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GALZ GALZ STATEMENT ON THE ARREST OF TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST, RICKY NATHANSON.

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GALZ deplores the arrest , detention and trial of Ricky Nathanson, a transgender person in Bulawayo on the 16th of January for using a ladies toilet. We are concerned that Ricky may have been treated in an inhumane and undignified manner during the arrest and subsequent detention in police custody before her court appearance.

We are surprised that the police have chosen to persecute Ricky for using a toilet. It is common knowledge that on numerous occasions in this country men and women continue to share public toilets as most of these facilities are in a deplorable state in various cities across the country and in need of urgent attention. The state of these public toilets continues to be unacceptable yet the “law” has turned a blind eye .

No matter what one thinks of Nathanson’s motives, this is a miscarriage of justice. In a country where the right to one’s gender identity and gender expression are not recognised, it is clear as in the handling of this matter that the sensibilities of heterosexists have been disturbed.

Such is the ignorance of the Police and media on matters of sexuality and gender that they refer to Ricky as “gay” and insist on charging her for criminal nuisance. There is clearly a need for further training of media practitioners and police officers on human rights as well as operationalising the new Zimbabwe constitution which is clear on the fundamental human rights and freedoms of people, particularly the provisions of Chapter 4, Sections 50 (5)d,51 and 53 in this matter.

In an effort to ensure that justice is done, we call on the Prosecuting Authority to preserve tax payers money by dropping such frivolous charges levelled against Ricky. As concerned citizens, we demand the speedy refurbishment and operation of public toilets across Zimbabwe. The dignity of Ricky and other women and men in Zimbabwe must be restored and preserved.//ENDS