



INTERNATIONAL DAY  
AGAINST  
HOMOPHOBIA  
AND TRANSPHOBIA  
**IDAHO**

THE INTERNATIONAL  
**DAY** AGAINST  
**HOMOPHOBIA**  
AND **TRANSPHOBIA**  
**MAY 17<sup>TH</sup>**

This report provides essential facts about the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013.

The full Annual Report 2013 can be accessed via the IDAHO Committee homepage:  
[www.dayagainsthomophobia.org](http://www.dayagainsthomophobia.org)

## Editorial

The 2013 edition of the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia was marked by an unprecedented level of actions, in at least 113 countries, in all world regions.

In 32 countries, activists took action despite the fact that freedom to even discuss sexual orientation and gender identity is harshly limited by law, proving once again that the Day provides a unique opportunity in the annual human rights calendar. Sometimes, like in Somalia, it was for the first time in the history of the country that this issue was discussed publicly at all.

This year's May 17 also received a particularly strong attention from official policy makers, including numerous heads of states, ministers, ambassadors and, for the first time ever, a monarch – Queen M<sup>a</sup>xima of the Netherlands. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also issued a moving declaration, as he stated that “for far too long, the suffering of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in all regions, was met with silence in the halls of power. As Secretary-General, I am committed to raising my voice.”

The year also saw an unprecedented level of joint mobilisation around the Day. At the invitation of the IDAHO Committee, activists in over 100 cities, in over 50 countries, joined this year's global initiative to flood the streets with 'Rainbow Flashmobs', creating a unique moment of joint activism.

If the celebrations went ahead mostly peacefully, some sad incidents had nevertheless to be reported. The probably worst reports came from Georgia, where a crowd of several thousand people attacked just dozens of peaceful demonstrators. Shocking images show priests leading the attacks. Events were interrupted by police forces in Kenya. Opponents attacked the peaceful 'Rainbow Flashmob' in Saint Petersburg. Police detained activists in China.

Still, despite these attempts to silence Human Rights defenders, the global visibility of sexual and gender minorities reached unprecedented proportions this year, with extensive media coverage from all parts. Over 100 million people were reached by messages about May 17 on twitter alone, whilst the IDAHO Committee's Facebook page reached over 1 million people in the week around May 17 alone.

Far from being limited to one Day, this wave of mobilisation sends a powerful and long lasting signal to opponents of the rights of sexual and gender minorities, that year after year our struggle gains more supporters and more momentum, and that opponents clearly stand on the wrong side of History.

## Context: The International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia

The International Day against Homophobia & Transphobia ('IDAHO') was launched in 2004 by an international group of activists. The date of May 17 was chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.

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 need to be addressed makes it impossible for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia to take one specific form or agenda. This is why 'IDAHO' is not one centralized campaign, but an opportunity for everyone to fight for sexual diversity and gender freedom according to the context in which they work. It is a moment that everyone, both within and beyond the LGBTI movement, can take advantage of to take action.

## Context : the IDAHO Committee

The IDAHO Committee was set up by the founders of the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. Its objective is to make the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia a global awareness and mobilization moment that represents a useful opportunity for everyone to take action at all levels. Its core strategies are to:

Give the initiative the necessary scope, visibility and recognition that will maximize its potential as a political force at all levels and, particularly:

- ▲ **Develop the scope and the diversity of mobilization on the Day around the world**
- ▲ **Develop the visibility of the Day**
- ▲ **Promote recognition of the Day by official stakeholders (states, local authorities, institutions and others)**
- ▲ **Support organizations, especially those working in very difficult contexts, to develop actions around the Day and make best local use of the Day in their lobbying and campaigning strategies**
- ▲ **Develop and facilitate international mobilization initiatives on specific LGBT issues using the Day as a campaigning focus.**

## INTERNATIONAL initiatives

### INTERNATIONAL IDAHO FORUM IN THE HAGUE

The government of the Netherlands hosted a broad International IDAHO Forum in the Hague on May 16-17. Over 500 people attended the two-day conference, which brought together high level government officials from over 20 European countries. All major European Union institutions, many civil society organisations and a wide range of LGBT activist groups were present.

The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency presented the results of the largest ever survey on discrimination experienced by LGBT people, while EU ministers from 11 countries jointly signed a specific 'Call for a Comprehensive Approach to LGBT Issues at the European Union Level'. ILGA-Europe also launched the Rainbow Europe package reviewing the situation of LGBTI people in Europe and measuring the progress of European institutions and national governments towards full respect for LGBTI human rights.

The Queen of the Netherlands attended the ceremony on the opening night of the Conference. The ceremony was also attended by high level international political figures, amongst them UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, and Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding.



Queen Máxima of the Netherlands at the International IDAHO Forum in The Hague, May 17

### EVENTS IN 100 CITIES FORM A 'GLOBAL RAINBOW FLASHMOB'

The call from the IDAHO Committee for rainbow-themed flashmobs to be organised to mark May 17, 2013 proved to be very popular everywhere. In total, flashmob events were organised in over 100 cities, across 50 countries.

Dance and musical flashmobs took place in the streets of Nairobi, Johannesburg, Jakarta, Bangkok, Lima, South Korea, the UK, and other cities. City spaces were covered in rainbow art in Fiji, Australia, Serbia, Portugal and Ireland. Kiss-ins marked the Day in the UK, Germany and Brazil, and rainbow coloured balloon releases lit up more than 25 city skylines, in all world regions. The IDAHO Committee gathered together video and photo contributions from activists in dozens of countries, to create the Global Rainbow Flashmob video which can be accessed through our homepage.



Activists prepare for Global Rainbow Flashmob action in Hong Kong

### FIGHTING TRANSPHOBIA WORLDWIDE

As in previous years, May 17 2013 provided an important moment for Trans activists to mobilise at the international level, to campaign on local issues, and to spotlight and challenge Transphobia within the LGBT movement. Events specifically focussed on the fight against Transphobia were present in all world regions. Moreover, such events were at the very forefront of national mobilisations in various countries including China, Thailand, Hungary, Zambia, Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

In an important addition to the Day's visibility internationally, May 17 was also marked by the publication of a special edition of the Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) Reports. The publications are produced by Transgender Europe (TGEU), and the 'Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide' (TvT) research project and documents levels of Transphobic hate crimes worldwide.

## PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS VOICES

Early in 2013, the IDAHO Committee, with support of the European Forum of LGBT Christians, launched a special appeal to progressive religious groups, LGBT people of faith and their allies, to speak out together for May 17, 2013, in the form of a 'Global Prayer Initiative'. The call out was met with a very broad response. More than 40 events keyed into the initiative, spanning 10 different countries. Some of these events generated significant media coverage and political impact, such as the participation of the National Cathedral in Washington D.C, which held an evening events on Friday May 17, including a film screening of the documentary 'God Loves Uganda'.

## Regional Reports

### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Actions in the region were confirmed in at least 18 countries. In 15 of these countries same sex acts between men are criminalised, with prison terms ranging, potentially, between 3 months and life imprisonment. In the case of Somalia, local activists report that a brief radio report about the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, on May 17 2013, constituted the first time the topic of homosexuality was ever discussed publicly in the country. In various other countries where public expressions of LGBT rights are extremely repressed – such as in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe – community-led statements, research reports, and/or speeches marked this year's May 17.

Elsewhere, such as in Burundi, Botswana and Zambia, LGBT communities came together to produce art, photograph, theatre and film projects. In many cases, they worked creatively to guarantee their own personal anonymity, and yet still press for community visibility. In Togo, lesbian and bisexual women came together for a specific day of events. In Senegal and Rwanda foreign embassies provided sanctuary and support for community-building events and expressions of international solidarity.

Public actions also marked the day in various countries in the region. In this respect, highlights included a week of events around May 17 in Cameroon, a huge concentration of activists from all over Southern Africa in the city of Johannesburg for a week of cultural and political events, and diverse public actions in Kenya, notwithstanding police restrictions. Film screenings, an LGBT rights capacitation workshop for journalists, diverse community-building events, and a variety of group statements marked May 17 in Uganda. Outreach activities were also held around May 17 in six rural towns in Burundi. In the small island of Mauritius,

activists marked the Day by taking to the streets for their 8th Annual Rainbow Parade. In Lesotho, the country's first ever pride march was held, one year after male homosexuality was decriminalised in the country.



*LGBTI communities come together for public actions in Nairobi, Kenya.*

### THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

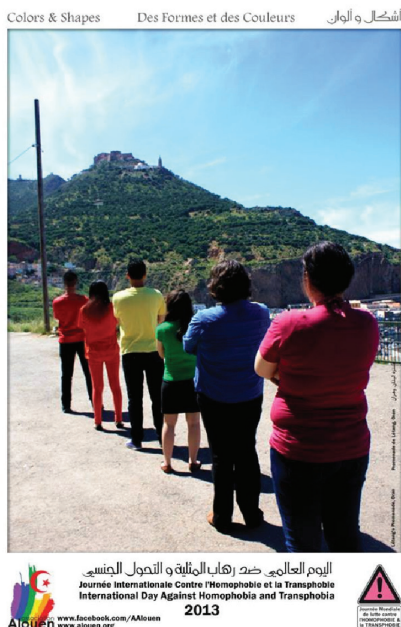
One of the year's clear highlights was the publication of a joint statement co-authored by activists in 17 countries in these regions (as well as the Balkans and Caucasus). The Regional Network Against Homophobia Statement, published in dedication to May 17, provides a panorama of the political and legal situations of LGBT people in these regions and outlines country-specific demands.

Statements of critique, stressing both the exclusion of Palestinian speakers from US embassy-sponsored events for May 17 in Jerusalem, and demanding 'no bargaining' on 'hierarchies of rights' within the global fight for LGBT equality marked this year's May 17 in Palestine. In Israel, protests, online campaigns, a vigil and high-profile events in the education sector constituted just some of the year's highlights. In Lebanon, activists held an LGBT rights rally in Beirut. In Iran, a small group of young LGBT people came together anonymously on May 17 to create a photograph exhibition which they shared online.

Similar strategies were adopted in Algeria and Morocco, where moving sets of photographs were also produced and shared online anonymously by local activists. In Algeria this approach evolved into the publication of the book 'Colors and Shapes', published to mark May 17. In Egypt, activists marked the week around the Day (May 11 – May 18) with a series of online calls (press releases, videos and social media actions) for May 11 to be recognised as 'EDAHO' in honour of the 'Cairo 52' - people arrested and imprisoned on May 11, 2001, after a police raid on Cairo night club.

In Turkey, an International Conference on Regional Peace was convened by LGBT activists in Ankara.

Grass roots activists, scholars, unionists, film directors and politicians from across Turkey, and from other countries, attended the two-day conference (May 17 – 18) to explore inequalities within and between sexual and gender rights movements, and the possibilities for building new coalitions across social movements.



Algerian activists created the 'Colors and Shapes' project as a response to the Global Rainbow Flashmob initiative



One of a series of photographs taken and shared online from Tehran, Iran on May 17

## ASIA

Activists from across China, and internationally, joined forces for actions in the cities of Beijing, Guangzhou, Changsha and Chengdu. Rainbow Flashmob actions, workshops, rallies and film screenings were held. Elsewhere in East Asia, the Day was marked with diverse actions in nine cities in Japan. In South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau, grass roots activists and their allies came together for Rainbow Flashmob actions, to conduct workshops, create photography projects,

occupy public spaces, release statements and lobby officials.

In Kyrgyzstan, as in Bangladesh, activists organised week-long programmes around May 17. In India, as in Nepal, Transgender and Third Gender communities were at the front-lines of national mobilisations with street theatre projects, the launch of community-led research projects, workshops and vigils held for May 17.

In Thailand, workshops and flashmob actions were held in different cities. In Burma/Myanmar, high level seminars and grass roots led public actions were held, involving several thousand participants throughout the country. A month of actions was held around the Day in Vietnam whilst, once again, May 17 commemorations converged with Cambodia Pride Week, with public actions, community-building and capacitation events held in the capital. Parades, marches, flashmobs, conferences, online campaigns, education initiatives, film screenings and community debates marked May 17 across five cities in Indonesia. LGBT communities in the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore also gathered for events including the launch of a new community safety campaign, the sharing of coming out stories, workshops, photography projects and a book launch.



Thailand saw acts throughout the country, including diverse Flashmob actions in Bangkok

## AUSTRALASIA/OCEANIA

In Fiji activists marked the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013 with a whole week of events, including rainbow-chalking events in the capital city of Suva, a peace vigil, documentary screening, debates and a pride party. In New Zealand, Helen Clark, head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and former New Zealand Prime Minister joined other key political figures in issuing a strong statement of support for the Day. Various politicians wore pink as a sign of support for May 17, whilst many stressed the significance of the Day's falling exactly one month after the legalisation of same sex marriage in New Zealand, on April 17, 2013.

Highlights in Australia included a rainbow die-in in Melbourne and the launch of a new anti-homophobia campaign by the Australian Football League Players Association: #Footy4IDAHO. More than 20 events were held around May 17 2013 in the city of Greater Geelong alone, including at 12 schools. Across the country countless new campaigns, texts and products were launched, film and discussion events held, and rainbow flags raised by local authorities.



*In Fiji, highlights included a special rainbow chalk-in for May 17*

## EUROPE

May 17 was marked in practically the whole region. We received reports of actions around May 17 2013, in 26 of the 28 member states of the European Union, and 40 of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Aside from a strong gathering of high level government officials at the International IDAHO Forum in The Hague (for more information see page 2), May 17 was also marked by endorsements from the British and Belgian foreign ministers, the President of the European Parliament, and countless other ministers, state and municipal leaders, and civil society representatives. In numerous legislatures, councils, government departments, embassies, companies, schools, colleges and universities flew the rainbow flag, throughout the region, on May 17.

The Day was also marked by significant gains in legislative arenas, and the launch of new public policy proposals. May 17 2013 entered history as the date on which France joined the other 13 countries in the world where same-sex couples can get married. In Portugal, this year's May 17 was marked by the passing of a bill extending adoption rights to same sex couples by the Portuguese Parliament. For May 17 in Montenegro, the national government launched its first ever national policy programme for the advancement of LGBT rights.

Despite the progress of laws banning 'homosexual propaganda' over the past year in Russia, May 17 was marked publicly in nine different cities, without significant incident. In other parts of Europe, reports were less positive. Perhaps the worst reports of violence this year came from Georgia. Actions for May 17 2013 quickly made international news headlines, after a counter-manifestation of several thousand people broke through police lines to attack a small group of activists, who had met to hold a 'silent' flashmob action in the capital, Tbilisi. Shocking reports, shared widely online, show priests leading the attacks. Human rights groups, heads of states, and representatives of key international institutions have since placed significant pressure on the Georgian government to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Just some of the countless community-led highlights from across the region include:

Well over 100 events were held in the United Kingdom alone, whilst #IDAHO trended throughout the Day on Twitter UK. Hand-holding flashmobs were organised by young environmental activists across seven cities in Austria and co-ordinated 'rainbowflash' balloon releases were held in more than 10 cities in Germany. Significant international LGBT conferences were held in Luxembourg (four-day multidisciplinary conference on transgender issues), and Croatia (two-day LGBT media conference). Week-long programmes of diverse political and cultural events were organised by grass roots activists in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia.



*In Belgrade, Serbia activists met for conferences, street art, exhibitions and many more events*

## NORTH AMERICA

In Toronto, Canada, the First National Gay-Straight Alliance Summit – a major three-day conference

– brought together young people and educators from across Canada with a focus on promoting safer and more inclusive schools for everyone. As in previous years, activists in the region of Quebec developed an active campaign across the francophone Province. This year's campaign focused on fighting homophobia on social media.

In the United States, over 15 State representatives commemorated the day through official proclamations and ceremonies. Organisers in California, Illinois, New York, Minnesota, Washington, Georgia, Florida, and D.C hosted activities in commemoration of the Day. US faith leaders convened in Washington, D.C at the National Cathedral to join IDAHO faith events which took place around the world.



*Portland Timbers Football Club, in Canada, organise a Mexican wave in honour of the Day*

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

As in previous years, May 17 was marked by a particularly strong mobilisation throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Events were registered in 17 of the 20 countries of mainland Central and South America.

Once again, the strength and diversity of actions in Brazil was exceptional. Well over 100 actions were reported in total, in all of Brazil's 27 states. Highlights included MTV Brazil's shifting its entire schedule out, to dedicate all programming on May 17 to the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. Hundreds of activists marched on Brasília, and staged a rainbow die-in in front of the National Congress.

As many as 50,000 people marched in the Chilean capital Santiago, for the VIII Santiago Equality March, which also marked the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. In Argentina various organisations, politicians and celebrities, pooled their efforts into the launch of a new nationwide anti-bullying campaign.

Activists marched through the streets of La Paz, Bolivia, to protest high levels of hate crimes against TLGB communities. In Lima, Peru, activists gathered outside the headquarters of the Ministry of Justice to deliver 1,500 letters and 1,200 signatures, and to protest their exclusion from the National Human Rights Plan. LGBTTI activists in Guayaquil, Ecuador, marked May 17 with a public occupation and kiss-in. Significant marches and official proclamations marked May 17 in various cities in Colombia and Venezuela. In Guyana, LGBT activists, young people and civil society groups gathered to paint a section of the Georgetown city seawall, with different designs in honour of the Day.

May 17 in Mexico was marked with public activities around the theme 'Talk Mexico', which extended throughout the entire month of May. Mexican President, Enrique Peña Nieto, tweeted in honour of the Day, whilst hundreds demonstrated in Mexico city wearing purple. In Guatemala and El Salvador trans activists demonstrated for national gender identity laws. In Nicaragua, LGBTI activists took to the streets of Managua in one of the year's most vibrant Global Rainbow Flashmob events.

A truly groundbreaking wave of commemorations marked May 17 in Puerto Rico. Thousands of people took to the streets in various parts of the capital, to take part in a huge festival in favour of LGBT equality. Belize's first lady, Kim Simplis Barrow, released a special May 17 video address affirming her personal and political opposition to Homophobia and Transphobia. May 17 in Cuba was marked by a whole month of events, as well as a massive public celebration, led once again by the President's daughter Mariela Castro. Hundreds of people gathered for events in Haiti, including a conference, film screenings, testimonies and the launch of a new information service for the LGBT community. In Jamaica, a Human Rights Symposium, group statements, blog posts, videos and podcasts, and a country-specific online campaign by Amnesty International marked May 17, amongst other initiatives.



*Brazilian activists stage Rainbow Flashmob die-in outside National Congress in Brasília*

# What does the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia bring to you?

## Quotes from activists around the world.

“The Day provides a clear focus and allows for easy actions, that can be done by small groups, be it ‘simple’ social gatherings or more elaborate public happenings, street actions, flashmobs, etc.”

“The fact that the Day is officially recognized by almost 20 States, countless local authorities and several international institutions like the EU provides a strong argument for the legitimacy of our action in hostile contexts. On the Day, our opponents don’t just have to face us, they have to face millions of our supporters, friends and allies worldwide”.

“In countries where the government had already taken commitments to fight discrimination related to sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, the Day constitutes a perfect annual moment for accountability.”

“In our company, the Day has given us the right backdrop for talking about the situation of homophobia worldwide. And this has really helped everyone to better understand the importance of our fight for equal rights inside the company too.”

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“Opposing homo/transphobic can form a common denominator for a large spectrum of stakeholders. Hardly anyone, including religious authorities, will want to appear to support homophobia and transphobia, even if they refuse to support any concrete progressive measure to fight them as well. This framing also facilitates outreach to straight people and can move them from a ‘neutral’ position to a more proactive one.”

“The Day helps us attract better media attention. Each year, we meet a lot of interest from the press, and papers do extensive coverage of our activities.”

“By addressing both homophobia and transphobia, the Day encourages people to keep thinking about the commonalities of these two aspects of hetero and cisnormativities. It also provides an entry point to questioning the transphobia within LG and B communities.”

“The Day constitutes an interesting moment to present reports on hate crimes. It also constitutes a privileged moment to talk to the medical sector, to psychiatrists’ associations, to academia, historians, anthropologists, etc.... This “scientific” approach has been very effective in highly repressive contexts.”

### IDAHO COMMITTEE

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