

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

Country visit to the Republic of Colombia (19 to 30 May 2025)

End-of-mission statement

1. The mandate of the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, established by the Human Rights Council in 2016 and renewed in 2019 and 2022, was created in response to the global and systemic nature of such violations. Country visits form a key part of the mandate, enabling the Independent Expert to assess progress, identify challenges, and provide guidance to States.
2. I conducted an official visit to Colombia from 19 to 30 May 2025 to assess the implementation of human rights obligations related to sexual orientation and gender identity. I met with national, regional, and local authorities in Bogotá, Cúcuta, Medellín, Cali, and Barranquilla, and wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Colombia for its invitation, the spirit of cooperation, and the constructive engagement demonstrated throughout the visit.
3. I was grateful for the opportunity to engage with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender-diverse (LGBT) individuals and civil society representatives across Colombia, and I deeply appreciated the strength, diversity, and resilience of the country's LGBT movement.
4. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia for its warm hospitality, practical support, and substantive engagement. Its deep expertise and sustained monitoring of the human rights situation in the country were invaluable to the success of my visit.
5. This end-of-mission statement will be followed by a full report including observations, conclusions and recommendations to the Government of Colombia that will be presented to the United Nations Human Rights Council in June 2026.
6. I was honoured to visit a country that has played a leading role, both regionally and internationally, in advancing the human rights of LGBT persons. The 1991 Constitution of Colombia enshrines the principles of equality and non-discrimination, guaranteeing all individuals equal protection before the law and equal rights, irrespective of their personal characteristics or status. The Constitutional Court has issued a substantial body of jurisprudence affirming and safeguarding the rights of LGBT persons, establishing Colombia as a judicial reference in Latin America and beyond. Colombia also stands out for its robust policy framework aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT individuals.

7. At the same time, Colombia is a country marked by profound contrasts and contradictions. As Nobel Laureate Gabriel García Márquez alluded to, the tension between aspiration and reality is a recurring motif in the national consciousness: “It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alternation between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay.” This dynamic is reflected in the lived experiences of LGBT persons, whose everyday realities often diverge from the constitutional promises of equality and dignity and fall short of policy goals.
8. A significant gap persists between the aspirational commitments of the 1991 Constitution and prevailing social attitudes and practices – at times manifesting in discrimination, exclusion, and, in its most extreme form, violence, including lethal violence. On 22 May 2025, I received the deeply disturbing news of the murder of Nawar Jiménez, a trans woman human rights defender and participant in *Tejiendo Dignidad*, a joint initiative of UN Women and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) in El Carmen de Bolívar. The murder of Nawar Jiménez marked the latest case in a broader, deeply concerning pattern of violence, highlighting the urgent need for stronger protection and accountability. According to Caribe Afirmativo, 43 LGBT individuals had been killed in Colombia so far in 2025 at the time of writing, following 164 LGBT persons killed in 2024, amounting to one person every 55 hours. In contrast, the national human rights institution (also known as the ombudsperson, or the Defensora del Pueblo) recorded only 52 murders of LGBT people in 2024, underscoring the gap in quantitative data collected by different actors. In both sets of statistics, the most frequently recorded LGBT victims of killings were transgender women and gay men.
9. The persistent gap between constitutional aspirations and lived realities – compounded by impunity for violent crimes – is a source of deep frustration not only for affected communities, but also for national, regional, and municipal authorities, the human rights institution, and law enforcement agencies. This gap forms the backdrop to the present report. It underscores the urgent need to develop a new set of indicators, in close collaboration with civil society, capable of measuring outcomes across key sectors – such as health and education – while accounting for territorial and population-based disparities. Such indicators are essential to accurately reflect the disparities experienced by LGBT persons and to expose the disconnect between legal and policy frameworks and their implementation in the lived realities of affected individuals.
10. Given the wide diversity of experiences, geographies, histories, and identities across Colombia, it would be both inaccurate and reductive to make broad generalizations based on the realities of any single region or group. The specific vulnerabilities faced by individuals are shaped by intersecting factors that vary significantly across contexts. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to visit multiple cities and engage with individuals living in both rural and urban areas, including regions profoundly affected by the multiple internal armed conflicts. These conversations included a broad range of communities – migrants, LBQ women, trans persons, and Indigenous and Afro-Caribbean populations –

each offering distinct perspectives that underscore the complexity and richness of lived experiences in Colombia.

National, regional and global context

11. The Constitutional Court applies a normative framework rooted in the *block of constitutionality and conventionality*, integrating constitutional principles and international human rights standards to promote equality and non-discrimination. Through *tutela* actions, and actions for constitutional review, the Court ensures laws and rulings are interpreted in line with human rights obligations. The *tutela* action is an essential mechanism for protecting fundamental rights, with over 800 rulings strengthening protections for LGBT individuals. It has been used to address police violence against trans women sex workers and to advance rights such as same-sex marriage and adoption. The Constitutional Court has issued key rulings to address discrimination and violence against LGBT persons in health, education, employment, and the prison system. Its decisions have upheld access to gender-affirming care, protected students from bullying, addressed workplace discrimination, and applied international standards to ensure equal treatment in detention settings.
12. As part of ongoing efforts to address structural discrimination, two legislative initiatives are currently under debate in Colombia. The draft Comprehensive Trans Law seeks to guarantee equal rights and protections for transgender and gender-diverse persons, contributing to the advancement of legal recognition and substantive equality. In parallel, the bill titled “*Love Him Always Because There Is Nothing to Heal*” aims to prevent and sanction so-called conversion practices. Both initiatives were prioritized through sustained advocacy by LGBT civil society and human rights defenders.
13. Colombia demonstrates strong political commitment to protecting and advancing the human rights of LGBT people. An Ad Hoc Diversity Commission has been established within the Congress of the Republic, comprising members from across the political spectrum and tasked with advancing legislation and overseeing the human rights of LGBT persons. The National Development Plan (2022–2026) includes concrete measures to advance LGBT rights, including an inter-institutional mechanism to prevent and address violence and discrimination, provide legal assistance to victims, and integrate LGBT protections into local development plans. The Ministry of Equality and Equity, established by Law 2281 and launched in June 2023, is a government body tasked with addressing structural inequalities and promoting the rights of marginalized groups, including women, ethnic communities, LGBT persons, migrants, and people with disabilities. However, in May 2024, the Constitutional Court found that Law 2281, which created the Ministry of Equality, was unconstitutional due to the absence of a fiscal impact analysis. The Court postponed the annulment until 2026, allowing the Ministry to remain operational while corrective measures are taken.
14. Colombia’s National Policy for the Guarantee of the Rights of the LGBTIQ+ Population, outlined in CONPES Document 4147 and approved in March 2025, sets out a 10-year roadmap for the full inclusion and protection of LGBT persons. Coordinated by the

Ministry of Equality and Equity and led by the National Planning Department (DNP), the policy commits 49 government entities to implement 167 actions focused on cultural transformation, equal access to services, reducing prejudice-based violence, and enhancing institutional coordination. Although not legally binding, CONPES 4147 provides strategic direction and is backed by a proposed investment of COP 250 billion. Its implementation is monitored through the SisCONPES platform, with oversight by the Attorney General's Office and the Ombudsman's Office, and includes a participatory monitoring mechanism involving LGBT civil society. While the policy will remain obligatory despite institutional changes, civil society organizations have raised concerns about its implementation in light of the uncertain future of the Ministry of Equality.

15. Senior representatives of regional and municipal governments with whom I met also showcased the principled policymaking processes by which they had successfully designed impressive public policies, strategies and action plans to respect, protect and ensure the human rights of LGBT people in their respective jurisdictions. While challenges persist in adequately funding the implementation of those public policies and action plans, they nonetheless included an array of good practices to address protection gaps, including: direct provision of psychosocial support, legal support, and social work to LGBT persons; sensitization of civil servants toward the needs of LGBT persons; capacity-building trainings for police and attorneys; and the deployment of “purple patrols” to help LGBT community members connect to care pathways. Some of those regional and local governments also established working groups and advisory committees to involve affected communities and their representative organizations in the design and implementation of public policies pertaining to their human rights.
16. In terms of international relations Colombia's Feminist Foreign Policy, launched in 2023, promotes gender equality, intersectionality, and inclusive governance in international relations. It focuses on social and environmental justice, peace, education, and institutional reform, and includes 12 thematic areas such as gender and climate, migration, and diplomacy. Colombia also collaborates internationally to advance feminist approaches in foreign policy.
17. Colombia is co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition, an alliance of 45 States committed to promoting and protecting the human rights of LGBTI persons globally. Established in 2016, it works in partnership with civil society, multilateral agencies, and activists to advance equality and inclusive development. Colombia is a member of the UN LGBTI Core Group, an informal cross-regional coalition of 42 UN Member States established in 2008 to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTI persons globally. Colombia co-sponsored the 2016 Human Rights Council resolution creating the mandate of the Independent Expert on SOGI and continues to support its renewal. Through active engagement in multilateral forums and by hosting the mandate holder in 2025, Colombia has reinforced its commitment to equality, human rights, and inclusive development.

Safety and security

18. Since 2019, several institutional initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen access to justice and improve the response to violence and discrimination against LGBT persons. In that year, the Ministry of Justice published the *Guide to Supporting Women and LGBTI People in Access to Justice Services*, providing a practical tool for actors within the justice sector. In 2022, the Prosecutor's Office issued a guide on good practices for the investigation and prosecution of prejudice-motivated violence. The following year, in 2023, the National Roundtable for Urgent Cases of the LGBTI Population was reactivated to coordinate a comprehensive institutional response to violations of the rights to life, integrity, and security of LGBTI persons. Also in 2023, the Prosecutor's Office released Directive No. 0006 of 9 October, which sets out guidelines for the investigation and prosecution of acts of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The SALVIA system was launched on 25 November 2023 to address gender-based violence, with its regulatory framework established by Decree 1476 of 12 December 2024.
19. In 2024, the Attorney General's Office established a National Working Group to investigate violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Operating under Directive 006 of 2023, the group aims to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of bias-motivated crimes and reduce impunity for violence against LGBT persons. Notwithstanding these initiatives, LGBT individuals in Colombia continue to face pervasive and systemic violence.
20. A growing wave of anti-rights discourse – reflected in congressional debates, legislative proposals, and public mobilizations – has contributed to increased misinformation and discrimination against LGBT persons.
21. In Colombia's conflict-affected regions – such as Catatumbo and Chocó – violence against individuals with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions is exacerbated by the presence of non-State armed groups and criminal organizations. The intersection of armed conflict, illegal economies, and limited State presence significantly increases the risks faced by LGBT persons, who are subjected to forced displacement, violence, and major barriers to justice. The absence of institutional protection has compelled many to flee in search of safety.
22. These groups frequently impose strict moral codes, forcibly regulating individuals' identities, expressions, and behaviours. Gender non-conformity and same-sex relationships are punished through threats, physical assaults, and, in some cases, targeted killings. Such dynamics are particularly acute in rural areas, where the control exerted by armed actors often goes unchallenged.
23. LGBT human rights defenders face especially severe threats, as they are routinely stigmatized and harassed by both State and non-State actors. Their visibility and leadership place them at heightened risk, undermining their rights to life, safety, and political participation. As one defender stated: "Our leadership and activism put us at heightened risk – many LGBTI defenders are forced to flee their territories due to targeted violence, threats, and persecution."

24. According to the NGO Somos Defensores, 157 social leaders and human rights defenders were killed in Colombia in 2024. Between 2016 and 2024, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights documented 16 killings of LGBT human rights defenders, all linked to their activism. The victims included seven trans women, six gay men, two lesbian women, and one non-binary person – most of whom were grassroots leaders and community organizers. These cases highlight the urgent need for enhanced protection mechanisms and accountability in the context of Colombia’s ongoing armed conflict.
25. In 2022, Colombia’s Truth Commission published its final report, including a dedicated chapter titled “*My Body is the Truth*”, which examined violence against LGBT persons during the armed conflict. The Commission found that armed actors targeted individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, causing profound harm to their personal and collective understandings of identity.
26. LGBT individuals face differentiated and compounded risks in the context of armed conflict, forced displacement, and migration. According to the Single Registry of Victims (RUV), 5,890 individuals identifying as LGBTI have been officially registered as victims of the armed conflict. In 2023, the Unit for the Search of Persons Deemed as Missing (UBPD) reported at least 47 LGBT individuals as missing in connection with the conflict. As a positive development, the UBPD has established the Rainbow Search Network, an extrajudicial mechanism that provides a dignified and inclusive space for families – including social and chosen families – to search for LGBTIQ+ persons who disappeared in the context of the conflict.
27. Colombia’s transitional justice system is the first globally to adopt a gender-sensitive approach that explicitly includes violations against LGBT persons, marking a significant step in acknowledging historical harms. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) has integrated a gender perspective across all macro-cases, including Macro-Case 11 on sexual violence during the armed conflict, enabling the identification of prejudice-motivated violence against LGBT individuals. However, civil society organizations have expressed concern over the limited timeframe allocated for the investigation of this case.
28. LGBT migrants and refugees – particularly Venezuelan trans women – face routine and severe forms of violence, including trafficking, sexual abuse, and exploitation, especially in border areas such as Maicao, Cúcuta, and Necoclí. Documented abuses include degrading treatment, such as forced head shaving and detention in male prison cells, intended to humiliate and expose individuals to further harm. Fear of deportation deters many from reporting such violations, reinforcing patterns of impunity and invisibility. Furthermore, there is documented evidence of the exploitation of Venezuelan LGBT individuals by armed groups and criminal organizations.
29. Lesbian, bisexual, and trans (LBT) women in Colombia experience gender-based violence in multiple settings, including domestic, community, and institutional environments. As described by LBT groups, these violations are frequently driven by patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic norms. Structural factors such as poverty,

racism, and displacement further deepen their vulnerability. In response, civil society actors – including feminist networks – have developed community-based protection strategies focused on self-care, training, and risk management. While these efforts have strengthened local resilience, substantial gaps remain in achieving comprehensive security, which should include physical safety, emotional well-being, and freedom from fear and stigma.

30. Despite some advances in political participation, including the election of Mayors and other representatives, during electoral cycles, LGBT candidates are frequently subjected to threats, stigmatization, and political exclusion, with limited effective protection mechanisms in place to ensure their equal participation.
31. LGBT individuals and civil society actors consistently expressed mistrust in institutions such as the Prosecutor's Office, the Inspector General's Office, the judiciary, and law enforcement, citing revictimization, impunity, and failures to deliver justice. Reports highlighted the involvement of some police and military personnel in perpetrating or enabling violence – particularly against trans women and sex workers – through arbitrary detention and degrading, gender-based treatment. While Directive 006 of 2023 provides a legal framework for addressing hate crimes, its implementation remains limited, reinforcing a climate of impunity and leaving many LGBT persons feeling unprotected by the very institutions mandated to ensure their safety and access to justice.

Data gaps

32. The National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) estimates that some 500,000 adults identify as LGBT. A broad spectrum of national, regional, and municipal authorities in Colombia acknowledged that limitations in data collection continue to pose a significant challenge to the effective implementation of legal and policy frameworks on equality. These challenges are partly attributable to the absence of systematic disaggregation of data by sexual orientation and gender identity within existing data collection mechanisms.
33. Officials across various levels of government noted that the lack of reliable census data on the size and geographic distribution of the LGBT population – along with limited disaggregated data at service delivery points – hampers efforts to design, budget for, and deliver socio-economic programs tailored to meet the needs of LGBT communities.
34. Authorities and civil society organizations also expressed concern regarding gaps in the documentation of gender-based violence, particularly when it involves actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. The national human rights institution observed that such gaps may lead to significant underreporting, which in turn could hinder the ability of law enforcement to identify and address bias motivations in these crimes, potentially contributing to patterns of impunity.

35. Similarly, the National Institute for Family Welfare emphasized that the absence of disaggregated data collection makes it particularly difficult to monitor and respond to the human rights concerns of LGBT children and adolescents.

Socio-economic rights

Education

36. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior emphasized that mechanisms are in place across Colombia's approximately 80,000 educational institutions to safeguard students from bullying and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. However, both institutions also acknowledged that the effective implementation of these protective systems is sometimes hindered by discriminatory attitudes or actions by educators and school administrators themselves. Such dynamics can limit students' ability to report incidents and can impede their access to key school services. Regional authorities described awareness and intervention programs to combat school bullying that might impact positively if correctly implemented.
37. Government authorities and civil society organizations noted that experiences of bullying, harassment, and violence in educational settings contribute to elevated dropout rates among LGBT students and, in some tragic instances, to suicide. One civil society group reported that nearly two-thirds of LGBT students surveyed did not feel safe at school due to persistent bullying, while approximately one-fifth cited school-based bullying as a reason for discontinuing their studies. Trans students were highlighted as particularly vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and exclusion, often leading to early school departure and associated mental health challenges such as trauma, depression, and anxiety. The absence of comprehensive sexuality education in many school curricula was cited as a contributing factor to stigma and peer-based discrimination.
38. Both the national human rights institution and civil society stakeholders expressed concern that exclusion from educational spaces often marks the beginning of a broader cycle of marginalization for LGBT individuals – affecting access to employment, health services, and full participation in society. Many of those submitting complaints to the national human rights institution reportedly had not completed secondary education, with only 12% holding a professional qualification. Among complainants, only 12% reported having access to formal employment, highlighting the long-term socio-economic consequences of early exclusion from education.

Employment

39. Recent national labour data from Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) for the period April 2024 to March 2025 indicates that LGBT individuals exhibit higher labour force participation (81.2%) and employment rates (71.9%) than their non-LGBT counterparts. Nevertheless, they also face a slightly higher unemployment rate (11.4%) and continued barriers to accessing stable and inclusive employment.

40. Despite this strong engagement in the labour market, civil society actors, public officials, and LGBT individuals interviewed during the visit consistently pointed to persistent challenges, including social stigma, educational exclusion, and discriminatory stereotypes. Particular concern was expressed regarding the situation of trans individuals engaged in sex work, who often face heightened levels of violence, economic precarity, and exclusion from formal employment opportunities, while also experiencing discrimination in access to public services and legal protections. Estimates from civil society sources suggested unemployment rates as high as 42% within the LGBT population – and up to 72% among trans persons. These figures contrast with official statistics and highlight a lack of disaggregated data on employment discrimination by sexual orientation and gender identity.
41. Economically marginalized LGBT persons are often concentrated in informal employment, frequently lacking formal contracts and labour protections. Some face heightened risks of exploitation, including survival sex work and trafficking, particularly when also affected by poverty or irregular migration status.
42. The national human rights institution confirmed that discrimination in employment remains a common concern raised in complaints. However, promising practices were noted in Bogotá, where inclusive employment programmes have successfully placed LGBT individuals in both public and private sector jobs, demonstrating the potential of targeted and rights-based strategies.

Health

43. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection reported that Colombia's national health system provides insurance coverage to approximately 80 to 85% of LGBTI persons through various programs. While LGBT individuals are formally entitled to the same healthcare access as the general population, concerns were consistently raised regarding discriminatory attitudes by some healthcare providers. Such attitudes were said to result in stigmatizing treatment or denial of services.
44. In interviews conducted during the visit, national, regional, and local authorities, as well as civil society representatives and LGBT individuals, consistently identified prejudice within the healthcare sector as a major barrier to accessing quality care. Numerous accounts described instances in which healthcare professionals, acting on bias or lacking adequate training, reportedly denied services to LGBT persons – particularly when perceived inconsistencies arose between a person's gender expression, legal identification, and registered name. A member of Congress and the national human rights institution both expressed concern about the reportedly continued existence of so-called "conversion practices" within segments of the public health system, sometimes allegedly funded with public resources. The Colombian Association of Psychiatry has publicly denounced such practices as scientifically unfounded and medically unjustifiable.

45. Intersectional discrimination was frequently cited, with LGBT individuals who are women, migrants, living with disabilities, or experiencing poverty reporting compounded barriers in accessing appropriate care. Despite clear rulings from the Constitutional Court, civil society organizations reported that transgender persons continue to face significant barriers in accessing gender-affirming healthcare within the prison system. Across settings, stigmatization and discrimination have been linked to elevated risks of mental health concerns among LGBT individuals, including depression, anxiety, and, in some cases, self-harm.
46. Health authorities shared that a new national protocol for the care of trans persons is expected to be adopted and begin implementation by the end of 2025. While the protocol will cover a range of gender-affirming procedures, authorities noted that access may remain uneven across different regions of the country. In parallel, Congress is currently considering two legislative proposals: one focused on the prevention of conversion practices, and another aimed at comprehensively addressing the human rights of trans persons within the healthcare system and beyond

Housing

47. LGBT individuals who are economically marginalized – often due to intersecting barriers such as discrimination, limited access to education and employment, and unequal health outcomes – frequently identified access to safe, affordable, and inclusive housing as a critical and persistent challenge.
48. Regional and municipal authorities acknowledged that budgetary constraints often hindered their ability to provide adequate shelter options for LGBT individuals experiencing homelessness. Civil society organizations further noted that existing shelters were not always inclusive, and in some cases, LGBT persons were reportedly excluded from access – particularly when resources were limited or when priority was given to other populations, such as heterosexual women survivors of domestic violence.
49. Despite these challenges, some local models illustrate promising practices. A member of Congress highlighted the capital district’s housing institutions and public policies as examples of how targeted support for LGBT persons can be effectively implemented. Officials from Bogotá’s District Planning Secretariat confirmed the success of five shelters that offer inclusive accommodation for members of the LGBT community. This shelter strategy not only provides housing but also integrates a range of support services, including food assistance and psychological care, demonstrating a holistic approach to meeting the needs of LGBT individuals experiencing housing insecurity.
50. In the Atlántico region, regional government officials outlined how their government departments had created targets and plans (called “service agreements”) – in conjunction with indicators and benchmarks – to ensure their programs positively impacted the LGBT community. Through that principled approach to policy implementation, authorities were able to track improvements in the access of LGBT persons to housing, gas supply and

other services. For instance, more than 300 families led by LGBT community members gained access to adequate housing through a regional government program.

Preliminary recommendations

51. While the country report presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2026 will contain a detailed set of recommendations, some of the areas that I will cover include:
 - a. Ensure coordinated institutional responses to systemic violence against LGBT persons, supported by robust accountability mechanisms and the meaningful participation of LGBT communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies.
 - b. Strengthen disaggregated data collection systems on violence and killings of LGBT individuals to improve the accuracy of institutional records and enable more effective, targeted prevention and protection measures across diverse territories.
 - c. Ensure a thorough, impartial investigation into the murder of Nawar Jiménez, examining all possible hypotheses, and guarantee the effective implementation of Directive 006 of 2023 from the Attorney General's Office as a critical step toward strengthening the investigation and prosecution of bias-motivated crimes.
 - d. Deepen meaningful and substantive civil society engagement in the development and implementation of policies.
 - e. Ensure adequate allocation of resources at municipal, regional and national levels to ensure effective implementation of policy.
 - f. Adopt a set of indicators, developed through a participatory process, that accurately reflect the lived realities of diverse populations and account for regional and demographic differences.
 - g. Take urgent steps to ensure that access to quality health care is widely available to trans persons.

Conclusion

52. In sum, I conclude this visit with deep appreciation for the opportunity to engage with a country that has played a pioneering role, both in the region and globally, in recognizing and advancing the human rights of LGBT persons. The 1991 Constitution enshrines a strong normative foundation for equality and non-discrimination, establishing the legal basis for equal rights and protections for all. Through its Constitutional Court, Colombia has built a robust and progressive jurisprudence that has significantly shaped regional legal discourse on LGBT rights. This legal and institutional commitment is further reflected in the country's broad policy frameworks dedicated to the protection and inclusion of LGBT individuals. There is a strong political will to address discrimination and violence against LGBT people, as evidence in the establishment of the Ministry of Equality and the adoption of CONPES 4147, the 10-year roadmap.
53. Yet Colombia remains a country of profound contrasts. While its legal and policy frameworks on the rights of LGBT persons are among the most advanced in the region, the lived realities of many continue to be marked by exclusion, marginalization, and, in

the most severe cases, violence. These patterns of violence are not isolated incidents but are rooted in deep-seated structural discrimination – intensified during the armed conflict and persisting in the post-conflict context, particularly in historically marginalized regions. Addressing this disparity between legal progress and lived experience remains one of the most urgent human rights challenges facing the country.

54. The leadership of LGBT individuals has been instrumental in shaping and sustaining grassroots organizations across Colombia's territories. These community-based actors play a vital role in articulating local survival strategies and advancing rights in contexts often marked by violence and exclusion. Ensuring effective coordination with such organizations – whose work is grounded in direct knowledge and lived experience – is essential to the success and legitimacy of national and local responses.
55. The gap between constitutional ideals and principles and societal practice remains a source of profound concern. Discrimination, structural barriers, and deeply entrenched prejudice continue to undermine the promise of equal rights. This disparity has significant socio-economic consequences and poses a serious barrier to the full and equal participation of LGBT individuals in society. The persistently high levels of violence, particularly against trans persons, stand in stark contrast to Colombia's otherwise progressive legal and policy framework and remain a profound source of concern. This enduring disconnect – keenly felt by communities and recognized by institutions at all levels – provides the context for these preliminary observations. It underscores the pressing need for a new generation of data and indicators that capture the real impact of laws and policies across populations and regions in areas such as healthcare, education, and justice. Only with such tools can States ensure that commitments to equality are not merely symbolic, but also translate into meaningful, measurable progress in the lives of LGBT persons.

Bogotá, 30 May 2025