The Human Rights Council:

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system and a subsidiary body of the United Nations General Assembly. The Human Rights Council, which replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, was created by the General Assembly on March 15 2006 by resolution 60/251 and it has as its designated meeting place, the UN Office at Geneva (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

It is made of up of 46 United Nations Member states which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The latter states are assigned with the responsibility of strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. They are elected by the majority of the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations through direct and secret ballot. The chosen members of the council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

Membership to the Council is based on equitable geographical distribution. The seats are allocated as follows:

1- African States: 13 seats
2- Asian States: 13 seats
3- Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
4- Western European and other States: 7 seats
5- Eastern European States: 6 seats

The Council as a whole has its main purpose grounded in addressing human rights violations around the world and finding solutions to end such violations. In order to guarantee the fulfillment of its goals, the Human Rights Council maintains a close relation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and works with the UN’s “special procedures”. The Special Procedures are either an individual (called “Special Rapporteur”or “Independent Expert”) or a working group usually composed of five members (one from each region). The Special Procedures have various mandates that are established and defined by resolutions creating them. It is important to note that the Mandate-Holders of the special procedures do not receive salaries or any other financial compensation for their work and their independent status is crucial for maintaining impartiality throughout fulfilling their functions (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

The Council has also adopted an “Institution-building package” in order to facilitate its work and help set up its procedures and mechanisms. Among them were the Universal Period Review mechanism which serves to assess the human rights situations in all United Nations Member States, the Advisory
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Committee which serves as the Council’s “think tank” providing it with advice on important human rights issues and the Complain Procedure which allows individuals and organizations bring the Council’s attention to certain human rights violations (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)

Historical Accounts of Homosexuality:

Homosexuality is not a modern phenomenon, it is one that has been prevalent, whether in secret or in public, throughout periods of time. Below you will find historical accounts of homosexuality from regions of the world:

- **Historical Accounts of Homosexuality throughout Regions of the World:**
  - The history of homosexuality can be traced back to ancient Greece, for they represented homosexuality through the love between the older man the erastes (lover) and the young man, eromenos (loved one). It was held that this love was represented through the erasts unselfishly providing love, guidance, education and lavish gifts to his eromenos. The eromenos would become the erastes’ devoted pupil and assistant and as such this relation had certain acts of sexuality involved (Vanggaard)
  - Transsexuals in Ancient Greece: in Ancient Greece and Phrygia (later in the Roman Republic), the Goddess Cybele was worshiped by a cult of people who castrated themselves, and thereafter took female dress and referred themselves as female. Early transsexual figures such as those have been modernly referred to as early gay role models by several authors (Vanggaard)
  - In China: homosexuality has been acknowledged in China since ancient times. Scholar Pan Guangdan did a series of studies and came to the conclusion that nearly every emperor in the Han Dynasty had one or more male sex partners; there was also an evident description of lesbians in a number of history books. It is believed that homosexuality was popular in the Song, Ming and Qin dynasties. Chinese homosexuals did not experience high-profile persecution as compared with that which was received by homosexuals in Europe during the Middle Ages (Dynes)
  - In Japan: several Heian diaries contain references to homosexual acts that existed; some of these diaries also contain references to emperors involved in homosexual relationships and to “handsome boys retained for sexual purposes” (Dynes)
  - In the Middle East: homosexuality was practiced and was thinly veiled among many Middle Eastern Muslim cultures that were egalitarian or age-structured. Same-sex relations were practiced in the temperate and sub-tropical zones stretching from Northern India to the Western Sahara; in these regions the relations were either gender-structured or age-structured. However, the practice of *Bacha Bazi*, i.e. sexual slavery and child prostitution, was also popular in the region; young boys would be sold for wealthy men as sexual slaves for entertainment. It is said that this obsession with young boys comes from the pre-Islamic Arabia claim that “beardless youth possessed a temptation to adult men as a whole. . .” (El Rouayheb 115)
  - In Africa: it is reported by anthropologists Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe that women in Lesotho engaged in *motsoalle*, which were socially sanctioned “long-term, erotic relationships”. It was also recorded that male Azande warriors in the Northern Congo, routinely took on boywives between the ages of twelve and twenty who helped with household related tasks and participated in certain forms of sexual activity with the older husbands. This was documented by
anthropologists Evans-Pritchard who had stories recounted to him by African tribe elders who mentioned that the latter act died by the 20th century in conjunction with the second wave European colonialism (Evans-Pritchard)

- **History of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Questioning (LGBTQ) Rights, Movements & Achievements:**

LGBTQ rights are also not modern phenomena, for there are many accounts in history of LGBTQ rights granted and LGBTQ rights fought for. However, the tough situations facing LGBTQ people and the harshness associated with lobbying for their rights make the historical LGBTQ rights seem haphazard. This haphazardness is due to the fact that LGBTQ people and organizations strove to get any kind of right possible in their struggle for equality; therefore, historical LGBTQ rights and movements cannot always be categorized under certain domains. It must be highlighted that not a lot of LGBTQ rights were attained in the past; ergo, many of the accounts mentioned will be concerned with historical people and organizations fighting for rights. You will find below accounts of influential LGBTQ rights and movements throughout history:

- In 1791, the first French Republic, after the outbreak of the French Revolution, removed the penal code against Sodomy. It was the first western country to decriminalize homosexual acts between consenting adults (Gunther)
- The United Kingdom from the 1870s onward saw the development of social activism that was focused on attaining homosexual rights. In 1879, George Cecil Ives founded the “Order of Chaeronea” which had social reformers lobbying for the legalization of homosexuality (Cook 137)
- In 1908, the first American defense of homosexuality was published in The intersexes: A history of Similisexualism as a Problem in Social Life. It was written by Eduard Stevenson under the pseudonym Xavier Mayne (Edsall)
- Germany from the 1890s till the end of the Weimar Republic (1934) had a strong gay liberation movement. Doctor Magnus Hirschfeld co-founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin in 1897, which lobbied for the abolishment of “Paragraph 175” of the German penal code that made sex between men illegal. The committee also campaigned for rights and recognition of homosexual men and women and transgender people. It branched out to various other countries making it one of the first LGBTQ international organizations. Hirschfeld also co-founded the Institut fur Sexualwissenschaft (Institute for Sex Research), which was a private sexology research institute. It was a worldwide pioneering institute of the time that called for civil rights and social acceptance of homosexual and transgender people. Berlin in the 1920s would become more tolerant of homosexuality (gay bars and shows spread everywhere), especially in the urban areas where homosexuality became acceptable by a number of people (Wolff)
- In 1923, Friedrich Rafzuweit founded the Bund fur Menschenrecht E.V. (BFM) [Federation for Human Rights], which worked for the rights of gay people and for the deletion of the aforementioned paragraph 175. His organization also published LGBTQ magazines and books (Steakly 50)
- In 1928, the Well of Loneliness was published by British author Radclyffe Hall; the latter novel became one of the first Lesbian novels that introduced people to lesbianism. Despite lacking explicit sexual references, the story was found obscene by a British courts due to its Lesbian storyline; all copies were either burned or recalled (“Laic Timeline: Before 1960”)
- The period in which the Holocaust occurred in Nazi Germany was one that saw the complete abolition of any form of regard for LGBTQ people and their rights. Gay, lesbian and transgender people were targeted and sought to be removed from society. They were either sterilized, abused killed or put in the gas chambers; the act of eugenics became a common one and homosexuals and transgender people became victims of research and horrible surgery (Lifton).

- In 1949 there was a denial of employment rights for American LGBTQ people when then President Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450, citing “sexual perversion” as reasons for preventing homosexuals from being employed by the federal government (Cain 1556).

- In 1951, Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Society, the first gay rights organization in U.S.A. Due to the hostility of the time and laws preventing pro-gay institution from functioning, the organization had to mask its direct activism by portraying its norms through Italian street comedy (“Harry and the Mattachine Society”).

- On May 15th 1951, Robert Cowell became Roberta Cowell, the United Kingdom’s first surgically altered transsexual (“Transgender History”).

- In the 1950s, The Ladder, one of the first Lesbian magazines was published in the United States. The Ladder labeled itself as a Lesbian review (“Laic Timeline: Before 1960”).

- In the 1950s, One Inc. was one of the first gay rights organizations in the United States. In 1953 it published the first pro-gay rights magazine and had extensive articles dedicated to what was called homophile studies (same sex love). The magazine was openly distributed in Los Angeles. In 1956 it developed the One Institute for Homophile Studies which was the first organization in the United States dedicated to such studies (“Timeline of Homosexual History, 1960 and before”).

- On September 4th, 1957, the Wolfenden Report was published in the United Kingdom. The report claimed that homosexual acts between consenting adults should not be a crime, since they do not disturb public order. The Report is named after John Wolfenden who would later become a hero for gay rights (“Timeline of Homosexual History, 1960 and before”).


- On Saturday, June 28 1969, the Stonewall Riots began in Greenwich Village, New York. These events were one of the first gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual responses against a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar that operated without a license. This is considered a pivotal event in LGBTQ rights and led to the development of the Gay Liberation Front in July of the same year and to the surviving tradition of gay pride parades. This movement has become an important symbol of rebellion for rights by LGBTQ people (“The American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline”).

- In 1969, the first gay and Lesbian interest group appeared in Scotland and went by the name of The Scottish Minority Group. It later became called ‘Outright Scotland’ and it campaigned for providing a social scene for lesbians and gay men (“Laic Timeline: Before 1960”).

- In the 1970s, the first bisexual groups developed in large U.S. cities. The National Bisexual Liberation Group was founded in New York in 1972 and claimed to have a large membership in the U.S. and abroad by 1975. The group published one of the earliest bi newsletters called “The Bisexual Expression” (Highleyman).

- 1973, the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of disorders partly because of successful work by LGBT advocates (American Gay Rights Movement).

- Harvey Bernard Milk was the first openly gay politician to be elected to a public office in California on July 8 1978. In his short political life span, he passed a gay rights ordinance in San Francisco, which was an achievement for the mindset and atmosphere of the time. He was later
assassinated by Dan White on November 27, 1978 and he remains one of the most influential and remembered figures in LGBTQ history (Milk Foundation)
- In 1982, Northern Ireland decriminalized homosexuality(“The Homosexual Offences”)
- In 1995, the Toronto District School Board launched the Triangle Program, which was Canada’s first alternative high school program for at-risk LGBT youth. Such a program provided protection for LGBT youth who were under the risk of being bullied, harassed and attacked(“Mission Statement”)
- In 1998, U.S. President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13087, which banned the federal government from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation in employment(Clinton)

Modern Situation of LGBTQ Rights:

The following section refers to the development and attainment of essential and basic rights in certain countries. The lack of information with regards to certain countries and regions is not due to a regional bias; rather, it is due to a lack of credible sources that provide LGBTQ-related information from these countries

Worldwide Situation of Rights:

- From 2011 onward there are 113 countries in the world where homosexuality is legal and 76 countries in which homosexuality is illegal (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 8)
- 54 countries in the world have laws that prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 12) and 19 countries have laws that prohibit discrimination in employment on the basis of gender identity(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 13)
- Only 7 countries in the world have a constitutional prohibition that prevents discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 13)
- 18 countries have a law of gender recognition after gender reassignment treatment(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 13)
- Hate crimes based on sexual orientation are considered an aggravating offence in 20 countries(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 14) and hate crimes based on gender identity are considered an aggravating offence in 6 countries(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 14)

Countries that punish homosexuality by death:
Djibouti, Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and parts of Nigeria and Somalia (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 10)

Laws from countries around the world that criminalize homosexuality as of 2011:

In Africa
- In Algeria, article 33 of the penal code states that any person who practices a homosexual act will be punished with a prison sentence between two months to two years and fined an amount ranging between 200 and 2000 Algerian Dinar(Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 20)
- In Guinea, according to article 325 of the 1998 penal code any person who commits an unnatural act with a person of the same sex will be punished by 6 months to 3 years
imprisonment and a fine ranging between 100,000 and 1000,000 Guinean Francs. If such an act was committed was a minor under the age of 21, the maximum penalty will be applied (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 24)

- In the Seychelles, homosexuality is illegal between males but legal between females. However, article 155 of the 1955 criminal code states that any person who has had carnal knowledge (sexual intercourse) against the order of nature with another person, or with an animal, or allows another male to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature, is punished with a prison sentence lasting up to 14 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 29)

**In Asia:**

- In Myanmar, homosexuality is legal between females and illegal between males. Any person found convicted of having “unnatural” sexual intercourse with a male, female or animal will be punished by “permanent transportation” (banishment), or a prison sentence up to 10 years and is required to pay a fine (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 41)

- In Qatar, the civil penal code does not address the issue of homosexuality; however, it does punish sexual acts outside of wedlock with males and females above the age of consent. They also apply the Islamic Sharia law to Muslims only and punish people for the offence of “Zina” (adultery). A married person that makes a sexual act outside of wedlock would be punished by death, while sexual acts by non-married persons are punished by flogging (rules apply to heterosexuals and homosexuals alike) (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 42)

- In Singapore, homosexuality is legal between females and illegal between males. The revised penal code of 2007 has an article on “Outrages on decency”, section 377A, it states that any male person who commits in public or private, the act of gross indecency with another male will punished with imprisonment for a term that can be extended to 2 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 43)

- In Syria, article 520 of the 1949 penal code punishes any unnatural act of sex with a term of imprisonment up to three years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 43)

**In Latin America:**

- In Belize, section 54 of the revised penal code of 2003, punishes people for “unnatural crime”. It states that any person who has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with another person or animal is punishable by imprisonment up to 10 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 53)

- In Grenada, article 543 of the criminal code states unnatural sex with a person of the same gender or with an animal is punished with imprisonment up to 10 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 54)

**In Oceania:**

- In Kribati, homosexual acts are illegal between males and legal between females. Section 153 on “natural offences” of the revised penal code of 1977 states that any person who commits “buggery” (sodomy) with another person or an animal and allows a male person to commit buggery with him or her is punishable with imprisonment up to 14 years. Section 154 states that people who are found to have the intent to commit the aforementioned acts of buggery, are to be punished with imprisonment up to 7 years. Section 155 states that any male person who committees an act of “gross indecency” with another male person in public or in private and allows another male person to commit such an act with him will be guilty of a felony and punished by imprisonment up to 5 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 58)

- In Palau, homosexual acts are illegal between males, but legal between females. Section 2803 of the Palau penal code on “Sodomy” states that any person who has sexual intercourse with a
person of the same sex or with a “beast” shall be punished with imprisonment up to 10 years (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 59)

**Right to adoption:**

- LGBTQ adoption is considered an essential right that would provide same-sex couples the right to adoption. It would also allow the step-parent to adopt the biological child of the actual parent in the same sex relation and it would allow LGBTQ single parents to adopt a child. This is a heated topic that relates to the issue of societal norms and family norms in particular. Opponents of granting LGBTQ people the right to adopt claim that LGBTQ people have a higher rate of suicide, depression, drug use and promiscuity; thus, they would not be the ideal parents for children. Proponents of such a right make the case that sexual orientation has nothing to do with parenting skills and many children in need of parents and homes should not be denied a home due to the sexual orientation of the foster parent.

- The right to adoption by same-sex couples is currently certified in the following countries:
  - Andorra in 2005 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Argentina in 2010 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Belgium in 2006 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Brazil in 2010 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Canada from 1999 but also depends on the province (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Denmark in 2009 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Iceland in 2006 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Israel in 2008 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Netherlands in 2001 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Norway in 2009 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), South Africa being the only African country to do so in 2002 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Spain in 2005 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), Sweden in 2002 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16), the United Kingdom: England and Wales in 2005, Scotland in 2009 (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 16) and Uruguay in 2009 (BBC)

- Countries in which Step-Child Adoption is legal:
  - Finland in 2009 (IceNews) and Germany in 2004 (gaymarriage)

**Right to serve in the army:**

LGBTQ rights to serve in the army are considered an essential step in obtaining equal rights for all. Laws that forbid LGBTQ people from serving in the military are considered highly offensive by the LGBTQ community because they prevent citizens from expressing their patriotism due to sexual orientation. While rights might be granted for homosexuals to serve in the military, certain countries still hold restriction on openly expressing such sexual orientation during the time of service.

The following are certain laws pertaining LGBTQ military service:

- In 1993, under the auspices of then U.S. president Bill Clinton, Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy was implemented, allowing gay men and women to serve in the military as long as they did not express their homosexuality and did not engage in it on service. Under such aw, the government would no longer ask the recruits about their sexual orientation and the recruits were not supposed to mention their sexual orientation (TIME)
- On July 22nd 2011, current U.S. President Barack Obama repealed the aforementioned “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and it came into force on September 20 of the same year. This meant that homosexuals were now allowed to serve in the military without having to hide their sexual orientation and without fearing to be discharged for expressing it (Bumiller)
In 2010, the government of the Philippines ended the ban on gays serving in the military (Dexter Mejia).

In December 2009, the Supreme Court of Peru ruled that sexual orientation cannot be a requirement for entering the military service; thus, allowing gay men and women to serve in the military (Carroll).

In Russia the issue of gays serving in the military is ambiguous. The Russian policy states “that ‘well-adjusted homosexuals’ are permitted to serve in a ‘normal capacity.’ But those alleged to have “sexual identity problems” are to be drafted only during wartime” (Sennott).

The following is the list of countries that allow gays to openly serve in the military: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, Uruguay and U.S.A (Palm Center).

Rights pertaining to marriage:

List of countries that allow same-sex marriages:

- [Argentina in 2010, Belgium in 2003, Canada in 2005, Iceland in 2010, Netherlands in 2001 (first country in the world to legalize same sex marriage), Norway in 2009, Portugal in 2010, South Africa in 2006 (being the first African country to do so), Spain in 2005 and Sweden in 2009] (Bruce-Jones and Itaborahy 15)

List of Countries that allow civil unions between same-sex couples:


Special Case:

- Nepal, which legalized homosexuality in 2007, has been trying since 2008 to ratify the Supreme Court ruling of legalizing same-sex marriages. If achieved, the new Nepalese laws will grant such form of marriage and more protection for minorities (Jones)

Same-Sex marriage in the United States:

- When looking at the issue of same-sex marriage in the United States it must be highlighted that same-sex marriage is still not legal on the federal level; however there are certain states that legalized it.
- In 1996, the U.S. Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was signed into law, it meant that no state (nor the Federal Government) needed to treat a same-sex relationship between persons as a form of marriage, even if that relation was considered marriage in another state (Library of Congress).
- In 2004, Massachusetts was the first U.S. state to legalize same-sex marriages (“American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline”).
- On June 24th 2011, lawmakers voted to make same-sex marriage legal in New York, making it the biggest state to legalize same-sex marriage. The marriage bill was approved by a 33 to 29 vote in
the Senate. This proved to be a great accomplishment for the LGBTQ community in New York, especially since it is the state where the Stonewall riots were born (Barbaro and Confessore).

- Proposition 8 (called by proponents California Marriage Protection Act) was a statewide ballot proposition that made same-sex marriage illegal in California and defined marriage as the union between a man and a woman. In 2010, judge Vaughn Walker overturned Prop 8 and in 2012 a 2-1 decision by a panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals found that Prop 8 was in violation of the U.S. Constitution (Dolan).

- Overall same-sex marriage in the U.S is recognized in the following states and districts: Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, and Washington (McVeigh).

Development of LGBTQ Rights:

- In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court abolished all remaining sodomy laws after a legal debate in the Lawrence VS Texas case, as such homosexuality ceased to be an indictable offence (“American Gay Rights Movement: A Timeline”).

- In 2004, the UK Gender Recognition Act offered transgender people full legal recognition of change of gender (“Transgender History”).

- In Switzerland in 2004, the International Olympic Committee decided that transsexuals would be able to compete at the Athens Olympics if they had the appropriate surgery and were legally recognized as members of their new sex (“Transgender History”).

- The Declaration of Montreal on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Human Rights was adopted in Montreal, Quebec, Canada on July 29, 2006. It was adopted by the International Conference on LGBT Human rights and it outlined a number of rights and freedoms pertaining to LGBTQ people. The Declaration was submitted to the United Nations in order to get a universal guarantee of LGBTQ rights (“Declaration of Montreal”).


- On December 21st, 2011 the United Nations issued the first report that called on governments to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and to prosecute all crimes committed against them and to remove discriminatory laws. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights hoped to lessen homophobic and transphobic violence and crimes (UN News Centre).

Key Actors:

Individuals as Actors:

- Rodney Croome is an Australian spokesperson for the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group. He launched a difficult campaign aimed at decriminalizing homosexuality in Tasmania. He enabled the Tasmanian activists to take their case to the parliament, United Nations, the Federal Government and the High Court. He enabled Tasmania to transform from having the “worst” laws, policies and attitudes towards homosexuals to having some of the best. He also founded the Tasmanian LGBT support group, Working it Out, that offers help and support to various LGBTQ people in society (“Rodney Croome-gay activist”).
- Li Yinhe, a Chinese sociologists and sexologist, she was an activist for LGBTQ rights in the People’s Republic of China and tried to break certain sexual norms. In 2006, she submitted a proposal on same-sex marriage for a third time to the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Yinhe saw that it was her duty to create an environment that was not hostile of the LGBTQ community and that did not discriminate against them (Xinhua News Agency).

- Volker Beck a German activist and a leading advocate of LGBTQ rights. He is a member of Germany’s Parliament, the Bundestag, and is considered the father of the German Registered Partnership Act. From 1991 to 2004, he was the spokesman for the Lesbian and Gay Association in Germany (LSVD). Beck has been credited with shedding light on the issue of same-gender partnerships and putting a LGBT anti-discrimination law on the parliamentary agenda (“Volker Beck”)

- Arsham Parsi is an Iranian LGBTQ activist who is exiled in Canada. He is the founder of Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees, an advocacy group that works on behalf of Iranian LGBTs seeking protection and safe havens inside and outside of Iran. It is the only Iranian NGO in the world that works for the rights of Iranian LGBT around the world. While living in Iran, he secretly worked for civil liberties for gay and lesbian people and formed many underground organizations to connect LGBT community members together (“Arsham Parsi- Iranian Queer Activist”)

- FannyAnn Eddy was a Sierra Leonean LGBTQ and human rights activist. She founded the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association in 2002. It was a group that provided social and psychological support to LGBT underground community. She also lobbied within government authorities in order to address the health and human rights needs of LGBT people. She had the bravery to testify in front of her government’s delegation about gay and lesbian rights abuses in Sierra Leone in the United Nations’ Session on Human Rights in Geneva. She died in 2004 after being raped repeatedly and stabbed multiple times (HRW)

- American LGBT rights activists Morris Kight was the founder and co-founder of many gay and lesbian organization. His initial organization was the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in October 1969 and by the next year there would be 350 GLF organizations throughout the U.S. He also co-founded the Christopher Street West Gay Pride Parade in Los Angeles in 1970, the Gay Community Center in 1971, the Stonewall Democratic Club in 1975 and Aid for AIDS in 1984 (Johns)

Institutions and Organization as actors:

- The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), was founded in 1990. It is a leading international human rights organization that is dedicated to bettering and improving the lives of people who are subject to discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender, identity or expression. The organization tries to effectively conduct documentation of LGBT human rights violations and cooperates with human rights advocacy groups around the globe. On July 19, 2010, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) voted to accredit the IGLHRC as one of the NGO’s granted consultative status with it. Through getting such accreditation, the IGLHRC became allowed to attend U.N meetings, contribute statements and collaborate with the United Nations agencies. As such the IGLHRC would be able to advocate its causes at an international platform (IGLHRC)
- The International Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Intersex Law Association (IGLAW) is an organization that unites people around the world, who are dedicated to the principle of equality under the law for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and intersex persons (IGLLaw).

- Trikone, is a non-profit organization that offers support and social and political organization for LGBTQ people of South Asian origins. It was founded in 1986 in the San Francisco Bay Area and has as its primary goal the creation of a friendly environment in which LGBT people can meet and be comfortable about their sexuality (Trikone).

- The Jerusalem Open House (JOH) is the only organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and their supporters in Jerusalem. It provides direct services for the LGBT community in Jerusalem and works to secure LGBT rights in Israeli society as a whole. JOH has a highly diverse constituency and as such political, ethnic and religious boundaries do not prevent it from working towards the common goal of tolerance and mutual support for LGBT people (JOH).

- The Lebanese Protection for Homosexuals Association (Helem) is the first LGBT group in the Arab World. It seeks the betterment of the legal and social status of LGBT people in Lebanon. It participates with local NGOs to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS among LGBTs and to place the sexual health concerns of sexual minorities on policy makers and health practitioner’s agendas. The organization tries to counter the lack of information (especially in Arabic) and the misguided information about homosexuality by providing objective facts that are intended to instigate dialogue and debunk common stereotypes about homosexuality. Its members lobby for the abolishment of the Lebanese “534 law”, which states that “unnatural sexual intercourse” is punishable by up to one year imprisonment. It also works with human rights organizations at the national, regional and international level in order to decriminalize homosexuality and allow for more personal freedom in Lebanon. It has also established the “Homophobia Monitor” that monitors homophobia across the Arab world (Helem).

- GLAAD is an American LGBTQ institution that has worked for 25 years with news, entertainment and social media in order to bring culture-changing stories of LGBT people into the public. They see media as a tool that has a huge impact on the public; ergo, GLAAD presents images of LGBT people and their allies that promote acceptance, understanding and equality. They put a lot of efforts into media advocacy and serve as a watchdog that monitors the defamation and spread of stereotypes about LGBT people on the media (GLAAD).

- The Trevor Project is a non-profit American LGBTQ-related organization that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention service for at risk LGBTQ youth. It is a leading institution that has established a crisis hotline, “The Trevor Line”, in order to constantly help LGBTQ who are contemplating suicide (Trevor).

- Human Rights Watch protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people who are subject to discrimination and violence—and sometimes even torture or execution—because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The organization advocates for the principles outlined in the Yogyakarta Principles, a document adopted in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2006 that is concerned with the application of human rights in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity. They do extensive work in Malawi, Albania, Lithuania and Uganda (HRW).

Questions To Explore:
1- Seeing that there is a lack of LGBTQ rights in the Middle East and homosexuality is still criminalized in most Middle Eastern countries, do you see LGBTQ rights as a farfetched goal in the region?

2- Should LGBTQ rights and sexual orientation be considered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? And Should the UN have the right to criticize countries with high accounts of abuse of LGBTQ people?

3- Seeing that there is a division inside the UN between states supporting LGBTQ Rights and states against, what type of framework should the UN adopt to ensure LGBTQ rights are guaranteed without being heavily criticized and attacked by certain countries?

4- Is seeking asylum and refuge in foreign countries on the basis of persecution due to sexual orientation justified? Why or why not?

5- In certain Middle Eastern countries, LGBTQ groups cannot operate because they are not considered legal under the law. That being said, LGBT underground organizations are usually formed. Do you see such organizations as a threat to public order? If yes, specify in what ways. If no, indicate the benefit from them

6- Do you think that LGBTQ history should be taught in schools? Do you see it as a rupture of public morale or as a step that would lead to less bullying of LGBT youth and more acceptance?

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