

UN rights office 'deeply concerned' over arrests of LGBT people in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Indonesia

13 October 2017 – The United Nations human rights office on Friday expressed deep concern about a wave of arrests in Azerbaijan, Egypt and Indonesia of more than 180 people perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), many of whom have reportedly been mistreated by law enforcement officials.

Arresting or detaining people based on their actual or perceived [sexual orientation](#) or gender identity is by definition arbitrary and violates international law, including rights to privacy, non-discrimination and equality before the law, said Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), at a press briefing in Geneva.

In all three countries, authorities have alleged that those arrested were involved in sex work although in almost all cases the accused have denied such allegations or indicated that they were coerced into confessing involvement, he added.

Mr. Colville said that Azerbaijan, Egypt and Indonesia should take immediate action to release anyone detained on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, drop charges based on vaguely worded and discriminatory laws, and should repeal such laws in line with their legal obligations under international law and long-standing United Nations recommendations.

In Azerbaijan, more than 80 people presumed to be gay or transgender have been arrested in Baku since mid-September. In Egypt, more than 50 people have been arrested in recent weeks based on their assumed sexual orientation or gender identity. In Indonesia, more than 50 people were arrested at a sauna in Jakarta last Friday, based on their perceived sexual orientation.