

His Excellency Emmanuel Macron

President of the French Republic

Palais de l'Élysée

55 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré

75008 PARIS

France

24 June 2026

Re: Call from Civil Society Organisations to Reconsider a Human Rights Council Resolution on Decriminalisation

Dear Mr President,

We, the undersigned civil society organisations working in countries that continue to criminalise consensual same-sex relations, write to you with a shared commitment to the decriminalisation of our laws, the protection of our communities, and the advancement of human rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity and/or sex characteristics.

Many of us work every day under conditions of criminalisation, recriminalisation, surveillance, intimidation, stigma, violence and political hostility. We know firsthand the harms that criminalisation causes to our lives and livelihoods. **We support decriminalisation unequivocally. We want our laws repealed, our communities protected, and our dignity recognised.**

We do recognise that civil society organisations hold different views on the proposed resolution. Some see it as an opportunity to affirm decriminalisation at a time of rising repression. Others, particularly organisations working in criminalising contexts, are concerned about the potential risks and backlash. These differences should not be misread as disagreement on the goal. Across our movements, there is a shared commitment to ending criminalisation. The question is whether this initiative, at this moment, through this process, advances that goal safely and effectively.

However, because we are the communities most directly affected by both criminalisation and international advocacy efforts concerning it, we respectfully urge the Government of

France not to proceed with a resolution on decriminalisation at the United Nations Human Rights Council. Our concern is not with the objective. It is with the strategy.

For many organisations working in criminalising contexts, the proposed resolution risks creating consequences that will be borne not by diplomats in Geneva and politicians in France, but by local activists and communities. State and non-State actors that already portray LGBTI people's rights as a foreign agenda may use a high-profile international resolution such as the one proposed to intensify surveillance, further restrict civil society space, double down with punitive measures, legitimise acts of violence, strengthen the "foreign agenda" argument, and, in certain scenarios, even re-criminalise homosexuality or strengthen laws and punishments. These concerns are based on our assessment of current political context, deep connection with on-the-ground realities, and the fact that many LGBTI human rights defenders face reprisals as a consequence of international advocacy.

We believe that the principle of "first, do no harm" should guide international efforts to advance decriminalisation. Initiatives intended to support our communities should be carefully assessed against the risks they may create for those living and organising under criminalisation.

In our contexts, change is often achieved through careful, long-term work: strategic litigation, engagement with parliamentarians, coalition-building with broader civil society, public education, dialogue with faith leaders and community actors, and persistent and sustained local advocacy. These efforts depend on trust, legitimacy, and local ownership. International initiatives that are perceived as externally driven can unintentionally make that work more difficult and, at times, jeopardise it.

We are also concerned that many organisations from criminalising countries have not been meaningfully consulted in the development of this initiative. Meaningful consultation requires not simply informing communities of decisions already made, but allowing affected communities to shape initiatives and guide whether and how such initiatives proceed. The principle of "nothing about us without us" should be central to any international initiative concerning decriminalisation.

As organisations working in countries where many criminalising laws have colonial origins, we believe it is also important to address a difficult historical reality. A significant number of the laws used today to criminalise consensual same-sex relations were introduced, codified, or

reinforced during periods of French, British and other colonial rule. The continued existence of these laws is part of a broader colonial legacy that still shapes the lives of our communities.

For this reason, we believe that French leadership on decriminalisation should begin with an explicit recognition of historical responsibility and an acknowledgement of the role colonial systems played in establishing legal frameworks that continue to criminalise people today. Such recognition should not be merely symbolic. It should be accompanied by meaningful commitments toward reparative action.

We therefore call on France to consider an alternative pathway that advances decriminalisation while centring the leadership, expertise, and safety of communities living under criminalisation.

Specifically, we urge France to:

1. **Pause all efforts to pursue a Human Rights Council resolution on decriminalisation.**
2. **Issue a high-level public statement reaffirming France's commitment to global decriminalisation**, recognising the colonial origins of many criminalising laws, acknowledging France's historical responsibilities where applicable, and expressing support for locally led pathways to legal reform.
3. **Establish a Global Decriminalisation Justice Initiative** designed in partnership with civil society organisations from criminalising countries. This initiative should be governed by and accountable to affected communities.
4. **Create dedicated and flexible funding streams** for organisations working in criminalising contexts, including support for strategic litigation, legal assistance, security and protection measures, movement-building, public education, research and community mobilisation.
5. **Establish ongoing consultation mechanisms with organisations from criminalising countries** to ensure that international advocacy efforts are informed by those most directly affected and are responsive to changing political realities on the ground.
6. **Invest in protection mechanisms for activists and organisations facing reprisals** because of their work on decriminalisation and engagement with international human rights systems.
7. **Support, through funding and advocacy**, the implementation of existing United Nations recommendations and mechanisms relating to decriminalisation rather than opening a new and potentially divisive negotiation process.

We believe France can continue to demonstrate leadership on decriminalisation. However, leadership should be measured by whether communities living under criminalisation are safer, stronger, better resourced, and able to achieve sustainable legal reform on their own terms. It should not be measured by the adoption of a new resolution.

For us, the question is not whether decriminalisation matters, but how decriminalisation can best be achieved — with the voices of those living under criminalisation at the centre.

We remain committed to working constructively with France toward the shared objective of ending criminalisation worldwide. We ask that this work be grounded in meaningful consultation, historical accountability, and the leadership of those most affected.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of our highest consideration.

This letter is endorsed by 141 civil society organisations, working or based in the criminalizing countries.

No	Organisation	Country
01	Afghanistan LGBTIQ+ Organisation (ALO)	Afghanistan
02	Akham Algeria	Algeria
03	Pathchola Foundation for LGBTIQAPH+ and Sex Workers Rights in Bangladesh	Bangladesh
04	Inclusive Bangladesh	Bangladesh
05	Womens Windows	Bangladesh
06	Equals Inc	Barbados
07	United Belize Advocacy Movement	Belize
08	UNION SACRÉE	Benin
09	AFA	Benin
10	Rainbow Identity Association	Botswana
11	FEV (femme espoir et e)	Burkina Faso
12	MOLI	Burundi
13	Health Care Cameroon	Cameroon
14	Working For Our Well-being	Cameroon
15	Cameroon Pride People. CPP	Cameroon
16	Positive vision	Cameroon
17	Anonymous Organisation	Cameroon
18	Anonymous Organisation	Cameroon

19	PLATEFORME UNITY	Cameroon
20	Égides - Alliance internationale francophone pour l'égalité et les diversités	Canada
21	Initiative Tile	Côte d'Ivoire
22	All inside	Côte d'Ivoire
23	Hope Gender Côte-d'Ivoire	Côte-d'Ivoire
24	Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko	Democratic Republic of Congo
25	Anonymous Organisation	Democratic Republic of Congo
26	Bedayaa Organization for LGBTAQIA+ Rights in Egypt	Egypt
27	Saloon Community Center	Egypt
28	Cairo 52 for Legal Research Institute	Egypt
29	Safe Circles - الدوائر الآمنة	Egypt
30	Rainbow Egypt	Egypt
31	Siyavelana	Eswatini
32	Trans Affirmative Action Guild	Fiji
33	Spectrum	France
34	Plural Gabon Network	Gabon
35	Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights, Ghana (CEPEHRG)	Ghana
36	Hope Alliance Foundation	Ghana
37	Rightify Ghana	Ghana
38	Western Equality Zone	Ghana
39	Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)	Global
40	SASOD Guyana	Guyana
41	Proud To Be Trans	Guyana
42	Háttér Society	Hungary
43	Hum Is Desh Wasi	India

44	Anant Aakash Foundation	India
45	Anonymous Organisation	India
46	PeriFerry	India
47	Bandung School of Peace Indonesia (Sekodi Bandung)	Indonesia
48	Anonymous Organisation	Indonesia
49	Anonymous Organisation	Indonesia
50	The Collective Asé	Jamaica
51	Caribbean Vulnerable Communities	Jamaica
52	Queerhive Kenya	Kenya
53	Summit We Care For the needy Foundation	Kenya
54	Trans Arrivals kenya	Kenya
55	The Eagles for Life Kenya	Kenya
56	CRSW-KENYA	Kenya
57	LEHA Kenya	Kenya
58	Affirming community	Kenya
59	Minority Womyn In Action	Kenya
60	HelpHeal Foundation	Kenya
61	The Eagles for Life Kenya	Kenya
62	Malindi Desire Initiative	Kenya
63	National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC)	Kenya
64	PEMA Kenya	Kenya
65	Initiative for Equality and Non Discrimination	Kenya
66	Mosaic, MENA Organization for Services Advocacy Integration and Capacity Building	Lebanon
67	Social Change Organization	Lebanon
68	journalRAGE	Liberia
69	LEGAL-LIBERIA	Liberia
70	Kun Organization	Libya

71	Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE)	Malawi
72	Safe Space Allies Organization	Malawi
73	Young Peace Builder,Independent Advocate and Activist	Malawi
74	Malaysia East Coast Coalition of Activists (MECCA)	Malaysia
75	Greater Equitable Measures (GEM)	Malaysia
76	Legal Dignity	Malaysia
77	Pride In Research	Malaysia
78	Life Under Umbrella	Malaysia
79	justice for sisters	Malaysia
80	KL Queer Space	Malaysia
81	Pride Borneo	Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia
82	Anonymous Organisation	Mali
83	Marriage Equality Coalition of Mongolia	Mongolia
84	SAQFE Organization	Morocco
85	Nassawiyat	Morocco
86	Rede de Advogados Defensores dos Direitos Humanos	Mozambique
87	CAN-Myanmar	Myanmar
88	Outright Namibia	Namibia
89	Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)	Namibia
90	GALE, The Global Alliance for LGBTIQ+ Education	Netherlands
91	Anonymous Organisation	Nigeria
92	TechPride Empowerment Foundation	Nigeria
93	Think Positive Live Positive Support Initiative	Nigeria
94	Anonymous Organisation	Nigeria

95	Youth Health and Right Initiative for Advocacy and Empowerment (YOHRIAE)	Nigeria
96	Rural Renewal & Community Health Development Initiative	Nigeria
97	Women in Innovation and Tech Initiative	Nigeria
98	NACSP (The North Africa Center for Strategic Partnerships)	North Africa (regional)
99	Global Faith & Justice Project	North America
100	Anonymous Organisation	Pakistan
101	Peace Builder	Pakistan
102	Hetura Network PNG Association Inc	Papua New Guinea
103	Outrage Magazine	Philippines
104	Focus Droits et Accès	RDC
105	Association des personnes vulnérables du Congo	République du Congo
106	Wiceceka Community Support Organisation	Rwanda
107	Samoa Fa'afafine Association ("SFA") Incorporated	Samoa
108	Raise Your Voice Saint Lucia Inc	Saint Lucia
109	Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE)	Saint Lucia
110	Anonymous Organisation	Sénégal
111	Savie asbl NGO LGBTQI DRC	South -Kivu, the democratic Republic of Congo
112	Pan Africa ILGA	South Africa
113	Holy Trinity Catholic Church LGBTI Ministry	South Africa
114	GIN SSOGIE	South Africa
115	RiWA South Sudan	South Sudan
116	Equal Ground	Sri Lanka

117	Sudanese Association for Gender Inclusion and Advocacy SAGIA	Sudan
118	Anonymous Organisation	Sudan
119	The Upper Room Communion	Sub-saharan Africa
120	ILGA World	Switzerland
121	International Service for Human Rights	Switzerland
122	Anonymous Organisation	Tanzania
123	ILGA Asia (Asian Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association)	Thailand
124	Anonymous Organisation	Thailand
125	GIRLxGIRL	Thailand
126	Equal Asia Foundation/ Stichting EqualA Foundation	Thailand/ Netherlands
127	Anonymous Organisation	Togo
128	Tonga Leitis Association	Tonga
129	The Woven Foundation	Trinidad & Tobago
130	The Initiative Mawjoudin for equality	Tunisia
131	Tuvalu Akanda Alliance	Tuvalu
132	Kampus Liberty Uganda (KLUG)	Uganda
133	West Nile Rainbow Initiative	Uganda
134	Rainbow Family Support Alliance (RFSA)	Uganda
135	Tooro Action For Vulnerability And Human Rights	Uganda
136	House of Guramayle C.i.c	UK, Austria, USA and Ethiopia
137	Sakhi for South Asian Survivors	USA
138	Outright International	USA
139	Alwan Foundation	USA
140	Zambia Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS- ZANERELA+	Zambia

141	Anonymous Organisation	Zimbabwe