



Violence against Lesbians, Bisexual Women, and Trans People in Malaysia

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Introduction

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. IGLHRC works with activists throughout the world to advocate to end discrimination and abuse on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression (SOGIE).

IGLHRC is submitting this communication, along with six others, to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) through its annual communications procedure. IGLHRC strongly urges the CSW to identify violence against lesbians, bisexual women, and trans individuals (LBT) people as an emerging trend and formulate appropriate policy responses.

In May 2014, IGLHRC's Asia and the Pacific Islands Program released a report, *Violence: Through the Lens of Lesbians, Bisexual Women, and Trans People in Asia* (The IGLHRC Asia report). A product of over two years of research by regional women's, gender, and sexual rights activists and over 370 interviews with LBT people and stakeholders, the report documents and examines violence directed towards LBT people in Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. A copy of the full report is available at this link: http://iglhrc.org/sites/iglhrc.org/files/LBT_ForUpload0614.pdf.

From 2010 to 2011, KRYSS, an advocacy and documentation organization focusing on SOGIE-issues in Malaysia, interviewed 50 LBT people in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Petaling Jaya to document their experiences with violence. Prior to this project, no comprehensive documentation of violence against LBT people in Malaysia existed. Highlighting KRYSS's main findings, this communication includes 17 case studies of violence against LBT people in Malaysia.

Due to a host of safety and privacy concerns, this communication uses pseudonyms for the victims mentioned. Many do not want the media, their government, communities, and/or families to know of their participation in the research project for fear of retribution. Many are not open about their gender identities and/or sexual orientations and wish to maintain their privacy to avoid further violence. Many victims who experience violence within the private sphere wish to remain anonymous to avoid public exposure of their families and intimate relationships. All names and information are on file with IGLHRC. Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the cases mentioned.

The need for this precaution further highlights the urgency of our petition. LBT people often are compelled to remain invisible to avoid further violence. As a result, violence against them remains severely under-documented and is largely overlooked by state governments and nongovernmental organizations.

Because the IGLHRC Asia report focuses on broad trends of violence against LBT people, many specific contextual details of our case studies, including exact times and dates of violent incidents, were not documented. Interviewers were primarily concerned with understanding the nuances of violence experienced by their respondents, including its overlapping forms and manifestations, root causes, and lasting effects on victims. All respondents have experienced violence multiple times in their lives; exclusive focus on an individual perpetrator or incident would have limited and flattened our analysis. Given the dearth of documentation of violence against LBT people in Malaysia, IGLHRC trusts that the CSW will find the information in this communication useful in its efforts to promote global gender equality.

Definitions

Bi/bisexual people have sexual and romantic desires for both females and males.

Cis/cisgender people are individuals whose gender identity matches their birth sex.

Coming out is the process of revealing one's SOGIE to other people.

FtM/transmen are female-to-male (FTM) transgender or transsexual people who were assigned female at birth but identify as a male.¹

Gender expression refers to the ways people choose to express their gender. Some common mediums of gender expression include choices in hairstyle, clothing, behavior, speech, and gestures.

People who are **gender queer** do not identify as males or females.

Lesbians are women who have sexual and romantic desires for other women.

MtF/transwomen are male-to-female (MTF) transgender or transsexual people who were assigned male at birth but identify as female.

SOGIE stands for sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

¹ Even though FtM individuals do not identify as women, IGLHRC strongly recommends that CSW consider cases of FtM individuals in its efforts to promote gender equality. Some of the most ignored in the LGBTIQ+ community, FtM individuals often experience severe violence because they are often perceived as women who need to be punished and converted. No other UN organization serves to promote their gender rights.

Trans/transgender people are individuals whose gender identity does not match their birth sex.

Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization's (WHO) World Report on Violence and Health, is "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual...that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury...psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."² This communication refers to two analytical categories to examine violence:

1) Forms of Violence

- a) **Emotional violence** refers to mental and psychological abuse. Actions and behaviors that constitute emotional violence in this research are verbal abuse (e.g., insults, taunts, allegations of abnormality, etc.); threats (e.g., to disclose SOGIE to others, abandon, evict, imprison, harm self or others, etc.); controlling actions (e.g., restricting interactions, invading privacy, monitoring communication, etc.); silent hostility (e.g., non-verbal behaviors that express contempt, denial, or rejection of a person's SOGIE); neglect (e.g., withholding financial support, denying medical treatment, etc.); and discrimination (e.g., employment discrimination, refusal of access to gendered facilities, etc.).
- b) **Physical violence** involves bodily harm. Examples include battery (e.g., beating, hair-pulling, throttling, kicking, pushing, burning, tying-up, head-butting, etc.); physical confinement and imprisonment; deprivation of basic necessities (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, etc.); forced electro-shock therapy; assault; and more.
- c) **Sexual violence**, according to WHO, is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or unwanted sexual comments or advances...using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim." Examples of sexual violence include threats to rape, forcibly showing sexual images, unwanted sexual touching, and more.

2) Sites of Violence

- a) The most common site of violence against LBT people is in the **private sphere**: households, families, intimate relationships, and tightknit communities. From a policy perspective, violence in the private sphere is particularly difficult to reduce because many perceive it to be a private matter without need for state protection or redress.

² While homicide is considered violence, we exclude it from our research because it is outside of the scope of our study. Suicide or attempted suicide is considered an impact of violence in this study.

- b) Both State and non-State actors perpetuate violence in the **public sphere**. Examples of the former include violence by State institutions (police, immigration authorities, courts, welfare departments, passport control centers, educational centers, etc.) and violence facilitated by State policies, such as endorsement of harmful religious or cultural practices. The latter primarily refers to violence by passers-by in public or open spaces (i.e. streets, public transportation facilities, stores, restaurants, etc.), neighbors, members of ethnic and religious communities, co-workers and bosses, and classmates.

Violence against LBT People in Malaysia: At a Glance

Often justified with reference to religion (including Islam and Christianity), social norms in Malaysia are predominately premised on heterosexuality, the existence of only two genders (men and women), and gender identities and expression that conform to birth sex. LBT people challenge these norms and are thus highly susceptible to violence.

The family is the most common source of violence against LBT people in Malaysia. Family members often emotionally abuse LBT children and young people by prohibiting them from participating in same-sex relationships; verbally abusing and teasing them; ignoring them; pressuring them to meet religious leaders and mental health professionals to be “corrected”; and more. Some respondents indicated that family members physically and sexually abused them as well.

LBT people in Malaysia with visible non-normative gender expression, including transwomen, transmen, and masculine lesbians and bisexual women, are exceptionally vulnerable to violence. In the private sphere, families often force them to wear birth-sex normative clothing, misgender them, torment them, and beat them. In the public sphere, police officers arbitrarily question and threaten them, stop them at unauthorized roadblocks, make sexual advances on them, and arrest them. Islamic religious officers and prison wardens often tease, humiliate, intimidate, and threaten them. Passers-by often make extremely offensive comments, give them disapproving looks, and physically and sexually abuse them.

Instead of taking steps to combat this violence, the state is becoming increasingly hostile of LBT people. Islamic law criminalizes Muslims for same-sex interactions, sex that is considered “against the order of nature,” and “posing” as or “impersonating” the other sex (e.g., cross-dressing). Secular law punishes “carnal intercourse against the order of nature” (anal and oral sex) with up to 20

years in prison.³ In 2008, the National Fatwa Council announced a *fatwa* (Islamic edit or opinion) condemning *pengkids*, Malay Muslim women with masculine gender expression. In July 2012, Prime Minister Najib Razak declared “LGBT, liberalism, and pluralism as enemies of Islam,” calling on Malaysians to defend the government from these “foreign” influences.⁴ Law enforcement agencies and the media shut down and target many gay establishments, including clubs and saunas, limiting safe space for LBT people to socialize.

In April 2012, Muhyiddin Yassin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, called on school counselors to curb the spread of LGBT groups. In September 2012, the Teacher’s Foundation of Malaysia and Putrajaya Consultative Council of Parents and Teachers released guidelines, endorsed by the Ministry of Education, to help parents identify gay and lesbian “symptoms” in their children.⁵ In April 2011, sixty-six young boys in Besut, Trengganu were forced to attend a “curative” camp for failing to conform to traditional standards of masculinity.⁶

In 2011, the Royal Police of Malaysia banned Seksualiti Merdeka, an annual sexuality rights festival, deeming it as a deviant cult, a free sex party,⁷ and a threat to national security.⁸ The Malaysian Film Censorship Board prohibits positive portrayal of LGBT characters in films.⁹ In March 2013, with support of the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Culture, a play titled *Asmara Songsang* (Deviant Love) was performed in Istana Budaya (the Palace of Culture), a national performing arts space. The play characterized LGBT individuals as predatory thugs and ended with lightning striking all LGBT individuals.

Case Studies

At the time of interview, **Bear** was a 27 year-old masculine Malay lesbian living in Bandar Manjalara, Kepong. Bear feels that her sexual orientation has humiliated her family. Her parents have cried multiple times to her, asking her

³ Laws of Malaysia, Act 574 Penal Code, <http://www.agc.gov.my/Akta/Vol.%2012/Act%20574.pdf>.

⁴ Hafidz Baharom, “Najib: LGBTs, liberalism, pluralism are enemies of Islam,” *The Malaysian Insider*, July 19, 2012, <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com>.

⁵ Susan Loo, “Guidelines to identify gay and lesbian symptoms published,” *FreeMalaysiaKini2* website, September 13 2012, <http://www.freemalaysiakini2.com> (site discontinued).

⁶ “Besut Boot Camp Against Human Rights: Press Statement by The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality,” *The International Gau and Lesbian Human Rights Commission*. April 19, 2011. <http://iglhrc.org/content/besut-boot-camp-against-human-rights>

⁷ Clara Chooi, “Marina Mahathir livid over ‘free sex’ slur on Seksualiti Merdeka,” *The Malay Insider*, November 7, 2011, <http://www.thestar.com.my>.

⁸ Jo-Ann Ding, “Seksualiti Merdeka: Threat to national security?,” *The Nut Graph*, March 12, 2012, <http://www.thenutgraph.com>.

⁹ Nina Hidayat, “Bad or Ugly: Malaysian Education Ministry Supports Gay Guidelines,” *Venus Buzz*, <http://www.venusbuzz.com>.

what they did wrong and how long she plans to be a lesbian. In college, when Bear asked her mother for a motorbike, her mother responded saying, “Why do you want a motorbike? You got dick, eh?” Today, Bear’s parents constantly pressure Bear to marry a man while she can still reproduce. Bear’s brother, a doctor, told her a few years prior to the interview that lesbianism is a mental illness. He’s also badgered her for not being “normal,” “making life difficult for [herself],” and not being “happy with what God gave [her].” Her family’s disapproval of her sexuality has severely affected her self-esteem, making her feel “small.”

Bear commonly faces violence in the public sphere. She decided to bind her breasts because passers-by on the streets stare at her chest as if to determine her gender. When Bear holds her current girlfriend’s hand in public, people stare at her disapprovingly. One time, a group of male motorcyclists chased Bear and other lesbians when they were in a car, shouting offensive comments. A few years ago, when Bear received a call from a private number, a man threatened to rape her. Officers from RELA Corps, a paramilitary civil volunteer corps formed by the Malaysian military, once stopped Bear at a marketplace, demanded to see her identification card, and were skeptical when Bear insisted that she was a woman.

Bear’s former partner’s parents forced Bear’s former partner to end her relationship with Bear and to stop being romantically involved with women all together.

Interviewed in February 2010.

At the time of interview, **SCC** was a 23 year-old Chinese transman living in Selangor. SCC is often teased when he uses men’s restrooms and sometimes even kicked out. One time, a group of men stood outside of his toilet stall and asked him about his gender. When SCC exited the stall, the men looked him up and down, making SCC unsafe. Passers-by commonly ridicule SCC in public, asking him prying questions about his gender identity and calling him offensive names. Restaurant waiters sometimes touch SCC inappropriately.

State police forces have caused SCC emotional distress. Once, police officers caught SCC kissing a female partner in his car. The police held the two outside their car for about an hour and teased SCC for being masculine, calling him an “alien.” In 2009, SCC was stopped by police officers five times on the road for speeding when he was driving under the speed limit. Each time, police officers ridiculed his gender expression, especially SCC’s short hair.

One of SCC’s former partners, a cisgender female, was extremely violent. She regularly yelled at him aggressively, grabbed him in public, hit him, and raped him, often in his sleep. To cope with this violence, SCC became a heavy smoker and an alcoholic. He also suffered from depression.

Interviewed on January 21, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Anita** was a 20 year-old Indian transwoman living in Penang. Anita suffered through severe violence from her family members. Anita's father hit, kicked, and burned her using wires and metals daily for looking too feminine. The violence was so severe that he broke her arms on several occasions. When she was seven, Anita moved to her uncle's house to escape her father. Anita's uncle began hitting her and spreading chili paste on her open wounds for having a "girl's face" and dressing femininely. In her early teens, Anita moved to her mother's house to escape her uncle. Anita's mother and brother began hitting her to punish her for her non-normative gender expression. They also started rumors about Anita and called her derogatory names such as "faggot." Each time Anita's brother caught her covering her chest with a towel after leaving the shower, he threatened to break her face. To escape this abuse, Anita moved in with an aunt. Anita's aunt's husband often sneaked into her room, rubbed her thighs, bit her, pushed her, and tried to force Anita into having sex with him. To flee violence from family members once and for all, Anita ran away from home at age 15 and began working as a trishaw driver.

Since she ran away, Anita has experienced violence in the public sphere. Passers-by have extorted money from her, ridiculed her, and hit her with bags of water. Local churches refuse to help her in their various charity programs. When Anita seeks medical services, nurses and doctors often look at her disapprovingly and call her offensive names. The local welfare department assumes Anita is a sex worker and refuses to give Anita any money.

Police officers have arrested Anita 36 times on both cross-dressing and unsubstantiated sex solicitation charges. Anita has served several prison sentences of up to 25 days and has paid fines of up to RM90. In prisons, wardens have shaved her head, made her run to a Saroja Devi (an old Indian female actress song), twisted her hands, hit her in the head with a cane, made sexual advances on her, put flowers in her hair to make her look "pretty," called her extremely derogatory names, and hit her for walking too femininely. When she was released from a Sungai Petani prison when she was 17, a middle-aged male police officer asked her, in court, whether she needed "company." When Anita refused, the police officer threatened her saying, "You will come again. We will see then." The same officer arrested her later that year.

The owner of Anita's trishaw once held the trishaw from her because of her non-normative gender expression. To make ends meet during this period, Anita became a sex worker. When Anita's boyfriend caught Anita being approached by men, he beat her up so severely that she required medical services. When Anita told her boyfriend that she wanted to leave him, he emotionally abused her, cutting himself in front of her.

Anita feels cheated by the several family planning organizations she has consulted, claiming that they take her money without helping her. She currently lives in her trishaw and is extremely malnourished.

Interviewed between 2010-2011.

At the time of interview, **Michelle** was a 25 year-old Chinese lesbian woman living in Kuala Lumpur. In 2009, Michelle's sister revealed Michelle's sexual orientation to their parents without Michelle's consent. Michelle's parents expressed deep concern with her sexuality, reminding her that lesbianism is a sin according to their Christian faith. Michelle's mother, in an attempt to "fix" Michelle, pressured her to talk to a pastor. Her parents have consistently refused to allow Michelle's partner to attend family gatherings, deeply upsetting Michelle. Her father went so far as to compare her to "a convicted prisoner with a death sentence that, out of compassion, was exiled instead of killed." Michelle says that it tortures her to see her parent's pain regarding her sexuality and she is gradually losing contact with them.

Interviewed in February 2010.

At the time of interview, **Eva** was a 34 year-old Malay transwoman living between Johor and Penang. Eva works in the entertainment industry as a model, actress, and showgirl. She has been denied roles at multiple casting interviews because her identification card listed her as a male. Passers-by have often stared at Eva to try to determine her gender and have made offensive comments to her. A few years ago, when Eva was riding a bike in a street in Penang, three men molested her. When Eva visited the state religious department to contend the arrests of local transwomen for cross-dressing, religious authorities cursed at her.

One of Eva's past boyfriends repeatedly beat her. Eva was too scared to seek help.

Interviewed in March 2011.

At the time of interview, **Anim** was a 43 year-old person who is gender queer. Anim's birth sex was female and has a masculine gender expression. Anim's family members, devout Muslims, do not accept Anim's gender identity. Anim's mother refuses to take Anim's previous relationships with women seriously, referring to them as "puppy love." Fearing that Anim will grow old alone, she consistently pressures Anim marry a man. Anim's lesbian friends disapprove of Anim's decision to inject testosterone, often asking Anim loaded questions such as, "Why would you want to change your body?"

Often, passers-by stare at Anim, especially when Anim is with a female partner. One time, an adolescent boy called Anim "sinful." A cisgender male mutual friend

once kissed Anim without consent, making Anim feel disgusted. The recent *fatwa* concerning tomboys (see “Violence Against LBT People in Malaysia: At a Glance”) concerns Anim deeply.

Interviewed in March 2011.

At the time of interview, **Sarah** was a 39 year-old Malay lesbian living in Petaling Jaya. Sarah used to work as a flight attendant for Singapore Airlines, where her male coworkers constantly flirted with her. One time, she felt so uncomfortable that she came out as a lesbian to a male coworker to encourage him to stop his flirting. He revealed her sexual orientation to the rest of their coworkers without Sarah’s permission. Soon afterwards, many coworkers started glaring at and ignoring Sarah.

Sarah’s ex-partner violently beat her for ten years. During this period, Sarah refrained from filing a police report because she feared that the police would ridicule her for being in a relationship with another woman and the media would sensationalize the story. Because Sarah was not out to everyone, she wished to avoid harmful publicity at all costs.

Passers-by often call Sarah offensive names. Once, a passer-by spat upon Sarah and a group of other friends with non-conforming gender expression.

Interviewed in January 2011.

At the time of interview, **Nuri** was a 35 year-old Malay transwoman living in Penang. Nuri’s brother has beat her up on several occasions and has called her offensive names, such as “scumbag.” Her family members refer to her as a male, calling her their son and brother. Her aunt often laughs mockingly at Nuri.

Nuri has applied for various permanent jobs at local hotels, restaurants, and factories and was rejected every time because of her gender identity. To make ends meet, Nuri became a sex worker. From 1999 to 2009, she was arrested four times on cross-dressing and sex work charges. Once, police officers invaded Nuri’s privacy by breaking into her house and arresting her for wearing makeup. Each time she was in prison, wardens shaved Nuri’s hair against her will.

She commonly is subjected to verbal violence from passers-by. In 2010, a man approached her and insulted her parents for having raised her.

To ease the pain caused by the violence she’s faced, Nuri became a heavy drinker.

Interviewed in December 2010.

At the time of interview, **Zaki** was a 30 year-old Malay transwoman living in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. Throughout his life, Zaki's father has pressured her to "toughen up, be a man, [and] stop being such a sissy." To this day, Zaki's mother refuses to refer to Zaki as her daughter. Zaki's cousins have tormented her for having a feminine gender expression, making her feel "mortified."

In 2009, a taxi driver forced Zaki to stroke his penis. After Zaki pleaded and cried, the taxi driver agreed to release her. Zaki says the most traumatizing part of this experience was when he told her, "This is the first transgender I encountered that is like you. All the [others]...would just go down on me." He also told her "Oh, I thought all of you...enjoy giving blowjobs to men." Other taxi drivers have asking Zaki prying questions including "Are you a girl or a man?"; "Do you still have a penis?"; and "Do you work in a saloon?"

A few years prior to the interview with KRYSS, Zaki took a course a local university to prepare for an exam she needed to pass to practice medicine. Lecturers forced her to cut her hair and teased her for bringing a pink bag to class. After Zaki failed her exam on the first attempt, she abandoned her dream of becoming a doctor largely to avoid having to suppress her gender identity in further preparation courses.

Once, a policeman stopped Zaki and her friends on the street to check their identification cards. He looked at Zaki suspiciously and asked her why she has a name traditionally given to males. Even though most of Zaki's coworkers at the HIV/AIDS organization he works at are LGBTIQ+ identifiers, they often gossip about Zaki's name and ridicule Zaki for her complex gender identity.

Largely because of the violence she has faced, Zaki has suffered from depression.

Interviewed on October 26, 2011.

At the time of interview, **J** was a 22 year-old Malay transman living in Klang, Selangor. J has not revealed his gender identity to his parents, traditional Catholics, because he fears they will disown him for being "sinful." In 2008, when J revealed his gender identity to his sister, she responded crying, insisting that "God created [J]...this way for a reason" and "[J should] not change." Following this incident, J's sister starting ignoring him. J's parents often tease him for wearing masculine clothing and, even though he is an adult, force J to wear dresses at family functions, weddings, Christmas events, and church. J's father and J are not on speaking terms, largely due to J's masculinity. When J confided in his priest regarding his gender identity, his priest told him, "transitioning is against God's will." One of J's friends once told him, "Trans [and] gay people should be brought [to] hell!"

In 2009, at a male toilet in Kuala Lumpur Sentral Railway Station, a man stared at J disapprovingly and kicked the door of the J's toilet stall violently. When J

and his girlfriend were in parked car together, police officers asked for their identification cards and told J that his gender is female. They inquired as to what the two were doing and then demanded bribes from them.

When J and an ex-girlfriend were in a fight, J drove to the parking lot outside of her place of work to resolve the problem. J's ex-girlfriend's co-workers scolded J, making derogatory comments including "You are not fit to be a man or woman!" J's current girlfriend recently sent him an email with offensive remarks, including "Hey, you bloody transgender!" and "I know what is underneath your pants!" After reading this "disturbing" email, J broke down crying.

In 2008, because he felt rejected by his family, church, friends, and society, J suffered through a severe depressive episode in which he did not talk to anyone for six months. He has attempted suicide by overdosing on Paracetamol multiple times, as recently as 2010.

Interviewed on October 1, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Yoyo** was a 27 year-old masculine Malay lesbian living in Bukit Damansara, Kuala Lumpur. Yoyo's mother, a devout Muslim, does not accept her sexuality. In 2010, she told Yoyo to not "entertain that feeling" because she "[has] God." Yoyo's brother has pressured Yoyo to "come back to the 'right' path." When one of Yoyo's friends discovered that Yoyo was a lesbian, she threatened to reveal Yoyo's sexuality to other people, making Yoyo feel "attacked."

Once, a police officer caught Yoyo and her ex-girlfriend kissing in a parked car. He asked prying questions including "Do your parents know you are like this?" and told them they were immoral. He then forced them to kiss in front of him, threatening that he would report them if they refused. On another occasion when Yoyo and her girlfriend were in a parked car alone, six police officers approached them and insulted Yoyo, saying she was "boyish." The police officers then drove the couple to a local police headquarters and forced them to explain their actions to their boss.

At the Curve shopping mall in Mutiara Damansara, Petaling Jaya, passers-by made derogatory comments towards Yoyo. Other passers-by have approached Yoyo telling her that if she were not lesbian, they would like to "be in bed" with her. A few years ago, Yoyo's ex-girlfriend's then boyfriend threatened to kill Yoyo if he ever saw her.

Interviewed between 2010-2011.

At the time of interview, **Ray** was a 42 year-old masculine lesbian living in Kuala Lumpur. Ray's girlfriend often pressures her to be more feminine, insisting that

she wants a “girlfriend, not a boyfriend,” deeply upsetting Ray. When Ray uses female toilets, people often stare at her “from head to toe” and ask her to leave. Once, when Ray sat in a female-only coach of a train, a woman glared at her and asked her to leave the coach. Ray often receives disapproving looks from nurses and receptionists at hospitals. Malaysia’s homophobic policies are a constant source of worry and distress in her life.

Because her coworkers constantly gossiped behind her back, gave her disapproving looks, laughed at her, and told her she should be more feminine, Ray decided to quit her former job. At job interviews, she is commonly asked whether she always wears masculine clothing. When she responds affirmatively, potential employers cut interviews short. As a result, Ray has been unemployed for the past two years. She does not know of any organizations or resources that could provide her consultation or help.

Interviewed between 2010-2011.

At the time of interview, **Hay-D** was a 23 year-old transman living in Kedah. Hay-D’s mother told him that she would never accept him if he decides to transition. Hay-D has refrained from revealing his gender identity to his friends and his intimate partner (a female with masculine gender expression) because he fears they will start ignoring him.

When Hay-D was riding a bicycle in public, a passer-by on a motorcycle grabbed his buttocks. On another occasion, when Hay-D and a female friend slept near each other at a hostel one night, the friend touched Hay-D inappropriately.

Hay-D works at the Malaysia Department of Civil Defence. At work, he is forced to dress in women’s clothing. His coworkers constantly tell him to stop identifying as a man, accept himself as a woman, get married, and become a housewife. Some have made sexual advances onto Hay-D. Because of these reasons, Hay-D is seriously considering quitting his job. He does not know of any organizations or resources that could provide him consultation or help.

Interviewed on October 23, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Hani** was a 20 year-old Malay transwoman living in Penang. Hani’s mother once incorrectly suspected that Hani was a sex worker and decided to throw away all of Hani’s female clothing and makeup. Passers-by often physically assault Hani and make offensive comments, calling her “disgusting” and “*pondan*” (a pejorative for transwoman). Many assume she is a sex worker and have asked her for sex. In six job interviews, potential employers refused to hire Hani because of her gender identity.

Police officers often coerce Hani into making payments to them, threatening to arrest her if she refuses. Once, she was arrested for “impersonating women” and fined by a court. While Hani was in jail, officers teased her for being feminine. They also removed her bra and eyelashes and have not yet returned them.

In secondary school, teachers often looked at Hani disapprovingly, making her feel uncomfortable. Her principal once called her parents to complain about the way she dressed. School officials almost blocked her from entering a hall to take her final examination (SPM) because she was wearing feminine clothing and makeup. Other students avoided becoming friends with Hani because of her gender identity. They often called her “soft,” tormented her for acting femininely, and once threatened to kill her. Sometimes, in restrooms, male classmates forced Hani to have oral sex with them.

Interviewed in December 2010.

At the time of interview, **H** was a 27 year-old masculine Chinese lesbian living in Bandar Utama. She has not come out to her father because he does not accept homosexuals, often referring to them as “disabled.” Her father, sister, and aunts have often teased H for dressing in masculine clothing. When H came out to her uncle, he responded disapprovingly, insisting that she gets married to a man. In 2010, when H revealed her sexual orientation to some of her friends, they all stopped communicating with her. This deeply hurt H and caused her to fall into a depression. She began feeling extremely insecure, started to feel like a “freak,” and even thought about seeing a psychiatrist to “cure” her.

In public toilets, women have often looked at H suspiciously and once referred to her as a man. Passers-by have laughed at her mockingly. Within the lesbian community, people have teased H for not being masculine or feminine enough. On several occasions, men have messaged H through online chat rooms telling her she needs a man to make her a “complete woman” and lesbians need men to “straighten” them up.

When H interviewed for a job at a law firm, her interviewer told her that she is not “pretty” and refused to hire her. H believes this is due to her masculine clothing and demeanor. This severely damaged H’s self-confidence and caused her to cry for three days.

Interviewed in May 2011.

At the time of interview, **Ain** was a 37 year-old masculine Malay lesbian living in Johor Bahru. Ain comes from a traditional Muslim household. When her parents discovered she is a lesbian, they scolded her, called her derogatory names, and violently yelled at her. Her mother forced Ain to see a psychiatrist to “cure” her. Ain is too scared to tell her parents about her current relationship with another

woman. For a while, Ain's siblings avoided her, treating her like she was a "stranger." Some of Ain's friends stopped communicating with her after she revealed her sexual orientation to them. To deal with the stress of not being accepted by her family or friends, Ain started using drugs.

When Ain used to work as a teacher at a secondary school, her co-workers often looked at her disapprovingly, taunted her, and ignored her. Ain felt so uncomfortable that she decided to quit her job. She then worked at a T.G.I. Friday's restaurant. Customers made prying comments to Ain, pointing out that she dresses like a man but sounds like a woman. Even though she was due for a promotion, Ain's boss demoted her after he discovered that she was in a relationship with a female coworker. As a result, she quit this job as well.

When she shopped for male underwear at a Metrojaya store, a store employee looked at her disapprovingly and made offensive comments to her. When Ain uses female toilets, other women often look at her suspiciously. Police officers have often arbitrarily stopped Ain on the road and demanded bribes from her.

Ain's former partner was extremely abusive. For a period of four years, Ain's partner regularly beat her, making her bleed. Ain's partner also often threatened to cut her with a knife. Ain did not consult any organization for help.

Interviewed between 2010-2011.

At the time of interview, **Kyels** was a 25 year-old masculine Chinese bisexual woman living in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur. Kyels currently works as a journalist for a newspaper. Her co-workers commonly ask her why she does not wear a skirt to work, making Kyels feel targeted. They also often make homophobic comments that deeply offend Kyels. One time, when Kyels used a female toilet, a woman scolded her and told her to use the male restroom. In 2011, when Kyels and her female partner were embracing each other in a cinema, a security guard tried to force them to leave.

Kyels's partner's mother does not approve of their relationship, insisting that Kyels brainwashed her daughter into being a bisexual. In 2008, immediately after Kyels's partner's mother learned of the relationship, Kyels received two phone calls from an anonymous number threatening her with employment termination for being in a relationship with the "wrong person." One of these calls also included a death threat. Kyels's partner's mother monitors her daughter's emails and phone history, forcing Kyels and her partner to communicate in code.

Largely due to the violence she has faced on the basis of her non-conforming sexual orientation, Kyels suffered through a severe depression for four years.

Interviewed in October 2011.