



IDAHO

INTERNATIONAL
DAY AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA
& TRANSPHOBIA



ANNUAL REPORT 2008 2009

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Introduction

1 ▲ WHY HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA (IDAHO) ?

Although to some western-centric observers homosexuality and gender variance are today broadly accepted, closer observation of the global situation indicates a different picture. The latest report that the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association, ILGA, released on the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009, confirms that no less than 80 countries around the world still consider homosexuality illegal and in 5 of them, homosexual acts are punishable by death. In almost all countries, freedom not to act as socially determined by one person's sex at birth is being limited by Transphobic laws. Very few countries are making a move towards full legal and social equality for people who want to live in a same-sex relationship or express their gender freedom.

On the international scene, issues around sexuality and gender create a historic dividing line between States, best symbolised by both the support and the hostile reaction triggered by the Statement on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity presented at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2008.

Reflecting State-sponsored homophobia and Transphobia, social attitudes discriminate against sexual minorities and Trans people, sometimes in the violent forms of persecutions, verbal and physical abuse, and even hate-crimes.

The International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia exists to help all concerned stakeholders to draw the attention of policy makers, opinion leaders, social movements, public opinion, the media, etc... to this situation.

The sheer diversity of social, religious, cultural and political contexts in which the rights to express gender freedom and to engage in same-sex relationships needs to be addressed makes it impossible for the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia to take one specific form or agenda. This is why the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is not

one centralised campaign, but an opportunity for all to fight for sexual diversity and gender freedom according to the context they work in.

It is also important to note that if respect of fundamental Human Rights for LGBT people is a specific issue with its own factors and arguments, it is nevertheless important to realise how much it is an intrinsic part of the wider Sexual Rights issues, making the fight against homophobia and transphobia relevant for those who combat the instrumentalisation of our bodies, and specifically our sexuality, for political and social control.

This is why the Day, although in its title focusing on the "negative" right to be free of harassment and discrimination, aims at joining the international movement in favour of the "positive" right for all to enjoy their sexual rights, which include the right to be free from sexual violence, including marital rape, female genital mutilation, early marriages, etc....



The Day creates an opportunity for all to :

- Draw media attention to the issue of homophobia and transphobia
- To organise events which mobilise public opinion
- To engage in lobbying activities
- To organise joint campaigning actions
- To network with like-minded organisations
- To develop new partnerships
- To address new constituencies

The date of May 17th was chosen to commemorate the decision by the World Health Organisation in 1990 to take homosexuality off the list of mental disorders.

It is now celebrated in more than 50 countries across the world, in most varied ways and expressions.

2 ▲ A BIT OF HISTORY

Following other initiatives such as the National Day Against Homophobia created in 2003 in the Quebec province of Canada by the Fondation Emergence and celebrated in June, Louis-Georges Tin, a French university lecturer, campaigner for Black and LGBT Rights and chief editor of the «Dictionary of Homophobia», launched in August 2004 an initiative to create an International Day Against Homophobia that is global in scope. He launched an appeal « For a universal recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia » (IDAHO) and proposed that this day be fixed on May 17th, to commemorate the World Health Organisation's decision to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.



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By May 17th 2005, as a result of a year long campaigning effort, 24000 people worldwide and reputed international organisations like ILGA, IGLHRC, the World Congress of LGBT Jews, the Coalition of African lesbians, to name but a few, had signed the "IDAHO appeal". In May 2005 already, the IDAHO saw some activities take place in many countries in the world. The first LGBT

events ever were organised in Congo, China and Bulgaria. Josepp Borrell, President of the European Parliament made a statement supporting the IDAHO and invited Tin to the conference the EU Parliament organised for IDAHO 2006.

By that time a new campaign had been launched calling « For a universal decriminalisation of homosexuality » and on May 17th 2006 it had attracted support from several Nobel Prize winners (Desmond Tutu, Amartya Sen, Elfriede Jelinek, Dario Fo, José Saramago), artists (Merryl Streep, Cindy Lauper, Elton John, David Bowie), intellectuals (Noam Chomsky, Judith Butler, Bernard-Henri Lévy), NGOs (ILGA, FIDH), politicians, etc... For IDAHO 2006 again, the IDAHO Committee and GayRussia co-organised the first GayPride in Moscow, preceded by an International IDAHO conference that brought together many activists, organisations and politicians from around Europe and North America.

In July 2006, thanks to the efforts of Fondation Emergence, the Montreal Conference on LGBT Human Rights, organised in the wake of the Outgames, included in its final declaration a strong recommendation to all Governments to recognise May 17th as the International Day Against Homophobia.

By 2007, IDAHO had been officially recognised by the EU Parliament, thanks to an initiative from the EUP Intergroup, on LGBT Rights ; by Belgium, thanks to the Association Européenne des Droits de l'Homme ; by the UK, thanks to the efforts of Derek Lennard from Galha ; and by Mexico, upon an initiative from MP David Sanchez Camacho. Later on, the organisation CIPAC was active in getting Costa Rica to recognise the Day, COC

promoted the case in the Netherlands, ACT-UP and the IDAHO Committee teamed up to get France to recognise the Day and in Luxemburg an alliance between the Green Party and the LGBT organisation Rosa Letzebuerg achieved to get the Day on the country's agenda.

In some other countries like Spain, Argentina, Bolivia, Australia, Croatia, etc..., national authorities have been called upon by their civil societies to have the Day recognised and active lobbying is on its way to success.

Organisations in more than 50 countries in the world now celebrate the IDAHO.

Campaigns by the IDAHO Committee :

2004/2005 : "For the recognition of an International Day against Homophobia"

2005/2006 : "For a universal decriminalisation of homosexuality"

2006/2007 : "No to homophobia, Yes to education"

2007/2008 : "No more Lesbophobia"

2008/2009 : "Against Transphobia and for the Respect of Gender Identity"

3 ▲ WHAT IS THE IDAHO COMMITTEE ?

The IDAHO Committee was set up by the founders of the IDAHO to develop a global mobilisation movement on the issues of sexual and gender freedom around the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia. We are a community of activists and committed people, sharing the vision that a global movement can bring an added value to dispersed individual initiatives.

Our objective is to make the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia become a global awareness and mobilisation moment that will be strong enough to bring an added value to campaigning initiatives by organisations and individuals around the world.

What are our core strategies ?

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What are our core strategies ?

1 ▲ DEVELOPING A GLOBAL CAMPAIGNING MOVEMENT

We believe that a global movement can hold tremendous power to change beliefs, attitudes and policies at all levels.

Policy making is most of the time informed by scientific research and intellectual conceptualisation, but more often than not it also needs a lot of public pressure to bring about change. The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia Committee aims at creating and supporting public campaigning in order to create positive contexts in which policy making can take place.

A global campaigning movement can display the common strength that “sexual minorities” or LGBT people’s movements very often lack. Pride marches provide this kind of display at national level and we all know how powerful this is. But Pride marches are not always possible and some parts of the LGBT community do not identify with this type of action. The idea behind IDAHO is to create something that can be visible at global level without needing to conform to one or other specific type of action. IDAHO is about unity in spirit and diversity in expressions.

Of course we don’t aim at making all anti-Homophobia and Transphobia actions focus on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and we strongly believe other initiatives and moments are necessary to create a global force.

But we encourage as many actions as possible to be taken on the 17th of May too, so as to reinforce the visibility of the collective strength of the LGBT mobilisation.

For organisations in “progressive” countries, the added value of a global movement might not always be obvious. But in countries where social, political and legal conditions are difficult, connecting to a wider picture does make a difference. The sheer fact that all around the world organisations unite in collective visibility provides an important support to organisations by breaking the isolation and creating a powerful argument for hostile public opinions or authorities : if it is easy for a political or social actor to counter what they perceive as a handful of local activists, or “deviants”, it will



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be harder for them to do so if public opinions consider these activists to be stakeholders in a global movement uniting millions. This is why we aim at creating a community or stakeholders that will be able to construct solidarity and support.

• Creating interest

The more organisations take action, the more the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia makes sense as a global movement.

We therefore aim at making the concept of IDAHO as much publicized as possible, creating interest, momentum and eventually participation. We do so through a communication and media strategy, with a special emphasis on working with existing networks.

We encourage organisations and individuals already engaged in actions on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia to spread the interest, to advocate for increasing the momentum and to get more stakeholders involved. In some countries, ad hoc facilitation groups have been formed to do this and coordinate actions. In other contexts, organisations don’t coordinate their various initiatives.

As with many things, there is not one pattern that fits all. Each organisation participating in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is invited to act responsibly to ensure that the ownership of the Day is as shared as possible and that the ball keeps rolling.

- **Engaging in core partnerships around the IDAHO strategy**

We strongly believe that alliance building is key to successful campaigning. We therefore aim at developing partnerships with Women's rights movements, sexual rights movements, HIV-AIDS focused groups and initiatives, Trade Unions, North/South Development agencies, Educational groups, Religious organisations, etc...

2 ▲ SUPPORTING ACTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

- **Supporting local actions**

Our aim is not to create a globalised one-size-fits-all campaign that comes with a fixed set of materials, but to lend local organisations support and expertise to help them generate campaigning actions and tools that are relevant for their specific contexts.

In line with our objective to increase the strength of the global movement, we aim at supporting in-country generated campaigning actions for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Organisations with good campaigning backgrounds and skills will most probably not need much support for action.

Yet, a lot of organisations have limited experience in campaigning and/or limited resources for action and will need support to engage in effective action. We are aware that this action-oriented support needs to be articulated with a wider medium-term support in capacity and constituency building.

- **Encouraging coordination of activities**

One of our preferred processes to support actions is to identify and encourage synergies between various actors so as to create best-practice exchanges, generate common initiatives and consolidate, or even create, networks around common interests/causes.

We believe that one of the most important single added values of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is to break the isolation of activists working in a very hostile environment, and that one of the most effective

Acknowledging the importance of research and intellectual conceptualisation, we also aim at fostering relationships with research institutes, universities, think tanks, ...in order to help us remain politically relevant and to give activists at grass-roots level access to the conceptual tools they need to make their case.

way of doing this is to facilitate joint actions with other groups around the world. We believe that engaging in joint actions will give activists an implicit global backing and that this will reinforce their impact and increase their security.

We also believe that joint actions across different contexts have a strong effect on how the LGBT agenda is perceived by local public opinions and media, and impacts on the capacity of hostile stakeholders to isolate LGBT activists or to accuse them of being manipulated.



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So, in line with our strategy to encourage networks of like-minded stakeholders, we aim at building bridges between organisations working on similar objectives, in similar contexts or with similar approaches or similar type of actions.

One of our main roles is therefore to act as a catalyst on initiatives taken around May 17th and to disseminate information and calls to join actions. We thereby allow interesting international or regional initiatives, like e-campaigns or web based actions, to be disseminated and attract participation.

3 ▲ FACILITATING/ORGANISING JOINT CAMPAIGNING INITIATIVES

• **Developing specific campaigns**

Although the Day itself is open to any kind of activity by all organisations and people that want to join in, it also aims to use the public, political and media attention that it attracts at all levels to highlight each year one specific aspect of the struggle for sexual rights.

So each year, the IDAHO Committee aims at facilitating the coordination of some specific campaigning activities, in conjunction with groups already focusing on the specific issues.

Where there is a strong coalition in place already actively campaigning on one given issue, we will aim at acting as a catalyst to make the 17th of May a meaningful moment for this campaign.

Where coordination is weaker, the IDAHO Committee might take a more proactive role in shaping the collective action by helping to form ad hoc working groups that will define the strategy and lead on advocacy activities at international level.

The campaigning activities in which the IDAHO Committee has taken a coordinating function have

traditionally been centred on “Appeals” that include both national and international level targets. The campaigns also include awareness raising and outreach activities that we aim at developing with all stakeholders involved in the campaign.

• **Developing ad hoc activities**

Apart from these structured campaign activities that are written within strategic plans, the IDAHO Committee also promotes initiatives at international levels to support the visibility of the Day, such as global video projects, global concerts, etc...

These activities are made in conjunction with partners who want to take advantage of the visibility that the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia enjoys.

The IDAHO Committee also supports partners and organisations in specific policy and lobby actions when there is an added value to mobilise the political influence capacity that the Committee has gained over the years.

4 ▲ REINFORCING THE GLOBAL RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY

• **Creating global visibility through communication**

In order for most of the objectives above to be effective, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia needs to be known and visible. This is where the “coordinating” function of the IDAHO Committee is arguably the most important. We therefore aim at developing visibility tools that will be harnessed by local level actors to document the strength of the global movement and thus generate more attention for their case. These tools will also be used within the context of the specific IDAHO campaigns as support material for advocacy and campaigning initiatives.

We mainly rely on the development of an up-to-date web site whose essential objective it is to display the force of the global movement and to promote interesting activities. We also aim at developing specific institutional documents on the International Day Against Homophobia and

Transphobia and specific reports on global campaigning. We also conduct a media campaign strategy, mainly during the month of May, to give the global dimension due media acknowledgement.

• **Working towards official recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia**

The official recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by any kind of organism that enjoys credibility is an important strategic objective for us.

The recognition is both an important asset for advocacy strategies as it opens policy doors and an important factor for media attention and public opinion reactivity. We therefore aim at increasing the interest of strategic national-level actors to take this objective up with their national authorities.

We also act directly at international/regional levels to get institutions to recognise the IDAHO.

Our activities in 2008-2009

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Our activities in 2008-2009

1 ▲ DEVELOPING THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Our objective has been to consolidate contacts with existing focal points in countries that have been traditionally most active on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. We have therefore encouraged national level coordination in various countries.

We have also aimed at developing links with organisations in countries where the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was not well known or where it was concentrating on one specific activity.

Engaging with organisations and networks around our Campaigns (see below) has been the essential process to get new constituencies aware of the Day and engage in actions.

Responding to an expression of interest from the World Aids Campaign, we have started discussions on how to get the HIV-AIDS agenda better included in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia strategies and how to better promote the International Day Against Ho-

mophobia and Transphobia with the organisations mobilised around the HIV-AIDS agenda.

We have also engaged in talks with the Global Coalition Against The Death Penalty in order to increase the awareness of the specific issue of Death Penalty on grounds of Sexual Orientation and to get the movement interested in mobilising around the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

We aim at increasing links with the world of Development agencies, as we share a wider common agenda around the cultural specificity of development, the importance of sexual rights in the broader development agenda, and the importance of economic development in the promotion of Human Rights.

Our new website foresees the capacity for various organisations who want to assume a coordinating role at national level to contribute directly to contents, therefore increasing ownership.

2 ▲ SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Our support for local action was mainly focused on the Transphobia campaign (see below), as we did not have the capacity to directly support local actions given the lack of financial resources and our limited human resources, despite many requests for advice and support from places as diverse as Mongolia and Cameroon.

The IDAHO Committee and Russian IDAHO Coordinator GayRussia nevertheless encouraged and financially supported the Phnom Penh Pride, which was the first LGBT event of this kind in Cambodia and constituted an historic initiative.

Some support was given through proactive dissemination of targeted information to develop dialogue amongst local actors engaging in similar activities.



3 ▲ JOINT CAMPAIGNING

• **The Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the UN General Assembly :**

Since our early days, one of our policy goals has been to reach the universal decriminalisation of same-sex relationships. Since the petition in 2006, we have been steadily advocating with different governments to take this agenda forward at the United Nations. In May 2008, a series of lobby actions towards the French government contributed to the country's decision, announced on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2008, to take a Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to the UN General Assembly before the end of the year. This decision was announced jointly with the official recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by the French government.

During the second semester, Civil Society organisations including the IDAHO committee, ILGA, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, ARC international, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and many other groups from the global South and East worked towards this initiative that eventually resulted in the December 2008 UN Statement read at the General Assembly by Argentina and supported by now 67 countries.

The IDAHO Committee participated in the UNGA session and intervened at France's invitation at the side event that was organised at this occasion.

Recognising that this UN Statement is one of the elements in a long strategy of LGBT advocacy at the UN, the IDAHO Committee participated in discussion groups and meetings to strategize the integration of the Statement into the wider strategy at the UN.

To follow up on the UN Statement, the French, Dutch and Norwegian governments chose to convene a World Congress on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Paris on the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009.

Given the date and its historic implication on the issue, the IDAHO Committee, as part of a central working group, was central in shaping the Congress' contents and organisation, taking up a lot of its working capacity around the Day.

The Congress brought together Ministers from 15 countries, including 3 African countries, and more than 50 panellists from all World regions, who debated during the day-long meeting to elaborate recommendations for all stakeholders. The recommendations of the Congress will be strong elements in the future of the strategy towards the universal decriminalisation of same-sex relationships and gender variance.



© Philippe Colomb

Many important contributions and statements were made during the Congress, such as the one from Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Hammarberg and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay

More than 80 representatives from NGOs in the Global South and East were invited by the organising Ministries to attend the Congress, providing with significant opportunities for networking.

It is also worth noting the initiative of our UK coordinator Derek Lennard who instigated an Early Day Motion in Parliament inviting the UK government to use its diplomacy to get further countries to sign up to the UN Statement. This Early Day Motion is getting ongoing attention from Members of Parliament.

• **The Transphobia campaign :**

Each year, the IDAHO Committee proposes that one specific issue within the LGBT agenda receives special attention. For 2009, we concentrated on Transphobia and coordinated a campaigning and advocacy initiative on the issue. We started by setting up a working group to develop the strategy and the content of the Campaign. We were very happy to meet a favourable response from major organisations and networks working for Trans people : Transgender EU, ILGA Trans secretariat, Gender Dynamix (Africa), Red-LacTrans (Latin America), the International Gay



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and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and resource people like Mauro Cabral from the think tank and NGO Mulabi and Justus Einfeld from Global Advocates for Transgender Equality. Given the focus on the World Health Organisation, UN-focused ARC International also joined the working group.

We jointly developed an "International Appeal against Transphobia and for the Respect of Gender Identity" that was disseminated around the world and attracted support from over 300 organisations in 75+ countries across all continents. The Appeal was also signed by many prominent artists, 3 Nobel-prize laureates, politicians, etc... that the IDAHO Committee approached.

The 17 page media briefing consolidating analysis, testimonies and advocacy positions was disseminated widely by all to their media contacts, contributing to increase awareness and understanding on the issue of Transphobia amongst journalists who, to judge by the feedback we got, were definitely under-informed and prejudiced.

The decision to make the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in 2009 focus on Transgender issues was the single most decisive factors that lead to the fact that Transgender Rights issues were given a prominent place in the discussions held in Paris on May 15th to follow up on the UN Statement last December.

For the first time, we initiated a common international campaign action by getting groups in different countries to stage a symbolic die-in on May 17th in remembrance of the many victims of Transphobia. The Netherlands, France, Turkey, the Philippines and Peru participated in this action.

The campaign, albeit in its very early stages, has already yielded some concrete results : in France, Health Minister Bachelot announced on the Day that France was to be the first country to officially stop considering Transsexualism as a mental disorder, in line with the campaign's demands.



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• **Other activities**

Our strategy is to engage into other adhoc advocacy and lobby actions if there is an added value for the IDAHO Committee to do so. Given our access to the French Secretary of State for Human Rights, we prompted them to diplomatic action against Burundi's intention to criminalise same-sex relationships, which participated in the Burundi Senate's decision to reject this measure. Unfortunately, this measure was later confirmed by the National Assembly.

We also raised with the diplomatic missions the case of growing homophobic attitudes in Africa, especially Senegal, Uganda and Cameroon, and in Turkey.

4 ▲ CREATING VISIBILITY

One of our main focuses this year was to create the conditions for increased visibility both for our own initiatives and for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia as a whole.

We have therefore commissioned a new web site that tries to inform on as many different activities as possible and provide a portal through which organisations who wish to take action and find inspiration, network opportunities and partners. We aim at developing this website in future around thematic directions, providing organisations also with resource material on various issues like Gender politics, HIV-AIDS, Lesbophobia, etc...

The website also aims at becoming a global mobilisation instrument, allowing the public to take action online on international campaigns as was the case for the Transphobia Appeal that is accessible to sign online.

Furthermore, we developed our contacts with journalists and the blogosphere to disseminate information and raise awareness of the Day. We developed a comprehensive media brief on the Transphobia campaign and issued a detailed media brief on the results of the 2009 International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by late May.

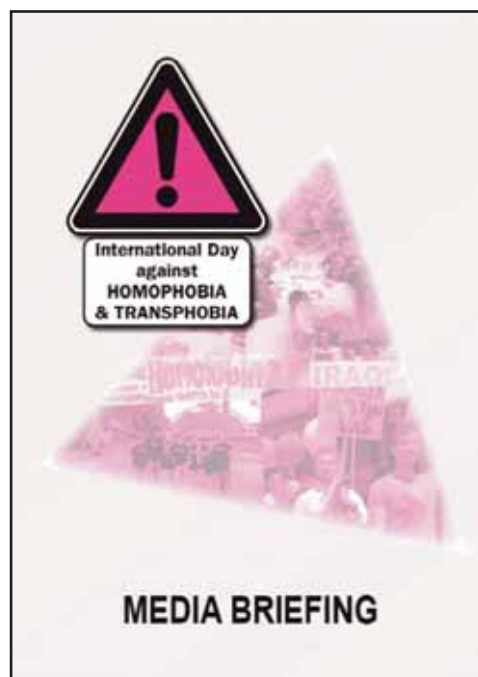
ILGA proactively supported this by providing help in disseminating initial information, appeals to contribute to, activity reports, media briefs, etc...around the world of LGBT organisations and its journalists networks.

Another dimension of the awareness raising strategy consisted in proactively supporting and participating in Video projects to be broadcast on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

In partnership with the IDAHO Committee, the international social LGBT network site GAYS.com developed a moving community-based project based on testimonies of people from all World regions sending a testimony of their pride in being

homo-, bi- or transsexual. The resulting video collage has been watched by 200 000 people online.

Also in partnership with the IDAHO Committee, the community information website Gaycliv.com edited a video collage of contributions from individuals who were invited to lip-synch to British pop-star Lilly Allen's new anti-homophobia song. The resulting video was broadcast on different websites and was viewed around 100 000 times. The idea, initially inspired by New Zealand blogger Stevie Beeshop resulted in similar projects being undertaken in other countries and posted on the artists home page.



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Some examples of activities around the world

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• Belarus	24	• Indonesia	39
• Belgium	25	• Japan	40
• Croatia	25	• Philippines	40
• France	25	• Singapore	40
• Georgia	26	5 Africa	41
• Germany	26	• Cameroon	42
• Italy	26	• Kenya	42
• Ireland	27	• Nigeria	42
• Kyrgyzstan	27	• South Africa	42
• Luxembourg	27	6 North America	43
• Netherlands	27	• Canada	44
• Russia	28	• USA	44
• Spain	28	7 Pacific	45
• Switzerland	29	• Australia	46
• Slovenia	29	• New Caledonia	46
• Turkey	29	8 Middle East	47
• United Kingdom	30	• Iran	48
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• Brasil	32		
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• Guatemala	33		
• Guyana	33		
• Jamaica	34		
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Some examples of activities around the world

It is impossible to have a comprehensive picture of all activities that were organised around the Day. As there is not one unified campaign for this Day, there is no central reporting system and this actually allows for greater ownership of the day and unleashes the creativity of activists. Yet, through intensive networking and many international contacts, we have come across a lot of information on activities that are very often organised under heavy social and political pressure, by activists who had the courage to stand up and speak out and who, whatever appreciation one might have on the relevance of their individual strategies, their advocacy tactics and the actions they undertake, share a common ideal of a world free of homophobia and transphobia, where

respect and individual responsibility will take over from hatred and social control.

This section of the report aims at highlighting the richness and diversity that the idea of an International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia triggers. It also aims at paying a sincere tribute to all activists who work all year round, mostly on a voluntary basis, to build a more tolerant and diverse future.

The following information are often just a short excerpt of more comprehensive reports that can be accessed on our website www.idahomophobia.org, where many videos of local events and international campaigns can be accessed.

1 ▲ INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

To follow up on the UN Statement (see “joint campaigning” section), the French, Dutch and Norwegian governments chose to convene a World Congress on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Paris on the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009. The Congress brought together Ministers from 15 countries, including 3 African countries, and more than 50 panellists from all



World regions, who debated during the day-long meeting to elaborate recommendations for all stakeholders. Many important contributions and statements were made during the Congress, such as the one from Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Hammarberg and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Pillay. More than 80 representatives from NGOs in the Global South and East were invited by the organising Ministries to attend the Congress, providing with significant opportunities for networking. ▲

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association ILGA now makes the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia the moment to launch its annual report on State Sponsored Homophobia. It can be accessed at www.ilga.org ▲



To celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the European Union issued a statement condemning all forms of discrimination against LGBT people. The Czech Presidency expressed its concern at Human Rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and specifically dismissed the use of the Death Penalty, torture and other inhuman or degrading treatments, arbitrary detention and infringements on the right to assembly. It also denounced the violations of economic, social and cultural rights for LGBT people. It asked all States to take adequate measures to ensure the end of these violations. In an important political step, many countries outside the EU aligned with the Statement, including Turkey and Ukraine, two countries that did not support the UN GA Statement on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. ▲



Terry Davis, Secretary

General of the Council of Europe, also made a powerful statement reminding listeners of the Nazi regime persecutions and the current level of social and State homophobia. “It is unacceptable that some people in positions of official or moral authority in Europe still behave as if the European Convention on Human Rights does not apply to homosexuals” he denounced. ▲

To mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009' focus on Transphobia, the International Gay and Lesbian Human



Rights Commission presented a report based on a dialogue with transgender activists in Latin America on the relationship between gender

identity and expression, and extreme poverty. The report highlights many issues transgender people confront, such as violence and arbitrary detention by state and non-state actors, violations of the rights to life and security of the person. Often being thrown out of their families at an early age, Trans people lack access to formal education that results in limited employment in fields other than sex work. Difficulties in exercising the right to housing, accessing appropriate health care, and moving freely within and between countries are other factors reported to keep transgender people in a situation of extreme poverty.

The report is designed for the United Nations' Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty to assist her in framing and advocating on these issues in UN debates. ▲

In Panama City, a group of United Nations agencies marked the observation of the World Day against Homophobia by declaring that homophobia and transphobia were hindering the efforts to curb the HIV epidemic in Latin America and the Caribbean. The agencies highlighted that evidence indicated that these populations are disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic. But fear of discrimination tends to dissuade people from seeking



HIV testing, counselling, care and, when applicable, treatment

The UN LAC Regional Directors' Group, representing ten UN agencies, funds, programs and

UNAIDS Secretariat working in the response to HIV in the Latin American region, has urged national government and civil society to renew efforts to eliminate homophobia and transphobia. "Countries in the region should observe the World Day against Homophobia as a way to strengthen human rights and build up more effective AIDS responses in the region," said Cesar Nunez, UNAIDS regional director for Latin America

"Stigma, discrimination and violence against homosexual, bisexual and trans people will only stop

if society works against it. It is imperative to develop a supportive environment where all people are treated with dignity and respect. All citizens are part of society regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but prejudice and repression have impeded recognition of the rights of sexual minorities," said Rebecca Grynspan, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), on behalf of the group. "Countries should use May 17 to examine their national legislation and policies, and determine how they can be improved," she said. ▲

Ahead of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a plan to encourage new and better approaches to HIV, specifically focusing on men who have sex with men and on transgender populations.

In many parts of the world HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men is more than 20 times higher than in the general population. Studies show that HIV prevention services reach only one tenth to one third of people who engage in male homosexual activity. In addition, a growing body of evidence shows that the majority of new infections in many urban areas are among men who have sex with men.

Yet, these same groups have limited access to HIV-related information and health services due to discrimination, violence, marginalization and other human rights violations. In many countries, they still face criminal sanctions and lack access to justice.

The action framework that the Agencies launched outlines several factors that impede access to HIV services: unwillingness on the part of governments and donors to invest in the sexual health of sexual minorities; the impact of social marginalization on the desire to access health-related services; fear



of violence and public exposure; fear of criminal repercussions and a lack of provision of information and services. ▲



For the International Day Against Homophobia, Human rights defence organisation Human Rights First called on governments to do more to curb homophobia by combating violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity bias. It provided an opportunity for the organisation to draw renewed attention to the group's 2008 Hate Crime Survey. Human Rights First's study focusing on Europe, the former Soviet Union, and North America shows that hate crimes against LGBT persons and their places of gathering are often more aggressive and purposely violent than other types of bias attacks. Nongovernmental and media reports reinforce the official findings that homophobic violence is frequent and on the rise in many parts of the world, yet it remains severely underreported. Human Rights First's Hate Crime Survey discusses the problem of violent hate crimes, offering practical solutions to governments. Some key findings pertaining to homophobic violence are summarized in the Fact Sheet on Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Bias, which draws attention to the rise in such attacks - manifested in the form of personal assaults and incidents of property damage - as well as the inadequate government response. ▲

For the 17th May, ARTICLE 19, an organisation aiming at protecting freedom of expression, announced the launch of a new project on freedom of expression, and sexual and gender identity. This year, ARTICLE 19 will work with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), and freedom of expression activists to raise awareness about the expression of sexual identity, and produce an advocacy manual highlighting principles and policies on the application of international freedom of expression standards and best practices in relation to sexual and gender identity. ARTICLE 19 firmly believes that freedom of expression standards and principles can and should be used to further advance and protect the rights of LGBT. ▲

In a testimony of the very strong negative impact of Homophobia and Transphobia on the fight against HIV-AIDS, the World Aids Campaign issued a Statement on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and invited the public to sign on to the Transphobia Appeal. ▲

For the first time the Institute of Development Studies celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia by asking « Why is Development so straight? And what can we do about it? » The panel discussion included a display of quotes and facts about homophobia in the development industry, and was followed by a party. ▲

Launched in Britain to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the Day in Hand international project aims to fight against homophobia and transphobia by inviting same-sex couples to come out and hold hands in public. According to initiator David Watkins, "holding hands with your partner, where you can, is about being true to yourself and to those you love. This is not a protest, a rally, a Pride or a march. This is about you and the life you lead every day." The initiative is going on at



www.dayinhand.com ▲

Homophobia and Transphobia, although very real, were also fought virtually this year on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, as a dance party was organised on virtual world website « Second Life ». ▲

EUROPE



• **Azerbaijan**

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was marked by the only LGBT NGO in Azerbaijan, "Gender & Development", at their local office in Baku.



© Gender and Development Baku

The event was attended by more than 50 representatives of other human rights related NGOs, in particular by members of «Clean

World» NGO and youth group «Dalga». LGBT activists distributed badges calling for the fight against homophobia and to halt the spread of AIDS.

• **Baltic countries**

The first Baltic Friendship Days took place in Riga between 15 and 17 May 2009. The event was organised jointly by Lithuania Gay League, Tolerant Youth association (Lithuania), Latvian Alliance of LGBT People and Their Friends – Mozaika, and Estonian LGBT Youth Association.

The March was initially allowed by the City Council, then banned following political pressure by some City



© Uldis Briedis / Diena

Council members, and eventually allowed again after the ban had been successfully challenged in the court just hours before it was due to take place.

The march drew together a few hundred people from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and other countries, as well as representatives of various organisations, including ILGA-Europe and Amnesty International.

But the peaceful march also unleashed extreme ho-



© R Olins / apollo

mophobic reactions with counter-demonstrations displaying brutal incitement to violence, although for the first time there was no reports of cases of harassment or brutality and the Baltic Pride marchers could leave the venue without being escorted in police buses.

• **Belarus**

For the second year running, LGBT activists in Belarus celebrated the month against homophobia, ending on May 17th. Events were organised not only in Minsk but also in Grodno and Luninets. Every day, several events were scheduled, including screenings of LGBT movies, roundtable discussions, parties, but also remembrances ceremonies. On April 26th, LGBT activists planned on taking part with the rainbow flag in the annual march commemorating the victims of Chernobyl in Minsk but were banned by organisers. On May 14th, a group of 12 Belarusian activists travelled to Moscow to take part in the Slavic Pride. They were all arrested by Russian police forces and detained for a few hours, with their embassies denying them assistance.



Activists from the region are planning to hold the next Slavic Pride in Minsk in May 2010, which will provide an important area of focus for the work of the IDAHO Committee.

• Belgium

The country officially recognised the Day as far back as 2005.

For a few years now, the week ahead of May 17th has been celebrated as the « Rainbow Week » in Francophone/Walloon part of Belgium (Wallonie) and many activities are organised throughout the region, some of which explicitly with reference to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. This year, the Wallonie regional Council supported the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by distributing thousands of pin badges



with the logo of the regional umbrella organisation « Arc-en-Ciel Wallonie » that was chosen as a symbol of the Day. This initiative was supported by the Government, all of Wallonie's major cities, many MPs, etc...

Politicians, celebrities, civil servants

and the wider public were invited to display this badge, which was widely distributed and displayed during the Belgian LGBT Pride on May 16th.

Other activities organised across the country included film screenings, exhibitions, concerts, conferences, ...

The Belgian Army also engaged in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia with an internal awareness raising campaign promoting sexual diversity. This campaign included a poster on homophobia that was distributed across the various units of the Army throughout the country.

• Croatia

This year, representatives from the centre for sexual and gender minorities Iskorak and the lesbian group Kontra sent a proposal to the Croatian Parliament for declaring May 17 to be the national day against homophobia. They also asked the government to mark this day by developing a national strategy to combat homophobia and to take action to promote an anti-homophobia public campaign.

Activists from both organisations distributed pamphlets in Zagreb in support of their demands.

At the same time, following up on Croatia's involve-

ment in the group of leading « core countries » that lead on the UN Declaration in December 2008, the Croatian Ambassador to France addressed the Paris World Congress on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity by committing its country to combat discrimination. This Declaration was followed by Serbia's State Secretary for Human and Minority Rights in turn calling for a better enforcement of Serbia's anti-discrimination laws.

• France

Once more, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia has been celebrated in France very actively throughout the country, including in many small towns where it often constitutes a main annual opportunity for political and/or cultural LGBT initiatives.

The International Day Against Homophobia and



Transphobia traditionally kicks off Pride season with first marches being organised at this occasion, such as in the city of Angers.

But more than 100 IDAHO-specific activities were also reported, ranging from film festivals to exhibitions, forums, performances....

And many "regular" arts performances playing during the month of May devoted one evening to the celebration of the IDAHO.

This year, given its special emphasis of the Day on Transphobia, the Paris International Trans Film Festival was made to coincide with the IDAHO. This issue also provided the theme of the annual IDAHO conference at the National Assembly (Lower House), attended by a large audience of policy makers and opinion leaders. The conference proved a decisive initiative as France thereafter announced it would officially break away from the World Health Organisation's categorisation and stop considering Trans people as having "mental disorders". The Day also provided a moment for remembrance of LGBT victims throughout History and specifically during the Nazi regime, with a ceremony that was attended by Secretary of State for Human Rights Rama Yade.

In Paris Town Hall, the National organisation "SOS Homophobie" released its annual report on violence

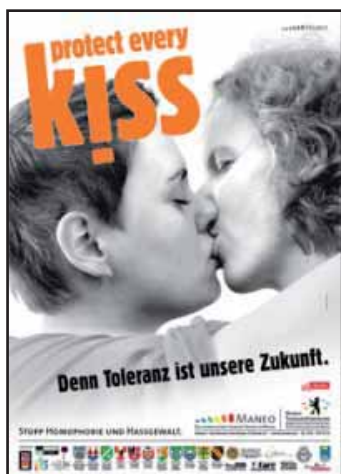
against LGBT people and celebrated its 15th anniversary under the patronage of Mayor Delanoë. As part of the wider IDAHO campaign against Transphobia, the many Trans activists from all continents who were in Paris for the World Congress on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (see above) joined in a Transphobia protest orchestrated by several Trans groups in a symbolic die-in action to commemorate the victims of Transphobia. And of course, many IDAHO-parties and dance evenings marked the Day across the country.

• Georgia

On May 20th, the Heinrich Böll Foundation office in Tbilisi hosted a discussion entitled "Homophobia: from private to public space", with participation of the Inclusive Foundation, a Georgian LGBT NGO. Part of the discussion was dedicated specifically to the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. However, debates were interrupted by members of the Orthodox Parents Union, a paralegal group endorsed by the Georgian Church, showing how intrusive homophobia is in the country.

• Germany

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia in Germany marked the end of a month long anti-homophobia campaign orchestrated by Berlin's anti-violence project MANEO. This campaign included actions like the 1500-strong demonstration in front of a Berlin ice-cream parlour who shocked customers by displaying homophobic attitudes.



A highlight of the campaign was the award of the 2009 European Tolerantia-Prizes and for the first time the 2009 MANEO Award. The German-French-Polish-Spanish initiative known as the Berlin Alliance Against Homophobia

awards the Tolerantia-Prize in recognition of outstanding involvement in the fight against homophobia and hate crimes in Europe.

On Sunday 17th a crowd of people, amongst them many prominent politicians, gathered at the monument in Berlin's Tiergarten Park.

Also, as a part of a wider video project to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009 (see « other actions » section), web sites Gays.com and Gays.de disseminated a special message by Michael Kauch, a gay German MP from the Free Democratic Party, supporting the fight against homophobia and transphobia.

• Italy

In Italy, to celebrate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 12 organisations and trade unions launched a national campaign named « Intolerant Anonymous ».

While of course denouncing homophobic and transphobic acts and attitudes, the campaign insisted on the need to provide "support and compassion to those suffering from the nasty illness of homophobia, that leaves them enslaved to hatred".

The campaign developed its specific visual materials and created a dedicated website www.intollerantianonimi.it to raise awareness of the situation of homophobia and Transphobia and support activities of Arcigay members in 35 cities across the country,



© Arcigay

from northern Genoa to Sicily, with a special emphasis put on Verona and Naples, two cities particularly plagued by homophobia. Dozens of initiatives took place, including many concerts, press conferences, public postings of the campaign posters, public debates on homophobia and gala events. During one of these gala events, the annual « Golden Pegasus » Prize was awarded by Arcigay to personalities supporting the LGBT cause.

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia also provided the occasion to publish and disseminate an updated version of the National Report on Homophobia. The report was sent to the media, to policy makers and to local and national institutions.

• Ireland

On May 17th, The national LGBT youth organisation BeLonG To celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, together with MarriageEquality, Transgender Equality Network, Gay Community News, OUTHouse, the Gay & Lesbian Equality Network and the Gay Health Network. Together, these organisations called on the Government to introduce measures to end hate crimes against members of the LGBT community. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth. The organisations released balloons at a Dublin ceremony to draw attention to homophobic bullying and harassment that young people experience in their schools and communities in Ireland and the fact that homosexuality is punishable by death or imprisonment in other countries. In a powerful testimony of how much attitudes have changed recently in the country, religious services to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia were held in various churches, including Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, as well as Cork and Belfast. The services were organised by Changing Attitude Ireland, the Christian pro-gay network which is working within the Churches for full affirmation of LGBT persons. In Belfast's oldest Church, St George's, the theme was "Don't Throw Stones" and organisers said it was an important step in showing solidarity by Christians with Northern Ireland's gay community, given the Churches' historical tradition of prejudice against persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

• Kyrgyzstan

For the first time in Kyrgyzstan an arts festival named "Rainbow Kyrgyzstan" commemorating the International Day Against Homo- and Transphobia was held in Bishkek on 17-20 May. The festival was prepared and organized by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organization "Labrys", which works on defence and promotion of rights of LGBT people of Kyrgyzstan.

The program of the arts festival included round tables and discussions on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity with the participation of gender experts, medical specialists and human rights defenders. It also included an exhibition of photographic works by LGBT communities of Kyrgyzstan and the CIS, a community-prepared "Queer Quilt", and readings of lesbian poetry. The festival also saw the launch of the first social photo-comic book titled "Road to Myself" covering problems of transgender people in Kyrgyzstan.

• Luxembourg

Ahead of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the Luxembourg Green Party tabled a motion in the Luxembourg Parliament, urging the Government to officially recognize the 17th of May as International Day Against Homophobia. The motion attracted unanimous support and Luxembourg thus joins the group of countries that officially recognise the Day. This initiative of the Green Party was explicitly prompted by the need to support activists in Eastern Europe, where homophobia is still extreme.

The Luxembourg Government has committed to now encourage and support awareness raising actions on May 17th to combat homophobia and transphobia.

The national LGBT organisation Rosa Letzebuerg organised a film screening of the documentary « A Jihad for Love » and other activities.

• Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the national network and LGBT defence group COC has taken a leading role in facilitating the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia actions in the country.

COC organised various initiatives, amongst which a debate for the heads of the candidate lists to the European Elections on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. The debate was attended by the heads of the 6 lists and two other list representatives and attracted around 100 visitors.



© Leiden Action / COC Netherlands

COC Netherlands also joined other Amsterdam based groups in a street protest against Trans- and homophobia that was part of a wider international mobilisation action against Transphobia within the international IDAHO campaign.

Local branches of COC organised various activities calling for attention to international solidarity. COC

Leiden, in partnership with Amnesty International, and COC Rotterdam organised activities around marathons that took place those days.

COC in addition joined Amnesty Netherlands together with the Socialist Party (SP) in organising events around the pride marches. These took place on May 16th and involved members of the Amsterdam city council in a debate on their role on international solidarity. A declaration was agreed upon by city council members calling for increased international solidarity. City council members agreed to raise LGBT issues in 'sister-relations' with other cities, to advocate for the position of LGBT members within their own (international) parties and to support the initiation of an international LGBT solidarity fund in Amsterdam.

• Russia

2009 marks the fifth celebration of IDAHO in Russia. The main IDAHO event in Russia since 2006 is the "Moscow Pride" which is organised by Gay Russia and takes place every year in May. Over the years, "Moscow Pride" has become a very symbolic fight for freedom of assembly and freedom of expression that goes much further than the borders of the LGBT community. Each Moscow Pride press conference welcomes 50 to 100 journalists giving a unique chance to promote LGBT rights throughout the country.

This year, the 4th Moscow Pride, rebranded as the "Slavic Gay Pride", was organized together with the coordinators for IDAHO in Belarus. The event featured a two days conference that took place on May 14th and May 15th outside Moscow and gathered



© Gay Russia

65 to 70 participants. The Mayor of Moscow, like every year, banned the Slavic Gay Pride march planned for May 16th, the day of the Eurovision Song Contest Finale. Despite the ban, around 50 persons

gathered and had to face a violent police crackdown that was broadcasted around the world.

Peter Tatchell, a supporter of the IDAHO campaigns in Russia since 2005, was awarded the International Slavic Pride Award for his 40 years of campaigning on gay rights. Vladimir Ivanov, a Russian film director, was awarded the Russian Slavic Pride Award for his aid in organizing the largest video archives in the LGBT community.

Ahead of the Day, GayRussia had started a campaign for same sex marriage equality in Russia supporting a couple of two lesbians who attempted to register a marriage in Moscow.

In solidarity, the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Samuel Žbogar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, expressed his concern about the action taken against the organisers of the Moscow Pride Parade. The Statement emphasised that " People belonging to sexual minorities enjoy the same right to freedom of expression and to freedom of assembly as any other individual within the jurisdiction of a member state of the Council of Europe"

In St Petersburg, "Coming out" LGBT organization and organisation LesbiPARTYya marched in the city with balloons and handed out leaflets advocating against homophobia before letting off balloons which flew over the city.



© Coming Out St Petersburg

An open discussion "Transsexuals have Rights!" on the definition of transsexualism, a diagnostic criterion of transsexualism and transsexuals' state in Russian society was held in Moscow on May 25th.

• Spain

The FELGTB, Spain's major LGBT umbrella organisation coordinated a campaign to encourage actions to be held on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia in the different Provinces,

Regions and different cities across Spain.

This year, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia campaign in Spain focused on education, titling "Educating in Equality". All campaign material was made in all Spanish languages (Spanish, catalá, galego, euskera and astur). The campaign aimed at denouncing the lack of attention the school system gives to the concerns of LGBT youth and included awareness raising actions amongst educators, the development of a series of pedagogic materials on sexual orientation and gender identity and the draft of a protocol in order that the professionals who work with minors - educational, sanitary, etc. - know how to address LGBT youth.

The campaign developed a Manifiesto that was sent to every one of the 54 organisations members of FELGTB and later sent to the regional and local institutions for them to endorse officially. FELGTB also sent to its member organisations online banners and posters that were used for all actions around the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia campaign.



© FELGBT

On May 17th FELGTB also delivered its "Feathers and Whip" Prize, which rewards and blames LGBT rights promoters and opponents.

FELGTB also engaged in direct initiatives to advocate with different institutions to fight against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

As a direct result of four years of lobby work by activists contacting not only political parties at the national Parliament and government office, but also in the majority of the 6,000 local councils of Spain, the Spanish Parliament took a historic decision on May

5th to ask the Government to recognise officially the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. This decision was supported by all political parties and is bound to follow through, allowing Spain to join the list of countries that officially recognize the Day.

As a reminder of the situation of homophobia and transphobia around the world and to denounce the growing homophobia in Morocco, tens of activists of Colega, another Spanish LGBT organisation, and Moroccan LGBT organisation KifKif covered their heads in black hoods to stage a protest action in Valencia in front of the Moroccan consulate. Colega also promoted a declaration that was endorsed by Malaga City Council calling for May 17th to be recognised as an official date and promoted a declaration against homophobia and transphobia that was endorsed unanimously by the Andalusia Parliament.

• Switzerland

Geneva's High Council adopted an anti-homophobia motion to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

This comes as a welcome support in the preparation of the national Conference against homophobia to take place in September, and to the work of the many organisations constituting the Geneva LGBT federation.

• Slovenia

Organisations Skuk and Mestna Obcina organised a concert on the eve of the Day and invited to join the international "A Day in Hand" initiative (see international initiatives).

• Turkey

Around 300 people took part in a Rally against Homophobia organised by the gay rights group Kaos GL. The group carried boards reading, "Transphobia



© Kaos GL

kills", and "Homophobia kills" referring to violence against homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals in recent months. The rainbow flag that the crowd had carried during the march was draped around the Human Rights Monument.

The demonstration ended with a press statement, which called for the acknowledgement of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites and transsexuals : "As LGBTT individuals, we are still deprived of basic human rights. (...) With discriminatory laws, we are kept from our professions. Our right to life is violated, we are exposed to violence, we are killed in hate crimes. The police never finds the perpetrators. Courts offer reductions in sentences for the murderers of homosexuals and transsexuals."

Lambda Istanbul and other organisations joined the march.

In an encouraging signal for possible future political changes, the Turkish State supported the Statement made by the EU for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia saying that "discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity is incompatible with the basic principles on which the UE is founded".

• United Kingdom

There were well over 100 events and initiatives in the UK to mark IDAHO 2009.

Marking the day, Lord Malloch-Brown, Foreign and



© AP

Commonwealth Office Minister, said: "Human rights are universal they should not be determined by sexual orientation or gender identity. We welcome the strong message that IDAHO events around the

world send to those who seek to deny these rights."

In London, one hundred people were arrested on May 17th as part of a police swoop on hate crimes relating to domestic violence and homophobia or transphobia. The Operation, called Athena, was

being carried out to mark International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. All through the Day, LGBT London Metropolitan police liaison officers and LGBT activists gave advice on hate crime and raised awareness of IDAHO itself in Trafalgar Square.

In Liverpool, the Rainbow Flag was raised for the first time on the Town Hall on the Day as part of a remembrance initiative for a gay teenager who had been beaten to death 10 months before. All police stations in Liverpool flew the Rainbow flag, as did numerous local authorities, police stations, educational establishments and even private businesses around the country to mark IDAHO day.

Rainbow flags also flew from a host of public buildings in Manchester, including dozens of police stations, as part of The Lesbian and Gay Foundation's "Flying the Flag" campaign funded by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities. The City Council also held it's 4th annual Consultation Day with members of the city's LGB & T community. (photo "Peter Fahy...")

The IDAHO theme of "Respect Gender Identity, End Transphobia" was heavily publicised in the UK, as for example at the high profile "Faith, Homophobia and Human Rights Conference" conference, which saw the participation of Kyrgyz LGBT organization La-brys.

The trade union UNISON brought out a press release on IDAHO day giving its support for the campaign. The Trade Union Congress also brought out a statement in support of IDAHO, and a major TUC IDAHO event involving MEP Michael Cashman was held in Birmingham.

Other IDAHO events included speeches by local politicians and campaigners, the shouting and screaming of "a minute's noise against homophobia and transphobia", the release of balloons representing countries which criminalise homosexuality, readings, public hearings and consultations between authorities and LGBTI groups, etc...

Many groups have now firmly put May 17th on their annual calendar, like for example Gay Surrey who organize a yearly public festival.

LATIN / CENTRAL AMERICA & CARIBBEAN



• Argentina

In Argentina, the organisation Area Queer NOA and the LGBT library "Crisàlida" organised a concert to mark the Day and demanded its official recognition in the country's official calendar.

• Bolivia

For the second year running, the Government of Bolivia supported the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by broadcasting at national level a TV spot calling for the respect of Human Rights for LGBT people. The Government also committed to edit some specific campaign material on the issue of Transphobia, following the international focus of the 2009 Day. Taking note of the commitment of the national authorities to combat homophobia and transphobia, the 45 organisations that have formed the national alliance "Colectivo TLGB de Bolivia" called on the government to officially recognise the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Also for the second year running, the organisation Fundación Igualdad LGBT organised with its partners and with the financial support of HIVOS the Film Festival of sexual diversity in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The festival screened about 30 films, complemented by other activities aimed at creating a "forum for sexual diversity".

• Brasil

To celebrate the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, many dozens of activities took place in as many as 52 cities across all of Brazil's 27 States, as well as at national level, proving once more how vibrant the country's



© ABGLT

LGBT activism is. Activities included outreach actions, conferences, festivals, local anti-homophobia campaign launches, etc...

Local groups developed specific campaigning material, including videos against homophobia.

Various organisations called for the regional or national authorities to recognise the IDAHO as an official event in their calendar, as is already the case for some States like Pará. In Rio, various organisations involved in the "Nao Homofobia" campaign (www.naohomofobia.com.br) aiming at criminalising homophobia launched the campaign "Rio for the World Day to combat Homophobia" with an array of activities including roundtables, seminars, marches, outreach activities in public places and beaches, with the participation of many officials, MPs and Ministers.

Sao Paulo also witnessed a large range of public actions, including a march that ended in front of the City Hall.

At national level, various seminars were organised by the national umbrella organisation ABGLT and the Parliamentary Front for LGBT Citizenship in conjunction with authorities, Ministries and the National Congress.

A Member of the Federal Parliament addressed the plenary of the Chamber of Deputies on the importance of the fight against homophobia and transphobia.

A demonstration in support for the nation-wide "Nao Homofobia" campaign was held in the National Congress and the President's Special Secretariat for Human Rights launched the National Plan for the Promotion of LGBT Citizenship and Human Rights.

• Chile

The Chilean Transgender organisation "Organización de Transexuales por la Dignidad de la Diversidad OTD" celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by holding a public forum in Santiago with representatives of the LGBT community and with a workshop on the Universal Periodic Review. The organisation was also active in Rancagua where a public debate was organised in cooperation with the Regional Secretary of Government and included police officers, detectives, City council employees, representatives from the health and the education authorities, etc..;

• **Colombia**

The LGBT group « Fundación Organización acción Humanista » organised a conference under the title «Homophobia is an illness – take a cure»



© Fundación Organización acción Humanista

• **Cuba**

President Raul Castro's daughter Mariela Castro, an outspoken gay rights advocate who directs Cuban Sex Education Center (CENESEX), led hundreds of Cuban gays in a street dance on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia to draw attention to LGBT rights on the island.

Participants formed a carnival-style conga line around two city blocks accompanied by the beat of drums and by costumed stilt-walkers. The event also included educational panels, conferences and presentations of books, magazines and CDs about gay rights and sexual diversity.



© Havana Times

Parliament speaker President Ricardo Alarcon attended the program's opening, in a testimony of how Cuba had advanced in recent years in the area of gay rights.

• **Ecuador**

To see how Ecuador's new constitutional and legal changes could translate into real changes for LGBT people in the country, the organisations "Fundación Amigos por la Vida" and "Defensoría del Pueblo del Guayas" organised a public forum to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

• **Guatemala**

Educators and activists of the Unidos project of the national network « Red Nacional de la Diversidad Sexual y VIH en Guatemala » took to the streets to display banners demanding equity and equality in rights for LGBT citizens of Guatemala. The banners were raised in front of official buildings, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the National programme on HIV and STD, the Ministry of Labour, the Metropolitan Cathedral, the City hall, the National Monument, the central park, etc...



© Red Nacional de la Diversidad Sexual y VIH en Guatemala

• **Guyana**

In Guyana, transphobic violence and discrimination came in for much attention earlier this year when a group of people verbally and physically attacked some 'cross-dressers'. The escalated confrontation led to the 'cross-dressers' being detained and charged. Days later, police unleashed a series of crackdowns in downtown Georgetown against 'cross-dressers'.

In the face of government inaction, the Guyana association SASOD has embarked on several initiatives to raise awareness and educate Guyanese on transphobia, violence and discrimination, including actions on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, as part of a collective under a joint UN inter-agency HIV project on sexual and gender minorities.

• **Jamaica**

In a country plagued with homophobia incited by hate preaching music, activists risked to raise a rainbow flag over Kingston in a symbolic act to draw attention to the three major factors that, according to LGBT organisations, are the driving force to homophobia : the Dancehall music, the Church and the Government.

• **Mexico**

Despite the fact that the Cámara de Diputados (lower House) passed the decree that recognised the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia in 2007, the document still hasn't been signed by President Calderón and therefore the Day still hasn't made its way into the country's Official Calendar.

On the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2009, organisations representing LGBTI constituencies and other Human Rights organisations including Amnesty International reminded the Presidency of its obligations and denounced its procrastination that parallels its support to Vatican-promoted religious initiatives.

Stands were held in Mexico City to collect signatures and a delegation drove at the end of the Day to the President's Office to hand them over.



© Gabriel Gutierrez Garcia

Meanwhile, the Catholic Apostolic Church of Mexico issued a communiqué on Sunday May 17th to denounce homophobia and calling on the Church to take a leading role to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and to respect the Christian message of love.

Other initiatives were organised for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, including Radio W organising a week-long campaign for sexual diversity to mark the Internatio-

nal Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. Programmes included broadcasting debates, programmes on LGBT reality and radio spots against homophobia and transphobia.

• **Peru**

In Peru, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was linked to the national day against hate crimes, celebrated on May 31st. On this day, a march was organised by Colectivo Marcha del Orgullo Lima, to commemorate the LGBT people victims of hate crimes. Inspired from an old Andean tradition, a "Kipu" was made by tying together pieces of rainbow coloured cloth bearing the names of the victims. In the evening, another march went through the city centre, displaying a rainbow flag -covered coffin.



© Diario de Lima Gay

In other cities in Peru, like Trujillo or Chiclayo, similar activities were organised.

• **Puerto Rico**

The 2nd Educational Congress against Homophobia took place between May 7-17, 2009 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The congress addressed problems of prejudice related to sexual orientation or gender identity in Puerto Rico and to raise awareness about how these types of discrimination are detrimental to respect for diversity, to dignity, and to basic human rights, the pillars of democratic society.

Activities of the congress included film screenings, lectures, round tables, public debates, music, theatre, and performances. Issues debated ranged from the consequences of Prop 8 on the capacity to envisage same-sex marriage in Puerto Rico to the reality of transphobia in the Puerto Rican context.

The Congress ended with a march.

Co-sponsors and organizers included the Puerto Rico chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International, the Committee against Homophobia and Discrimination, Puerto Rico Queer Filmfest, graduate students from the School of Social Work at the University of Puerto Rico, and support groups such as PLIEGOS, Metamorphosis, and Puerto Rico para tod@s.

- **Venezuela**

On May 17th, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was marked in Caracas by a cultural and political event named « City of Equality and Diversity ». With support of UNAIDS, the City council and other entities, the Venezuelan LGBT civil society organisation Lambda coordinated the initiative consisting of organising a space for stands for LGBT organisation, but also others like the Fundacion Cultura Chacao or the City Council.

Concerts, dance performances and other artistic events marked the day.

The event allowed for signatures to be collected in favour of a proposal by a Member of Parliament to extend the current bill on Gender Equality and Equity to include the protection of the economic rights of same-sex couples through registered partnerships and the right to free gender identity of Trans people.

During the event, the City Council reiterated its commitment to legislate in order to prohibit and sanction all discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Caracas.

ASIA



• Cambodia

In Cambodia, 11th-17th May saw LGBT people coming out to celebrate Phnom Penh Pride which was made to coincide with the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Events included the queer film festival that showed a range of films from hugely inspirational international struggles, to love stories and comedies exploring LGBT themes. A range of SE Asian queer films ensured the film festival was proudly Asian. Pride events also included a very special viewing of the freshly released 'Khnoyom chea neck na?' Cambodia's first lesbian film.



© Phnom Penh Pride

Further art exhibitions, drag shows, games, beauty pageants, and lots of parties marked the week that also provided an important opportunity to hold workshops for the Khmer LGBT community to let their voice be heard.

Pride 09 was the culmination of a huge collaboration between Khmer NGO's, local businesses, LGBT volunteers and international NGO's. International LGBT groups, amongst which the IDAHO Committee and Russian IDAHO Coordinator Gay-Russia further provided both moral and financial support, a powerful statement of unity as many of these countries are themselves facing struggles against homophobia and discrimination. This support allowed for LGBT people from remote provinces to come and attend the events.

• China

Rainbow in Motion, the Beijing multi-campus Bike Ride on 09' International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), was launched on May 17 to celebrate gay pride, raise awareness of LGBT rights and introduce IDAHO to the LGBT community and general public of mainland China.

Close to 100 students and their friends participated in this public event. The team visited seven university campuses, where they were welcomed by dozens of on-campus volunteers.

Large rainbow flags with the May 17th IDAHO logo were put up. More than 5000 copies of reading materials and little gifts were given out, including pamphlets of "The ABC of Homosexuality", postcards introducing IDAHO, stickers and buttons with rainbow colours and IDAHO logo, and many rainbow-coloured bracelets. Also, hundreds of signatures from the students were collected on a banner titling "Understand LGBT people, say no to discrimina-



© Common Language / Tongyalulu

tion. Build a harmonious society".

Rainbow in Motion was co-organized by Common Language and Aibai Culture and Education Center, two pioneering organizations that have been working on LGBT rights in China for years.

• Hong Kong

More than 200 gays, lesbians and their supporters marched to the government headquarters on May 17th to protest against the lack of laws to ensure equal rights, under the motto "love is not a crime, hate is not a family value".



Members of 20 groups, two political parties and seven religious organizations joined in to mark the city's fifth participation in the annual International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and protest against the Democratic Party's opposition to discussions over the inclusion of sexual minorities in the Domestic Violence Ordinance.

More than two dozen demonstrators later staged their fourth "die-in" outside the Legislative Council to condemn "indifference" to their plight.

A few days after this action, the Hong Kong Government announced that the Domestic Violence Ordinance will eventually have an amendment to include same sex couples, a decision directly to the credit of the activists' mobilisation.

• Indonesia

More LGBT organizations than ever joined in the celebrations for the International Day Against Ho-



© Arus Pelangi

mophobia and Transphobia, not only in the capital Jakarta but also in other cities like Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Makassar, and even in the strict-Islamic city of Banda Aceh.

Under the motto «Join hands, celebrate diversity», festivities started with a march in Jakarta where colourful demonstrators handed gifts and flowers to the pleasantly surprised public and staged speeches, songs and drama. The programme for IDAHO included public discussions, one of which was organized by a student organization of the State Islamic University with around 300 students attending it.

In the birthplace of the international Yogyakarta Principles, the local LGBT network staged a peaceful demonstration demanding the end of discrimination and violence against LGBT. The demonstration, with the theme "No more violence in the midst of Diversity" was preceded by public discussions on 'The Acceptance of LGBT by Their Families' and a Photo Exhibition and an Art Performance.

Subaraya, the second largest city in Indonesia witnessed a day-long open-air event on 17 May, consisting of an NGO bazaar, talk show, film screening and 'edutainment'. The theme was "Together, Diverse with No Limits". The evening program was filled with a series of art performances by trans, gay, lesbian groups: theatre, dance, lip-sync etc.

Meanwhile in Makassar, activists organised a peaceful street action in the city centre distributing leaflets and flowers to passers-by.

The organisation GAYa Nusantara got invited to a popular TV show to discuss IDAHO 2009, reaching out to a large audience with lively debates. The organisation Arus Pelangi, a driving force behind IDAHO activities in Indonesia, also organised specifically a "Die-in" action in solidarity with the victims of Transphobia. This action was part of an international action within the IDAHO Transphobia campaign.

• Japan

In Japan, a network "Yappa Ai (Love) daho!" was established in 2007 and has carried out a march "Say Yes! to Diverse Sexuality" every year since. Symposiums and lectures as well as exhibitions were also held on this day across the nation.

In 10 Japanese cities including Sendai, Tokyo, Chiba, Osaka, Ehime and Fukuoka, LGBT and their supporters addressed people on the streets by reading out loud messages written by LGBT, their friends and families and sent to the organizers of the events ahead of May 17th.

In some cases, the speakers also distributed IDAHO leaflets in support of the action.

In Shizuoka, a symposium on LGBT rights was organized prior to the Day.



© Labornet Japan

In the wake of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the Tokyo Pride Festival was held on 23 May. Some 3500 people gathered at the Yoyogi Park, Shibuya, Tokyo. The event received the backing of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. There were live music and dance performances, conferences and other public events.

• Philippines

As part of the cross-national action that was organised within the IDAHO campaign against transphobia, Task Force Pride of the Philippines, with active leadership from the Society of Transsexual Women of the Philippines (STRAP), organised a die-in in solidarity with Trans-people murdered around the world. The video of the event can be watched on www.idahomophobia.org

• Singapore

Hundreds of people rallied in Singapore for the first ever "Pink Dot" festival, celebrating sexual diversity and tolerance. Speeches and performances marked the day. Participants, all wearing pink, grouped to form the word "Love" against the green grass of the park and finally all assembled in a giant pink dot, releasing hundreds of pink balloons. The video of the event can be watched on www.idahomophobia.org

AFRICA



• Cameroon

On IDAHO, activists of the Cameroon LGBT organisation ADEFHO proposed to interact with the public through the radio station Sweet FM. Insults, threats and threats for the gas chamber were part of the reaction they got. Nevertheless, the programme certainly allowed some facts and figures to be announced and will surely have contributed to make some mentalities change. According to ADEFHO members, "in countries like Cameroon, the global nature of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is a valuable argument to open up spaces to dialogue and lend support to grassroots activists."

Meanwhile LGBT defence organisation "Alternatives Cameroun" organised a workshop in Douala where 84 participants reflected on various elements of the situation of LGBT people and developed strategies to combat homophobia and transphobia.

• Kenya

The International Day Against Homophobia was marked on Sunday, May 17. The Kenya National Human Rights Commission, the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK), and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission posted a newspaper advert that quoted President Mwai Kibaki's pledge last year to protect people's rights and freedoms.

The advert also quoted the South African Nobel Peace Laureate and Anglican cleric, Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "It is impossible to keep quiet when people are frequently hounded, vilified, molested and even killed as targets of homophobia for something they did not choose - their sexual orientation."

• Nigeria

In a country where the Death Penalty for same-sex behaviour is still active in some provinces under Muslim law, it is a brave act to stand up against homophobia. In a news briefing, officials of The Independent Project for Equal Rights (TIPER) and The International Centre for Sexual Reproductive Rights (INCREASE) unveiled an appeal that urged the three tiers of government to stop discriminating against homosexuals, lesbians and gay people.

The House Of Rainbow Metropolitan Community Church in Lagos also issued a press statement to remind the government, religious bodies, media, people and society that they have a responsibility in protecting all members of society. The statement drew attention to the current violent homophobic articles in the Nigerian press, calling for more responsible attitudes from the media.

• South Africa

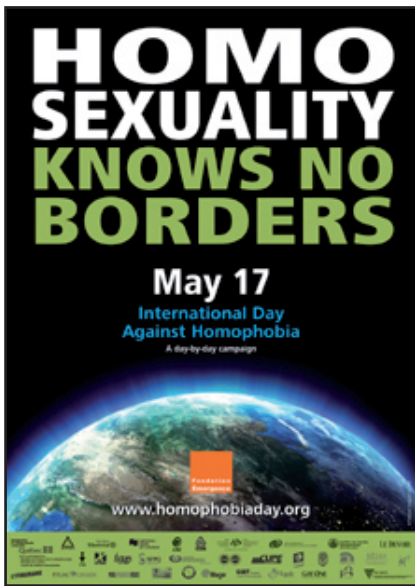
In South Africa, the Trans people's network Gender Dynamix disseminated the International Appeal against Transphobia and for the Respect of Gender Identity that marked this year's global IDAHO campaign. This resulted in South African LGBT organisations massively supporting the appeal, together with more than 300 other organisations across the globe.

NORTH AMERICA



• **Canada**

For some years now, Quebec based Fondation Emergence, who launched in Canada a Day Against Homophobia celebrated initially in June, has actively been championing the promotion of the International Day and impulses a great diversity of actions all over the country. This year, the Fondation Emergence launched a campaign titled "homosexuality knows no borders" and developed campaign material and toolkits for action. It provides a detailed activity report on www.homophobiaday.com



On May 17th, the Canadian Labour Congress issued a statement to support the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. The statement read that "On May 17th, the Canadian Labour

movement stands in solidarity with lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities and affirms our commitment to fight homophobia and transphobia (...) because we know that an injury to one is an injury to all".

• **USA**

First activities for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia were organised this year in the USA and links have been established with activists and organisations around the country for more future actions.



© Rainbowfund

In San Francisco, activists came together over the course of a one-hour fund-raising rally for the LGBT solidarity "Rainbow Fund" that was put under the sign of protest against the killings and torture of LGBT Iraqis.

In Chicago too, protesters gathered to show solidarity with Iraqi gays and others targeted around the world for their LGBTQ identity or behaviour. The protest was organized by the Gay Liberation Network.



© Gay Liberation Network

PACIFIC



• **Australia**

To mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, ACON, Australia's biggest GLBT health promotion agency, organised with many other LGBT organisations various events in Sydney, including public debates on same-sex adoption.

The organisation also launched its project of an online photo gallery where participants can upload pictures of themselves with messages that challenge homophobia or celebrate diversity and social inclusion. The gallery can be accessed at www.thisisoz.com.au

Olympic champion Matthew Mitcham, MTV VJ Ruby Rose, Greens Leader Sen. Bob Brown and former High Court judge Michael Kirby are among many famous and everyday faces that are part of this new campaign to fight discrimination against Australia's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

Still in Sydney, Community Action Against Homophobia (CAAH) held a rally aptly beneath the 'I have a dream' mural in Newtown. The main aims of the rally were to call for the legalisation of same sex marriage in Australia, highlight the need to tackle transphobia and continue working towards an end to homophobia globally. A range of speakers



© ACON

came together to speak out against homophobia and discrimination against gays and lesbians. People called upon the Australian government to legalise same sex marriage and governments around the world to de-

criminalise homosexuality. Several individuals from the LGBT community organised a photo exhibition displayed in Sydney but also accessible online at <http://idahosydney.wordpress.com/>.

To make the general population in Victoria and,

more specifically, ethno-cultural communities of all backgrounds, more aware of issues related to sexual identity the Anti Violence Project of Victoria Inc. (VicAVP) organised a series of events ranging from concerts to conferences and even bingo !

Linking to other similar initiatives in the country, VicAVP launched a website that offered people an opportunity to have their picture taken with a message of support for the campaign to be uploaded. This initiative attracted prominent statements, such as that from Governor of Victoria, Prof David de Kretser who said: "I am pleased to support the International Day Against Homophobia. It is critical in our society that the right of consenting individuals to express their sexual preference is upheld without any fear of retribution. Having a day on which this issue is raised in the awareness of the public, is one way attention is drawn to this important matter. It also makes people aware that this freedom is not available in many countries throughout the world, and even when such a right is present in a society, prejudice can still prevail."

• **New Caledonia**

For the third year running, the LGBT organisation Homosphere organised an arts exhibition in the French Pacific island. 30 artists across all disciplines united over this year's theme of "mixing the differences", which resonates locally in a very ethnically and culturally diverse society. After being launched on the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia in the capital Noumea, the exhibition is now scheduled to travel to other parts of the country, where the issue of homo-



© Homosphère

phobia is often facing total denial.

MIDDLE EAST



• Iran

Homosexual Students of Iran's Universities sent an Open Letter to the Student Movement of Iran, on May 15, urging the Movement to shed homophobic behaviours, from ignorance to belittling reactions towards homosexuality and transgender community; to admit the presence of Homosexual Students amid the body of the movement; and to include the queer community's demands, in their statements to the government. The letter addresses The Student Movement in particular, but it doesn't fail to notice that all social and intellectual movements of Iran today are connected together, and therefore the letter reaches out to other movements, such as women's, social and human rights, workers, and the intellectuality movement. This letter, at a time that bloggers, mostly consisting of queer students and academics, are under government scrutiny and attack, is a meaningful act. The letter is signed by 8 Universities, including all of the most important universities in Tehran.

• Lebanon

The general objective of the Lebanese mobilisation around International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was to advocate towards the abolishment of the article 534 from the Lebanese Penal Code that can be used against homosexuality as an "unnatural sexual behaviour". Activities were organised on 2 consecutive days, one being for the LGBT community and the public to come and participate in events, the second being for the media, civil society organizations, professionals and policy makers...



The programme of the first day included an interactive theatre play about police violence, documentaries on LGBT issues and a theatre performance about article 534.

A panel discussion on 534 explained its origins and application by the government on the LGBT community. The panel was informing the LGBT community about their rights, and also letting them know the reason behind this law and how and when it can be applied and when it can't.

Concluding remarks



Concluding remarks :

2009 has once again proven a fantastic year for LGBTI Campaigning on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. Activities were reported in around 50 countries, ranging from isolated initiatives to week-long festivals and international congresses.

The IDAHO Committee itself has known a tremendously interesting year with historic developments at the UN and the launch of the international Appeal against Transphobia and for the Respect of Gender Identity. The year was also marked by our strong involvement in shaping the Paris World Congress on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

We have had a lot of pleasure working with international websites to create outreach videos against homophobia. We have also witnessed tragic hours where activists were brutalised, from Moscow to Kampala, Bujumbura and Ankara. These were a signal, if need be, that the fight against ignorance, bigotry and social control by conservative forces needs to be developed, sustained, and known to the world.

This is why the IDAHO Committee will keep developing the networking function and the relevant communication instruments, such as the web site and the list server.

We will also keep developing the capacity to identify innovative national or international projects and support them.

We will also seek to develop international outreach projects in partnership with networks and international media, to increase the exposure of the Day and support our campaigning activities.

We will also pursue our strategic objective to expand the official recognition of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia by more countries, by creating a working group that will allow participation of all organisations who want to take this objective further with their national authorities.

And of course, we are heading towards new exciting international campaigning coordination, so watch out for news to come soon on this.

In order to achieve these objectives, we will actively encourage participation of professional volunteers and devote more energy to internal communications and structuring.

The road ahead is full of challenges but the past campaigns have all proven that the IDAHO Committee brings a significant added value on the LGBT campaigning front. These achievements give us confidence that we should move ahead with the same pride that we hope the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia will trigger in LGBT activists and people's minds and souls over the years to come.



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