



**INTERNATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**  
HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE. EVERYWHERE.

## **Violence Against Lesbians, Bisexual Women & Transgender People in Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka**

**For more information, contact:** Grace Poore, [gpoore@iglhrc.org](mailto:gpoore@iglhrc.org), Regional Program Coordinator for Asia and Pacific Islands

**To arrange interviews, contact:** Brian Tofte-Schumacher, [brian@iglhrc.org](mailto:brian@iglhrc.org)

### **Japan Research Highlights**

- Over half of the LBT individuals interviewed for the Japan study reported experiencing sexual violence, from unwanted touching to rape. Sexual violence perpetrators usually knew their victims. They were dating partners, workplace colleagues, family members, and intimate partners. The violence was precipitated by perpetrators' responses to individuals' sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression,
- Emotional violence was the most frequently reported violence in the Japan research. LBT individuals attributed this violence to strictly enforced codes of conduct at home, work places, medical institutions, public facilities and schools. Non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression were viewed as antithetical to Japanese culture and family harmony.
- Despite Japan's (trans)gender recognition law, transgender people were most often abused and assaulted because of their visible gender non-conformity.
- A significant number of Japanese LBT interviewees reported that workplace sexual harassment was linked to general sexist attitudes about and sexual objectification of women. Lesbians and bisexual women in the study reported being sexual harassed by male co-workers just as their heterosexual women colleagues were "for being women." Transgender women reported unwanted groping of breasts and buttocks because of "their gender as women." Transgender men who experienced sexual harassment felt their "changed gender was disregarded" and they were targeted for sexual violence as women.
- All the Japanese LBT respondents who experienced violence reported long term and, sometimes, severe consequences, including depression, chronic physical illness and pain, addictions, low self-esteem and low confidence. Forced gender conformity led to acute self-loathing, social isolation, school drop out, disrupted education, job loss, loss of employment opportunities, and difficulty finding housing.
- Suicide was a significant factor. Over half of the LBT respondents in the Japan study had considered suicide to end the violence and the suffering due to violence. Five individuals made unsuccessful attempts to kill themselves. One individual died as a result of suicide during the research.
- Help for LBT people experiencing violence was either unavailable or inadequate because mental health and legal services were insensitive to and uninformed about LBT realities.
- Discriminatory rape and sexual harassment laws denied LBT people in Japan access to legal redress. The primary source of support came from self-help groups.



## Key Findings across all five countries:

1. Governments in Asia failed to prevent violence against LBT people. Current laws on the books in the five countries that prohibit violence against women are often discriminatory and do not extend adequate or any protections for LBT people.
2. Emotional violence was the most commonly reported form of violence in both the home and in the public sphere. This violence often continued for many years with long-term consequences.
3. Despite reports of violence by police, religious officers and members of the public, the family was the primary perpetrator of violence towards LBT people in this study.
4. There was an unexpectedly high occurrence of intimate partner violence, including physical and sexual violence.
5. An overwhelming number of perpetrators of sexual violence against LBT people knew their victims. Most perpetrators tended to be heterosexual, cisgender (gender-conforming) males.
6. Greater visibility of non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression resulted in greater frequency of violence against LBT people.
7. LBT victims of violence were either denied service or received insensitive services from medical, mental health and State-funded women's shelter networks.