



Violence against Lesbians, Bisexual Women, and Trans People in Sri Lanka

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International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

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 2012, Women's Support Group (WSG), a Colombo-based LBT support and advocacy organization, interviewed 33 LBT people throughout Sri Lanka to document their experiences with violence. Prior to this project, no comprehensive documentation of violence against LBT people in Sri Lanka existed. Highlighting WSG's main findings, this communication includes 13 case studies of violence against LBT people in Sri Lanka.

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 Sri Lanka, IGLHRC trusts that the CSW will find the information in this communication useful in its efforts to promote global gender equality.

Definitions

Androgynous people do not identify as males or females.

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.

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

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

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,

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.

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.
- 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.)

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.

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 Sri Lanka: At a Glance

Often justified with reference to culture and religion (including Christianity and Sinhalese Buddhism), Sri Lankan society enforces gender-differential treatment in all spheres. Female independence, especially gender nonconformity and sexual autonomy, is strongly discouraged. LBT people challenge these norms are thus highly susceptible to various manifestations of violence, intimate partner violence; passer-by harassment; housing and employment discrimination; rejection by loved ones; and more.

The family is the primary source of violence against LBT people in Sri Lanka. Family members often emotionally abuse LBT children and young people by pressuring them to participate in conventional heterosexual marriage; 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. Family violence is often highly invisibilized because it is considered a private matter.

Emotional violence is the most common form of violence against LBT people in Sri Lanka. Common manifestations of emotional violence include gender-norm enforcement, manipulation, silent contempt, and controlling behavior.

Thirty-one of 33 respondents reported that the violence they experienced on the basis of their non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression has negatively affected their mental health. Many suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. Some have engaged in self-harm, had suicidal thoughts, and attempted suicide.

State laws are hostile towards LBT people. Section 365 of the Sri Lankan penal code criminalizes adult same-sex sexual relations. The criminalization of same-sex intimacy gives police and anti-gay groups an excuse to brand LBT people as perverts and criminals. Section 399 of the Sri Lankan Penal Code, “Cheating by Personation” is often used to discriminate against trans people, including

arresting them for “misleading the public.”³ Sri Lanka’s Vagrancy Order of 1842 continues to give authorities the power to detain people whom they consider to be loitering in public. This is often misused to detain non-heteronormative women and trans people, especially those of lower socio-economic status.⁴

Case Studies

At the time of interview, **Christy** was a 28 year-old masculine Sinhalese lesbian living in Colombo. Since childhood, Christy’s parents, traditional Catholics, have pressured her to wear feminine clothing, grow her hair long, and behave “like a girl.” They also have urged her to pray and see a priest to “cure” her “sinful” soul. Christy’s father refers to homosexuality as a foreign-borne “disease.” Christy’s brother refuses to take her sexual orientation seriously, referring to it as a “phase.” As the eldest daughter, Christy is constantly pressured by her parents, siblings, grandmother, and relatives to marry to a man. Many of Christy’s friends, convinced that Christy’s sexual orientation is “sinful,” stopped speaking with her after she came out to them.

When Christy came out to her aunt, she asked Christy prying questions, such as “What would you do if I were your girlfriend?” and “How do you kiss?”. When the two of them were alone, she attempted to force Christy to kiss her and placed Christy’s hand over her genitals, telling Christy to “show her what she [would] do.” When Christy visited her uncle at his office, he asked her why she did not have a boyfriend. He then forced Christy to watch lesbian pornography with him and told her that the reason she is a lesbian is because she had not been with a man that could “give her a good time.” He approached her and told her that he could give Christy “what [she] want[s].” These experiences deeply traumatized Christy. As a result, she isolated herself from all of her relatives.

Three years prior to the interview, Christy dated a cisgender male to appease her parents. When this partner started drinking heavily, his mother blamed Christy, telling her that it is her fault for being too “independent” and not “acting like a woman.” He taunted Christy for hesitating to give him oral sex, insisting that she would have no problem if he were a woman. He raped Christy on several occasions and once recorded it on video camera, making Christy feel like a sex object. When her ex-boyfriend suspected that Christy slept with a woman, he called her a “slut,” asked whether his penis was “not enough” for her, slapped her violently, and choked her in her apartment. Christy delayed seeking advice from a friend because her ex-boyfriend threatened to publicly release the video of him raping her if she did.

³ “Boy Disguised as Girl since the age of 18,” *Lankadeepa*, August 31, 2010; “Woman disguised as a Male Army Officer married to a Woman following mobile phone love affair,” *Lankadeepa*, August 23, 2010.

⁴ A Nichols, “Dance Ponnaya Dance,” *Feminist Criminology*, April 2010, Volume 5, No. 2.

One day, Christy's landlady barged into Christy's apartment and yelled at her for "bringing women" to the apartment. She told Christy that she "[doesn't] like things like this happening in [her] houses!" and evicted her.

Christy has worked as a customer care executive for five years. Her coworkers openly gossip about Christy's current relationship and ask her invasive questions regarding her partner's masculine clothing. One time, a cisgender male coworker spanked her as she was using the copy machine. When Christy told her coworker to stop, the CEO of her company called her in and ordered her to stop having a "negative attitude towards men." The CEO has also made sexual advances onto Christy. He has asked her about her sexual preferences, pressured her to have sex with another woman in front of him, requested naked pictures of her girlfriend, asked her to come into his room after office hours, and texted her inappropriate messages. Her CEO has told her that she would only qualify for a promotion if she came over to his house on an evening. Christy feels that her coworkers and the CEO treat her like a "dog." She assumes that her CEO is too rich and powerful to be prosecuted or punished and has not sought redress.

As a result of the violence she's faced on the basis of sexual orientation, Christy suffers from a severe depression and has very little self-esteem. She has cut herself over two hundred times with pieces of glass and burned her hand. She has also attempted suicide.

Interviewed on February 18, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Roshmi** was a 39 year-old Sinhalese lesbian living in Sri Lanka. Growing up, Roshmi's mother closely monitored Roshmi's telephone activity when she suspected that Roshmi was a lesbian. Recently, Roshmi's niece's husband's sister's husband teased Roshmi for not getting married to a man. He attempted to show her pornographic images against her will on several instances.

Most of Roshmi's friends express disappointment in Roshmi's sexual orientation, insisting that, as a woman, Roshmi should find a husband and have children. One of Roshmi's friends revealed Roshmi's partner's sexual orientation to her manager. As a result, Roshmi's partner's manager fired her. This same friend's husband, an army commander, has stalked Roshmi and threatened to kidnap and kill her on several occasions, as recently as about a year prior to the interview.

To this day, Roshmi's partner's family disapproves of their relationship. They have forced Roshmi's partner to take pills and participate in electric shock therapy in order to "cure" her of her homosexuality. Her partner's family has scolded and attempted to beat Roshmi on a number of occasions. Roshmi's partner's sister once attempted to vandalize Roshmi's car.

Roshmi and her partner experienced severe harassment when they moved to a village in North Central Province for an employment opportunity. During this period, Roshmi's partner dealt with severe mental health issues due to her family's rejection of her sexual orientation. When Roshmi's partner sought health services, she was denied on the basis of her sexual orientation. Community members often gossiped about them and taunted them. Some male community members even threatened to rape Roshmi and her partner in order to "correct" them. After several community members filed complaints to the *Grama Niladhari* (village officer), he forced Roshmi and her partner to leave the village six months prior to their lease expiration date.

When Roshmi's partner sought medical services in a Kalubowila hospital, cisgender male doctors asked Roshmi and her partner prying questions, such as how they have sex, and attempted to sexually abuse Roshmi's partner. As a result, Roshmi and her partner refuse to receive medical services from male doctors anymore.

To cope with the violence she has faced, Roshmi became a chain smoker and started drinking heavily.

Interviewed on January 6, 2012.

At the time of interview, **Sandra** was a 36 year-old masculine lesbian living in Colombo. To this day, Sandra's mother does not accept her non-conforming sexual orientation. Up until Sandra was eighteen, her mother shoved, slapped, and punched her for not wearing dresses and skirts, riding bicycles, and acting masculine. Her mother also tried to force Sandra to go to a psychiatric institution to "cure" her. She has ignored Sandra for long periods of time, making Sandra feel "awful" about herself. She constantly pressures Sandra to get married to a man.

Not being able to marry her partner is a constant source of distress in Sandra's life. She is not able to apply for a joint housing loan, give a supplementary credit card to her partner, or allocate her property to her partner in her will. It also deeply troubles Sandra that she can be criminally prosecuted for having sex with her partner. She feels that homosexuals in Sri Lanka are "completely invisible."

Interviewed on September 18, 2010.

At the time of interview, **Maya** was a 37 year-old Sinhalese androgynous person living in Sri Lanka. Maya was born a biological female and is attracted to females. About five years prior to the interview, Maya's sister revealed Maya's gender identity and sexual orientation to their parents without Maya's permission. Maya's parents and sister do not accept Maya's non-conforming SOGIE. They have pressured Maya to end Maya's relationships with women on several

occasions. When they found love letters written to Maya from Maya's ex-girlfriend, they barged into Maya's ex-girlfriend's office and showed the letters to her co-workers to embarrass her. Maya felt that this was an invasion of Maya and Maya's girlfriend's privacy.

People often glare at, whisper about, and taunt Maya in toilets, restaurants, hotels, streets, public transportation facilities, and places with large crowds. Maya particularly finds Sri Lanka's staring culture towards people who look different to be extremely harmful. As a result, Maya actively avoids using public transportation and being in public – an enormous inconvenience.

When Maya was experiencing health problems, Maya made an appointment with a gynecologist at a private hospital and went with a female friend. The gynecologist, a cisgender male, mocked Maya for Maya's non-conforming SOGIE. He asked Maya unnecessary, prying questions, such as whether Maya was having sexual intercourse with the friend Maya brought. It took five appointments before the gynecologist finally treated Maya's health problem.

As a result of the violence Maya has faced, Maya has very little self-esteem and suffers from a severe case of anxiety.

Interviewed on January 22, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Skinner** was a 34 year-old Sinhalese transman living in a suburb of Colombo. Skinner's family does not accept his gender identity. His parents constantly pressure him to marry a man, telling him he needs to "face reality." His brother commonly makes homophobic comments. As recently as a month before Skinner's interview with WSG, his mother and brother, Sinhalese Buddhists, forced him to see an herbal doctor to "cure" his non-conforming gender identity. The doctor told Skinner that his non-conforming gender identity is a direct effect of watching too much television, deeply offending Skinner. Skinner's avoids speaking with his relatives because they tell Skinner that he is "abnormal."

When Skinner required medical services, his mother checked him into the female ward of a local hospital, ignoring Skinner's gender identity. At the hospital, many people glared at Skinner and gossiped about him, making him feel targeted. A man once punched Skinner on a Kohuwala public bus, breaking his elbow. Passers-by have often called Skinner extremely offensive names, including *Ponneya* and *Appa*, pejoratives for people with non-conforming SOGIE.

In job interviews, when potential employers learn that Skinner is trans from his identification card, which lists him as a female, they often make demeaning comments, including "Why can't you be normal?"; "Why are you dressing like this?"; and "You can never get a job like this." He is commonly denied jobs because of his gender identity. Skinner strongly feels that if he were to dress in

female clothing at job interviews, he would have a noticeably higher likelihood of getting hired.

When Skinner applied for a housing loan at a local bank, he had to present his identification card to a bank employee. When she saw that his identification card lists him as female, she became extremely suspicious and demanded that Skinner present official documentation from a doctor confirming that he is “physically a female.”

As a result of the violence he’s faced, Skinner has extremely low self-esteem and suffers from a severe depression.

Interviewed on October 7, 2010.

At the time of interview, **H** was a 23 year-old Sinhalese transman exclusively attracted to women living in Colombo. H has not come out to his parents, because he fears they will stop paying for his education. They constantly badger him as to when he plans to get married to a man. H’s mother does not approve of H’s decision to cut his hair or wear masculine clothing. She often asks him, “What’s wrong with you?” H’s aunt frequently tells him to dress more femininely and be more of a “pretty girl.” Both his mother and aunt have pressured H to grow his hair longer for his cousin’s upcoming wedding in order to avoid embarrassing them in front of their extended relatives.

H’s friend’s boyfriend has pressured H’s friend to stop talking to H. A year prior to the interview, he threatened to kill H if he saw him speaking to his girlfriend, called H a *ponnaya* (an extremely offensive pejorative for effeminate men and gay men), and punched H at a party, leaving H a bruise. One of H’s mutual friends, a cisgender male, constantly pleads H and his girlfriend via Facebook and SMS text message to have sexual relations with him. Five of H’s friends have stopped speaking to H since he came out to them, making him feel isolated.

Passers-by often make derogatory comments to H, including “*anna ponnaya yanawa*” (“Look there at the pansy/fag!”). When H uses men’s toilets, people commonly glare at him and tell him he is in the wrong toilet. About two weeks prior to the interview, after H was coming home from a nightclub, a cisgender male trishaw driver asked H whether he was a boy or a girl, grabbed H’s hand, and offered H money to have oral sex with him.

Interviewed on February 12, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Anishka** was a 25 year-old half-Burgher, half-Sinhalese bisexual woman living in Pepiliyana. About nine months prior to the interview, Anishka divorced her ex-husband to be with her current girlfriend. When she did so, her mother, a traditional Christian, was extremely disappointed. She told

Anishka that she would surely “go to hell” for choosing a woman over her ex-husband. Anishka’s mother’s friend occasionally pressures Anishka to see a doctor to “cure” her of her bisexuality. Anishka does not bring her partner to dinner parties in order to avoid having to explain her sexual orientation to her extended family.

Anisha’s classmates at her Christian University regularly pressure to rekindle her relationship with her ex-husband, insisting that having a same-sex partner is not “normal.” They ask her demeaning questions, such as “What are you doing with your life?” Some of Anishka’s other acquaintances and mutual friends have asked her lewd, invasive questions about her relationship, including “What do lesbians do?”; “Do you miss penis?”; and “Do you use toys?”. Some have even asked Anishka to watch her have sex with her partner.

Anishka’s and her current partner are co-workers at a television office. Many of Anishka and her partner’s other co-workers gossip about their relationship behind their backs. Anishka and her partner do not attend work events or parties to avoid ridicule and disapproving glares.

About a year prior to the interview, a group of men made lewd gestures to Anishka and her current partner at a restaurant. When Anishka approached these men and asked them to stop, one responded by slamming his hand on a grill and shouting “You fucking lesbian! You fucking bitch!” They then followed Anishka and her girlfriend into the parking lot and kicked the door of their car, telling Anishka that he intended to kill her. The next morning, Anishka got a call from a man who did not identify himself. He commented on Anishka’s relationship with her partner and the violent incident from the night prior. This incident made Anishka feel extremely unsafe.

Interviewed on October 10, 2010.

At the time of interview, **DKS** was a 28 year-old Indian lesbian living in Battaramulla. DKS came out four years prior to the interview. Extremely disappointed in her, DKS’s parents threatened to disown her, asked her “why on Earth [she] want[ed] to be gay,” insulted her using extremely derogatory words, and strictly monitored her movement for three months. Many of DKS’s friends, including some she had known for over eight years, started ignoring her. These instances made DKS feel extremely rejected, and, as a result, she often locked herself in her room and cried for extended periods of time.

DKS’s parents forced DKS to see several psychologists and an Anglican priest against her will to “cure” her of her same-sex attraction. One male psychologist made extremely demeaning comments to DKS, calling her “disgusting” and telling her she needed to be a heterosexual.

Whenever DKS and her partner are public, passers-by stare at them, making her feel like a “carnival.” Two years prior to the interview, a man shoved DKS and her girlfriend and attempted to fight them when they were dancing together at a nightclub. Many of DKS’s former coworkers frequently made homophobic comments in front of her, deeply offending her. DKS and her partner cannot take out a housing loan from a state bank together because they are not a married, heterosexual couple.

As a result of the violence she’s faced, DKS has had low self-esteem, engaged in self-blame, and suffered from anxiety and depression.

Interviewed on September 18, 2010.

At the time of interview, **Dhammi** was a 21 year-old Sinhalese transman living in Dehiwala. Dhammi is extremely close with his brother – ever since their parents died when they were children, Dhammi’s brother raised him and served as his de-facto parent. When Dhammi’s friend revealed Dhammi’s gender identity to Dhammi’s brother without permission a few years prior to the interview, Dhammi’s brother was extremely outraged. He told Dhammi’s that his gender identity is shameful and has threatened to reveal Dhammi’s identity to other family members. He refuses to see Dhammi until he becomes “normal” once again. This has devastated Dhammi, who deeply misses his brother.

A few years prior to the interview, when Dhammi was staying at a lesbian woman’s house in Colombo, the woman touched Dhammi inappropriately without his consent. Dhammi’s friend advised him to ignore the incident.

Because of the violence he’s faced, Dhammi has extremely low self-esteem, suffers from anxiety, and “lost interest in life.”

Interviewed on January 19, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Anu** was a 29 year-old Tamil bisexual woman living in Colombo. When Anu came out to their parents, they pressured her to go to a mental health institution for therapy. When Anu came out to her friends, many spread harmful rumors about her, called her offensive names like “faggot,” and stopped speaking with her. Some, pointing to the fact that Anu’s current partner is a male, continue to insist that Anu’s bisexuality “was just a phase.” Many of Anu’s friends in the LGBTQI+ community have teased her for being bisexual, saying that she’s “really a lesbian but [doesn’t] want to admit it.” Passers-by have made lewd comments to Anu and threatened to tie her up and beat her.

Interviewed on August 8, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Chamila** was a 36 year-old masculine Sinhalese lesbian living in Maharagama. Chamila's family members and friends have pressured her to get married to a man. Many of her family members refer to her lesbianism as a "mental disability" and an "embarrassment." Chamila's father beat her violently when he discovered that she is a lesbian. Her mother forced her to see a mental health professional to "cure" her of her sexual orientation. Chamila's neighbors have also beaten her up for being a lesbian. Chamila's partner's family members threatened to beat Chamila if they ever meet her.

Chamila works at a government security company. She is forced to wear a skirt, even though she feels much more comfortable in trousers. Many of her co-workers gossip about her sexual orientation and call her offensive names, such as "*Appa*," a pejorative for lesbians. Several of her bosses have told Chamila that she should get married to a man, even though they knew Chamila is a lesbian. Two of her former bosses, cisgender males, made sexual advances onto Chamila and asked her to have sex with their female partners. Following one of these incidents, Chamila experienced difficulties attaining a promotion.

As a result of the violence she's faced, Chamila suffers from anxiety.

Interviewed on August 8, 2011.

At the time of interview, **Indrani** was a 32 year-old masculine Sinhalese lesbian living in Kalubowila. Indrani's family members constantly pressure her to get married, telling her that having a husband would "fix" her. She was pressured to wear a dress at a family wedding, making her feel extremely uncomfortable.

Passers-by frequently stare at Indrani as if to determine her gender; call her extremely offensive names, including "*Appa*," "boy-girl," and "gentleman without balls"; laugh at her mockingly; misgender her, calling her "Sir" and "Brother"; and push her violently. One time, at a carnival, a man approached Indrani and squeezed her breasts.

Multiple landlords have evicted Indrani because of her masculine gender expression. Some have raised Indrani's rent, knowing that Indrani would have a difficult time finding another place to live because of her masculine gender expression. Indrani's neighbors gossip about her masculinity, and one even beat her.

One of Indrani's former partners was extremely controlling. She often stalked Indrani and restricted her movement. When Indrani told her partner she wanted to end the relationship, her partner threatened to reveal Indrani's sexual orientation to her family.

One time, when Indrani and her former partner were walking home from a dinner at around 8PM, they had to pass through a non-entry zone. Police officers

stopped them to check their identification cards, teased Indrani for looking masculine, referred to her using the pejorative “*Appa*,” and arrested the two. When Indrani’s aunt bailed the two out, the police officers scolded Indrani’s aunt, telling her to not let her Indrani be alone with another girl at nighttime. About a year prior to the interview, an Army official arbitrarily stopped Indrani on the road when she was riding a motorcycle and ridiculed her masculine gender expression.

As a result of the violence she faces, Indrani has low self-esteem and suffers from anxiety. She has also had suicidal thoughts.

Interviewed on September 22, 2012.

At the time of interview, **Jenny** was a 28 year-old masculine Sinhalese lesbian living in Nugegoda. Jenny’s family pressures her to get married to a man and stop dressing in trousers. A female friend started ignoring Jenny because her husband prohibited her from associating with lesbians.

Jenny is constantly told to leave female bathrooms in Colombo shopping malls, including MC and Liberty. When she used to work at a bank, she was forced to wear in a tight skirt against her will, making her feel extremely uncomfortable.

Jenny is a former member of a Sri Lankan national sports team. Many of Jenny’s teammates gossiped about her sexual orientation and made offensive comments towards LGBTQI+ people in front of her. Jenny’s captain pressured Jenny not to cut her hair. In 2008, the team’s selection committee arbitrarily kicked Jenny off the team. Jenny’s coach told Jenny’s friend, another member of the team, that it did so because of Jenny’s non-conforming sexual orientation. Jenny did not seek redress, feeling that she “[could] not have any influence.” This incident deeply pained Jenny, and she is too traumatized to play the sport anymore.

One of Jenny’s former partners left Jenny to marry a man. About a year prior to the interview, this former partner discovered that Jenny was in a new relationship and became jealous. Jenny’s former partner pushed Jenny’s new partner to the ground and pulled her hair when she ran into Jenny and her new partner at a beach. For a period of about a month, this former partner threatened to reveal Jenny’s sexual orientation to her parents if she did not break up with her new partner. Out of fear, Jenny stopped dating her new partner.

To cope with the violence she’s faced, Jenny has hurt herself by banging her head against a wall and cutting herself.

Interviewed on April 8, 2011.