



## UN LGBTI Core Group event for IDAHOBIT 2026

### Rooted in Rights:

### LGBTIQ Communities and the Future of Democracy

**Thursday, 14 May 2026, 10 to 11.00 AM**

**Conference Room 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

RSVP [HERE](#) | Also to be webcast on UNWebTV

**Invitees:** Core Group Members · UN GLOBE · Civil Society in NYC · In-person Special Event  
Tickets available for non-UNHQ pass holders

### Background

This year's IDAHOBIT theme — "At the Heart of Democracy" — arrives at a critical inflection point for democratic governance worldwide. In 2024, more than 1.5 billion people voted across 89 countries in a "super election year."<sup>1</sup> Yet electoral and political spaces proved systematically hostile to LGBTIQ people — not as a marginal trend, but as a deliberate strategy. In at least 85 percent of countries studied, candidates deployed anti-LGBTIQ rhetoric in their campaigns.<sup>2</sup> Attacks on so-called "gender ideology," accusations of foreign influence, and deliberate scapegoating have become signature tools of anti-democratic movements worldwide.

The implications stretch well beyond LGBTIQ communities. When exclusionary politics take root against one group, the erosion of rights rarely stops there. LGBTIQ people have long served as early sentinels of democratic backsliding — raising alarms about shrinking civic space and the weaponization of law. From Bangladesh to Türkiye to Georgia, when democratic institutions came under threat, LGBTIQ communities mobilized for the democratic values that protect everyone.

LGBTIQ movements have also long embodied the principles democracy aspires to: horizontal organizing, inclusive decision-making, coalition-building, and centering marginalized voices. No democracy can be complete while a significant portion of its citizens is excluded from full participation. Meaningful inclusion of LGBTIQ people — as voters, candidates, and policymakers — is not a peripheral demand, but a measure of democracy's integrity.



<sup>1</sup> Outright International, The "Super Election Year" and Its Impact on LGBTIQ Persons (2025):

[https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/Outright%20International\\_SR%20FoAA%20Input%20on%20Elections.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/Outright%20International_SR%20FoAA%20Input%20on%20Elections.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Outright International, Queering Democracy: The Global Elections in 2024 and How LGBTIQ People Fared (2025):

[https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/092425\\_Outright\\_Elections2024\\_online.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2025-09/092425_Outright_Elections2024_online.pdf)

## Objectives

- **Affirm:** that LGBTIQ inclusion is inseparable from democratic integrity — that genuine democracy cannot exist where any segment of society is systematically excluded, criminalized, or silenced.
- **Illuminate:** the role of LGBTIQ communities as democratic actors — not only as people targeted by anti-democratic forces, but as communities that model and practice democratic principles in their own organizing and movements.
- **Draw attention to:** the early-warning function that LGBTIQ organizations have played in identifying and responding to authoritarian trends, demonstrating how the targeting of LGBTIQ people often presages wider democratic erosion.
- **Advance concrete commitments:** from member states and UN entities on meaningful LGBTIQ participation in electoral, legislative, and civic processes.

## Run of Show

**Moderator:** Maria Sjödin, Executive Director, Outright International

Opening Segment	
10:00–10:02	<p><b>Maria Sjödin, Executive Director, Outright International</b>            Welcomes participants, frames the IDAHOBIT 2026 theme "At the Heart of Democracy," and introduces the central question: what does meaningful LGBTIQ inclusion in democratic life actually require?</p>
Welcome Remarks	



10:02–10:05	<p><b>UN LGBTI Core Group Co-Chair</b> — Permanent Representative of Chile  <i>Opening statement on behalf of the Core Group, situating the event within the LGBTI Core Group's advocacy agenda and the significance of IDAHOBIT 2026.</i></p>
<p><b>Keynote Remarks by Video</b></p>	
10:05–10:10	<p><b>Erika Hilton, Member of the Chamber of Deputies of Brazil</b> (TBC)  <i>Pre-recorded keynote from the first trans woman National Assembly member and current chair of the Brazilian Commission on the Defense of Women's Rights, speaking to the stakes of LGBTIQ political representation and democratic participation at this moment.</i></p>
<p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p>	
10:10–10:15	<p><b>Representative, United Nations Development Programme</b> (TBC)  <i>The institutional dimension: what meaningful LGBTIQ inclusion in democratic and governance processes requires from international institutions, and how development frameworks can support it.</i></p>
10:15–10:22	<p><b>Ari Shaw, Senior Fellow and Director of International Programs, Williams Institute, UCLA</b></p> <p><i>Suggested question: "Your research shows that anti-LGBTI rhetoric and policies are not just symptoms of democratic backsliding — they are predictors of it. Can you walk us through what the evidence shows, and what it tells us about why LGBTIQ communities so consistently find themselves at the frontline of democratic erosion?"</i></p>
10:22–10:30	<p><b>Tamás Dombas, Executive Director, Háttér Society, Hungary</b></p> <p><i>Suggested question: "Háttér Society sustained its work through 16 years of one of Europe's most systematic experiments in democratic backsliding. Just weeks after a historic election ended the Orbán era, what does your experience tell us about the role of LGBTIQ civil society as both an early warning system and an active</i></p>



	<p><i>defender of democracy — and what does genuine democratic restoration actually require for LGBTIQ communities and Hungary more broadly?"</i></p>
<p><b>Open Dialogue</b></p>	
<p>10:30–10:50</p>	<p><b>Moderator facilitates an interactive dialogue</b> with Member States, UN entities, and civil society participants.</p> <p><i>Up to six 3-minute statements or questions at PR/DPR level. Three slots reserved for Africa/GRULAC/Asia Core Group members; up to three from WEOG/EEG. Member States wishing to intervene should notify Co-Chairs as soon as possible — requests accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.</i></p>
<p><b>Closing Segment</b></p>	
<p>10:50–10:55</p>	<p><b>UN LGBTI Core Group Co-Chair</b> — Permanent Representative of Norway Delivers closing remarks summarizing key takeaways and articulating a call to action for member states and the international community.</p>
<p>10:55–11:00</p>	<p><b>Close by Chair</b> — <b>Maria Sjödin, Executive Director, Outright International</b></p>