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***ICELAND***

***Statement by Mr. Finnur Birgisson***



***UPR 24. Session – January 2016***

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Iceland warmly welcomes the delegation of Latvia and thanks them for their comprehensive report. We applaud Latvia’s achievements made on human rights since their first UPR review.

My Delegation takes positive note of Latvia’s ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and the abolition of the death penalty from the Criminal Law. However, we believe that further steps should be taken to evaluate the 2014 amendment to the Criminal Code regarding hate crimes.

Iceland encourages Latvia to take additional measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination. In that respect, we note with concern that Latvian legislation leaves individuals of certain groups unprotected from hate crimes and discrimination, such as the LGBTI community.

Iceland makes the following recommendations to the Government of Latvia:

1. To define incitement to violence on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity as a criminal offence
2. Improve the relevant legislation to further combat racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred in order to effectively protect the rights of ethnic minorities.