



# ASEAN SOGIE CAUCUS



24 December 2014

## **Statement of Concern on the Increasing State Repression against LGBT Persons in Egypt**

The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC) expresses concern over the increasing state repression against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons in Egypt. We are concerned that homophobic and transphobic acts of the government have sown fear amongst members of the LGBT community.

In previous months, the Egyptian government has been undertaking targeted violence against self-identified and perceived to be gay individuals and shutting down spaces specific to LGBT community. On December 7, Egyptian police raided a bathhouse in Cairo and arrested more than 30 individuals alleging them to have been involved in homosexual acts. The individuals arrested were reported to have been identified by the media which infringes upon their right to privacy. In November, eight men were penalized with three year imprisonment due to their attendance to a same-sex wedding ceremony. In April, four men were sentenced to between four to twelve years imprisonment for being involved in an all-men gathering in Cairo.

Egypt's laws do not explicitly criminalize homosexuality. However, existing laws on public morality consider homosexuality as a social taboo. The 1951 law on prostitution prohibits "debauchery" or unspecified form of immorality which Egyptian courts have interpreted to include consensual and non-commercial sex between men.

We consider Egypt's persecution of LGBT persons as contrary to its human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Prosecuting individuals based on their sexual orientation is against fundamental human rights to protection against discrimination and to the right to privacy. Applying a law, which explicitly does not criminalize homosexuality, against LGBT persons is a form of discrimination.

Furthermore, we are concerned that the Egyptian government's targeted repression against the LGBT community is political fuelled by the need for the government led-by President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi to gain legitimacy from conservative and extremist religious groups. We are appalled that human rights of gay persons are overshadowed by the political aspirations of the state.

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