



**FORUM:** Human Rights Council (HRC)

**QUESTION OF:** Discussing the banning of conversion therapy camps for minors

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Conversion therapy refers to a practice of attempting to change an individual's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression to align with heterosexual and cisgender norms. Conversion Therapy camps, specifically designed for minors, have gained significant attention in recent years due to their potential harm to the mental and emotional well-being of young individuals. This research report aims to explore the issue of banning conversion therapy camps for minors, discussing the reason behind such a ban and the potential impact it can have on the affected individuals.

## **BACKGROUND AND STATISTICS:**

Conversion therapy camps claim to offer a "cure" for individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ by using various psychological and religious techniques. However, numerous medical and mental health associations, including the American

Psychological Association, have widely discredited such practices, as they are based on unfounded beliefs and have no scientific basis. Conversion therapy has been proven to be ineffective, harmful, and often results in long-term psychological damage to individuals subjected to it.

A report of the Human Rights Council-appointed expert Mr. Madrigal-Borloz has shown that these therapies are practiced in at least 68 countries on every continent. For example, an estimated number of 700.000 people who identify as lesbian, gay, trans or other gender expressions have been subjected to these practices at some point in their life's in the United States. In Switzerland, according to estimates by civil society organizations, approximately 14,000 people are affected.

There are several reasons why the banning of conversion therapy camps for minors has to be discussed.

Firstly, the violation of Human Rights: Conversion therapy camps infringe upon the basic human rights of minors, including the right to personal autonomy, dignity, and freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. These camps often use coercive and abusive methods, leading to severe emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and even suicide among the participants.

Secondly, the lack of scientific validity: Research shows that sexual orientation and gender identity are innate and cannot be changed through therapy or any other means. Conversion therapy camps disregard established scientific evidence, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and stigmatizing LGBTQ+ individuals. Banning these camps would reinforce the importance of evidence-based practices and protect minors from pseudoscientific treatment.

Thirdly, the mental health Implications: Minors who go through conversion therapy camps often experience negative mental health outcomes, including increased risk of depression, anxiety disorders, self-harm, and suicidal ideation. By banning these camps, governments can prioritize the mental well-being of their young citizens and ensure they receive appropriate support and acceptance.

## **DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:**

**Conversion Therapy:** Conversion Therapy refers to any practices or treatment that aims to change an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. It often involves psychologic, religious or pseudoscientific techniques that have been widely discredited and deemed harmful.

**The Psychotherapeutic Approach used in Conversion Therapy:** Interventions based on the belief that sexual or gender diversity is a product of an abnormal upbringing or experience and variations applied include psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive and interpersonal therapies.

**Medical Approach used in Conversion Therapy:** Practices rooted on the postulation that sexual or gender diversity is an inherent biological dysfunction. They rely on pharmaceutic approaches such as medical, hormone or steroid therapy.

**Faith-Based Approach used in Conversion Therapy:** Interventions that act on the premise that there is something inherently evil in diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Victims are usually submitted to the tenets of a spiritual advisor, and subjected to programs to overcome their "condition".

### Scientific Validity:

Scientific validity refers to the reliability and credibility of a practice or treatment based on scientific evidence.

**LGBTQ+ Rights:** LGBTQ+ Rights encompass the rights and protections afforded to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, or queer, as well as those who belong to other diverse gender and sexual orientation identities.

### POTENTIAL ISSUES:

**The General Discrimination of LGBTQ+ People:** While the average level of acceptance has increased since 1980, there are still many countries that penalize same-sex intercourses and other forms of sexual and gender expression with Prison and Death.

**Anti-LGBTQ\* religious beliefs and communities:** Present day doctrines of the world's major religions differ in their attitudes towards sexual orientations and whether they fit in their beliefs.

### **MAIN COUNTRIES INVOLVED:**

**United States:** Conversion Therapy is legal in some states, although many states and several cities have banned it for minors. The legal status varies from state to state.

**Russia:** Conversion Therapy is legal in Russia, and there are no national laws against it.

United Kingdom: Conversion Therapy is not explicitly banned nationwide in the UK but the government has expressed intentions to introduce legislation to ban it.

## **SOURCES:**

Report on conversion Therapy published on United Nations Human Rights

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/report-conversion-therapy>

UN Human Rights Experts fight to eliminate conversion therapies:

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1112242>

Consequences of Effort to Change Sexual Orientations or Gender Identity of the HRC Foundation

<https://www.hrc.org/resources/the-lies-and-dangers-of-reparative-therapy>

Conversion Practices on LGBT+ People

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/752385/IPOL\\_STU\(2023\)752385\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/752385/IPOL_STU(2023)752385_EN.pdf)