THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA “IDAHO” - MAY 17TH

ANNUAL REPORT 2013
Human Rights and Human Faces: celebrating humanity, as courage unfolds

The week around May 17, 2013 was marked by an unprecedented level of events, in at least 113 countries in all world regions.

The mobilisation was definitely too broad and diverse to give full coverage to. Each action – from gigantic to individual – has its own significance, and each of them is one note in the symphony for human rights which the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia constitutes. This annual report aims at covering just some of the essential highlights, and to show the diversity, creativity and courage that once again unfolded.

One specific feature we were able to witness this year, is that the Day received a particularly strong attention from official policy makers. The Day was marked by many Heads of States, by Ministers, Governors, Mayors and other officials, and for the first time ever by a Monarch – Queen Máxima 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.”

In 32 countries, activists took public action despite the fact that expression of issues of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression 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.

And in over 50 countries, activists joined this year’s global initiative and flooded the streets with ‘Rainbow Flashmobs’, creating a unique moment of joint activism. We have captured the spirit of international actions in a global video collage which is released simultaneously with this report, and can now be viewed on our site. Countries in which Global Rainbow Flashmob actions were registered are marked with the symbol: 🌈.

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 hundred people attacked 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. The IDAHO Committee’s reporting of events suffered a blow as hackers paralysed the site.

Still, despite these attempts to silence Human Rights defenders, visibility of sexual and gender minorities reached unprecedented proportions this year, with extensive media coverage from all parts. On social media, millions of people read, posted, tweeted, shared and liked, sending a ‘pink’ glow across the web.

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.

As an activist from Ukraine beautifully puts it: “The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is one Day in a year that changes the other 364!”

Warm wishes,
The IDAHO Committee team
1. Context: the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

The International Day Against Homophobia and 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 and 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, a space that everyone, both within and beyond the LGBTI movement, can take advantage of to take action.

The International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is now celebrated in more than 110 countries across the world in the most varied ways and expressions. LGBTI organisations, governments, cities, human rights organizations and others have engaged in activities around May 17 in all world regions, from Australia to Iran, and from Cameroon to Albania.

It creates an opportunity for all to:
- Draw media attention to the issue of homophobia and transphobia;
- Organize events which mobilize public opinion;
- Demand attention from policymakers and engage in lobbying activities;
- Network with like-minded organizations and develop new partnerships at home or beyond; and
- Mobilize existing constituencies and address new audiences.

2. Context: the IDAHO Committee

The IDAHO Committee was set up by the founders of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia.

Its objective is to make the International Day Against Homophobia and 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; and
  - 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.

CAMPAIGNS BY THE IDAHO COMMITTEE
2004/2005: “For the recognition of an International Day Against Homophobia”
2005/2006: “For the universal decriminalization of homosexuality at the UN”
2006/2007: “No to Homophobia, Yes to education”
2007/2008: “No more Lesbophobia”
2008/2009: “Against Transphobia and for the Respect of Gender Identity”
2011/2012: “Fighting Homophobia and Transphobia in and through education”
2012/2013: “Global Rainbow Flashmob”
HIGHLIGHTS AND EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES AROUND THE WORLD

It is impossible to give a comprehensive picture of all activities that are organized each year around the Day.

Yet, through intensive networking and international contacts, the IDAHO Committee has collected information on some of these activities, often organized in extremely hostile contexts by activists who had the courage to stand up and speak out and who, whatever their differences in strategies, tactics or political affiliations, share a common ideal of a world free of homophobia and transphobia.

This report aims to highlight the diversity and the creativity of the fight for sexual and gender diversity around the world. It also aims to pay sincere tribute to all activists who work year round, most on a voluntary basis, to build a more open and diverse future.

The following information is just a short excerpt of more comprehensive reports, which include information about the main participating organisations*, as well as photos and videos of local events. These reports can be accessed on our website, www.dayagainsthomophobia.org. Each article in this report also has hyperlinks embedded for easy access to further information.

*Given that hundreds of organisations were involved, it was not possible to cite them all in this report. We therefore made the decision to not specifically name any in these pages, and instead report in more detail on the website.
1. INTERNATIONAL initiatives

INTERNATIONAL IDAHO CONFERENCE 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 (May 16-17), which included various plenaries and invitational workshops, bringing 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, including the European Gay Police Association, ILGA-Europe and Transgender Europe.

While the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency presented the results of the largest ever survey on discrimination and hate experienced by LGBT people, delegates from the European-wide Rainbow Cities Network discussed policy making at municipality level. EU ministers from 11 countries jointly signed a specific “Call for a Comprehensive Approach to LGBT Issues at the European Union Level”.

The European LGBT umbrella organisation ILGA-Europe 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 package includes the full Rainbow Europe Map 2013 as well as score sheets on each individual European country.

HM the Queen of the Netherlands and Ms Bussemaker, Minister for Education, Culture and Science, who hosted the conference.

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, involving dance, music and theatre acts, photography, street and performance art, as well as coloured balloon releases, and many more activities.

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 facilitated the active networking of several hundred activists involved in organising actions, and has edited a global video montage of the events, accessible on our website. We also launched a call out for rainbow photo contributions in the lead up to the Day. We received

HM QUEEN MÁXIMA OF THE NETHERLANDS ATTENDS CONFERENCE

The Queen of the Netherlands attended the ceremony on the opening night of the International IDAHO Conference in the Hague. This was one of the monarch’s very first public events and her participation was hailed by the organisers as a clear sign of the strength of her support in favour of human rights for all, irrespective of sexual orientation and gender identity.

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.
hundreds of images which we turned into a collage in the form of a ‘Rainbow World Map’, which was released on May 17. Just some of the year’s highlights included a giant concert in Paris which starred pop star Mika in front of a 20,000-strong crowd, a rainbow makeover for the Argentinian Statue of Liberty in Buenos Aires, and the release of black balloons – alongside rainbow coloured ones – in St. Petersburg and other Russian cities, in remembrance of the victims of recent hate crimes against LGBT people.

Countries where rainbow flashmob events were registered are marked in this report with a 🌈.

Rainbow flashmob preparations in Hong Kong

Rainbow flashmob actions formed part of a massive Day of action in Puerto Rico

UNITED NATIONS

Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, underlined the importance of the May 17 mobilisations at the International IDAHO Conference with a special address to the participants in the IDAHO Conference in The Hague.

In his speech, the Secretary General underlined that “for generations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in all regions have been subjected to terrible violence on account of their sexual orientation and gender identity”. “For far too long, their suffering was met with silence in the halls of power. As Secretary-General, I am committed to raising my voice,” he affirmed.

While underlining the need for legal reforms, Mr Ban Ki-moon also emphasized that “public education is also essential to challenge negative stereotypes and promote greater understanding.” The address was read by delivered by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navjot Kaur Pillay.

The United Nations Human Rights Office also released an official video, entitled ‘The Riddle’, just before May 17. The video features the voices of LGBT people from around the world, as well as key UN figures, Navi Pillay and Ban Ki-Moon. It serves as a powerful call for more universal recognition that ‘LGBT rights are human rights’. Various UN agencies, including UNAIDS, UNESCO, UN Women and the UNDP, made statements of support for May 17. In various instances UN agencies also offered practical support to activists on the ground in different countries.

Scenes from The Riddle

FIGHTING TRANSPHOBIA WORLDWIDE

As in previous years, the 2013 edition of the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 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 LGBT community and movement spaces. 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 and the Dominican Republic. In some of these countries, trans activists were more visible, politically, than any other community.

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, created by Transgender Europe (TGEU), and the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide’ (TvT) research project.

The reports document levels of transphobic hate crimes worldwide, and are otherwise published periodically, as well as on Transgender Day of Remembrance. Since their inception, in April 2009, the reports have become a widely-acclaimed resource for activists highlighting the prevalence of lethal transphobic violence in specific countries, and globally.

The IDAHOT 2013 edition included an update of the TMM interactive map, which visualises hate crimes in different countries. Since January 2008, the group has documented 1,233 transphobic murders worldwide.
TMM interactive map published online for IDAHOT 2013

TGEU also for the first time presented the Trans Rights Europe Map at the International IDAHO Forum in The Hague. The map and index highlight the legal situation for trans people in regard to legal gender recognition, protection from hate crime and discrimination in 49 European countries. Policy makers and LGBT activists all over Europe understood through the visualized map that an appalling 24 countries that still require trans people to be sterilized before recognizing their gender identity. While 16 countries do not have any provisions for trans people to update their documents. The data is based on ILGA-Europe’s Rainbow Map.

The IDAHO Committee can also report that out of the 73,500 unique web pages which included the phrase 'International Day Against Homophobia', in the month around May 17, 2013, 20,400 pages (more than a quarter) included the complete phrase 'International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia'. Examples of significant efforts to give a specific visibility to transgender activism around May 17, could be found in some mainstream media coverage, such as that given by the Huffington Post and the Thomas Reuters Foundation. Though this is still not enough, it does suggest that the day’s specific focus on transphobia is being understood by a significant audience both within and outside of LGBT communities.

PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS VOICES

Early in 2013, the IDAHO Committee 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.

Activists and people of faith in Brazil, engaged the Day to campaign for the protection of religious and spiritual diversity, as well as to denounce the growing strength of the Evangelical right in the Brazilian state. At least 10 different churches in Italy held services and vigils to remember the victims of hate crimes. In Ireland, churches in seven cities - Dublin, Kilkenny, Cork, Limerick, Belfast, Newry and Derry – held services to commemorate the Day. Five of these events were held in Cathedrals.

THE DAY IN NUMBERS

104 million unique people were reached by messages about the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013 on Twitter alone.

Posts on the IDAHO global facebook page reached one million unique users on the week around May 17 alone.

Actions around May 17 2013 were reported in at least 113 countries.

Events took place in 32 countries in which same sex relationships, or the public expression of LGBT identities, are legally repressed.

The United Kingdom and Brazil were the countries with the most events reported by national-level volunteers, both with well over 100 events.

THE DAY IN LETTERS

In this report, the acronyms used to abbreviate the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, such as IDAHO and IDAHOT, generally follow the terms used by activists in their own texts and speech. The same is true for LGBT, LGBTIQ, LGBTTT and other variations of movement naming. The explicit inclusion of lesbophobia, biphobia and other forms of violence and discrimination follows the same policy.
2. Country reports

**ALBANIA**

In the capital Tirana a whole host of events marked the year’s commemorations. Activists hosted a Second Festival of Diversity Against Homophobia on May 17. The 2nd annual IDAHO ‘Gay Bike (P) Ride’ took off successfully through the streets of the capital, flashmob actions were held as well as a series of workshops on contemporary policy-issues and lesbian/women’s rights. The city also received the innovative Swedish exhibition ‘Article 1’. Though after the bike ride, participants were attacked with tear gas, local activists dubbed the year’s events a success – and an improvement on last year (when they were attacked mid-ride).

**ARGENTINA**

May 17 in Argentina was marked with a range of activities, various of them focused on themes of education and bullying. Activists in Buenos Aires marked the launch of the high profile nationwide anti-bullying campaign, ‘More Inclusion Without Bullying’ which features various Argentinean actors and actresses. The Statue of Liberty in Buenos Aires was dressed in the colours of the rainbow flag, and the participatory photo project ‘Views of Diversity’ also marked the year’s commemorations.

**ALGERIA**

IDAHO mobilisations in Algeria centred on the publication of the ‘Colors and Shapes’ book, which features testimonies and powerful images of Algerian LGBT people. Says the organiser’s press release: In Algeria the ‘Rainbow Flashmob’ operation proves to be very difficult, if not impossible, when we know that simple gatherings are repressed by the authorities, bringing LGBT people together may pose a danger to their safety. Despite these constraints... [we] insisted on participating with the action of “Colors and Shapes” by bringing a few people together in major cities across the country to take pictures anonymously. With the aim of increasing LGBT visibility, but paradoxically with a hidden face.’

**ARMENIA**

On the evening of May 17, LGBT people and allies gathered in Armenia’s capital Yerevan, near Tumanyan Park, to participate in the Global Rainbow Flashmob. ‘Few seconds, and the pleasure began: lots of colorful
balloons in the sky that have started their peaceful mission,” the organisers said. Activists have been organising 'rainbowflash' balloon releases in Yerevan for May 17 since 2010

RUSSIA

The global call to organise flashmobs to mark IDAHO was taken up in Austria by the Green Party, whose youth section inspired activists to organise same sex hand-holding flashmobs in seven major cities across the country (Vienna, Graz, Dornbirn, Kufstein, Salzburg, Wels and Baden). These were all held on the afternoon of May 17. A rainbow balloon release was also held in Vienna, whilst LGBT people, friends and allies, took to the streets on Saturday, May 18 with a 'WALK4IDAHO' demonstration.

AUSTRALIA

In Melbourne, activists staged a rainbow Die-In action, as their contribution to the Global Rainbow Flashmob, and to commemorate those who have died due to homophobia and transphobia. In Sydney highlights included the the distribution of the 2013 IDENTITY Catalogue - which represents sexually diverse multicultural minority groups both locally and internationally, and the launch of the Your Own Safety Campaign. In total more than 20 events were held for IDAHO 2013 in the City of Greater Geelong, including at 12 schools. The city’s Mayor raised the rainbow flag and hosted morning tea at City Hall, whilst Geelong’s LGBT young people organised a mini Queer Film Festival. In Ballarat, LGBT young people produced and launched a special Iphone app for IDAHO, and created a 'rainbow brick road' which led guests into the local Ballarat library for live music and theatre. The Australian Football League Player’s Association also launched a campaign called #Footy4IDAHO, which focuses on ending the use of homophobic language.

BANGLADESH

Activists in Bangladesh, from different groups, held a series of events to mark IDAHO, for the 6th year running. This year’s commemorations featured high profile media coverage from Bangla Vision – one of the country’s leading television channels. Activists also organised a musical concert ‘Love Music Hate Homophobia’ featuring various artists from around the country. A poster campaign and workshop sessions also marked the year’s commemorations.

Football players take the pledge to 'give homophobia the boot' in Australia

Poster campaign, May 17 2013, Dhaka, Bangladesh
**BELGIUM**

Tens of thousands of secondary school children were given pin-on badges and over 100 schools received special educational kits on fighting homophobia. More than 70 municipalities raised the rainbow flag to show their support for International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. In a unique contribution to the Global Rainbow Flashmob, LGBT activists targeted nine different train stations to give away rainbow stickers. The Belgian Foreign Minister, Didier Reynders, issued a strong statement of support for May 17 mobilisations around the world. Activists also locked themselves in a cage for 48 hours, in central Brussels, to raise awareness for IDAHO!

Activists locked themselves in a cage for 48 hours in Brussels, Belgium (May 16-17)

**BELIZE**

'When last did Belize get a Senator, former Foreign Minister, a first lady and two media houses to join on IDAHO Day to express support or solidarity in Belize? Well never.’ – Belize LGBT activists on May 17 2013.

The Day in Belize saw a variety of actions including a rainbow balloon release action, group meetings, various blogs published, and positive television coverage of LGBT people, talking about growing up in Belize. The highlight of the Day, however, was Belize’s Special Envoy for Children and Women – and the Prime Minister’s Wife – Kim Simplis Barrow, releasing a 'powerful and unequivocal' video challenging homophobia & transphobia, especially for IDAHO 2013.

Kim Simplis Barrow, Belize's First Lady, in a special video address for May 17 2013

**BOLIVIA**

Challenging violence against gender and sexual minorities was a strong feature of mobilisations in Bolivia. Trans, lesbian, gay and bisexual communities (TLGB) of Bolivia, marched through the centre of the city of La Paz, to mark May 17 2013. This protest was focused on highlighting hate crimes, and the impunity with which they are so commonly treated in Bolivian society. Activists highlighted, in particular, hate crimes in the city of Santa Cruz, where a transsexual woman was killed with 50 stab wounds, and in the Andean city of El Alto, where a lesbian was killed with 13 stab wounds.

May 17 March Against Impunity in La Paz, Bolivia
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Activists involved in LGBTIQA associations in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, commemorated the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013, with a very diverse range of cultural and political events from May 13 – 19, in the first time the day has been commemorated on any significant scale. Actions included an IDAHO media campaign, film screenings, workshops, vegan lunch, music show, lecture, info session for journalists, street art and a community recycling event. Activists also organised for grass-roots led radio coverage of events around the Day.

US Embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Street art in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina: ‘Everything is grey. Give your life a little colour.’

Kalvin K. Kol-Kes whose lesbian short play premiered in Botswana for May 17

BOTSWANA

Having completed a run of performances which were first conceived for IDAH0 2012, innovative script-writer and producer, Kalvin K. Kol-Kes, created a new short play about lesbian lives in Botswana. BUTCHered premiered on May 17, 2013, in the creator’s second annual dedication to the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. The IDAHO Committee also received reports that an art exhibition marked the Day in the capital, Gaborone.

BRAZIL

As in previous years, the strength and diversity of actions in Brazil was exceptional. Well over 100 actions were reported in total, making Brazil one of just two countries with 100+ events (the other was the UK). Events for May 17 were registered in all of Brazil’s 27 states. Highlights of the year’s commemorations include 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 the National Congress in Brasília, and staged a rainbow coloured Die-in in front of the main Congressional building.

Whilst setbacks also continue to characterise the state of play for LGBT rights in contemporary Brazil at the national level, activists also had particular reason to celebrate this year: On May 14th same sex marriage was fully legalised in the country. Same sex couples may now have their partnerships recognised at local registry offices, rather than through the courts.

Rainbow Die-in outside the Brazilian National Congress
LGBT activists outside Brazil’s National Congress, for IDAHO 2013

**BULGARIA**

For May 17 in Plovdiv, LGBT activists involved the public with a creative photo campaign. Organisers advised, ‘we decided to focus on homophobia in sport. We printed Red and Yellow cards for homophobia and suggested that people take photos of themselves with the cards, voicing their stance against homophobia. We opened the initiative with a sports event in Plovdiv.’ Over 500 people, spanning 10 countries were photographed cautioning homophobia, or sending it off the pitch. The photos then made part of an exhibition called ‘Let’s Leave Homophobia out of the Game’ at Plovdiv Mall, which was inaugurated by Deputy Chief of Mission, Bryan Dalton, of the US Embassy of Bulgaria.

**BURKINA FASO**

LGBTQI activists in the West African nation joined the international commemorations with a day of action, reflection and community building on May 18, in the capital, Ouagadougou. Activities included a brainstorming session on ‘how to make IDAHOT our own; how to raise awareness on homophobia and its impact on LGBT people’, as well as an arts session, and a creative photo shoot which fed into the Global Rainbow Flashmob initiative. They also hosted an evening meal, and organised a workshop based around the production of t-shirts with the motto ‘Accept Me As I Am’. A community-led study of attitudes to homosexuality in Burkina Faso was also published, based on survey research amongst students of the capital’s eight universities.

**BURMA/MYANMAR**

LGBT rights activists in Burma/Myanmar held events to mark May 17. Actions for 2013 spanned seven different cities (Yangon, Mandalay, Pathein, Monywa, Kyaukpadaung, Pyay and Kawthaung); 4,000 people joined actions nationwide including workshops, speeches, a talent show, music concert, and – for the first time ever – a government approved public event in an open space. Activists reported big public interest. Events received official recognition from the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, the British Council and UNAIDS.

**BURUNDI**

On May 17, to mark the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, a coalition of organisations defending sexual minorities in Burundi launched a powerful new short documentary. The 25
A five-minute film is structured around telling the stories of different LGBT people in Burundi. Activists also conducted specific awareness-raising activities in the rural cities of Gitega, Muramvya, Mwaro, Rutana and Ruyigi.

Cambodia

LGBT activists organized a series of new events in the capital, Phnom Penh, to mark International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013 and Cambodian Pride Week. Workshops were organized on ‘Coming Out because we are not wrong!’ and ‘The beginnings of accepting LGBT rights’. Human rights lawyers also ran capacity sessions on how people can protect themselves from rights violations, and examining how the anti-trafficking law is being used against lesbians, amongst other issues. A Pride Community Day, blessing ceremony, sports day and an evening concert of LGBT performances also marked the year’s commemorations.

May 17 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Cameroon

One year after a violent mob attacked a peaceful demonstration, Cameroon saw one of the largest mobilizations in the African continent, for May 17 this year. Various LGBT organisations rolled out a special programme for IDAHO 2013, spread over an entire week. The commemorations featured a series of thematic film screenings, followed by debates on religion and coming out. A football match opposing a team of MSM (men who have sex with men) to a team of heterosexual men, was held. The MSM team wore T-shirts bearing the slogan ‘Everyone Has Rights. So Do We’, together with the logo for International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, and the match was followed by speeches from both team captains.

Activists also organized a thematic conference on LGBT discrimination. Debates focused on human rights violations against LGBTI people, as well as on the positive contribution of sexual and gender minorities to society. 300 people attended a festive evening, in which ‘Miss and Mr IDAHO’ were crowned, and prizes honouring community leaders awarded.

For the first time, the police agreed to ensure the security of the event and were present during the entire time of the event, which was held in a private residence.

LGBT activists also organized a rainbow flashmob event in the streets of the capital Yaoundé, which proceeded without incident.

Canada

The First National GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) Summit was held in Toronto, May 17 – 20. This gathered together young people and educators from across Canada with a focus on promoting safer and more inclusive schools for everyone, and ‘especially lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirit, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) folks, with plenty of room for straight allies’. Organizers also staged a rainbow flashmob event on the first evening of the conference – Friday, May 17. In central Montreal, a special celebration was held at the church of St. Peter the Apostle, Sunday May 19, for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, with more than 60 singers of the Gay Choir Montréal and the Gay Choir Mélo’men from Paris.

Like every year, 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. For the Day’s events in Vancouver, activists placed a special emphasis on homophobia in sport. Schools and educators around the country marked the day with assemblies, arts events and statements of support.

In Halifax, Nova Scotia, activists joined together for day of IDAHoT events.
Students at Bridgeport Elementary School, Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada, on May 17 ‘Rainbow Day’

CHILE

In one of the biggest public demonstrations of the year, as many as 50,000 people marched in the Chilean capital Santiago, for the VIII Santiago Equality March, which also marked International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia. Various celebrities and politicians attended the march, including the mayor of Santiago, Carolina Toha. Former president Michelle Bachelet also endorsed the march. The rainbow flag was raised by the mayors of six Chilean municipals, and a day of prayer was organised in the city of Quilpué.

50,000 strong march for equality in Santiago, Chile

CHINA

Activists from around the country, and internationally, joined forces for actions in different cities including Beijing, Guangzhou and Changsha. A colourfully choreographed dance flashmob was also held in the city of Chengdu. In Beijing activists took aim at transphobia, with a specific evening of events focused on the launch a new documentary film *Brothers* - a pioneering portrayal of FtM trans communities in contemporary China. Mobilisations were also met with significant repression as activists in two cities were detained by police in response to peaceful demonstrations. In one of the most heavy-handed expressions of state repression this year, one activist was detained for 12 days after organising a May 17 event.

Activists hold a vigil outside the headquarters of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Costa Rica

COSTA RICA

Kisses, flags and proclamations against homophobia marked the international commemorations in Costa Rica. In the capital, LGBT and human rights activists from various groups came together for a vigil outside the headquarters of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on the evening of Friday, May 17 – a place dubbed an ‘Oasis of Respect’. Candles were lit, placards and messages brought, as participants underscored their commitment to fighting for justice, in Costa Rica and internationally.

Activists flashmob event in Chengdu, China

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COLOMBIA

The governor of the state of Bolivar flew the rainbow flag on the central balcony of the 'Palace of the Proclamation'. The pride flag flew alongside the flags of Colombia and the state of Bolivar. In Cartagena, a 'March For A Victory Against Homophobia' was held, focussed on the question of impunity for hate crimes in Colombia. The march proceeded colourfully, through the streets of the city, whilst LGBT rights activists held up posters with photos of victims of homophobia and transphobia. The government of Sucre, also launched the campaign ‘No to violence against women and homophobic discrimination’ on May 17, and created a new foundation to combat gender-based violence and
all forms of discrimination, especially towards LGBTI people.

Activists in Cartagena, Colombia protested homo/trans/lesbophobic hate crimes, May 17

CROATIA

In Zagreb, LGBTIQ groups came together to host a two day International LGBT Media Conference, on May 16-17. The conference drew together a wide range of LGBTIQ groups, individuals and media professionals from across the Balkans and beyond, with a focus on encouraging knowledge exchange, creating space for debate, and fostering ethical and responsible media coverage of LGBTIQ issues.

...Homophobia is not cool.’ May 17 poster by organisers in Croatia

CUBA

The island saw activities around the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia spread over more than a week. Highlights included community panels, theatre, cultural galas, lectures, symposia, workshops, art exhibitions, shows, presentations, book launches, video panels and debates. A gala against homophobia was held at the Karl Marx theatre. Among the guests this year were international experts such as the British sociologist Jeffrey Weeks and the Mexican sexologist Rinna Riesenfeld. A high profile IDAHO conference was held, as well as a main activity in the province of Ciego de Avila, on May 17 – a large scale demonstration which evidenced the ‘sexual diversity of the island and the wish that more Cubans can freely exercise their sexual orientation or gender identity.’

The year’s commemorations were also marked, on May 14, with a parade though the streets of Havana. Once again Mariela Castro, the daughter of Cuba’s president Raul Castro, led the parade out, and affirmed that more must be done to raise awareness about lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people.

12 days of activities marked the commemorations in Cuba. In this, Gilberto Diez, right, applies makeup to Dayan Sanchez, 25, a gay artist known as Venus in preparation for a drag show in Havana, May 15.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic saw various events organised in Brno and Prague around May 17, including a rainbowflash balloon release, rainbow picnic, book launch, club night and creative workshop. It was also a day, however, for a high profile case of alleged discrimination as President Milos Zeman rejected the nomination of an openly gay scholar, Martin C. Putna, as professor – a decision greeted with significant public contestation.

People gather for a rainbow flashmob in Brno, Czech Republic

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Trans (Transsexuales, Travestis y Transgeneros) activists were at the forefront of the year’s actions in the Dominican Republic. A rally was organised in the city of Santo Domingo, to protest human rights violations in the country, and to spotlight the fact that trans people comprise a significant segment of them. As in various other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean this year, activists drew particular attention to the question of impunity for the perpetrators of
hate crimes. They also highlighted constitutional guarantees to protect against hate crimes. The action was covered on national television in the Dominican Republic.

Activists spotlight transphobic violence in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

**ECUADOR**

LGBTTI activists in Ecuador marked the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia with an encampment in downtown Guayaquil, Ecuador’s largest city. At the end of the action various partners also took part in a kiss-in, to attract the attention of passersby to the situation of the LGBTTI community.

**EGYPT**

Egyptian activists marked the year’s commemorations by launching an online campaign for May 11 to be recognised as ‘EDAHO’ (Egyptian Day Against Homophobia), in memory of the Queen Boat (Cairo 52) raid on a gay nightclub in 2001. Of the 52 men arrested in the raid, 50 were charged with ‘habitual debauchery’ or ‘obscene behaviour’. Many received prison terms of several years and with hard labour. Activists mobilised online for the week from May 11 – May 18, including through a specific twitter campaign. Numerous videos and texts were also published as part of this year’s actions.

**ESTONIA**

In the capital Tallinn, different LGBT groups hosted an evening of theatre featuring the play *The Box*. The play dramatises different experiences about what it means to be a minority, and a discussion session with the authors and actors followed afterwards. In Estonia’s second city Tartu, two LGBT associations teamed up to create a discussion event on the topic of sexual minorities in Estonia. Participants shared their experiences and opinions about LGBT people, and a theatre improvisation group also attended and performed, in an interactive evening of events.
FIJI

Activists amongst Fiji’s LGBT community marked the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013 with a whole week of events. The programme included various rainbow-chalking events in the capital city of Suva, a peace vigil, a documentary screening and discussion, and a Pride Party. This was the third year that the Day has been marked in the south pacific island. Organisers hoped that the week long series of events would encourage the community to educate themselves on sexual orientation and gender identity issues and to stand up against homophobia and transphobia in Fiji.

FINLAND

In Finland, the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia has been commemorated, since 2006, as ‘1705’. This year events took place in 5 different cities (Helsinki, Turku, Tampere, Joensuu and Jyväskylä). Highlights included flashmob actions, video campaigns, an awareness day/club night, a photo competition, lectures, a ‘glow-rainbow event’ and community picnic, amongst many other actions.

FRANCE

The Day’s main event in France was undoubtedly the announcement from the Constitutional Court that the same sex marriage law was not contravening any constitutional principle. This step was the last one in a long and heated legislative process, and May 17 2013 thus enters history as the date on which France joined the other 13 countries where same-sex couples can get married. Interestingly, the court had withheld the decision for a few days to make the announcement match the Day.

Several French ministers marked the day with an official presentation of the government’s achievements on LGBT equality over the first 6 months of its mandate, and outlined their future action plan. As part of the Global Rainbow Flashmob, LGBT activists organised a giant concert in Paris, starring pop star Mika in front of a 20,000-strong crowd. LGBT activists in Paris held a gathering in the most central and busy part of the city centre’s pedestrian zone to unveil a ‘Wall of Shame’ of international and national homophobic figures.

A great many other activities were reported across the country.

GEORGIA

It was events in Georgia that grabbed the majority of international news headlines on the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013. Violent clashes on May 17 last year left activists uncertain as to what, if any, public action to take in 2013. But a small network of LGBT activists took the courageous step to mark the Day with a small public demonstration and a silent flashmob action, outside the City Assembly in the capital, Tbilisi, intended to dramatise – and ‘speak’ back to – the systematic oppression of LGBT communities in the country. The aim was to deliver the message, ‘Love is for Everyone’ to the wider public. ‘We all have to fight hate’ activists affirmed, in the lead up to the Day.

A small number of activists gathered in Pushkin Park, Downtown Tbilisi, on May 17, in a move that had been guaranteed explicit state and police protection; underlined by Georgia’s President, just 24 hours before. Colossally outnumbered, however, the peaceful gathering was attacked by a rally of thousands of anti-gay activists and representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church; the crux of a sustained campaign to collectively confront the ‘insulting’ actions of gays. Shocking images, shared globally online and in the mainstream international media, show priests leading the attacks. Amnesty International received reports of an attempted lynching by individuals amongst the crowds. Police were forced to attempt to bus the activists out, still, counter-demonstrators blocked their way to the bus, attacked them violently, en masse, and attempted to break down the windows. At least 17 people, including police officers, were reported injured as a result.

Many international and regional organizations, governments, progressive faith organisations and human rights watchdogs – roundly condemned the violent actions against LGBT activists in Georgia,
and have called on the government to hold the perpetrators accountable.

People gathering for rainbow flashmob actions in Mainz, Germany

GERMANY

As in previous years, Germany was the international centre for ‘rainbow flash’ balloon releases for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia in 2013. Events took place in more than 10 towns and cities, including Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Dresden and Mainz. Coloured balloon releases were joined by kiss-in actions, exhibitions, workshops and countless other events throughout the country.

GUYANA

LGBT activists, young people and civil society groups gathered together on May 18, 2013 to commemorate International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia by painting a section of the Georgetown seawall. Organisers advised: ‘This year’s event was titled “Painting a Brighter Future” under the theme, “The Children are our Future” to raise awareness of the issues children face in Guyana, such as violence, abuse, and discrimination based on sexuality and gender. IDAHO was also utilized to keep a local spotlight on the Select Committee of the National Assembly that is currently holding consultations on the abolition of corporal punishment in schools and the need to create a safe and enabling environment for children, regardless of race, religion, social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. IDAHO was therefore acknowledged by highlighting the immense work of Guyanese groups advocating to advance human rights protections of all citizens.

HAITI

The International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia was commemorated in Port-au-Prince, Haiti with a series of film projections, conferences, debates and testimonies. A new database system
which enables confidential information sharing of the rights violations of LGBT people, was also unveiled. Local activists reported that they mobilised this year around the theme of ‘how action and reflection can benefit the fight against verbal and physical abuses based on sexual orientation’. On the evening of May 17 there was a projection of the Haitian documentary film Of Men and Gods at the US embassy, which deals with questions of faith, religious diversity and homosexuality. Community leaders also organised a debate-style working group at the Hotel Montana, attended by around 200 LGBT people, straight allies, and various representatives of organisations working for the rights of sexual minorities in Haiti, as well as various high-level guest speakers.

HONDURAS

Events around the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia in Honduras lasted a week, and were spread across three different cities. A sexual diversity film mini-festival, tackling themes of ‘homo, lesbo and transphobia’ was held in the city of Comayagüela. The screenings targeted educators specifically and featured a showing of the documentary En Mis Tacones In My Heels about the lives of Honduran trans women. Lesbian and trans activists joined together for a day of visibility on May 14. They installed various information in the central park of Honduras’ capital city, Tegucigalpa, and conducted awareness raising activities in other parts of the city.

A University Forum on violence towards the LGBT community, a memorial service and prize giving, and national newspaper coverage also marked the year’s commemorations. Events culminated on Friday May 17, with a press conference exposing the causes and effects of violence against LGBT communities, and a march and candlelit ceremony. Participants were asked to attend in green – a culturally recognised symbol of hope.

HONG KONG

A Global Rainbow Flashmob event was held on the afternoon May 17, on Great George Street, Causeway Bay – organisers reported positively on the extensive media coverage the event garnered. An LGBT rights rally was also held the week before, on May 12. Organisers advised: ‘The theme this year is “In.Creativity”, to reflect the lack of legal protection from discrimination for different sexual orientations and gender identities while such legislation is still distances away.’ Special guests included Hong Kong’s Equal Opportunity Commission Chairman Mr. York Chow, and a host of well-known local musicians. A Street Forum was also held on May 17 under the title ‘Straight or Gay, Everyone’s Equal under the Law! Legislation on Discrimination to Protect Homosexuals!’ Participants debated the need for sexual discrimination legislation, discussed questions of religion and shared experiences with racial equality campaigners. An inter-religion forum was also held as part of the year’s commemorations on May 18.

ICELAND

Surely amongst the year’s most beautiful photographs is a set shared online by Icelandic LGBTQI activists, on May 17. Participants of the group encouraged people to fly the flag throughout different municipalities in the country, receiving diverse contributions, including one featuring Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Iceland’s Minister of Education, Science and Culture outside Harper Concert Hall in Reykjavik (right).

The Global Rainbow Flashmob comes to Hong Kong

Images from Ólafsfjörður and Reykjavik, Iceland, respectively
INDIA

The Indian state of West Bengal featured strongly in activities for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013. May 17 was observed in three different districts in the state: Howrah, Kolkata and North 24 Pargonas. As part of the programme in Kolkata activists, especially those linked to a community project providing shelter to trans people/hijras, organised a street photo exhibition featuring their ‘Me by Me’ project. The same night, a rainbow flashmob was held near the shelter home. In Howrah and near Salt Lake, activists also held a candle light vigil and awareness campaign. A special visibility was given to the Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) report (see Chapter 1. International Initiatives). Activists also launched a new research report on LGBT questions on the Day.

INDONESIA

Various LGBT organisations joined forces to organise a diverse series of events around May 17 2013 in five different cities in the country. The overarching 2013 IDAHO message in Indonesia was ‘Stop Homo/Trans-phobic Bullying and any form of violence and discrimination against LGBT persons!’ Activities included an online media campaign; a carnival, street parade and flashmob in Jakarta, and a public signing during the street action. Activists also launched a Two Years report on Cases of Violences and Discriminations against LGBT persons in Indonesia, and re-launched the book ‘The Rights to Work of Transgender People is the State’s Responsibility’.

Outside the capital, an LGBT in campus seminar was held in Medan, an LGBT gathering, viral campaign, and ‘LGBT Goes to Campus’ event in Jogjakarta, an LGBT gathering, musical performance and film screening in Makassar, and public performances, talk show, testimony and LGBT night in Surabaya.

IRELAND

Actions for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia took place in at least nine different cities in Ireland. Various events gave a specific platform to progressive religious voices. Five IDAHO events were held in Cathedrals – in Dublin, Belfast, Limerick, Kilkenny and Derry. LGBT young people in Galway organised a street art flashmob. Seminars were also held on issues affecting LGBT young people, and on ‘school ethos’ and LGBT identities, which brought together a varied audience including LGBT youth, educators, activists, international researchers and the Irish government’s Department for Education and Skills.

ISRAEL

Various events for IDAHO/Havana were held in Israel between May 16th and 19th. Actions included facebook campaigns challenging hate and promoting visibility, a special event featuring a ‘coming out’ action, discussion about the day and a ceremony honouring key volunteers of the community.

The University of Tel Aviv hosted a special seminar on LGBT questions, where the award for the best
academic paper on LGBT-phobia and Judaism was also given. Other actions, including a protest vigil and photo event, also marked the Day. IDAHO, has been held in Israel since 2006, under the name ‘Havana’ which is the abbreviation for IDAHO in Hebrew, and also means ‘Understanding’.

ITALY

Progressive religious voices featured strongly in this year’s actions, with vigils to remember the victims of hate crimes held in more than 12 different towns and cities. A video campaign to highlight May 17 as a moment for progressive religious voices to speak up was also created in the run up to the Day. For Italy’s ‘Rainbow Tour’, a rainbow coloured caravan toured through the streets of Belluno, Feltre and Bassano del Grappa, bringing live performances, speeches and a party with it. Many more activities, including flashmob events, workshops, radio reports, video campaigns and meetings in schools and with government officials were also reported by local activists.

JAPAN

A rainbow soap bubble event in Iwate, was hosted by LGBT activists as their contribution to the Global Rainbow Flashmob. Participants were joined by passersby including children, students who happened to be in our town on their school trip and even adults who were curious what we were doing. They approached us and some of them joined us blowing bubbles. The event, as well as an ‘IDAHO-T panel exhibition’ was covered by a local newspaper and a women’s centre radio programme. A screening of the film Call Me Kuchu, which deals with Ugandan gay and lesbian communities, was also held in Tokyo, and sold out. Events around May 17 were observed in another 12 cities in Japan, ranging from exhibitions, to workshops and street actions, where messages by LGBT people and allies were read out in the streets calling for respect.

KENYA

A peaceful May 17 manifestation in Nairobi city centre was banned at the last minute by police. Local activists advised they had acquired a permit ahead of the event but this was unexpectedly cancelled, just ahead of the start of the march which was due to start at Freedom Corner, Uhuru Park. The news was covered in a brief segment on Kenyan National Television station KTN, and was widely reported by international media, such as BBC World. A dance flashmob in Nairobi also had to be moved at the last minute due to sudden government concerns about traffic control. Activists were undeterred however, issuing a number of defiant statements on and after May 17. The capital’s LGBT community also joined together for a rainbow-themed picnic the weekend before May 17, and gathered for a manifestation in a Nairobi city park. A range of activities in the city of Kusumu also marked the year’s commemorations.

LEBANON

An Anti-Homophobia rally in the capital Beirut, a documentary film screening and discussion at the French Embassy, and the participation of Lebanese activists in the Regional Network Against Homophobia statement for May 17 marked commemorations around the Day in Lebanon.
Pride flag bearing the cedar tree carried by human rights activists in Beirut, Lebanon

LESOTHO

LGBT activists in Lesotho made history on the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013, by organising the country’s first ever pride march. This was a hugely significant act given the official criminalization of same sex relationships between men, the social stigma attached to being LGBT, and the country’s status as having the third highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world. Aside from the march, activists also organised a film screening and series of talks, held in a cinema in the centre of the capital, Maseru.

LITHUANIA

Various events took place in the capital Vilnius, including a film screening of the documentary Beyond the Pink Curtain, a discussion about the safety of coming out in Lithuanian society, and a preview of the new Baltic Pride 2013 campaign videos. A successful Bi-Meetup event was also held, in which people came together to explore biphobia in their personal attitudes and within the community, involving a game of biphobic bingo. LGBT activists also took the occasion of May 17, to send each Member of Parliament in Lithuania a postcard drawing their attention to a Council of Europe Recommendation urging member states to take measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Screenings of the new film Right2Love were also held in Vilnius and the city of Kaunas.

MACAU

To mark IDAHO 2013, activists gathered for a Global Rainbow Flashmob action, outside of one of Macau’s most famous landmarks – the ruins of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

MACEDONIA

Activities for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013 were reported in eight different cities in Macedonia. The key theme for the year was ‘Say No to Homophobia’. Organisers advised that activities started in Gostivar, in which activists created and put up posters with the theme for the year, and translated them into four different languages. Similar activities were reported in the cities of Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Shtip, Ohrid, Bitola and Kicevo.
MALAYSIA

LGBT rights activists in Malaysia joined the commemorations for May 17, in various ways in 2013, including through different online actions. Highlights included the launching of a web-based video campaign to challenge transphobia. The campaign asks questions, in particular, of what it means to be a trans* ally? Activists also connected to the global rainbow flashmob, with a rainbow photo shoot action.

MEXICO

IDAHO 2013, and the entire month of May in Mexico was marked by the campaign ‘Talk Mexico’ (Reacciona México), in which LGBT associations invited civil society organizations, government agencies, companies and the general public to participate for the second year, in the different activities, carried out throughout the country. The President of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, tweeted about IDAHO, and his team released a brief statement recognising the Day. The Northeastern city of Monterrey held the first edition of a 5km ‘race against homophobia’. Leftist political party National Regeneration Movement (Morena) also marked the Day by demanding effective laws in Mexico to respect sexual diversity.

MOLDOVA

The capital Chisnau was a key focus for events in Moldova, which dovetailed this year with activities for the 12th Moldovan LGBT Pride Festival, ‘Rainbow over the Dniester’. 5 days of diverse events went ahead which included exhibitions, same sex partnership ceremonies, a human library, award ceremonies, debates, a women’s arm-wrestling competition, a march for LGBT traditional values, a safe sex promotion party and, especially for May 17, a flower-laying ceremony at the Victims of Repressions Monument and KOMPOT – an open-air event representing a mixture of forms of artistic expression, communication and participation.

MONTENEGRO

This year’s International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia was marked by the adoption of the first national LGBT policy – the Strategy of the Government of Montenegro for improvement of the lives of LGBT people in Montenegro, which runs until 2018. LGBTIQ activists in Montenegro commemorated May 17 2013 with the launch of a pioneering campaign to extend marriage rights to same sex couples. Activists also published the first ever Montenegrin LGBT postcard, advising ‘The first LGBT postcard is inclusive, it points out the existence of the LGBT community, its identity and characteristics, the right to liberty and belonging to Montenegro’. The first produced was sent to the President of the Parliament, Mr. Ranko Krivokapic. Street performances, sports tournaments, workshops, book donations to the public and university libraries, and fundraising events for other vulnerable groups, also marked the year’s commemorations.
May 17 2013, saw the launch of the first ever LGBT postcard in Montenegro

**MOROCCO**

For the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia 2013, a Moroccan LGBT magazine, dedicated to the gay and lesbian community, launched a cyber campaign called ‘Love for All’. Through this campaign they hoped to ‘act against homophobia, which is very present in the Moroccan society and the Arab world in general,’ advised one of the organisers. The campaign takes place in the context of the recent three year prison sentence delivered for two Moroccans in the north of the Kingdom who were allegedly engaged in same-sex conduct. Another couple of the Rabat region currently stand on trial and face the same punishment. In Morocco, sexual relations between persons of the same sex are punishable by 6 months to 3 years imprisonment under Article 489 of the Criminal Code.

**THE NETHERLANDS**

The International IDAHO Forum in the Hague was, of course, a clear highlight of events in the Netherlands (for more detail see Chapter 1. International Initiatives), with a special mention for Queen Máxima of the Netherlands who became the first monarch ever to participate in the May 17 commemorations. At Leiden University campus in The Hague, a seminar was also held on existing legal frameworks for LGBT rights, survey findings, and discussions of same sex partnership and adoption rights. Once again Dutch embassies around the world were particularly active in promoting the day by flying the pride flag, and organising events to mark May 17, including in countries where LGBT communities are severely repressed.

**NICARAGUA**

A range of activities took place in the capital city, Managua, for May 17, as part of Nicaraguan LGBTI activists’ campaign ‘April 26 – May 17 – June 28’ (April 26 being National Day of Lesbian Visibility and June 28 the anniversary of the Stonewall riots). Highlights included hundreds of Nicaraguans marching against homophobia and transphobia in Managua, with rainbow flags and shouting slogans demanding an end to discrimination.

**PALESTINE**

Palestinian women’s/LBTQI activists published a critical statement of solidarity for the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013, on a platform of ‘No to bargaining on rights. No to hierarchy on rights. And no to the fragmentation of rights.’ They also issued a press release on the eve of the global commemorations which criticised the US Embassy in Tel Aviv for organising an IDAHO event without creating space for Palestinian LGBTQI communities to speak.

**PARAGUAY**

The Day in Paraguay was commemorated with a Kiss-in outside of the Paraguayan Congress, with pictures of the event shared internationally on social media. Accompanied by music and rainbow flags, the event was widely covered in the national media. ‘Day to day life is where the discrimination that still characterizes Paraguayan society is felt, in families, schools and the workplace,’ affirmed one of the organisers.
Kiss-in outside the National Congress in Paraguay

PERU

In Lima LGBT activists protested outside the headquarters of the Ministry of Justice to contest their exclusion from the National Human Rights Plan. Over 1,500 letters and 1,200 signatures were also presented, protesting this decision. LGBT activists also marked the Day by publishing a new report on hate crimes against LGBT people in Peru over the past year.

Protest outside the Peruvian Ministry of Justice, for May 17, 2013

THE PHILIPPINES

LGBT people and straight allies joined business owners on May 17 in the capital Manila, in a toast to celebrate their commitment to create safe spaces. The event was called ‘Tagay for IDAHO’ and marked the launch of the Safe Space Campaign - a program that aims to eliminate discrimination through policy change. Activists also released an open letter to Churches, asking them to back the campaign. ‘We live in a world where we NEED to safeguard our freedom. Ours is a world that unfortunately discriminates against diversity – and so we need to protect that at all costs,’ affirmed one of the organisers. Activists also ran an online awareness raising campaign in the lead up to the Day. The year’s commemorations concluded with ‘Hayag,’ a staging of a collection of coming out monologues.

LGBT activists take to the streets in Poland: ‘Greetings from Krakow and say hello to Krakow! Rainbow revolution!’

POLAND

A widely acclaimed anti-homophobia video campaign was launched by LGBT activists - Spoko, Ja Tez (Okay, I do) - which delivers a strong message about homophobic bullying in schools. Polish centre-right politician, Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament, released a video statement in support of May 17. Poland’s (and the World’s) only transgender Member of Parliament currently in office, Anna Grodzka, also spoke at an IDAHO event in London. Polish Secretary of State, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, spoke at the International IDAHO Conference in The Hague. In Lodz, LGBTQI rights activists, dedicated radio coverage to the Day, and a silent flashmob action was also reported. In Krakow, LGBT activists also took to the streets with a 'rainbow revolution' action.

PORTUGAL

A diverse range of events marked the Day’s commemorations in three different cities in Portugal – Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra. Actions included a march against homophobia & transphobia in Coimbra, a queer performance festival in Porto and Lisbon, rainbow flashmob street art in Lisbon, a free hugs event and a one day conference bringing together...
LGBT young people, activists, academics and policymakers in Lisbon. The Day was also marked, much to the surprise of LGBT activists, by the passing of a bill extending adoption rights to same sex couples by the Portuguese Parliament.

PUERTO RICO

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 city festival, which activists had spent months planning. Activism and arts collided with diverse events including street performances, speeches and exhibitions. The commemorations culminated with thousands gathering for a demonstration and night-time lantern festival on Friday May 17.

Thousands gathered on the night of May 17 in San Juan, Puerto Rico

RUSSIA

Rainbow flashmob events were organised on the afternoon and evening of May 17 in nine different cities in Russia (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Murmansk, Khabarovsk, Samara, Vladivostok, Ryazan, Nakhodka and Tolyatti/Toglatti). Rainbow coloured balloon releases featured prominently, but in various instances these events merged with memorial style events, to remember the victims of hate crimes. In Saint Petersburg, for example, activists took the decision shortly before May 17, to release black balloons alongside rainbow coloured ones. This was as an act of remembrance for, amongst other victims, 23-year old gay man, Vladislav Tornovoi, who was raped, tortured and murdered on May 10, 2013, in what police described as a homophobic hate crime.

Though, as in many cities and states (and now federally), a bill banning the promotion of ‘homosexual propaganda’ had been passed in Saint Petersburg in February 2012, activists were given permission to publicly mark IDAHO 2013. Opposition groups broke through police lines, however, to attack the peaceful demonstration with smoke pellets and stones. They also shouted slurs and held up pictures of pedophiles. Local activists, however, also stressed success, highlighting an attendance of more than 150 and adequate attempts at policing. In Moscow, which one week later (May 25, 2013) would ban a scheduled city Pride March, a coloured balloon release in the city centre proceeded peacefully.

Rainbow flash balloon release proceeds without incident in Moscow, Russia

SENEGAL

In Senegal, the Dutch and German Embassies hosted a reception for IDAHO, in the presence of civil society representatives and members of LGBT communities. The reception provided the opportunity for the diplomats to critique the fact that religion was invoked as an excuse for human rights violations. The reception ended with the screening of several short films, including a documentary about the story of two outed Senegalese men, whose lives have been destroyed by social stigma.

SERBIA

Diverse events were reported in the Serbian capital, Belgrade around May 17. Actions included a one day event centred on a panel discussion focused on community empowerment, which drew together local opinion makers, representatives of LGBT activist organizations, culture and art scene, government and media. A photography exhibition – tackling themes of
of sexuality, the body and homo/transphobic violence – and a rainbow flashmob street art session also marked the Day. Elsewhere in the city, a new annual report on the rights of LGBT people in Serbia was released. Government representatives also spoke on LGBT rights issues at a community-led seminar, and the first Rainbow Award was presented. The award recognises contributions to the fight against homophobia and transphobia and protection and promotion of LGBT and human rights in Serbia.

May 17 actions in Belgrade, Serbia

**SINGAPORE**

The International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia in Singapore was marked by the presentation of the book *I Will Survive* – a collection which ‘features real-life experiences of love, grace, faith, dignity and courage from 21 ordinary gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Singapore who have survived extraordinary circumstances.’ The well-attended event featured excerpt readings by special guests (Ovidia Yu, Tania De Rozario, Leona Lo, Ng Yi-Sheng and Miak Siew), a question & answer session, and a book signing session with the editor Leow Yangfa.

*I Will Survive* – An edited collection of LGBT life stories from Singapore

**SOUTH AFRICA**

This year, Johannesburg was witness to the largest ever International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia public actions in southern Africa. An entire day of social, political and art activism, as well as entertainment was held in the city on May 17. Aside from a dance flashmob, the Day’s programme also included a march, a sight-seeing tour of the city and a queer arts mini festival. Before the Day activists also created two powerful videos as part of an awareness campaign to encourage a ‘cascade of action in southern Africa’ for May 17 2013.

In Cape Town, activists came together for a parade in the townships. The event took place on Saturday May 18 in Gugulethu, the site of numerous hate crime attacks against lesbian women. A set of talks was also held in the city to mark the Day, bringing civil society groups, politicians and the wider community together to discuss violence against LGBT people, public policy development and what politicians can do to support the movement.

Activists prepare for Johannesburg rainbow flashmob campaign, South Africa

**SOUTH KOREA**

South Korea was witness to some of the most creative events of the year - widely buzzed around the world on social media. In the centre of Seoul, Korea, around 100 people gathered for an action against homophobia and transphobia, with a rainbow flashmob version of the song ‘You Make Me Proud’. A coloured balloon release also marked the year’s commemorations, as well as some ‘guerrilla gardening’ (the planting of coloured pansies in Seoul, to memorialise the victims of hate crimes).

LGBT activists gather for musical flashmob on May 17 in Seoul, South Korea

**SPAIN**

Various local and regional authorities, including the Andaluzian parliament and the city assembly of Malagà, marked the Day with official proclamations.
In Seville, LGBT associations banded together to organise various activities in secondary education centres. More than 600 people attended the series of events which included film screenings, debates, lectures, and the presentation of a study of 3,000 LGBT students from the Seville area. The study found that 13% reported having experienced physical aggression by their peers. In Málaga, a group of secondary school students created their own photography exhibition to mark the Day. A prayer evening, to remember the victims of homophobia, was also held in Seville on May 17.

**SRI LANKA**

Activists in Sri Lanka, organised to create two videos which they released for this year’s international May 17 commemorations. *Homophobia Hurts* features a series of excerpts illustrating the different dimensions of violence and discrimination against LGBT people. *Equal Ground - We Stand Up for Equality* is a collage of different messages from the Sri Lankan LGBT community, united by the theme ‘love is instinct, hate is taught’.

**SWITZERLAND**

Activists in western Switzerland organised a video contest for International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia 2013, in which they invited film students to produce short videos challenging discrimination against LGBT people. Over 150 people attended the screening and award ceremony on the evening of May 17. Members of different LGBT organisations also presented federal authorities with a new action plan against homophobia, developed by legal experts on behalf of community groups. They also launched a petition to have May 17 officially recognised by federal authorities. LGBT groups, in association with UNAIDS, also came up with a novel ‘Placemats Campaign for IDAHO’. Five placemats, each featuring slogans and statistics challenging discrimination, were produced for use in various UN agency cafeterias.

**TAIWAN**

LGBT young people in Taiwan joined the international May 17 commemorations in style, with colourful photo contributions to the Global Rainbow Flashmob. The organisers advised as they published their contribution: ‘We support International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia!!! We hope we can make Taiwan become a non-discriminatory, respectful and diverse society. We need everyone’s effort!!!’

**THAILAND**

Trans activists featured strongly in Thailand’s contribution to this year’s May 17 commemorations. Events included a participatory workshop with Miss Tiffany Company, a world-renowned transwomen beauty pageant organization in Thailand. The workshop, held in in Pattaya, focused on raising awareness of IDAHOT and on human rights issues related to trans women and featured the participation of 27 finalists as well as media and celebrities. Together with Thailand’s National Human Rights Commission, activists also organised a day-long IDAHOT event at the NHRC office on May 17. Discussions included the global IDAHOT movement and the presentation of a project on trans rights and Thai military recruitment. In Bangkok, LGBTQI activists organised the event ‘IDAHOT Rainbow People’. Various rainbow themed activities were conducted involving dance, theatre, costume and candlelight, at the Democracy Monument, Thammasat University, BTS Skytrain, and...
Victory Monument consecutively. Various other events took place throughout the country.

Thai activists took part in the Global Rainbow Flashmob with various events in Bangkok

**TURKEY**

During the month of May 2013 itself, key highlights included a march for LGBT rights in Ankara, in which approximately 500 people participated. The 8th International Anti-Homophobia Meeting, a two day conference, was also organised on the topic of regional peace. The conference organisers aimed to point at ‘links between homophobia/transphobia and sexism, nationalism, racism and militarism’, in order to make ‘connections between various kinds of discrimination’. As well as grass roots activists, scholars, unionists, film directors and politicians from Turkey as well as the US, Poland, the Netherlands and France attended the meeting on May 17 - 18. Activists reported that their events were greeted with significant media coverage locally, nationally and even – to a smaller extent – internationally.

**UKRAINE**

A small group of LGBTQ activists in in Zaporizhia, Ukraine, braved anti-gay opposition, and intimidation, to hold a rainbow flashmob action on May 17 2013. Participants advised that, in contrast to last year, ‘anti-gay organizations and religious communities of Zaporizhia announced an “Anti-gay Parade” exactly on May 17th, in order to thwart any attempt to celebrate the Day Against Homophobia. Homophobic groups in social networks organized a campaign to raise people willing to use violence against the LGBTQ people in case of any attempt to carry out a meeting.’ Nevertheless, activists advised that ‘more than 20 people had the courage to come out and speak out for the right to equality and freedom. Lined up in a row, the participants composed inscriptions “F*ck homophobia” and “Любовь сильнее ненависти” (“Love is stronger than hate”). Then, in a noisy and joyous atmosphere, the participants wrote on a piece of paper their dreams and wishes, bound them to the balloons before they climbed into the gloomy rainy sky, colouring it with all the colours of the rainbow...’

LGBTQ activists brave opposition and intimidation in the Ukraine

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Well over 100 events were reported in the United Kingdom, making it one of just two countries with 100+ events (the other was Brazil). Actions for the Global Rainbow Flashmob took place in London, Manchester, Brighton, Sheffield, Newcastle, Coventry, Swansea and Glasgow. Foreign Secretary, William Hague underscored his, and the UK government’s, support for May 17, with a special statement published at the start of the Day. The Manchester-born Pansy Project – aside from organising flashmob theatre in Sheffield – also inspired guerilla gardening for May 17, as far afield as South Africa and South Korea. Also Manchester born, the Flying the Flag initiative, which once again encouraged people, groups and institutions to fly the rainbow flag in honour of May 17 was popular not just in the North-West of England, but internationally. Comedian Stephen Fry tweeted his support for May 17 activities, with a special mention to young LGBT people organising events in Brighton.

London based international LGBT news site joined the global IDAHO commemorations with their very own rainbow flashmob event on the banks of London’s River Thames.

Gay Star News Flashmob, with London Gay Men’s Chorus and London Big Gay Band, United Kingdom
UGANDA

May 17 in Uganda was marked by many events by several different organisations, spread out over the week leading up to the Day. Actions included a roundtable discussion with Ugandan journalists focussed on homophobic violence, activities from bisexual women’s-led organisations centred on highlighting community specific health questions and discriminations, and the sharing of testimonies of transphobic violence amongst the community.

Advocacy workshops, a talent show and an exhibition project also marked the year’s commemorations. On May 17, a joint event – involving the participation of various different sexual and gender rights associations, and their allies – was also held, centred on the screening of three documentaries. In addition to events, various Ugandan organisations marked the Day with statements calling for government abandonment of repressive legislation projects, and greater attention to effective HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and support.

UNITED STATES

In the US, over 15 state representatives pledged to commemorate the day through official proclamations and ceremonies. Organisers in California, Illinois, New York, Minnesota, Washington, Georgia, Florida, Washington, D.C, and throughout the rest of the country 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. For the first time ever, the eponymous state of Idaho recognised IDAHO as an official Day. For the 4th year running activists in Georgia organised a four-day series of events around May 17. In Utah, the exhibition ‘Trans*forming Salt Lake City’ brought a trans community focused art exhibition to the streets. In Portland, Oregon, fans of Portland Timbers Football Club, marked the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia with a massive rainbow coloured Mexican wave on match day.

Sadly, the night of May 17, 2013 was also marked by the homophobic murder of Mark Carson, a 32-year old gay man, in Greenwich Village, New York City. Thousands of people participated in rallies, marches and vigils held over the following nights to protest against LGBT hate crimes, and to honour his life.

PRIDE not Prejudice’: Portland Timbers fans club Timbers Army mark IDAHO 2013 in Portland, Oregon, United States

URUGUAY

A march against transphobia, homophobia and lesbophobia in Montevideo – spearheaded and organised by trans rights activists – put the fight against transphobia centre stage, in Uruguay’s May 17 mobilisations this year. The Ovejas Negras (Black Sheep) collective organised a participatory video project - highlighting teachers’ and students’ experiences of homo/lesbo/transphobia in schools. Activists also took to the streets to celebrate the country’s recent legalisation of same sex marriage.

VENEZUELA

The second March Against Homo-Transphobia took to the streets of Caracas, under the motto ‘Unifying, Organising, Mobilising’. One of the aims was to gain recognition of May 17th as an official day on the part of the Venezuelan government.
This is part of a larger campaign in which, once again in 2013, LGBT rights advocates tabled a proposal for official recognition in the national Congress.

VIETNAM

For over two weeks (May 2 – 18), LGBT organisations in Vietnam, rolled out an impressive range of activities to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia, on a nationwide scale. The programme included an advocacy workshop with national stakeholders, a capacity building workshop for LGBT activists on storytelling, a roadshow with young people, an exhibition focused on lesbians, and a public event: Listen (music and candle light event in the center of Hanoi). Activists also presented study findings on same sex couples in Vietnam, and held a flashmob event & dissemination session during an IDAHO festival, co-hosted by the US Embassy. Music, the publishing of new reports and many other events marked the year’s commemorations.

OTHER COUNTRIES

The mobilisations for 2013 surpassed our most hopeful expectations and, frankly, mean that we have been unable to do justice to all of the actions in all of the countries where actions took place this year in this printable report, given time, space and resource constraints. The process of selecting which countries to include was also highly imperfect, with some fantastic community-led mobilisations still not included as summaries in this version.

Actions in a further 24 countries are, however, available for view online – through the links below and through the world map on the www.dayagainsthomophobia. org site:

Notable public actions led by LGBT activists were reported in Hungary, Jamaica, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Romania, Nepal, Mauritius, Sweden, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Luxembourg. Community-led actions were also reported in New Zealand, Greece, Panama and Latvia. In Denmark, various statements were made by activists and policy-makers in honour of the Day. In Trinidad & Tobago activists reported widespread and positive media coverage of a report about homophobia in the country, released to mark the Day.

Local activists from Somalia reported that radio coverage, acknowledging the significance of May 17, constituted the first time the issue of homosexuality has ever been publicly mentioned in the country at all. In Rwanda, activists organised a day of events at the US Embassy. In Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tunisia, statements for May 17 were issued by LGBTI activists, who called on their governments to guarantee basic protections of human rights. The first ever published report on the situation of LGBTI individuals in Sierra Leone, was also published on May 17, 2013.

In addition, we are either waiting on further details, or have unconfirmed reports of activities in Togo, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Kazakhstan, Cyprus and Norway (where May 17 is also Norwegian Independence Day).
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