



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

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Malaysia Research Highlights

- Malaysian LBT people reported a life time of violence and discrimination, ranging from verbally demeaning treatment, family and community rejection, forced meetings with religious authorities and mental health professionals, religious condemnation, prolonged silent treatment and isolation by family and people they were close to, employment discrimination, and financial deprivation by the family.
- Physical and emotional violence by family members (usually parents, older brothers) occurred most often after LBT people disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity, after they were accidentally discovered, or after they were exposed as LBT.
- In some cases, parents severely beat LBT children from a young age for displaying non-conforming sexual orientation and gender identity (e.g., gestures, speech, mannerisms that were viewed as deviant).
- LBT Malaysians also experienced intimate partner violence that included physical and emotional abuse.
- Transgender women reported being sexually taunted and physically assaulted on the streets. There were reports of car abductions and forced sexual activity inside vehicles.
- State and non-state representatives, specifically, police officers, anti-vice officers, religious officers, religious court judges targeted transgender individuals of lower economic backgrounds for discrimination and violence.
- School teachers targeted students with non-conforming gender expression (tomboys, girls with short hair and dressed in shirts and pants, effeminate boys) for disciplinary measures that included being sent to religious camps, school suspensions and expulsions.
- Section 377 of the Malaysian Penal Code criminalizes “unnatural” offenses such as homosexuality and lesbianism. Section 21 of the Malaysian federal law penalizes “indecent” public behavior such as cross-dressing. These laws fuel the mistreatment of LBT people in Malaysia.
- Ethnic Malay and Muslim LBT people were additionally targeted for violence and abuse by the Malaysian government’s endorsement of religious, including Islamic fundamentalist enforcement of religious (sharia) penalties for gender non-conformity (cross dressing, gender impersonation) and same sex relations between men and between women. These religious penalties in some of the local jurisdictions include whipping, prison and fines.



- Violence by Malaysian police officers and religious officers who are hired to monitor compliance with religious (sharia) laws included threats, verbal humiliation, arbitrary arrest and detention, physical and sexual abuse while in custody, and raids of private premises under the guise of preserving public order and morality.

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.