

UNHRC LGBT Panel, March 8th 2012

IB as German society civil society “representative”

(intro Sylvia Groneick)

Dear president, dear high commissioner, distinguished delegates!

I want to thank the German foreign office for the opportunity to address this audience.

I have a comment and a question to the panel.

We in Germany welcome the LGBTI report of the Office of the High Commissioner, and we recommend South Africa for their leadership in bringing about this panel.

As human beings, we seek to learn the lessons of our history. The atrocities committed in Nazi Germany – which actually lead to the UN Declaration of Human Rights – is part of OUR history. We say “never again” to discrimination and violence against certain groups within society. We have special reason to welcome human rights frameworks that bring the issue to an international, and more objective, level.

It is not very well known that the Nazis also persecuted homosexuals. It was actually an integral part of Nazi racist ideology. At least fifty thousand men were convicted during the Nazi period. 10-15 thousand were killed in concentration camps.

Much to our regret, most of THESE victims of Nazi persecution were never rehabilitated and compensated, as criminalisation stayed in place for several decades after the war in both German states.

What has German civil society learned from this? We have worked hard to remove the stigma off homosexuality and trans. Most holocaust commemoration sites now include homosexual victims. The Homo-Monument in Berlin serves as our central site.

The goal is that the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also extends to LGBTI human beings in many regions.

My question to the distinguished panel is this: The High Commissioner's report indicates a clear need for systemic and permanent attention to this issue. What do you think: Is this better achieved by having a special rapporteur on LGBTI issues, or by integrating LGBTI into existing mechanisms?

Thank you.