



I G L H R C

# OUTSPOKEN

SPRING/SUMMER 2010

INTERNATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE. EVERYWHERE.

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## SENEGAL: ADDRESSING ESCALATING ARRESTS & VIOLENCE

In Senegal, same-sex activity has, since 1965, been punishable by up to five years imprisonment. Enforcement of this law has escalated in the past two years, with the arrests of more than 50 people and trials of at least 16 individuals suspected of same-sex activity or being part of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans community. Simultaneously, state-sanctioned violence and anti-gay rhetoric in the media against individuals believed to be LGBT has increased.

In February 2008, publication of photographs from a same-sex commitment ceremony set off a wave of arrests and an anti-gay media frenzy and sent dozens of gay men into exile. In December 2008, police raided an HIV training hosted by a local AIDS Service organization – AIDES-Senegal. Those present were arrested, beaten, held in appalling conditions and sentenced to eight years in prison before successfully appealing their convictions. Arrests continued with the apprehension of four men in Darou Mousty in June 2009. In November, Safinatoul Amal, an organization charged with the spiritual protection of the town of Touba, reportedly raided a man's home and arrested him for "incitement to debauchery" and forming a "network of homosexuals." On December 24, twenty-four men were arrested at a private home in Saly Niakh Niakh and briefly held before being released. The arrests were accompanied by sensational media coverage of LGBT issues, virulently homophobic statements from religious and political leaders, and violence – including physical attacks and the exhumation and desecration of the bodies of deceased people suspected of being LGBT.

IGLHRC has responded to these events and worked closely with emerging LGBT communities in Senegal to protect the human rights of LGBT people and their defenders. Along with regular updates and action

alerts designed to bring pressure to bear on Senegal's government, we also provided material support for those fleeing from danger, visited those in prison and provided food and medical supplies, and documented the patterns of abuses faced by LGBT people in Senegal.

Of particular significance is our recent collaboration with None on Record: Stories of Queer Africa, that resulted in four audio profiles of LGBT Senegalese, who recount their experiences with hostility and homophobia in the country.

LISTEN TO AUDIO PROFILES @ <http://tinyurl.com/senegalaudio>

Photos by Olive Demetrius.

## INFLUENCING REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL POLICY

The development of regional and international law and policy can profoundly affect peoples' lives. In the last year IGLHRC has continued its work with intergovernmental bodies – particularly the African Union (AU) and the Organization of American States (OAS) – to pressure governments to protect, defend and promote the rights of LGBT people.

IGLHRC's participation at the OAS was enhanced in 2009 when we were granted status as a civil society organization, enabling us to attend and make presentations at meetings and provide information and advice on OAS documents. LGBT civil society has had impact at the OAS. In June 2009, a 24 organization coalition (including IGLHRC) from 17 countries successfully lobbied the OAS General Assembly

to adopt a resolution condemning human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity and encouraging states to take action.

In November 2009, IGLHRC worked as part of a multi-region LGBT coalition at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, resulting in the first inclusion of our issues in the agenda of the Commonwealth People's Forum. Broad civil society support was also evident in the civil society outcome document's reference to LGBT rights in Uganda.

In Africa, IGLHRC worked with partners to influence statements and policy at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at the AU. We brought activists from across the continent to Commission sessions, met with

Commissioners, and submitted requests for action on Cameroon, Nigeria and Uganda. This work has resulted in a resolution highlighting the need to protect LGBT human rights defenders.

In the past year, IGLHRC sponsored the attendance of LGBT activists from Azerbaijan, Japan, Switzerland, and Panama at the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. We challenged the UN to stand more firmly for LGBT rights through events at the 54th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and through leadership on a panel on grave human-rights violations on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity at the General Assembly on International Human Rights Day.

# NEWS FROM IGLHRC

## A MESSAGE FROM CARY ALAN JOHNSON



Dear IGLHRC Supporter:

It has been just over a year since I was appointed Executive Director of IGLHRC, and it's been the most exhilarating year of my life. The challenges facing our movement have kept me learning, growing, and delving deeply into my

experiences as an activist and my hopes for our liberation and equality.

In March, IGLHRC celebrated our 20th anniversary by honoring Colombia Diversa, a group at the forefront of the battle for LGBT rights in Colombia. Our Special Recognition Award went to Congressman Barney Frank for his tremendous work, including work to ensure that LGBT people fleeing violence and oppression around the world are eligible for asylum in the United States. We celebrated the work of Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS Executive Director, who has spoken up on LGBT rights worldwide by emphasizing the impact of sodomy laws and other anti-LGBT laws on HIV vulnerability. We thank Michel and look forward to working with him to push UNAIDS, the UN, and governments to recognize, protect and celebrate LGBT people as full citizens deserving of all rights.

In the last year, IGLHRC, along with our active support base, has:

- Worked with Caribbean Vulnerable Communities to bring together transgender leaders, resulting in a new [empowered network of trans men and women](#) demanding visibility and respect.
- [Led a call for authorities in Iran](#) to stop the executions of individuals accused of sodomy, and for influential countries to pursue diplomatic efforts to prevent the executions.
- Worked for the release of Steven Monjeza and Tionge Chimbalanga of Malawi – arrested, held without bail, and tried for loving outside of gender norms. Our staff continues to visit the detainees and stand in solidarity with the country's young LGBT movement.
- Led a successful appeal to return a 19-year-old student to classes [after he was expelled from his school in Belize](#) because his style of dressing was deemed "gender inappropriate."
- Protested the Philippines Commission on Elections' rejection of the application of LGBT political party Ang LADLAD to run in the national elections. Hundreds of letters were sent to the Philippines government and [the Supreme Court eventually overturned the ruling](#).
- Worked with Lambda Legal Defense to [send a lawyer to Nepal](#) to help craft constitutional protections for LGBT people and revise marriage laws to ensure equal recognition of our relationships.
- [Testified before a US Congressional committee, led letter-writing campaigns](#) and provided support to the Ugandan LGBT movement in its efforts to fight the exportation of homophobia from the US and the frightening Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

Whether you clicked on an Action Alert, wrote a check or attended a vigil on behalf of LGBT rights worldwide, thanks again for your support. You are making a world of difference.

Cary Alan Johnson, Executive Director

## IGLHRC STAFF: NEW ADDITIONS

A few words to introduce you to some of the new faces that have recently joined IGLHRC:



**Jessica Stern** is IGLHRC's new Director of Programs. She has led LGBT rights work at Human Rights Watch, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, and Amnesty International. She is a board member of Queers for Economic Justice and an advisory committee member of the New York Women's Foundation.



**Monica Mbaru** took over the direction of IGLHRC's thriving Africa Program. She previously worked at the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists and brings a deep knowledge of the human rights challenges facing LGBT activists working in Africa.



**Sam Cook** came on board as the Director of Communications and Research. She most recently led the PeaceWomen Project at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, working on issues of women, peace and security. She brings experience on international policy advocacy and online communications.

» For more on our staff visit: <http://tiny.cc/iglhrcstaff>

## PLANNED GIVING: HOW YOU CAN HELP

What do you want your legacy to be? Do you want to be remembered as a philanthropist? An advocate for human rights? A long-term supporter of the LGBT movement? As you plan for the future, think about gift planning as an option for ensuring your legacy of commitment to human rights and security for LGBT people.

As discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity persist and even worsen in many parts of the world, IGLHRC's work is vital in responding to the homo- and transphobic backlash our community is witnessing.

You can be part of this mission, and gift planning allows you to ensure that IGLHRC's goal of human rights for everyone, everywhere is met – no matter how long it takes. Whether you choose to include IGLHRC in your will, living trust, or retirement plans, gift planning comprises numerous options as well as benefits for the donor.

To learn how you can include IGLHRC and its continued mission in this life and in the mark you make, please contact Rebecca Libed at [rlibed@iglhrc.org](mailto:rlibed@iglhrc.org) or 212.430.6020. Your planned gift will help fight intolerance now and for years to come. If you decide to name IGLHRC in your will, please have your attorney use our Federal Tax ID: 94-3139952.

*Your gift*

WILL HELP FIGHT INTOLERANCE  
*now and for years to come.*

# IGLHRC AT WORK

## PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

IGLHRC has been engaged in several research projects that emphasize collaboration and capacity building. In 2009, with the input of many activists and colleagues in the movement, we published *Equal and Indivisible*, a handbook for writing shadow reports to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women that incorporate issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The publication is being used to broaden support for LGBT issues at the UN and we hope to use this model to develop further human rights reporting resources for activists.

Another activist-driven research project was launched during the first IGLHRC Asia Activist Institute

held in the Philippines in April. After much discussion, Institute participants named the project "Research to Address Violence Against Non-Heteronormative Women and Transgender People on the Basis of their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Gender Expression," and it will be conducted over three years and in twelve languages. The project responds to the needs expressed by Asian activists to make the gravity and prevalence of violence against LBT people visible by acquiring training to carry out proper human rights documentation and widely disseminating data on the problem.

The Africa Program has recently been engaged in a human rights report in Cameroon in collaboration with Human Rights Watch and two Cameroonian partners, ADEFHO and Alternatives-Cameroun. The report details continuing violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Cameroon and will form part of broader collaborative advocacy efforts in Cameroon and within the structures of the African Union.

» For more information on IGLHRC reports visit <http://tiny.cc/iglhrcreports>



*IGLHRC's Cary Johnson, Marcelo Ferreyra and Samara Fox, meet with residents and peer health educators in the Delmas camp for displaced persons in Haiti.*

## HAITI: MOBILIZING SUPPORT

The January 2010 earthquake forced IGLHRC to move outside our normal areas of work and respond to the urgent needs of the Haitian LGBT community. Overwhelming generosity from IGLHRC supporters allowed us to support our Haitian partner organizations—including SEROVie, a group which provides HIV services to men who have sex with men and transgender women. During a week-long mission to Haiti in April, IGLHRC staff had the opportunity to observe how donated tents, medical supplies, clothing and office equipment were put to use. While there, we conducted focus groups and interviews with more than 60 people to learn more about the ways in which the earthquake has affected LGBT lives.

## THE ACTIVIST INSTITUTES: TRAINING, NETWORKING & MOVEMENT BUILDING

For several years, IGLHRC has held Activist Institutes to support local LGBT activists through training and networking. The Latin America and Caribbean Program held the first event in Argentina in 2005 and has since hosted three further institutes. Twenty-two activists gathered in Lima, Peru from April 18-29, 2010 for the most recent two-week training, focusing on "Strategies Against Religious Fundamentalism." As part of ongoing efforts to make the outcomes and proceedings of the Institutes widely available, there were daily Institute blog postings and a comprehensive report will be produced.

Replicating this successful model, the first Asia Activist Institute was held from April 13-17 in Antipolo City, the Philippines. Twenty activists from five Asian countries gathered to build regional capacity for documenting and exposing homophobic and transphobic violence against lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Participants collaborated in the planning of a joint documentation project that will take place over the next three years and which is described in our Research Update. During the Institute, IGLHRC and the country research teams developed common conceptualizations of violence, discrimination, identity and behavior and collaboratively defined the project's objectives and methodology.

» Read more at <http://tiny.cc/lacinstitutes>



*IGLHRC staff and participants at the conclusion of the Activist Institute in Lima, Peru in April.*

# IGLHRC AT WORK

## UGANDA: UPDATE

Few LGBT issues have been as high on the international human rights agenda as the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda. The Bill, introduced in October 2009, would not only strengthen existing prohibitions on same-sex activity in Section 145 of Uganda's Penal Code, but would punish with death "serial" offenders and those who are HIV positive and engage in consensual same-sex relations. It would also criminalize "aiding and abetting" homosexuality, "promoting" homosexuality, and failing to report those who are suspected of same-sex activity. The bill generated an outcry from Sexual Minorities of Uganda (SMUG) and other LGBT groups, as well as the wider Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law.

In March 2009, IGLHRC and SMUG coordinated a response to an anti-gay workshop led by three right-wing Christian evangelists from the US who travelled to Kampala to lay the groundwork for the

introduction of the Bill. Together, IGLHRC and SMUG sent delegates to the conference, posted updates on IGLHRC's blog and website, and issued a press release to publicize the impact of the workshop and the Bill, including increased violence and arbitrary arrests throughout Uganda. IGLHRC provided funds to help local activists visit prisoners, investigate human rights violations, and mobilize local, regional,



*A protestor outside of the Ugandan Mission in New York at a solidarity rally organized by IGLHRC and other groups at the request of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG).*

and international support, including sending staff to Uganda to help with local organizing efforts. In conjunction with SMUG, IGLHRC has issued action alerts and updates to our membership, and helped organize the solidarity protest requested by SMUG outside of Uganda's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in November 2009. IGLHRC also submitted formal requests for action to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Arrest and Detention and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

IGLHRC has been active in publicizing further attempts to export homophobia to Uganda and is working to hold pastors like Lou Engle and Rick Warren responsible for their anti-gay rhetoric. As the situation develops, IGLHRC will continue to work behind the scenes and mobilize a wider public against the Bill until it is defeated.

» Learn more about our work in Uganda at <http://tiny.cc/iglhrucuganda>

## ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

*Selly Thiam is the founder of None on Record, an oral history project that documents the lives of queer Africans on the continent and in diaspora. We interviewed Selly about the possibilities presented by oral history and audible media.*

**IGLHRC:** What do you consider the most powerful part of oral history as an activist tool?

**ST:** I think the most powerful thing is the empowerment of the individual who tells the story. That's the most important thing. [...] I think people sometimes—especially in activism—have a tendency to fight all the time. We don't take care of ourselves, sometimes, and we fall sick, and all these things happen to us.

And we don't have a moment to feel empowered, because we're always fighting being disempowered, and so

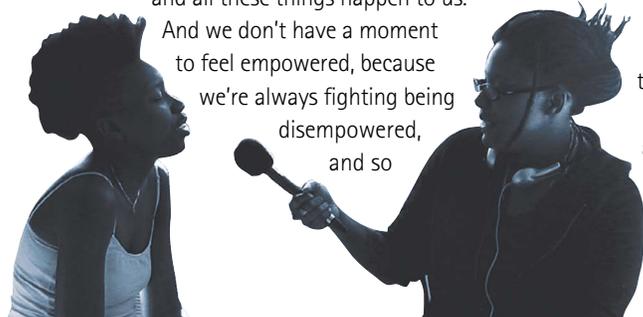
you get into the motions of fighting—but you have to have something there that fills you up. You have to have something that keeps you going when things are really difficult. And I think a project like None on Record is one of those things. I remember watching Nick listen to Carlos' story about not being able to go back to Cote d'Ivoire after he had come to Toronto, and he didn't realize that was part of the immigration process. And he's always thinking of Cote d'Ivoire even though he's in Montreal doing work with African men who are gay and French speaking. He's always thinking about going home. And I remember listening to that and thinking about how intense that must be. But then I looked over at Nick and he was crying, and saying, "I can't go home either." I think that's the most transformative thing.

There's that quote that says a story is the shortest distance between people. I think that's truly some of the most empowering work—to be able to see someone's humanity is what we all have to try to inspire in people who fight

against us. We work so hard to be seen as people, so our rights will be protected – that's the basis. I think oral history has that power, but it also empowers the individual to feel like they're part of something... that their humanity is important. I know that's a long way to say something kind of simple, but it's something that's so important and necessary, and it's sometimes forgotten.

IGLHRC has collaborated with None on Record in research and advocacy efforts in Senegal.

» Learn more and read the full interview at <http://tiny.cc/sellythiam>



### PARTICIPATE IN THE IGLHRC COMMUNITY

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