



I G L H R C

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE.
EVERYWHERE.



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INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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MISSION

The mission of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is to secure the full enjoyment of the human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation or expression, gender identity or expression, and/or HIV status.

WHAT WE DO

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) works around the world to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and ensure that human rights exist for everyone, everywhere. We believe that realizing this vision requires the development of strong human rights movements globally; building partnerships is at the heart of what we do.

AS PARTNERS, WE WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH LOCAL ACTIVISTS TO:

Respond to Emergencies. IGLHRC plays a special role in reaching out to sexual minorities under siege—from the police, government or religious leaders, and even local communities. IGLHRC supports their efforts to secure immediate safety and develops strategies for responding to state-sanctioned violence.

Expose Human Rights Violations. IGLHRC works to ensure that those responsible for the abuse and targeting of LGBT people are openly exposed and challenged. IGLHRC seeks to compel their compliance with international and regional human rights law.

Strengthen Capacity. IGLHRC develops projects, training institutes, and strategy sessions designed to enhance the ability of local partners to challenge human rights violations and effect lasting change in the way sexual minorities are treated.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIRS



Dear Supporters and Friends,

We are proud to report on a most momentous year for the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC—affectionately pronounced “eagle-herk”). In April, we had the unique pleasure of presenting Archbishop Desmond Tutu with IGLHRC’s 2008 OUTSPOKEN Award. It was our honor to host him at the annual *A Celebration of Courage* event in San Francisco, where he addressed the largest group of IGLHRC supporters in our history.

Through your generous support, IGLHRC was able to expand its work in Africa and Asia this year, two critical regions in the global effort to achieve LGBT people rights. We established our first Africa Regional Office in Cape Town, South Africa, and we have dedicated activists on staff building our work with partners in Asia and Pacific Islands. IGLHRC is now able to help advocates on four continents build a global movement for change.

IGLHRC was fortunate to receive a generous bequest from Ric Weiland as part of his gift to the LGBT community. IGLHRC will receive nearly \$200,000 per year over the next 8 years—for a total bequest of just under \$1.6 million dollars—in furtherance of Ric’s specific desire to help strengthen not just our programs but our capacity around the world.

On behalf of the rest of IGLHRC’s Board of Directors, we thank you for your continued faith and support in the work we do. Your funding helps us promote the right of every LGBT person to live free of stigma, discrimination, and abuse.

Human Rights for Everyone. Everywhere.

Ally Bolour

Co-Chair, Board of Directors

Dorothy E. Sander

Co-Chair, Board of Directors

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters and Friends,

Have you ever felt that you were alone?

Perhaps in struggling with your sexuality or gender within your family, fearing rejection. Perhaps in school, where the sense of your difference made you fearful of taunts and ridicule. Perhaps at work, where you fabricated a social life.

When people are arrested and thrown into a dirty, crowded prison cell for being transgender, are tortured by police for being gay, or are beaten and driven to suicide by family members for being a lesbian, they are often alone.

Every day IGLHRC reaches out to assure LGBT people around the world that they are not alone. IGLHRC helps them get back on their feet. IGLHRC fights back against the injustice of homophobia and discriminatory laws, that treat them as outcasts. The simple act of reaching out is the necessary first step to change.

When Shumail Raj and Shahzina Tariq, a married Pakistani couple, were arrested and imprisoned for violating marriage laws (Shumail is a trans man), IGLHRC reached out to human rights defenders in Pakistan for help and joined dozens of people around the world in sending notes of encouragement to the couple while their case dragged on.

When Senegalese lesbians and gay men were stalked and arrested for attending a gay wedding, IGLHRC staff went to Dakar to meet with those whose lives had changed forever because of the public exposure of their sexual and gender identities. We helped calm their fears, provide funding for them to move until the tensions died down, and we continue today to help them rebuild their traumatized community.

IGLHRC is the only international LGBT organization with the capacity to reach out to LGBT people around the world in times of crisis and to work side by side in building their ability to face down the violence and discrimination they will face in the future.

We do this only with your support. We thank you for that and look forward to your continued commitment to helping IGLHRC help change the world.

Sincerely,

Paula L. Ettelbrick

Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

What began in 1990 as a one-room office on Castro Street has grown to a staff of 18 dedicated and energetic people with offices in New York, Buenos Aires and Cape Town. Since its founding, IGLHRC has dedicated itself to building a global movement to ensure the human rights and dignity of all people.



Too often, human rights violations turn to violence. People are beaten or tortured for speaking up, arrested for gathering in public places or for being too public, abused by family and community members for refusing to conform to their expected gender roles, publicly humiliated when seeking health care, prosecuted for nothing more than being who they are, and violently threatened by political and community leaders. Prison sentences in approximately 80 countries outlawing homosexual conduct span from a few years to life. Death upon conviction is still an option in seven countries. When government, community, medical and religious leaders are allowed to openly threaten and ridicule sexual minorities, they create a climate of intense fear for sexual minorities. When leaders are not held accountable for their actions and the conditions they create, a climate of impunity for violence and discrimination against sexual minorities pervades the entire community.

IGLHRC is committed to supporting sexual minorities around the world in their effort to fight back against the human rights violations they encounter, and to building a greater understanding of the lives of sexual minorities and the universal human rights that belong to them.

IGLHRC'S SIX PRIMARY GOALS:

Ending criminalization and detention

Promoting freedom of speech, expression, assembly, and association

Promoting anti-discrimination laws and policies

Ensuring that diverse sexualities remain at the forefront of the global response to HIV/AIDS

Addressing human rights violations related to gender, gender identity, and gender expression

Developing alliances with key allies, particularly women's/sexual rights defenders, trade unions, and faith communities



2008 OUTSPOKEN AWARDEE

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU: **FIGHTING RACISM AND HOMOPHOBIA FROM THE PULPIT**

IGLHRC's OUTSPOKEN Awardee Archbishop Desmond Tutu is world-renowned for his role in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to this struggle in 1984. It took 18 more years of active resistance for apartheid to be vanquished. During all that time, Desmond Tutu remained a leading moral voice against racial injustice, urging other nations to impose sanctions on his country.

During the last several years, Archbishop Tutu has begun to make direct comparisons between the evils of apartheid and the evils of homophobia, declaring them both issues fundamentally related to justice. "I have wished many times that I could shut up. And of course, there would be many who would have been relieved. Though we can say that I do have the freedom to speak or not to speak...I could just as well try not to breathe...I have spoken against the injustice of apartheid, racism, where people were penalized for something about which they could do nothing, their ethnicity," he told IGLHRC this year. "I therefore could not keep quiet, it was impossible, when people were hounded for something they did not choose, their sexual orientation."

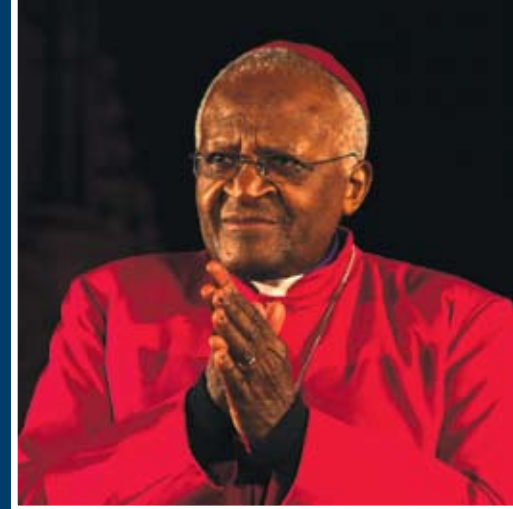
In the face of ongoing persecution, Tutu has praised sexual minorities for being "compassionate, caring, self-sacrificing and refusing to be embittered," and has spoken critically of his Church, apologizing for the way it has ostracized sexual minorities and for making them feel as if God had made a mistake by creating them as they are. "How sad it is," he told IGLHRC, "that the Church should be so obsessed with this particular issue of human sexuality when God's children are facing massive problems—poverty, disease, corruption, conflict..."

Archbishop Tutu's capacity to recognize that all human beings are inherently valuable and deserve to be treated with justice and respect makes him such an exemplary human rights activist, and more than qualified to receive IGLHRC's 2008 OUTSPOKEN Award.

IGLHRC's OUTSPOKEN Award recognizes the leadership of a global ally to the LGBT community whose public support has contributed substantially to advancing the rights and understanding of LGBT people everywhere.

“ I have wished many times that I could shut up. And of course, there would be many who would have been relieved.

Though we can say that I do have the freedom to speak or not to speak...I could just as well try not to breathe...I have spoken against the injustice of apartheid, racism, where people were penalized for something about which they could do nothing, their ethnicity...I therefore could not keep quiet, it was impossible, when people were hounded for something they did not choose, their sexual orientation. ”



— Archbishop Desmond Tutu

WORKING IN THE REGIONS

IGLHRC's effectiveness is enhanced by our regional structure, spanning several continents. We have program staff based in Africa, Latin America and Asia, while our main office is located in New York City, steps from the United Nations. We work for the day when strong movements for sexual rights exist globally, and when law and policy respects and protects the human rights of all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

IGLHRC'S AFRICA PROGRAM

From its base in Cape Town, South Africa, IGLHRC's Africa Program fights for an end to human rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in Africa and provides support to the growing African movement to protect the rights of sexual minorities.

More than two-thirds of African countries have laws criminalizing consensual same-sex acts. In many countries, sexual minorities face arbitrary arrest and detention, physical attacks, blackmail or extortion, and discrimination in the areas of employment, education, and access to health care.

CRISIS IN SENEGAL

In February 2008, IGLHRC learned that ten men and one woman had been arrested in Dakar, Senegal after a popular local magazine published photographs of a marriage ceremony between two Senegalese men. Those arrested were guests at the wedding.

Multiple homophobic articles appearing in the press created tremendous public animosity toward LGBT people in Senegal. Statements such as "killing a homosexual is not a sin" and "they should all be well and truly eliminated from the face of the Earth!" appeared on popular websites. Many gay men and lesbian women were driven from their homes while others were attacked by mobs.

Leaders of the Senegalese LGBT community called upon IGLHRC to make two emergency trips to the country, where Joel Nana, IGLHRC's Program Associate for Southern and West Africa, met with key leaders. IGLHRC coordinated financial assistance for LGBT defenders and others at risk, and led an advocacy campaign demanding the detainees' release. Senegal ultimately released the detainees. IGLHRC is still working to ensure that charges against those arrested be dropped.



AFRICA

OTHER IGLHRC WORK IN AFRICA INCLUDES:

- After members of the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya (GALCK) appeared on a television show discussing the issue of LGBT rights in their country, many of them experienced physical and verbal attacks on the streets of Nairobi. IGLHRC provided financial support. This enabled GALCK members to avoid using public transportation for several weeks to keep their cell phone service active, so they could call for help in emergencies.
- After learning that five people in Cameroon were arrested on the basis of their sexual orientation during July and August 2007, IGLHRC called for the repeal of Article 347 prohibiting consensual same-sex relationships, the release of all individuals detained under this law, and an end to official discrimination based on sexual orientation in Cameroon. IGLHRC led more than 100 protesters in a demonstration outside the Cameroonian Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa while French and Cameroonian groups carried out similar protests in Paris.
- The tenuous human rights situation for sexual minorities in Africa prompts IGLHRC to work with progressive human rights partners throughout Africa at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. IGLHRC fields a delegation of African LGBT activists to the twice annual sessions of the Commission, and IGLHRC and its partners submitted the first briefing paper on sexual orientation ever presented to the Commission. Staff uses every opportunity to educate commissioners on issues affecting sexual minorities, including visiting them in their home countries in the period between sessions.

VICTOR J. MUKASA



UGANDAN ACTIVIST VICTOR J. MUKASA, IGLHRC'S RESEARCH AND POLICY ASSOCIATE FOR THE HORN, EAST, AND ANGLOPHONE CENTRAL AFRICA

For years Victor has devoted himself to human rights work. Among his early accomplishments were co-founding Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG), an organization that fights for equality for LBT women in the country, and Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a network of Ugandan LGBT groups. Doing this work in Uganda is not easy. In 2005, government officials illegally raided his home, removed documents related to LGBT organizing, took a Kenyan LGBT activist who was staying at Victor's home to the Kireka police post, and forced her to undress to "prove she was a woman". Following this incident, Victor was forced to flee Uganda for his own safety. This is not a rare occurrence. LGBT Ugandans live under constant threat of persecution, arrest and gross mistreatment in detention.

Unfazed by these threats, Victor returned to Uganda a year later and, along with the Kenyan activist, courageously waged a legal battle with the government over the invasiveness of the police raid. IGLHRC has worked closely with Victor and provided him with legal and financial assistance for his trial. In 2007, Victor J. Mukasa joined IGLHRC as our Research and Policy Associate for the Horn, East, and Anglophone Central Africa.

ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS



IGLHRC'S ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS PROGRAM

IGLHRC's Asia and Pacific Islands (API) Program was revived in 2007 after a two-year hiatus. Staffed by a regional coordinator from Malaysia based in the United States and a project coordinator based in the Philippines, the program promotes acceptance of sexual minorities at all levels of society.

Several API countries—including Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, and Sri Lanka—have laws criminalizing intimacy between same-sex couples. The threat of family or community rejection or recrimination often prompts sexual minorities to lead double lives, making them vulnerable to police blackmail and extortion. IGLHRC partners with local and regional groups in API to bolster their ongoing efforts to achieve equality and justice at national and regional levels, and to increase the visibility of API activists within the international arena.

VICTORY IN NEPAL

Severe violence faced by metis (transgender males) from Nepalese law enforcement has been extensively documented. In response to a request from the Blue Diamond Society (BDS), the leading group fighting for sexual minority rights in Nepal and IGLHRC's 2007 Felipa de Souza Awardee, IGLHRC assisted Nepali lawyers with preparations for a landmark court case.

BDS and three other groups representing sexual minorities in Nepal filed a writ petition with three main demands: to recognize the civil rights of transgender people without requiring them to renounce one gender identity for another; to create a new law preventing discrimination and violence against sexual minorities; and to require the state to make reparations to LGBT victims of state violence and/or discrimination.

IGLHRC commissioned a team of lawyers from India, Vivek Divan and Arvind Narrain, to serve as court observers and share legal strategy with BDS legal counsel. IGLHRC later disseminated a report prepared by the lawyers which outlined the history of pro-active litigation by sexual minority groups in Nepal and provided a legal analysis of the BDS-initiated proceedings.

On December 21, 2007, the Nepali Supreme Court directed the Nepali government to repeal discriminatory laws and enact new laws providing full rights for LGBT people in Nepal.

“I trusted them and yet they ridiculed me. Was that something a professional would do? I can’t even walk on the streets without being laughed at by my neighbors. I want my ordeal to end. I hope it doesn’t happen to anyone else.”

CRISTINA CRISTOBAL



FILIPINA ACTIVIST CRISTINA (GING) CRISTOBAL, IGLHRC'S PROJECT COORDINATOR FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS

Ma. Cristina “Ging” Cristobal has always considered herself as being a political person, but never felt she needed to be political about her sexuality. That changed when she attended a film screening on lesbian issues and learned about lesbian discrimination. She subsequently immersed herself in issues that confront lesbians in the Philippines and became involved with a lesbian NGO, Can’t Live in the Closet (CLIC). In 2000, she co-founded Lesbian Advocates Philippines (LeAP!), a lesbian and feminist non-profit organization. She became Executive Director soon after and provided counseling to many lesbians. LeAP! became a safe place for lesbians to socialize and learn about LGBT issues.

In addition to regular discussions, film showings, and workshops for lesbians, LeAP! has published two books on lesbian sexual health and a book documenting violence against lesbian women in the Philippines.

Ging also devoted herself to legislative advocacy with the Lesbian and Gay Legislative Advocacy Network seeking first to pass an anti-discrimination bill. The bill outlaws discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, forcing Philippine society to go beyond their stereotypes of LGBT people and establish human rights protections for LGBT people.

Ging was first introduced to IGLHRC when she participated in a research and documentation workshop co-sponsored by LeAP! and IGLHRC. In June 2008, IGLHRC hired Ging as a Project Coordinator for the Asia and Pacific Islands. She is the first IGLHRC staff person to be working from the region. Ging brings to IGLHRC more than twelve years in the Philippine and Asian movement. IGLHRC’s focus in the API region will be on violence against women, an area in which Ging has considerable expertise.

OTHER IGLHRC WORK IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS INCLUDES:

- Although policies on LGBT issues in South Korea have been relatively progressive, LGBT activists continue to fight discrimination in schools and in the military. The country’s LGBT movement is currently strategizing about how to stall a negative decision on the proposed anti-discrimination bill, which, in its most recent draft, eliminates provisions banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. IGLHRC worked with the South Korea Alliance Against Homophobia and Discrimination Against Sexual Minorities to pressure the Ministry of Justice to restore sexual orientation in the pending Anti-Discrimination Bill. The Bill has been delayed.
- After a sexual encounter in December 2007, Jan Jan, a 39-year old gay man from Cebu, Philippines discovered that a perfume bottle inserted into his rectum without his knowledge, requiring surgery. During the surgery, while those tending to him laughed and mocked him, a nursing student videotaped the surgical procedure without his consent. The video ended up on YouTube, much to his humiliation.

IGLHRC assisted local LGBT groups, circulating news on the case to other activists, putting pressure on government institutions to penalize the health providers involved in the case. In May 2008, the Department of Health suspended two doctors and one nurse involved in the rectal surgery. In September, a Congressional inquiry was held to continue the case of Jan Jan and to emphasize the need to pass an anti-discrimination bill in Congress.



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

IGLHRC'S LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN PROGRAM

Based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, IGLHRC's Latin America and Caribbean Program is our oldest program. The situation of sexual minorities in the region is nuanced. While some Latin American countries have decriminalized consensual intimacy between same-sex couples, including Colombia (1980), Mexico (1998), Puerto Rico (2004) and Nicaragua (2007), others such as Argentina still criminalize gender expression. Furthermore, many Caribbean countries have laws criminalizing same-sex acts.

In addition to assisting local groups facing violations, IGLHRC has evolved this year into a region-wide coordinator for stronger advocacy within the Organization of American States and other regional human rights entities.

RECOGNITION IN MERCOSUR

IGLHRC coordinated with LGBT groups, such as MOVILH from Chile, Federacion Urugaya LGTBQ from Uruguay, Otras Ovejas from Uruguay, FALGBT from Argentina, Igualdad GLTB from Bolivia, Paragay from Paraguay, within the Southern Common Market countries (MERCOSUR) to form an LGBT federation to ensure that the rights of sexual minorities would be integrated into trade and other agreements in the region. On August 7, 2007, the first significant step in promoting region-wide sexual and gender rights in Latin America was taken when the human rights committee of MERCOSUR issued a declaration to recognize and promote an end to discrimination against sexual and gender minorities by member countries. Should the entire Southern Common Market pass the resolution, it will result in sweeping changes to the rights and policies affecting LGBT people in Latin America.

OTHER IGLHRC WORK IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN INCLUDES:

- On February 25, 2008, three members of the National Police of Peru raped 26 year-old Luis Alberto Rojas Marín at the Casa Grande District National Peruvian Police Station. In April, Judge Rosendo Villas Castillo, an Ascope County magistrate, ordered the arrests of the three police officers accused of the crime—the first time that authorities in Peru have ordered arrests because of hate crimes or human rights abuses related to sexual orientation. When family and friends of the police officers organized marches to support the officers, IGLHRC helped fight back to ensure a full trial would be held. Unfortunately, the officers were released.
- On March 23, 2006, 19-year-old Darlyn Acevedo Ramirez was murdered in the city of Santiago de Cali, Colombia. This is one of 13 unsolved murders of transgender women that have taken place in the country within the past two years. Besides these terrible crimes, the physical, psychological and ethical mistreatment suffered by trans women in Santiago de Cali is a serious and continuous problem and a daily violation of the human and constitutional rights of this community. IGLHRC mobilized its emergency response network to draw attention to the case and to press officials to address the needs of trans women. The case is still pending.



THE MIDDLE EAST

IGLHRC'S WORK ON THE MIDDLE EAST

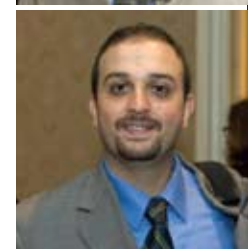
This year, IGLHRC has been able to begin strategic development of its work in the Middle East. With an initial focus and staff expertise on Iran and Iraq in particular, IGLHRC has played a leading role in responding to violence, arrests, executions, and in the case of Iraq, the need for safety in the chaos of war. Work in this area is complicated by our concern that action taken outside of Iran, especially, will result in backlash and increased violence against LGBT people in the country. IGLHRC, thus, takes great caution in its public role. Nonetheless, IGLHRC's vigilant monitoring in the region, along with increasingly threatening public actions and statements by political leaders, has opened opportunities to respond and call for compliance with human rights law.

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO AHMADINEJAD'S PUBLIC DENIAL OF THE EXISTENCE OF HOMOSEXUALS IN IRAN

IGLHRC was a leading public critic of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's famous denial that gay people exist in Iran. IGLHRC's public statement interpreting his statement (delivered in Persian) made at Columbia University in New York City was picked up by press around the world, and IGLHRC's Middle East expert was interviewed on international radio and television, including BBC, Voice of America, and CNN. Of most importance, the public reaction to his statement was made known within Iran as well.

OTHER IGLHRC WORK IN THE MIDDLE EAST INCLUDES:

- In November 2007, IGLHRC joined other international human rights groups and Iranian activists in demanding a halt to the execution of Makvan Mouloudzadeh, a young Iranian who was convicted of sodomy allegedly committed at 13 and sentenced to death by the Iranian judicial system. Our action alert resulted in hundreds of protest letters to the Iranian leaders and the story was well publicized by media in the United States, especially MSNBC. Although the Iranian chief justice initially halted the death sentence, a few days later local authorities executed the young man, even though the evidence presented to the court was inconclusive and many witnesses recanted their testimonies.
- In response to Iraqi ex-pats, IGLHRC mobilized many of its donors and public support for contributing to the rentals of safe houses for Iraqi LGBT people who have been persistently persecuted by militia in Iraq, where the chaos of the war has resulted in violence and kidnapping of LGBT people.
- The wave of gay men leaving Iran to seek international refugee status in Turkey has reached a crisis stage as there are little to no resources for addressing the housing, food, and safety issues that arise for these men as they wait the months, sometimes more, for processing and resettlement. IGLHRC has contributed directly to the aid of those facing life-threatening situations as well as those whose lives in Iran were put in jeopardy as a result of working with IGLHRC to document violations in that country. In addition, IGLHRC has engaged international refugee groups – better equipped to address the situation – in offering support and help.



2008 FELIPA DE SOUZA AWARDEES

“I hope there will be a day when IRQO will reach such a level of success that no Iranian queer will be discriminated against, tortured, executed, or mocked, and when their rights will be respected by all.”

– Arsham Parsi



ANDRÉS IGNACIO RIVERA DUARTE FORGING A NEW FUTURE

“Not conforming to the patterns of men and women established by society is a real challenge,” said Andrés Ignacio Rivera Duarte, a trans man and pioneering human rights defender who founded and heads Organización de Transexuales por la Dignidad de la Diversidad, the first NGO in Chile dedicated to fighting for trans people’s rights.

Rivera knows first-hand the hardship that trans people must confront. He told IGLHRC that trans people in Chile are forced to undergo invasive medical procedures, hormone therapies and sex reassignment surgeries—all to be acknowledged as human. The authorities “don’t care if we have pre-existing conditions that makes hormone therapy or surgery hazardous,” he said. “They don’t care if we have the money to pay for that, or if our life is at risk. All this to submit a name and sex change petition which is finally up to a judge to accept...or not.”

That a Chilean trans person can submit this type of petition to a judge represents progress, much of it due to Rivera’s own persistence. He fought a landmark lawsuit, bringing issues of gender identity into the public view, and finally winning the right for trans people to legally change their name and sex in 2007.

This remarkable achievement only scratches the surface of Rivera’s extraordinarily wide-ranging activist agenda. He has worked with government and the local health system to simplify processes for the evaluation, treatment, and surgery of trans people and organized a debate on the Civil Union Pact. But his work is not just with high-level officials; he also provides direct support to sex workers, visiting them nightly to distribute coffee, food and information about HIV/AIDS.

Although Rivera fully acknowledges that social nonconformity can bring consequences “such as discrimination, bullying, unemployment, pain, violence and occasionally death,” he remains optimistic in the face of all these challenges, emphasizing that it can also precipitate “growth as a human being, and growth in the fight for equality, justice and dignity.” As the first Chilean trans man to marry, he demonstrates just that—and embodies hope for the future of trans people in Chile.



ARSHAM PARSI MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

Arsham Parsi exists. And just this fact confounds the claims of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who in September insisted that, “In Iran, we don’t have homosexuals like in your country....We don’t have that in our country.” Parsi is almost synonymous with the Iranian Queer Organization (IRQO), the organization he founded in 2001 and built from the ground up after two of his gay friends committed suicide in Iran.

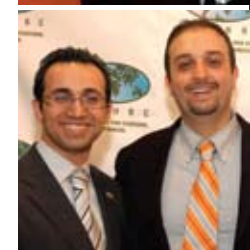
IRQO began as an internet-based chat group inside Iran, designed to create moral support for a group of gay men and lesbians living under a regime mandating the death penalty for same-sex intimacy. Over the last seven years—despite limited financial resources and constant threats from the Iranian authorities—IRQO has become the voice of thousands of Iranian queers, based both inside Iran and overseas. Parsi has dedicated his life to the cause, selflessly working around the clock and without pay to ensure that Iranian queers are not forgotten or ignored.

Today, Parsi’s IRQO plays a key role in documenting LGBT rights violations in Iran and in mobilizing public opinion to pressure Iranian authorities to end the inhumane treatment of sexual minorities. It also supports Iranian refugees and asylum seekers who are forced to leave their country, offers phone counseling to its members, and publishes regular articles on homosexuality in Iran.

Parsi himself says that IRQO’s main achievement has been to make homosexuality visible in Iran—creating a public discourse that previously did not exist, and “bringing the issue of sexual minorities in Iran...into kitchen-table conversations and seminars, under the banner that queer rights are human rights.”

By being the face of the Iranian queer movement and by telling the stories of LGBT Iranians, Parsi shows the international community that in spite of many problems, the Iranian queer movement is very much alive and demands equality, dignity and justice.

“I hope there will be a day when IRQO will reach such a level of success that no Iranian queer will be discriminated against, tortured, executed, or mocked, and when their rights will be respected by all,” Parsi told IGLHRC. “That day will come; we just need to keep on working toward it.”



THE UNITED NATIONS



IGLHRC'S WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS

With its organizational headquarters in New York City—the main seat of the United Nations—IGLHRC plays a leading role in promoting human rights and inclusion of LGBT groups at the United Nations. While strengthening the ability of local groups to move their domestic governments toward human rights compliance is IGLHRC's top priority, it is also important to build alliances with governments and human rights experts at the international level. IGLHRC works very strategically within a few contexts at the UN to promote support for the rights of LGBT communities.

GETTING A SEAT AT THE TABLE FOR LGBT PEOPLE AT THE UN

For over a decade, the UN has been decidedly hostile to allowing LGBT groups the official consultative status granted generally to NGO and civil society groups so that they might participate in the meetings and forums in which the UN commits to promote human rights. This year, IGLHRC, along with our domestic and international partners, as well as LGBT-supportive government missions to the UN, broke the log jam and succeeded in obtaining consultative status for two European LGBT groups. More groups are in the pipeline, including IGLHRC's own application for consultative status, which will ensure that the LGBT community has a seat at the table.

OTHER IGLHRC WORK AT THE UNITED NATIONS INCLUDES:

IGLHRC has become increasingly active in reporting to the UN on violations against LGBT people in specific countries. Of note this year was IGLHRC's report on Indonesia, which was submitted to the Human Rights Council as part of its periodic review of how well states are following through on their human rights obligations. The IGLHRC report specifically addressed the mistreatment of waria and other transgender people within Indonesia.

PAMELA MERCHANT

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE PAMELA MERCHANT IGLHRC'S BOARD MEMBER

Human rights advocacy is a lifelong passion for Pamela Merchant. From anti-apartheid campaigns during her college years at Georgetown University to women's and LGBT rights advocacy and her current devotion to bringing torturers from around the world to justice, Pamela has contributed her passion, sound judgment, and legal talent to building a world that respects human rights.

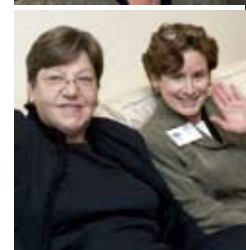
So, it is not surprising that Pamela's path would lead her to IGLHRC. While living and working as a trial lawyer in Boston, she served for years on the Board of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, helping that organization grow into what is now one of the leading LGBT legal advocacy groups in the U.S. Pamela attended her first IGLHRC event in San Francisco in 1999 during one of her many visits to San Francisco while she and her partner, Kirby Sack, were maintaining a long distance relationship.

"I was deeply moved by the speeches and hearing the experiences of LGBT activists from around the world," she said, "I can't tell you how much respect I have for activists from countries such as Zimbabwe where government leaders literally threaten to kill you for being who you are as a gay person. That fear simply should not be a part of anyone's daily existence."

In 2003, Pamela and Kirby took the big leap: they became major donors to IGLHRC. At that year's fundraising event, they met the then-new IGLHRC Executive Director, Paula Ettelbrick, and Pamela was easily persuaded to join the Board of Directors. As the chair of the Development Committee, as well as the perennial co-chair of IGLHRC's signature fundraising gala, *A Celebration of Courage*, Pamela has contributed substantially to IGLHRC's growth and long-term vision of creating a world where LGBT people live without fear of harm and discrimination.

Pamela has committed substantial time and fundraising effort to IGLHRC while being a non-profit Executive Director herself at The Center for Justice and Accountability, a San Francisco-based international human rights organization dedicated to ending torture and other severe human rights abuses.

Her highpoint with IGLHRC? "Definitely meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu when we honored him last year in San Francisco. Hearing him apologize to us for the way the institutional church has treated LGBT people was definitely a historic moment for all of us around the world."



A CELEBRATION OF COURAGE



At this year's *A Celebration of Courage*, IGLHRC's annual gala awards ceremony, IGLHRC presented numerous awards to honor the commitment to the movement for human rights for everyone, everywhere. IBM, represented at the ceremony by Jane Harper and Joseph Bertolotti, was awarded a Special Recognition Award for its contributions to IGLHRC's global mission of building a strong and viable LGBT human rights movement and for its leadership in promoting non-discrimination policies in all of its workplaces in the world. Harper was part of the IBM Executive LGBT Task Force that five years ago made a decision to partner with IGLHRC in support of our mission to work on an international scale. IGLHRC also presented its signature Felipa de Souza Awards to Arsham Parsi of the Iranian Queer Organization, and Andrés Ignacio Rivera Duarte, a trans human rights defender in Chile recognizing their courage and working toward the fundamental human rights of all people.

In San Francisco IGLHRC had the thrill of hosting Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient and veteran anti-apartheid campaigner who demurred at the suggestion that he should be commended for his human rights activism. Tutu was presented with our OUTSPOKEN Award, recognizing his leadership as a global ally of the LGBT community because of his exceptional commitment challenging racism in his own country and homophobia internationally.

The music for the evening—which soared gloriously through the lofty Grace Cathedral and received a rapturous reception by the audience—was provided by Transcendence, the first all-transgender gospel choir in the US.



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Were held in Atlanta, GA; Boston, MA;
Los Angeles, CA; Washington, DC; and
San Francisco, CA. Hosted by Franklin Abbott,
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Paul Hastings and Tim Lane.

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“Because the global movement for LGBT human rights depends on the support of people like you”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said it best at our human rights award ceremony in April when he gave an historic speech to the LGBT community at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco—speaking up for human rights is as basic as the act of breathing.

We rely upon the generosity of individual members, foundations, and corporate sponsors—people just like you—who understand and support the IGLHRC mission. We invite you to continue helping us build a better world and join us as we work toward human rights for everyone, everywhere. Your continued support will ensure that our work of seeking and achieving human rights continues and grows one person, one community, one country, and one institution at a time.

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- Donate online or send us a check in the mail
- Join our Global Dignity Fund, our monthly giving program
- Ask about a matching gift or charity giving program through your employer
- Attend our *A Celebration of Courage* human rights award events
- Host a fundraising party for IGLHRC
- Transfer select stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and securities to IGLHRC
- Include IGLHRC in Your Estate Planning
- Make an in-kind donation of your unused goods or professional services

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Report written and produced by IGLHRC staff and board, including Paula Ettelbrick, Russell Ferri, Colleen Kane, Jason Portwood Hipp, Rebecca Libed, and Sarah Tobias. Design by j©graphicdesign.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as of June 30, 2008

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$388,302
Investments	\$224,439
Accounts Receivable	\$8,800
Grants & Contributions Receivable	\$350,387
Prepaid Expenses	\$18,425
Total Current Assets	\$990,353

NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Grants Receivable	\$0
Fixed Assets	\$27,303
Security Deposit	\$28,234
Total Assets	\$1,045,890

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts and Accrued Expenses Payable	\$55,213
Total Liabilities	\$55,213

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	
Operating	\$ 85,899
Board Designated Reserve	\$400,000
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 486,424
Permanently Restricted	\$ 18,354
Total Net Assets	\$ 990,677
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,045,890

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

for the Year Ended June 30, 2008

REVENUE

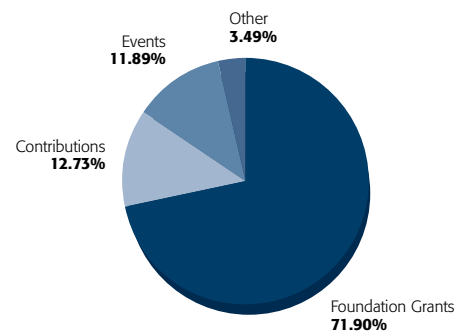
Foundation Grants	\$1,239,145
Contributions	\$219,348
Special Events	\$204,879
Interest and Dividend Income	\$18,724
Net realized gains in investments	\$6,282
Net unrealized loss on investments	\$(6,281)
In-Kind Contributions	\$40,893
Other Income	\$541
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,723,531

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,250,471
General and Administrative	\$195,366
Fundraising	\$243,597
Total Expenses	\$1,689,434

Change in Net Assets	\$34,097
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	\$956,580
Net Assets, End of Year	\$990,677

INCOME



EXPENSES

