



**UNITED NATIONS 78TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THIRD COMMITTEE**

Item 69: Promotion and protection of human rights

Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Intervention of Belgium

26 October 2023

M. President,

Belgium aligns itself with the EU intervention and thanks the Special Rapporteur for his report, which takes a new and timely perspective linking colonialism and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The findings directly address previous concerns and current stories heard.

My delegation wishes to focus on one specific element in the report. Although colonialism in some cases engendered hatred of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity, it did not bring this diversity. In fact, as the report illustrates very well, diversity in sexual orientations and gender identities has existed everywhere and throughout recorded history. We believe this to be a crucial point because it directly contradicts the too-often-told narrative that Western influence has brought diversity in sexual orientations and gender identities.

Belgium regrets that 67 countries still criminalize homosexual relations and calls on them to reconsider their position in this regard. No one should fear for their life simply because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Many countries have made progress in deconstructing the frameworks of these old colonial laws on public indecency. We hope that others will engage constructively in this process. My country will certainly remain available to support them in this process.

Thank you.