



Petition to end criminalization and medicalization of sexual orientation and gender identity in Iran

Under Iran's Islamic Penal Code, consensual same-sex sexual relations between adults carry flogging and the death penalty while transgender expressions including cross-dressing may attract a punishment of 74 lashes and a fine. Transsexuality is, however, recognized as a Gender Identity Disorder (GID) curable through sex reassignment surgeries, which were made legal in Iran after a 1986 fatwa by Ayatollah Khomeini. As a result of this legal framework, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) individuals who do not conform to culturally approved models of femininity and masculinity have to choose between risking harassment, persecution, and arbitrary arrest and detention by police and paramilitary forces because of their actual or perceived homosexual orientation on the one hand, and seeking a diagnosis of GID with a view to undergoing sex reassignment procedures on the other. Medical professionals frequently lead LGBTI individuals to choose the latter course, which accounts for Iran having one of the highest numbers of sex reassignment surgeries in the world.

Lacking access to information about sexual orientation and gender identity and fearing laws criminalizing any positive speech about homosexuality, medical professionals frequently assign a diagnosis of GID to LGBTI individuals merely on account of their same-sex desires and gender non-conformity. They then nudge LGBTI individuals to either receive reparative therapies (including electroshock therapy and psychoactive medications) aimed at "curing" them of homosexuality or undergo sterilization and genital reassignment surgeries (GRS) aimed at turning them into "normally gendered" men or women. These abusive practices are taking place at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of Iranian officials. For instance, Mohamamd Javad Larijani, the head of Iran's Human Rights Commission, called homosexuality "an illness" for which "people must be put under psychiatric care and sometime even biological and physical care."

We, undersigned, call on the Iranian government to:

- Pending full decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations remove the death penalty and flogging for offences relating to consensual same-sex relations between adults;
- End discrimination and violence against LGBTI people, both in law and practice;
- Protect gender non-conforming people from harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, and torture and other ill-treatment, whether by state or non-state actors;
- Adopt a comprehensive legislation to streamline legal sex change procedures and protect the right to health of transsexuals, without imposing sterilization and genital reassignment surgeries as a prerequisite for gender legal recognition;
- Outlaw reparative therapies including electric shock therapies and psychoactive medications aimed at converting people's sexual orientation and gender identity;

- Promote freedom of expression and access to accurate information and prohibit the use of hate speech against people with different sexual orientation and gender identity, which leads to more domestic, social and state violence against one of the most marginalised groups in Iran.

Signatories:

Name	Organization
Azusa Yamashita	Gay Japan News (Equality)
Rachana Choerung	Micro Rainbow Internationals (MRI)
Thida Kuy	UNWomen
Rebecca	Trans Feminist Activist
Rainbow	Talita Kum
Renate Hartman	
Zakaria Nasser	Tajassod
Colette O'Regan	LGBT Ireland
Pisey Ly	RoCK- Cambodia
Ineza Roussille	Justice for Sisters
Thilaga	Justice for Sisters
Nguyen Hai Yen	Viet Feminists
Nga LH Nguyen	Women Who Make a Difference
Mai Nhu Thiên Ân	FTM Vietnam Organization
Nara Lee	Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea
Lucio	China LGBT Youth Network
Lim Khinlui	Student Gender Alliance TW
Usman Hakimuddin	Humraz Male Health Society
Bhoomi Harendran	FPA Sri Lanka
Hiroto Shimizu	Japan LGBT association
Mari Yoshida	Japan LGBT association
Mikiyasu Kato	Japan LGBT association
Ariel Herrera	Dignity for All
June Chua	The T Project
Bess Hepworth	Planet Alley
Hic Zhuo	Trans Center
Manis Chen	Justice for Sisters
Romiaty Barreto	Fundasaun CODIVA (<i>Coalition for Diversity and Action/Hamutuk iha Diversidade ba Asaun</i>)
Sasha	GWL-INA
Shahzadi Rai	Sindh Transgender Welfare Network (STWN)
Moazzam Ali	SUB RANG SOCIETY
Bebo Haider	Pireh Male Health Society



**Iranian Lesbian &
Transgender Network**
6Rang شش رنگ