



Reject Transphobia, Respect Gender Identity:

An Appeal to the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the States of the World

Every day, people who live at variance to expected gender¹ norms face violence, abuse, rape, torture and hate crime all over the world, in their home as well as in the public arena. Though most cases of violence never get documented, we know that in the first weeks of 2009 alone, Trans women have been murdered in Honduras, Serbia and in the USA. Trans men are equally victims of hate crimes, prejudice and discrimination despite their frequent social and cultural invisibility.

The basic human rights of Trans people are being ignored or denied in all nations – be it out of ignorance, prejudice, fear or hate and Trans people overwhelmingly face daily discrimination, which results in social exclusion, poverty, poor health care and little prospects of appropriate employment.

Far from protecting Trans citizens, States and International bodies reinforce social transphobia through short sighted negligence or reactionary politics:

Because of the failure of national law and social justice, in far too many States Trans people are being forced to live a gender which they experience as fundamentally wrong for them. In most countries, any attempt to change one's gender can lead to legal sanctions, brutal mistreatment and social stigma. In other countries, legal recognition of gender change is subject to sterilization or other major surgical intervention. Trans people who cannot or do not wish to submit to this, cannot obtain legal recognition of their preferred gender, and are forced to 'come out' whenever they cross a border, run into a police patrol, apply for a new job, move into a new home or simply want to buy a mobile phone.

Contributing factors include that current International health classifications still consider all Trans people as mentally "disordered". This outdated vision is insulting and incorrect and is used to justify daily discrimination and stigmatization in all aspects of Trans people's lives.

Recently though in some countries with very different social and cultural contexts significant legal advances have been made. Following in the wake of bold judicial decisions, State action has led to increased acceptance of Trans people within their society. This demonstrates that understanding and progress is possible.

Currently Trans people everywhere in the world rise up to reclaim their human rights and freedom. They carry an unanimous message that they will no longer accept to be labelled sick or treated as non human beings on the basis of their gender identity and gender expression.

¹ (such as transvestite, transsexual, transgender and other cultural identities related to cross-gender dressing and living)

This is why we ask:

- **The W.H.O.** to stop considering Trans people as mentally disordered and to promote access to adequate health care and psychological support, as desired by Trans people.

- **The United Nations Human Rights bodies** to examine the human rights abuses that Trans people face around the world and to take action to combat these abuses.

- **The States of the World** to adopt the international Yogyakarta Principles and ensure that all Trans people benefit from appropriate health care, including gender reassignment if they so wish; be allowed to adapt their civil status to their preferred gender; live their social, family or professional lives without being exposed to transphobic discrimination, prejudice or hate crime and that they are protected by the police and justice systems from physical and non-physical violence.

We call on the UN, the W.H.O. and the nations of the world, in adopting these measures, to refuse transphobia and welcome the right of their citizens to live fully and freely in their preferred gender, assumed as an expression of cultural freedom.