



Barranquilla, 7th February 2022

To the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Greetings,

Caribe Afirmativo, a non-governmental organization based in Colombia, sends to the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity the following report on the realisation of the right of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in relation to SDG3.

The report summarizes the findings of Caribe Afirmativo, an organization that has defended the rights of LGBTI people for 13 years. The current report is based on the expertise of Caribe Afirmativo's team, whose work with LGBTIQ+ people who have been victims of the political armed conflict in Colombia, and its work with the transitional justice system, have allowed us to have a broad view of the state of human rights' of LGBTIQ+ people.

The current report includes our findings in terms of how LGBTIQ+ people who are victims of the political armed conflict have been impacted in their wellbeing, from a psychosocial, physical, socio economic and community point of view.

We hope that this reports can answer the questions posed by the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and that it can contribute to building a more robust, rigorous and inclusive report to the 50th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Report.

1. Caribe Afirmativo is a civil society organization in Colombia that has been leading joint research agendas, legal advising and promotion of the human rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex population - LGBTI. With this, we seek to influence the development of a culture of respect for sexual diversities and gender identities and the enforceability of full citizenship for this population. This agenda for the defense and vindication of the rights of LGBTI people has a greater incidence in the Colombian Caribbean, however, we have done national work previously in several departments of the country, such as Antioquia, Arauca, Cauca, Caquetá, Nariño, Norte de Santander y Valle del Cauca among others, as in other Caribbean countries such as Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

Health and LGBT people in the armed and socio-political conflict in Colombia

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Right to public health: enforceability, resistance and popular autonomy.

2. To speak of the right to health in the context of an armed and socio-political conflict with complex dynamics and causes that are so divergent, added to the structural conditions of discrimination and violence experienced by people with a non-hegemonic Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression and Sex Characteristics-SOGIESC, within and outside of this, leads us necessarily to rethink what we mean by health. This definition should not come from anywhere other than the territories, where the horrors of war are lived daily and health is disputed from the particular resistances that each people builds. The definition of health to be constructed will provide a certain framework of enforceability and justiciability of rights and, therefore, lines of action in the field of public policies. In this way, defining what is health in these contexts goes beyond a mere play on words and goes beyond the understanding of its definition as a political tool that opens popular and institutional horizons for the dignification of the lives of Lesbian people, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT).

3. The World Health Organization has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"¹. Far from this limited and tautological² definition that focuses on health as an unreachable utopian state, here we propose to approach health and the right to it from a Public Health perspective, which allows to understand health not as a state, but as a process of health-disease-care (PSEA³ for spanish acronym), allowing us to understand how this process is carried out and what differentiated actions and policies are needed to shape more solid community and institutional platforms with strengthened foundations. These elements refer to the social determinants of health that lead us to think about the structural, historical, political and socio-economic conditions that frame the PSEA processes, taking into account an intersectional approach, intercultural and evidence power relations; not only to understand their relationship to health but to signify the diverse territorial scenarios of LGBT resistance as exercises of sovereignty and popular self-management of health.

¹ Moreno, G (2008). La definición de salud de la Organización Mundial de la Salud y la interdisciplinariedad. Sapiens. University journal of research, Year 9, No. 1.

² Carnut, L (2019). Salud es política: Pensamiento social de Floreal Antonio Ferrara y sus contribuciones para pensar “lo político” en la salud. Revista Gerencia y Políticas de Salud, vol. 18, No. 36

³ Liborio, M (2013). ¿Por qué hablar de Salud Colectiva? Rev. Méd. Rosario 79: 136-141.

4. Thus, the social determinants of health comprise three major components: "the structuring logic of capital accumulation, with its cultural political conditions; the particular dominance of modes of living with their group-structured patterns of exposure and vulnerability (gender-ethnic-class power relations); and the unique dominance of lifestyles, and the personal free will that people live with their phenotypic and genotypic conditions".⁴ Along these lines, to talk about health and the right to health is to talk about politics, about resistance, about the right to a decent life and about the social context. When we talk about the social context, we do not only refer to descriptive work, but to a call to understand the systems of oppression that lead to LGBT people experiencing structural, systematic and institutional violence against them, but also to plant routes of transformation of their social realities. Public health, therefore, is necessarily built in a participatory, popular and emancipatory way. Health is a political exercise that, as a right, must be appropriated by the communities for their self-management and sovereignty, increasingly withdrawing it from the hegemonic centers that have historically had power over it, administering it in a mercantile and exclusive manner.

5. Since the arrival of the current Colombian government, the peace accords have been undermined through political negligence, impunity, the militarization of life and lack of funding. This has had dire consequences in terms of reparation and guarantees of non-repetition for LGBT victims, to whom are added the institutional prejudices, and of certain dominant political sectors in which it is considered debatable whether an LGBT person is a subject of rights; in ignorance of what is reasonable and what is dictated by the Political Constitution of Colombia. This contextual-political framework aggravates the historical-structural conditions of marginalization, inequality, poverty and violence, leaving LGBT people in complete vulnerability and lack of protection that has direct impacts on their mental and physical health, and on accessibility to this right; as will be described below in the impacts that the armed conflict has left on people with a diverse SOGIESC. Notwithstanding, LGBT communities and people have built resistance exercises that seek political advocacy, popular organization, and the transformation of imposed systems and realities of oppression. This emphasis on advocacy and empowerment is a participatory, political and autonomous health exercise.

Differentiated impacts on LGBT people who have been victims of the armed and socio-political conflict in Colombia.

⁴ Liborio, M (2013). ¿Por qué hablar de Salud Colectiva? Rev. Méd. Rosario 79: 136-141.

6. The references to testimonies and analyses of this text arise from previous investigations that we have conducted and from reports that have been submitted to the ‘Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz’ and the ‘Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición’, which gather accounts of people with a diverse SOGIESC who have been victims of the armed and socio-political conflict in Colombia.
7. The impacts of armed conflict are shaped from a complexity that harbours different forms and magnitudes. There are tangible and intangible damages, quantifiable and unquantifiable, and even irreparable, that could even be all. A characterization of the damage presented here gives an account of psychosocial, physical, socioeconomic and collective impacts from which different symptoms and different categories emerge. The relationship and interaction between the different types of impacts are undeniable, as are the tenuous lines of separation between them⁵. In order to analyze the damage suffered by LGBT persons in the context of the armed and social conflict, it was necessary to address the victimizing events, the armed actors, the contexts, experiences and characteristics of the victims, as well as their coping capacities and support networks.
8. Freedom of expression, the full development of identity, the realization of the life project, participation in decision-making spaces, the appropriation of public and private spaces, and the care of physical and mental health, are aspects that have been denied and taken from people with not hegemonic SOGIESC in the context of the Colombian armed and social conflict, as part of the armed groups' strategies to gain territorial control. In return, they have had to face setbacks or cancellations in processes of self-recognition, elimination of the desired identity, denial of the various ways of loving and relating, discrimination, exclusion, difficulties in accessing health services, housing, food, education, decent work, among others.
9. Besides, bearing in mind that many of the violence occurred from an early age, when the victims were children and young persons, it is worth noting that the traces of war are more destructive in those who are most vulnerable. Since they were children and young persons, the victims have had permanent marks on their bodies as a result of the raw and dramatic experiences that the armed conflict forced them to undergo. This damaged the foundations of trust and protection needed for personal and social development, affecting the ability to live together fully. Their childhood experiences

⁵ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press.

were taken away and they were forced to bear adult responsibilities.⁶ In this sense, the reading of the impacts from an age-based approach, recognizing particularities due to the age of the victims, allowed to consider the damages in crucial stages of vital development. We will list the impacts encountered and expand on some.

Psychosocial impacts

- Post-traumatic stress disorder.
 - Depression.
 - Anguish, anxiety and fear.
 - Suicidal conduct.
 - Use of psychoactive substances.
 - Distrust and hopelessness.
 - Isolation and loneliness.
 - Uprooting.
 - Breaking of ties.
 - Cancellation or loss of one's identity.
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- Breakdown of life projects.
 - Cracks in duels.
 - Loss and absence of support networks.

10. This symptomatology⁷ is given in response to the damage and represents a struggle to survive amid the need to know why the events occurred and why these people specifically in certain contexts.⁸ The senseless, the lack of answers and the absence of truth make use of the symptoms as a way, as an attempt to find meaning,

⁶ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press.

⁷ We name symptoms to expand the explanations, without pathogenic intentions

⁸ Lira, E. (2010). Trauma, duelo, reparación y memoria. *Revista de estudios sociales* (36), 14-28.

explanation, control and survival.⁹ However, in many cases, the diagnoses are insufficient to account for the alterations in the victims due to their magnitude and complexity. Traumatic experiences often destroy systems that give people "a sense of control, connection and meaning".¹⁰ These are events that mark personal and collective histories, "that abruptly break the course of life because they take away the certainty of inhabiting a known world, and put in crisis beliefs, relationships and, in general, all aspects that are a source of meaning and support for existence".¹¹

11. Fear and anguish are the most repeated impacts on victims in all territories, albeit in varying proportions and in different ways. It is even something that goes beyond the intrapersonal aspect and is also transferred to other people. The anguish and fear no longer arise only with respect to one's own life, but extend to other lives and to other areas, going beyond the limits of personal relationships to reach the interactions between citizenship and the State. The fear and silence imposed have been the main obstacles, along with the state's revictimization, to denounce the violence experienced.

12. Distress and fear, as well as post-traumatic stress, complicated grief and/or depression, can lead to isolation and loneliness. When LGBT people do not have a protective environment and their lives are always at imminent risk, isolation becomes an attempt at refuge. However, contrary to the tranquility that would be expected, the isolation is presented as a reinforcement of the symptoms that pushed the confinement, and the distancing from other people and other customs. Locking up, hiding, fleeing or marginalizing oneself, due to violence, generates cracks in interpersonal relationships that are often irretrievable. Here, the rupture of the social fabric as the purpose of the war, is achieved. And this rupture is also replicated in the links with the territory. Expelling someone from the place where they have grown up, cutting ties with that space, implies a violation of their human rights because people are forced to leave their homes. This uprooting is particularly present in LGBT peasant, indigenous or Afro-descendant people because of the relationships they build with their territories. The right to life, liberty, security, non-discrimination, freedom

⁹ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press.

¹⁰ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press. (p.267).

¹¹ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press. (p.267).

from torture or degrading treatment, the right to privacy and family life are threatened and violated.¹² Thus, loneliness appears in the face of unmet social needs.

13. The places of enunciation have also been taken from them. People with a diverse SOGIESC have been stripped of their sovereignty and have had to face the imposition of lives of others, as well as obstacles to the autonomous construction of their identity and sexuality, that prevent them from narrating themselves and the world from their own feelings and purposes. The loss of the autonomous construction of bodies, the concealment and self-control of the multiple expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBT victims, has been a way of denying, erasing, blurring or losing the Self, to disconnect with their bodies as a defense mechanism, way of coping and method of survival. For victims, adherence to hegemonic stereotypes and gender roles has involved the acquisition of behaviours demanded by armed actors and communities, such as regression in transit processes, and "seriousness" as a characteristic worthy of respect, assuming that authentic and genuine ways of being and inhabiting the world of LGBT people must be punished and annulled.
14. The threat and fragmentation of one's identity is a consequence of the political process in the country and must be understood in relation to the situation of each individual.¹³ When the identity construction is outside the moral frameworks established by society and armed groups, it becomes visible among those deemed acceptable. Bearing in mind that any visibility entails a signal, it cannot be overlooked that in the face of the visibility of LGBT people, the response has been more atrocious by armed actors, being reflected in the persecution exercised against persons with a not hegemonic SOGIESC.
15. The damage also runs through the plans, the dreams, the purposes with which the victims were building their lives before suffering violence in the context of the armed conflict, and which collapsed in the face of the impossibility of keeping them safe. The stories give an account of a before and after the war, which reveals the rupture in their life projects as one of the most frequent affectations in the victims' narratives. This has invaded the areas of work, school or academic, economic and business, as well as sentimental relationships by not being able to build their projects with other

¹² Cançado, A.A. (2003). *El desarraigo como problema humanitario y de derechos humanos frente a la conciencia jurídica universal. Derecho internacional humanitario y temas de áreas vinculadas*, Lecciones y Ensayos N. 78, Gabriel Pablo Valladares (compiler), Lexis Nexis Abeledo Perrot.

¹³ Lira, E. (2010). Trauma, duelo, reparación y memoria. *Revista de estudios sociales* (36), 14-28

people, as they had wished. With regard to LGBT people, this impact is differentiated by the context of denial of rights they face, due to all the obstacles they face in accessing education and decent work. "The rupture in life projects deepens exclusion and discrimination on account of their diverse SOGIESC. In addition, it exacerbates conditions of marginalization and often condemns them to the practice of sex work, to street situations, to informality, to school dropout, among others".¹⁴ The inroads into the victims' plans affected different areas of their lives, including political and community leadership projects, while impacting the social processes and citizen participation of LGBT people.

16. Victims live loss after loss without the possibility of healing on many occasions, because there is no time between the violence to stop to take care of themselves, or there is no external support to elaborate the mourning. Thus appears the figure of the "unresolved duel" which can be understood as "the suspended duel, in those cases in which the conditions for initiating the work of mourning have not even been created".¹⁵ The silence imposed by armed actors and society, together with the fear of suffering other forms of violence, makes the process more difficult, preventing words from being a vehicle of healing, that the body names the violence that went through and marked it. That other people know about the pain, that they understand, that they feel empathy, that they accompany, and that they are emotional containment for the support of the victims.

Physical impacts.

- Injuries and sequelae resulting from physical violence against the bodies.
 - Physical damage resulting from sexual violence.
 - Other physical impairments.

17. Physical damage is inseparable from psychosocial impacts, and even from socioeconomic ones in cases where resources are insufficient to care for health. The violence against the bodies of LGBT people was carried out in multiple ways, thus

¹⁴ Caribe Afirmativo (2019). *Nosotras Resistimos. Informe sobre violencias contra personas LGBT en el marco del conflicto armado en Colombia*. (p. 149). Submitted to the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición on 19th september 2019.

¹⁵ Diéguez, I. (2019). *Cuerpos residuales, prácticas de duelo. Essay about the work of Erika Diettes*.

opening the field of the impacts suffered. Wounds were generated from which scars have been left as indelible traces that remind them of the passage through their bodies of traumatic events. Even, due to the breakdown in their life projects and the changes in their habits and customs, they had to go hungry for not having anything to eat and endure low temperatures for not having housing after the forced displacement.

18. Armed actors used different forms of power to subdue victims of sexual violence, such as coercion, threats, physical violence and torture. Because they were prejudicial violence against people with not hegemonic SOGIESC, the damage was also directed to sexualized areas of the body, which deepens the effects on identity constructions and sexual autonomy from psychosocial and physical perspectives.¹⁶ With this and starting from the deep connection between identity and body, the physical injuries unquestionably hurt the spirit as well. The humiliation to which the victims are subjected generates negative feelings that, together with the pains and body marks, are inscribed in the subjectivity and in the construction of gender identity. In this sense, dignity is outraged and changes the trust, security, self-esteem and perceptions of the victims about themselves and the environment.¹⁷

19. Among other physical affectations, it was found that the psychological damage, as a result of the victimizing events, caused the symptoms of certain pre-existing diseases, such as diabetes or abnormalities of glucose in the blood, worsen and lead to a detriment to their health. In fact, the stories showed the decrease in the degree of importance that LGBT victims can give to victimizing events, and the difficulties to preserve self-care actions, which are related to their life stories, social violence due to their SOGIESC and the naturalization thereof, and psychosocial impacts such as distrust in the judicial system, and low self-esteem (linked to the difficulty in accessing care and protection tools).

Socioeconomic impacts.

- Effects on the right to work.

¹⁶ Caribe Afirmativo (2019). *Nosotras Resistimos. Informe sobre violencias contra personas LGBT en el marco del conflicto armado en Colombia*. Submitted to the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición on 19th september 2019.

¹⁷ Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica. (2013). *¡BASTA YA! Colombia: Memorias de guerra dignidad*. Bogotá: National Press.

- Impacts on the right to housing.
- Impact on the right to education.
- Impact on the right to comprehensive health.

20. Taking into account that there is no health without social justice, an analysis is also made of the fundamental rights that have been denied to people with a diverse SOGIESC. In this sense, historically, LGBT people have been marginalized and thus denied basic rights to support dignified lives. The armed conflict has highlighted the deepening of this exclusion in access to work, housing, education and health. The realities of LGBT people in the country have shown the complexity involved in carrying out work activities in contexts of exclusion and discrimination, since generally, because of stereotypes related to SOGIESC, they are assigned to hairdressing, care, street sales and sex work. Added to this is that the informal economy forces people to be in public spaces, places where LGBT victims can be highly vulnerable.

21. Due to the shrinking labor field, when LGBT people "are able to advance their life projects through activities such as business opening or the performance of some work that provide them with economic support, for them it is particularly important to preserve them. Losing skills or abilities to work, exposes them to not finding other jobs where they can develop freely and support themselves economically".¹⁸ For the victims, the abandonment of the work with which they supported themselves economically also represented a break with their rural customs and family traditions. Some victims had to work from a very early age to survive. In addition, the absence of work and monetary gains that impeded autonomy in access to housing and food pushed them to seek help from others, which often generated feelings of low self-esteem.

22. The loss of housing also meant that victims faced new places that forced them to take on challenges and exclusions to which they were not exposed in their former homes. On other occasions, violence perpetrated by families occurred at the same time as that of armed groups. Thus, the loss or denial of a physical shelter, together with the absence of support networks, plunges the person into greater suffering. As a result of persecution, threats, humiliation, sexual violence, homicides and femicides, physical

¹⁸ Caribe Afirmativo (2019). *Nosotras Resistimos. Informe sobre violencias contra personas LGBT en el marco del conflicto armado en Colombia*. Submitted to the Comisión para el Esclarecimiento de la Verdad, la Convivencia y la No Repetición on 19th september 2019.

injuries, attempts at recruitment, among others, the victims were forced to move forcibly, leaving their homes. The dispossession of their homes, far from being a free and voluntary decision, was a manifestation of the struggle to overcome the victimizing context.

23. Regarding the school or academic environment, this has been a context of discrimination for LGBT people. However, it can also be a space in which learning is developed, knowledge acquired and interaction with peers or others in the vicinity can be particularly beneficial to a historically marginalized population. But before the impossibility of uniting the desire with the reality, there appear feelings of frustration, sadness and anger, linked to the rupture of the life projects. Denial of access to education can lead to greater difficulties in acquiring desired and dignified employment. The interruption or abandonment of studies is a frequent effect on the victims. The unfinished yearning for a formation that could not take place is also part of the breakdowns in the life purposes of the victims, which have not yet been consolidated.
24. Even in contexts that have not been read since the armed conflict, people with diverse IGSOs have been denied the right to comprehensive health in multiple ways. In the context of the conflict, the denial of access to health care is closely linked to psychosocial, physical, socio-economic and collective impacts, as well as to the denial of access to justice, from the point of view of reparation. The timely care of victims would allow a contribution to their physical, psychological and social well-being, while the abandonment of the State leads to an increase in alterations and suffering. The health impacts also occurred in family members of the interviewees. All the victimizing events caused, in different ways and in different intensity, impacts on the health of the victims and some people close to them. The bodies of the victims speak directly or indirectly of damage to their mental and physical health. In this sense, poor overall health is also related to the possibilities that were taken from the victims to choose the ways in which they build their lives, as well as the places and people who accompany the process in which they could find well-being.
25. It is important to bear in mind that the socio-economic impacts created the conditions for some victims to live in poverty, which in turn deepened the exclusion, marginalization and violence against them, at the time when it increased damage or introduced others. The rates of poverty, homelessness and food insecurity are higher among LGBT people,¹⁹ and these are increasing in contexts of armed conflict,

¹⁹ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. (2015). Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons in the Americas. (36).



affecting personal and family lives, as well as social aspects related to the recognition and attention to the violation of rights, which prevent the construction of dignified lives for people with a diverse SOGIESC.

Collective and community impacts

- Denial of citizen participation.
 - Denial of public space.
 - Denial of social and legal complaint.
 - Invisibilization.
 - Naturalization and justification of violence.
 - State re-victimization as a deepening of the damage.
26. The damages were not only presented individually on the bodies of LGBT people but also on the communities. The community meeting was considered a threat to the armed groups, since it would prevent the purpose of social rupture they wanted to achieve. Preventing people with a diverse SOGIESC from forming organizations and building forms of emancipation also became a direct or indirect target of the perpetrators, unfortunately achieved through threats and the imposition of collective fear. In turn, humanity was also denied to LGBT people from the outburst of interdependence and interpersonal ties, as well as from the dispossession of authentic social relations. The victims could not be loyal to themselves, as they could not behave on the basis of their wishes but from moral frameworks defined by society and armed actors.
27. Some people also preferred to go unnoticed in social struggles because of the violence and the damage that participation could cause them. However, for whom leadership was a pillar in their lives, the risks have been imminent. The fearful, limited or non-existent participation of victims with not hegemonic SOGIESC in decision-making spaces resulted from the victimizing acts against them, as well as from the lack of guarantees of security and protection on the part of the State. The damage to collective work has such a strong and profound symbolic impact that it can end up destroying

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the community and cracking down on the collective rights associated with security, a healthy environment and organizational autonomy.²⁰

28. In this regard, both personal and collective identities were pierced by the damage caused by armed actors against LGBT people. The victims' accounts exposed the shattered relationship they were forced to have with the territories they inhabited and the spaces that made them up. Tranquility did not usually characterize private places or public places, which prevented them from circulating, mobilizing, appropriating, recognizing and transforming them.
29. There was also a social pact of silence from which the communities did not talk about the violent events, which contributed to make invisible the experiences of people with diverse SOGIEC, and to give continuity to the circularity of violence perpetrated against them. Many of the victims could not tell what happened to their loved ones. The threats against them mingled with fear, preventing the horror scarred on their bodies from becoming a word. Likewise, the victimizing acts were never reported in state entities, or were only known institutionally after the time elapsed. Even, on some occasions, the victims made statements without mentioning that they were LGBT people.
30. The denial and dispossession of all the above led to invisibility, social invalidation, the symbolic and real elimination of the SOGIESC in the territories. The victims were often pushed by armed actors, communities and institutions, to be invisible, to live in hiding, to hide their own existence and that of other LGBT people, as a method of protection and survival, because visibility was always a risk. Public naming was a death sentence. The invisibility, as a form of violence, represented limitations in the development of sexuality, the construction of identity and the full behavior of LGBT people, and even of all those who inhabited the territory, because contempt and the elimination of difference and diversity hampered self-recognition and recognition of other people towards the victims.
31. Alongside the impacts described above, there is the naturalization and justification of violence by society, including people with diverse SOGIESC, which impairs personal and public health. Added to this are the obstacles to access to justice, linked to the shortcomings of the State in reparation plans. Officials' attention to victims has been described by them as disappointing and prejudiced towards LGBT people, preventing recognition of their experiences, and thus increasing suffering, distrust and

²⁰ UARIV. (2016). Resolution No. 2016-19777 of 25 January 2016.

hopelessness. The absence of the State, the repetition of the violence, and the lack of guarantees for the victims also prevented them from seeking help and, therefore, their rights from being restored.

32. The impacts described show that LGBT people position themselves as victims when their autonomy has been taken from them. Recovering it would allow them to resignify or move from that place, from a process of reparation that returns sovereignty over their bodies, the care of their health and the opportunity for social participation (Lira, 2010). In this sense, the word, listening and validation become vehicles of healing, allowing the recognition of losses and death in the interior (Lira, 2010), which arise from experiences in the context of an armed and social conflict. Reparation is also an enabler of trust, of grieving and, therefore, of the recovery of comprehensive personal and public health.

Other reflections

33. Humans are social and interdependent beings. The chances of coping with impacts in a timely manner are reduced when a protective and safe environment is not in place, and there are no people around to provide the necessary support. Victims may also lose their support networks, and they may even blame them for the problems and needs that go through them (when they are singled out for their ways of being or their diverse SOGIESC as the reason for misfortunes, for example). In contexts of exclusion and discrimination, coupled with armed and social conflict, the presence of persons or communities that support and shore up when victims are adrift becomes more necessary. However, sometimes other people do not have the tools to accompany victims because the context has not provided them with the knowledge or sensitivity to do so.
34. As a counter-response, in the midst of war and a state that seizes rights, LGBT people have also built personal and collective resistance exercises, which enable them to protect themselves, take care of themselves and re-shape their life stories amid imminent hostility. Among the serious violations of human rights and the right to health, when State re-victimization, lack of psychosocial care, lack of guarantees of non-repetition and comprehensive reparation are evident, resistance is also revealed, self-care and collective organization that LGBT people have built in their territories, accounting for the capacity to build health on a popular and autonomous basis, recognizing the individual and collective resources that communities have to self-manage their mental health and transform the realities they inhabit.



35. Consequently, the right to health in the current context of armed and social conflict does not only include the expansion of the framework of public health, psychosocial care and comprehensive reparation requirements for victims; but also the right to health is to strengthen the organizational and resistance processes in which people with a diverse SOGIESC have been working. Sovereignty in health has been a seed of dignity that must be safeguarded and not criminalized or militarized. In response to the state's lack of protection, building Public Health through resistance and ethnic or community knowledge, has been a way to exercise a denied right, but of which one is aware that it belongs to them: health.

Wilson de Jesús Castañeda Castro
Executive Director
Caribe Afirmativo