



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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Sri Lanka Research Highlights

- LBT individuals in the Sri Lanka study reported high levels of emotional and physical violence by the family, usually when their sexual orientation or same sex relationship was discovered or disclosed.
- Emotional violence by family members against Sri Lankan LBT people included prolonged silent treatment, forcing gender conformity, forcing the same sex relationship to end, neglect, severing of family ties, communication being monitored and restricted, and religious condemnation.
- Over half of the LBT people who participated in the Sri Lanka study reported sexual violence, ranging from sexual harassment to rape. Perpetrators were employers, colleagues, family members and strangers.
- A significantly high number of LBT participants in the study had experienced intimate partner violence, including physical and sexual violence. For some the violence was a single incident and for others it was a frequent occurrence.
- Visible gender non-conformity was an excuse for police, military and security officers to stop, question and verbally harass butch lesbians and transgender men, particularly if they were also from a lower economic background.
- Fear of being exposed as LBT prevented individuals who experienced violence from reporting violence even if it was severe. In some instances, the reluctance to report was to avoid exposing violent family members or same sex partners to the heavy hand of the law in a country where the state violates human rights with impunity.
- Reporting violence also exposed victims to the risk of being criminalized themselves for being LBT under Section 365A of the Sri Lankan Penal Code that prohibits homosexuality and lesbianism or Section 399 of the Penal Code that penalizes "impersonation" and "misrepresentation" which applies to transgender men and butch lesbians who can be charged with "disguising as men" and transgender women for "deceiving the public."
- According to the Sri Lanka report, all the LBT interviewees suffered long lasting effects of the violence, including depression, anxiety, persistent anger, chronic illnesses, and addictions.
- Attempting suicide was a coping mechanism for a significant number of the LBT Sri Lankans who had experienced violence and discrimination.



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.