



I G L H R C

OUTSPOKEN

WINTER / SPRING 2011

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

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TURKEY: TRANSGENDER ACTIVISTS UNDER ATTACK

On May 17th, 2010, a few hours after the end of a ceremony marking the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, five transgender activists were arbitrarily stopped by police. Upon the activists' refusal to be detained without reason, the police resorted to violence. The activists were handcuffed, beaten with batons, kicked, and sprayed with tear gas, before being taken to the police station. Witnesses to the incident reported that the police screamed at the activists, "Faggots, next time we will kill you!" The women, members of Pembe Hayat LGBTT Solidarity Group – an Ankara-based transgender rights organization – were indicted by Ankara's public prosecutor and charged with resisting authorities. This was before the prosecutor had even concluded an investigation into their complaint of ill-treatment.

IGLHRC, in collaboration with Pembe Hayat and human rights groups in Europe and the U.S., led a successful international campaign in support of the activists. We issued a press release and sent a strong letter to Turkish authorities protesting these human rights violations and calling for the charges to be dropped immediately. The case received broad media attention, in part due to IGLHRC's campaign, within and outside of Turkey. Finally, in late October 2010, the charges against the women were dismissed by the presiding judge for lack of evidence. The judge reprimanded the police for their mistreatment of the activists and referred to their actions as "totally wrong."

This case is but one example of a pattern of violence and discrimination faced by the transgender community in Turkey. Amidst a series of social, political and legal reforms implemented by Turkey as it seeks membership in the European Union, Turkey's LGBT community experiences systematic violence, discrimination and prejudice. Although same-sex activity is not criminalized, Turkish LGBT people face violence and exclusion within their families and communities – it is not uncommon for families to disown their LGBT children. Despite increasing international

pressure, in particular from European countries, the government has, so far, failed to pass any legislation to protect the LGBT community. In the face of extreme violence, this is unacceptable.

Over the past 20 months, at least 12 transgender people have been murdered across the country in hate-motivated crimes. There are also many other cases of targeting and mistreatment of transgender women by police, who often detain and harass gay men and transgender people on spurious charges. Turkish law-enforcement authorities regularly enforce a range of laws against transgender people, particularly the Law of Misdemeanors (No. 5326) that purports to protect public order and security. Research by non-governmental organizations has shown that, as is the case in so many other jurisdictions around the world, the law's broad and ambiguous language is used to justify unfair harassment of anyone deemed "undesirable," particularly transgender people. These laws must be repealed and replaced with effective legal protections against discrimination.



From the left to right: Derya Tunc (Founding Member), Buse Kilickaya (Founding Member), Sinem Kuzucan (Current Board Chair), Evrim Topdal (Current Board Member), Hayat (Member)

UNITED NATIONS: OBSTACLES AND VICTORIES FOR LGBT HUMAN RIGHTS

*It is not called the **partial** declaration of human rights.
It is not the **sometimes** declaration of human rights.
It is the **universal** declaration, guaranteeing all human beings their basic human rights... without exception.*

Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon • December 10, 2010



It has been an exciting and challenging year for LGBT human rights at the United Nations, with significant steps forward for IGLHRC and the LGBT movement as a whole.

In July, IGLHRC was accredited as a civil society observer by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This was a landmark resolution that reversed an earlier discriminatory denial by the committee responsible for making recommendations on the awarding of this status to non-governmental organizations.

In the fall of 2010, IGLHRC worked in Uganda with Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), a lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights group, on a human rights report which was then submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). IGLHRC and FARUG attended the October session of CEDAW, where the Committee called on Uganda to oppose a proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill in response to FARUG's report.

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NEWS FROM IGLHRC

A MESSAGE FROM CARY ALAN JOHNSON



Dear IGLHRC Supporter:

The recent attention to the challenges facing young LGBT people is long overdue. Tragically, it is a result of an alarming number of youth suicides and well-publicized cases of anti-gay violence that captured media attention

in the United States and reverberated in many other countries. Violence, isolation, depression, suicide and homelessness are serious problems for our young people, particular for youth of color and those mired in poverty.

Countless young people around the world have told IGLHRC stories of mistreatment by family members, school and health officials, police and other authorities. While many American figures are communicating to LGBT youth that *it gets better*, we must not forget the young LGBT people outside of the U.S., whose challenges have important similarities and stark differences.

In Belize, Jose Garcia, a secondary student was threatened with expulsion in 2009 because Jose "acts like a girl" and "dresses effeminately." Transgender and gender-queer youth in schools are subjected to discrimination, physical and verbal abuse and are often forced to wear clothes that do not match their gender identity.

In Lithuania, a new law criminalized the distribution of information about sexual orientation through "any medium to which children have access," depriving young people of vital information. The law was modified after significant international outcry, but another proposed law would now make "promotion" of homosexuality an offence under the same rationale of protecting minors.

And just last month in Jamaica, a university student was savagely beaten by classmates after being lured into a private conversation with one who was posing as gay.

While organizations that serve LGBT youth in the U.S. are often underfunded and under attack by the religious right, at least they exist. In the Global South and East, where LGBT movements are younger, dedicated youth programs are rare. In fact, LGBT centers are often hesitant to serve the needs of young people for fear of being accused of "recruiting" youth into homosexuality. Young LGBT people are then unable to access the critical services they desperately need. Compounded by sodomy laws in 76 countries and the failure of most countries to provide protections for transgender people, young LGBT people are among the most marginalized groups in the world.

In recent years IGLHRC has used documentation and appeals to focus on human rights violations against young people in Cameroon, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria and beyond. As an organization committed to building a diverse and empowered global LGBT movement, IGLHRC works closely with the most marginalized members of our community—young people, elders, transgender people, sex workers, and those affected by HIV.

In this issue of *Outspoken*, you can read about our work with transgender women in Turkey, our new report on laws criminalizing homosexuality in Cameroon, and the enormous gains and challenges we have faced at the United Nations this year.

Thank you for reading and for, as always, your support.

Cary Alan Johnson, Executive Director

STAFF: INTERNS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Of the many people that make IGLHRC's support to local, regional, and global LGBT rights movements possible, those who are often the most invisible are our interns. IGLHRC's internship program offers internships to students and emerging human rights professionals of diverse academic levels and backgrounds. From law students to students of engineering and media, those who have participated in the program have contributed to all areas of our work. The opportunity interns have to learn about the international LGBT human rights landscape is an important part of supporting and strengthening the LGBT movement and bringing sexual rights perspectives to other social justice movements. Two recent summer interns are already using their experiences at IGLHRC in 2010 to further develop academic and activist work:



Linley Beckner interned with IGLHRC's Development Department as part of Mt. Holyoke's Learning Through Application Program and contributed to donor research, database management, grants, and Spanish translation. Linley is now using these experiences in conjunction with

her study abroad work in Argentina, where she also worked with IGLHRC's Latin America and Caribbean program staff as well as many other Argentine LGBT groups to develop her senior thesis which focuses on the Argentine sexual minorities' rights movement.



Alyssa Pomponio, a law student from the University of Washington, worked as a Communications and Research intern, performing media tracking, international legal and country-specific research, and an in-depth analysis of the issues of sex work, gender identity and expression, and the right to health under the Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Alyssa subsequently interned at the Sex Workers Project in New York. Next summer she will work at the Bay Area Legal Aid in Oakland, CA dealing with issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, youth, and trafficked persons.

» For more on becoming an intern or supporting IGLHRC's internship program, visit <http://bit.ly/internIGLHRC>.

A CELEBRATION OF
C O U R A G E

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 7, 2011 6:30 TO 9:00 PM

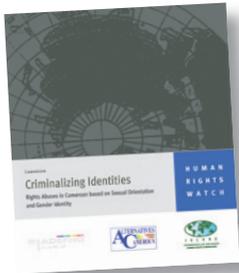
LANDMARK ON THE PARK
CENTRAL PARK WEST @ 76TH STREET, NYC

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LEARN MORE <http://bit.ly/COC2011>

IGLHRC AT WORK

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH: CAMEROON



Cameroon continues to arrest and prosecute individuals under a law that criminalizes same-sex sexual activity. This law has consequences for LGBT people beyond their unacceptable arrests and imprisonment. It drives

inequality within the justice system and promotes violence within families and communities. To combat these violations, in November IGLHRC launched the report, "Criminalizing Identities: Rights Abuses in Cameroon based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity."

The report was a collaborative effort with Human Rights Watch and the Cameroonian LGBT organizations Alternatives-Cameroun and l'Association pour la Défense des Droits des Homosexuels. Based on interviews with human rights defenders, survivors, and officials as well as visits to detention centers, "Criminalizing Identities" documents the prejudice, discrimination, and abuse suffered by LGBT people in Cameroon at the hands of police, politicians, the media, and their own communities. Included are accounts of arrests, abuse in detention, the difficulties faced by HIV-positive in accessing medico-legal services as well as the violence, ostracism and fear experienced when individuals are seen to violate strict gender norms.

The launch of "Criminalizing Identities" in Cameroon included meetings with government officials and advocacy at the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. IGLHRC organized a highly-attended panel at the November session of the African Commission in the Gambia. The report recommends the decriminalization of homosexuality in Cameroon and calls on the government to provide effective legal protections for LGBT people.

IGLHRC first worked in Cameroon to help defend a group of individuals arrested in a cafe in Yaounde in 2005. Since that time, the LGBT movement in Cameroon has developed into one of the strongest in Africa. Prepared with this report IGLHRC is committed to ongoing support to LGBT Cameroonians in their opposition to discrimination and violence.

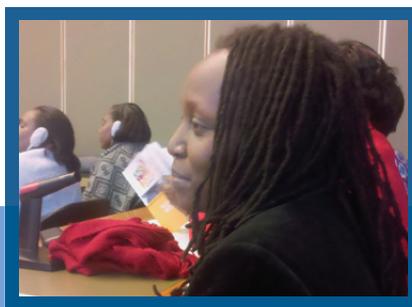
» To read "Criminalizing Identities" visit <http://bit.ly/cameroonReport>

UNITED NATIONS: OBSTACLES AND VICTORIES FOR LGBT HUMAN RIGHTS

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At that same time, in a groundbreaking move, CEDAW made two "General Recommendations" that explicitly condemned discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. These recommendations guide States in interpreting their treaty obligations, making it the fourth UN Treaty Body to include sexual orientation in its list of categories of individuals in need of special recognition for protection, and only the second to include gender identity.

With increased ability to engage at all levels of the United Nations as a result of our consultative status, IGLHRC has also been active at the UN General Assembly, engaging with States and Special Rapporteurs on reports that highlight the human rights violations against LGBT people. Notably, on December 10 – Human Rights Day – IGLHRC was a co-organizer, along with a number of State sponsors, of a high-level panel at the UN denouncing



violence and criminal sanctions on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The panel featured Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and US Ambassador Susan Rice, as well as other State representatives, and LGBT human rights defenders from Guyana, Namibia, and Turkey.

There have also been significant challenges and victories in the General Assembly. In November, we saw the alarming removal of the words "sexual orientation" from a resolution on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, a reference that had survived attempts to remove it for ten years. However, when the resolution came to a vote in the General Assembly on December 21, 2010, after heroic efforts by supportive States and international civil society, the reference was reincorporated in a 93-55 vote with 27 abstentions. IGLHRC was one of the leading organizations coordinating NGO and State support for the inclusive resolution.

As these events demonstrate, it remains critical for LGBT activists to remain engaged on an intergovernmental level, using the UN as a powerful and effective arena for advocates to challenge governments.

WATCH VIDEO OF KASHA JACQUELINE
@ <http://bit.ly/WeRWomen>

IN FOCUS: UGANDAN ACTIVISTS GET RESULTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS AND AT HOME

One of the issues that Freedom and Roam Uganda raised to the UN CEDAW Committee – and that the Committee recommended the Ugandan government address – was the incitement of violence against LGBT people by the Ugandan media. In October, the Ugandan tabloid *Rolling Stone* ran a story outing a number of LGBT people, including pictures and personal information, with the headlines, "Uganda's Top 100 Homos" and "Hang Them." Following attacks on activists named in the paper, local LGBT leaders waged a court battle to stop *Rolling Stone* from continuing to incite violence.

In response to a temporary injunction to stop the dangerous articles, the paper's publishers vowed to continue calling for violence. They accused the LGBT people of "recruiting new members among our kids and destroying the moral fabric of our country." Then, on January 3rd, the High Court of Uganda issued a permanent injunction against the tabloid in a decision. It stated that, "the impugned publication threatened the rights of the applicants to respect for human dignity and protection from inhuman treatment and the right to privacy of the person and home."

IGLHRC AT WORK

ASIA PACIFIC FORUM

The Asia Pacific Forum (APF) is a consortium of national human rights institutions in 17 countries. In December, it issued a report that all of its member states were failing to provide adequate protections for LGBT people. APF called on international human rights experts, judicial officers, and legal scholars to develop recommendations for the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in the work of its members and the human rights action plans of member states. IGLHRC was among the experts invited to provide training for this work. In response, Malaysia's non-governmental Human Rights Commission has already agreed to undertake a study on the status of the rights of LGBT Muslims in the country.

MOROCCO

On October 23rd, LGBT Moroccans held a historic ceremony in Rabat to observe what they christened, 'National LGBT Day'. The historic gathering included discussions of the fears, restrictions and dangers faced by individuals because of their sexual orientation.

Kifkif, a Moroccan LGBT group, decided to submit a letter to authorities to alert them to rights violations, remind them of their human rights commitments, and push for LGBT groups to be permitted to work openly in Morocco. A full report by activist Karim Al-Samiti is on IGLHRC's blog: <http://bit.ly/Kifkif>.

ZAMBIA

Recent efforts to revise the constitution of Zambia have dealt the LGBT community a severe blow. With same-sex acts already illegal and punishable in Zambia with up to 14 years



Friends of Rainka staff at the Rainka offices in Lusaka, Zambia.

in prison, the draft constitution included a clause forbidding same-sex marriage. The Zambian LGBT group, Friends of Rainka, condemned this move as an unnecessary attack on their already vulnerable community. In November 2010, IGLHRC facilitated a training in Zambia to increase activists' understanding of the constitution-making process and to strengthen their capacity to address the constitutional threat.

PERU

In October, IGLHRC issued an Action Alert jointly with Peruvian LGBT partners Boletín Diversidad and VIHDATE calling for the condemnation of anti-LGBT hate crimes, including the recent murder of journalist and human rights activist Alberto Osorio. Peruvian activists delivered more than 500 letters generated by the Alert to local authorities. In response, the Office of the Public Ombudsman committed to an investigation with communication with community leaders. Authorities voiced support for hate crimes legislation being debated in parliament and committed to training police and media on LGBT rights issues.

ACTIVIST TOOLKIT

LGBT BLOGS

Pioneering Algerian blogger ZIZOU runs and writes ZIZOU's Magazine, which is one of the most prominent and popular Arabic-language blogs for the LGBT community, focusing on everything from human rights and politics to entertainment (<http://zizoumag.blogspot.com>). As part of an ongoing series highlighting creative tools used by sexual rights activists globally, IGLHRC asked ZIZOU about the importance of blogging for LGBT activism.

ZIZOU: The LGBT rights blogging phenomenon has grown extensively and impressively in recent years in parallel with developments in human rights in general and in the field of modern technology, especially the Internet. This has allowed these media channels to develop quickly and to compete with traditional channels of intellectual and cultural information.

A blog for me is an investment in freedom that benefits from the World Wide Web, which is beyond government censorship. Blogging allows me to discuss political, social, and frank

personal issues that don't otherwise reach people through other channels in a simple and funny (sometimes cynical) way.

There are many factors that have helped develop blogging and made it accessible for LGBT activism, including specialized online services with ready-to-use formats that make publishing an easy process. Blogging doesn't require much time or effort and it does not require a high level of education, permits, capital, employees, or distributors. It is also possible to create a blog under a pseudonym allowing one to discuss issues frankly and without external threat or the pressure that comes just from talking about some issues.

The idea of a blog has itself allowed me to break down the geographical, political and social boundaries between countries. However, there are still various barriers that activist bloggers need to overcome. It is critical to prioritize developing consensus on principles and codes of conduct in the burgeoning field of LGBT blogging in order to ensure the ongoing communication and cooperation of the many diverse LGBT bloggers

(whether professionals, researchers, scholars, innovators, or students) who want to capture lost freedom and who desire change.

This work of developing a consensus around human rights requires bloggers to have a lot of courage because they face many pressures when they discuss issues related to the social, political and legal situation in their countries. Some may end up facing restrictions such as having their blogs blocked and may end up being persecuted and even imprisoned for their work. For this reason this work cannot happen individually – support and collective action is required.

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