

Universal Periodic Review: The State of Transgender Rights in Singapore

General Context

- ▶ Constitution (Article 12) of Singapore guarantees all persons equality before the law and equal protection of the law which includes: religion, race, descent and place of birth but does not protect against discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation.
- ▶ Transgender people in Singapore have access to psychiatric and endocrinological services, but face strict criterias for legal gender recognition, comprising a ‘complete’ change of genitalia that may require multiple expensive surgeries unavailable in Singapore. The vast majority of transgender Singaporeans are unable to fulfil these criteria. Only those who manage to change their legal sex are permitted to legally marry members of the opposite legal sex;
- ▶ Homosexuality is criminalised under section 377A of the Penal Code. It fuels stigma and marginalisation at the societal level and in broader policymaking arenas.

General Context

- Transgender people face multiple discriminations in employment, but are excluded from existing anti-discrimination labour guidelines such as the Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP).
- Violence against transgender people by family members and in public spaces often goes unreported. Transgender persons additionally face discriminatory attitudes from enforcement agencies. “Conversion therapy” and related practices are still carried out in Singapore. Healthcare professionals are allowed to provide such services only on request, but no such restrictions apply to religious counsellors and providers. Transgender youths are especially at risk of being sent for conversion therapy by their parents.
- Transgender persons face barriers in terms of reporting and gaps in service provision. Research by Sayoni has found that the absence of LGBTQ-specific structures of protection makes transgender persons especially vulnerable to acts of violence and discrimination from family members, officials and the public, and significantly impedes access to justice.

Challenges

- ▶ Legal Gender Recognition
- ▶ Discrimination, Abuse and Restricting Students in Education Settings
- ▶ Discrimination against transgender persons in the employment sector
- ▶ Access to Healthcare, Including Gender Affirming Healthcare
 - ▶ Limited Access to Gender Affirming Care
 - ▶ Discrimination in Healthcare Settings
- ▶ Marriage and Access to Decent Housing and Shelter
- ▶ Violence against transgender persons
 - ▶ Violence from Family Members
 - ▶ Violence in Public Spaces
 - ▶ Immunity for Actors Promoting and Practicing conversion therapies
 - ▶ Barriers to reporting violence and gaps in service provision for victims of transphobia and homophobic violence