

March 5, 2026

Council for Global Equality Statement on the U.S. Conflict in Iran

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Council for Global Equality (CGE) denounces the ongoing military operations conducted by the United States, in conjunction with Israel, toward Iran. These actions lack clear justification, a clear timeline, and clearly violate the United States Constitution, as only Congress has the power to declare war. As CGE stated in [our response](#) to the United States' military action in Venezuela in January, this effort is yet another example of the Trump administration's dangerous regression to unchecked and escalating interventionism and threats to international human rights standards.

We are deeply concerned about the rising civilian toll of these operations and attacks on civilian infrastructure. There are [numerous reports](#) of US and Israeli airstrikes that have hit public facilities in Iran, including a missile strike on a girls' school which killed more than 150 students and teachers. Some organizations are estimating at least 1,000 civilian casualties within the first few days of this crisis. This is on top of the estimated 30,000 civilian deaths by Iranian forces in the last months of civilian peaceful protest against the regime. Iran's counterstrikes on U.S. military bases in the region are also of great concern, as civilians are forced to flee their homes for safety.

These actions constitute serious violations of international law and the Geneva Conventions. As a U.S.-based advocacy organization that works closely with civil society across the Middle East and world to promote the human rights and dignity of LGBTQI+ persons, we recognize that this U.S. action endangers the safety and security of everyone in the region, including those in the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ organizations in the region have already been forced to transition their services to humanitarian relief and emergency response in previous years, and these strikes will only exacerbate this challenge.

The Iranian people and their neighbors have long faced violence, persecution, and devastating economic consequences — at the hands of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's ruthless rule and, for decades, through the interference and sanctions policies of external powers including the United States. The regime's human rights record is severe. It has brutalized ethnic and religious

minorities, suppressed dissent, and systematically persecuted LGBTQI+ people. Too often, we have learned of the regime's brutal repression of LGBTQI+ people, as Iran criminalizes same-sex sexual relations with the maximum penalty of death and has carried out executions of gay men as recently as 2022. The [UN's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran reported in March 2025](#) that LGBTQI+ people are subjected to “dehumanising insults, threats and treatment amounting to torture” and that these violations may constitute gender persecution.” Alongside these abuses and other attacks on minorities, Iranian human rights defenders have long called for international attention to the multitude of human rights violations carried out by the regime.

We acknowledge these abuses in solidarity with the Iranian people, and not to join those who use human rights as cover for military intervention. Pinkwashing, the cynical deployment of LGBTQI+ human rights to legitimize war and occupation, has no place in our advocacy. We refuse to let this recognition be conscripted into that logic. While CGE does not mourn the end of Khamenei's deadly rule, we fear for the safety and security of all Iranians and others in the region in the midst of ongoing strikes and further threats of escalation. We are mindful that the broader regional consequences of this moment — political, religious, and cultural — will fall hardest on the most vulnerable, including LGBTQI+ people. Iranians deserve a future free from violence and one that ensures respect for the human rights of all. A future Iran must be shaped by Iranians.

However, the fact remains that the Trump Administration must - according to our Constitution - convince both the American people and Congress that there is a legitimate reason for war. Unfortunately, since September 11, 2001, Congress's ability to provide checks on Executive war powers has deeply eroded under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

It is Congress's solemn duty to debate and authorize U.S. military interventions. We urge the United States Congress to immediately pass a War Powers Resolution that reins in this administration's warrantless and unchecked military efforts in Iran, Venezuela, and elsewhere. Furthermore, we urge the international community to hold the U.S. government and its Israeli partners accountable for their actions during this conflict. The protection of civilians and commitments to international human rights standards cannot be undermined.

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