

Idaho in the Philippines: LGBTs push for end to hate crimes

Saturday 29 March 2014, by [BERNAL Buena](#) (Date first published: 18 May 2012).

NO TO HATE CRIMES. The participants of the parade congregated at UP Palma Hall. The march ended at the Commission of Human Rights.

MANILA, Philippines — Legislators and government officials must punish those behind hate crimes against LGBTs (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual), human rights supporters stressed.

An emotional Marlon Lacsamana knows crimes against LGTBs all too well. "Two of my friends were murdered, one with 72 stab wounds and another strangled to death."

These deaths, together with other incidents of hate-motivated discrimination and violence against LGBTs (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual), was the glue that held various rights advocates together as they marched on Thursday morning, May 17, to the Commission on Human Rights central office in celebration of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (Idaho).

The march concluded with a program where Commission on Human Rights (CHR) chair Loretta 'Etta' Rosales signed a document attesting her support for the LGBT plight. She also led the planting of "The Rainbow Tree" in remembrance of the departed LGBTs.

REMEMBRANCE. Plaque card where a tree was planted in remembrance of those who died. Photo by Dawn Fabrero
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In her speech, Rosales acknowledged the gains of the LGBT movement over the years, citing the 2010 Supreme Court ruling that overturned the Comelec's decision to bar gay rights party-list Ang Ladlad from electoral contestation. She also challenged civil society to acknowledge that arbitrary violence directed at a specific group should be universally condemned.

Rosales authored the first proposed anti-discrimination legislation as Akbayan Party-list Representative in 1998. Various versions have surfaced in Congress, but no law has been enacted to date.

LEADER. Loretta Ann P. Rosales signs a "certificate" of appreciation for all her contributions to the LGBT movement. Photo by Dawn Fabrero
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Need for legal reform

Knowing that the fight against hate is better fought with legislation, the LGBT community was firm in declaring the need for legal means to protect their dignity and human rights, and to redress their grievances.

Because of the lack of investigative and identification mechanisms by the government, LGBT rights advocates depend solely on independent reports which are but a glimpse of the real situation of gender-related hate crime incidence in the country.

“The government needs to recognize, investigate, document, and prosecute hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI),” said Lacsamana who, motivated by the death of two of his friends, started collating incidents of LGBT-targeted violence since 2009.

The Philippine LGBT Hate Crime Watch says that since 1996, there have been 164 cases of murdered LGBTs, 16 of which happened in 2012 alone. Together with the rest of the marchers, the independent group called for the passing of House Resolution 1432 which calls for a congressional inquiry on LGBT-targeted hate crimes in aid of legislation.

Another law which LGBT rights advocates seeks to push is House Bill 1483 or the Anti-Discrimination Act of 2010, authored by Bayan Muna party-list representative Teddy Casino in August 2010.

Alvin Dakis, who represented the bisexuals in the LGBT community, spoke of the precedence of the passing of the Anti-Bullying Act by the Philippine Congress.

“Now, they have no excuse not to pass the Anti-Discrimination Bill,” Dakis said in his solidarity speech.

What is the root of hate?

In an interview, Ron De Vera of Amnesty International - Philippines (AIP) said that while legislative reform is important, community engagement also matters in the fight for LGBT rights.

De Vera explained that it is the fear of the unknown and ignorance on the science behind LGBT that leads to prejudice, which breeds hate and violence.

Galang, a lesbian-initiated, lesbian-run feminist human rights organization, echoed the same sentiment and reasoned in a statement that hate emanates from society’s fear of anything different and unfit to existing norms.

Using an illustration with the government as duty-bearer and citizens as rights-owner, De Vera made it clear that education and awareness on LGBT issues is key to remove people’s fear and prejudice. Furthermore, these are needed to push government to fulfill its duty of protecting citizen’s rights against arbitrary violence.

Discussion groups, online campaigns, and the inclusion of gender issues in formal education are means to this end, he added.

Idaho

The International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHO) is in commemoration of the World Health Organization’s decision dated May 17, 1990 to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders.

BUENA BERNAL

Among the groups who joined in the Idaho march were

Philippine LGBT Hate Crime Watch

Ang Ladlad party-list

Amnesty International Philippines

Filipino Freethinkers

Metropolitan Community Church Quezon City

Philippines Atheists and Agnostics Society (PATAS)

University of the Philippines Babaylan

Deaf Rainbow Philippines

Queer Archers

Gay Geeks, Society of Transgendered Women of the Philippines

Lesbian Advocates Philippines

Galang

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

Rainbow Rights, Task Force Pride (TFP) Philippines

Women's Legal Bureau

Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP)

WeDpro

P.S.

* - Rappler.com. POSTED ON 05/18/2012 12:50 AM | UPDATED 01/08/2014 12:06 AM:
<http://www.rappler.com/move-ph/5549-remembering-the-departed-lgbts-in-idaho>

* Erratum: In an earlier post, we mistakenly reported that the World Health Organization's decision to remove homosexuality from the list of mental disorders was dated May 17, 1975. We corrected this to May 17, 1990.