

Solidarity Statement from LGBTIQ communities
in conjunction with a statement against homophobia & transphobia
from Canadian Imams and Muslim leaders

RE: Orlando shooting

Release Date: June 24, 2016

Community Unity Iftar - The 519, 519 Church Street, Toronto ON

We, the undersigned, are representatives of organizations working both for and within Ontario's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) communities. We issue this statement against Islamophobia and in support of Muslim communities across Ontario.

In the early hours of Sunday, June 12, 2016, (7 Ramadan, 1437), in Orlando, Florida, 49 people were killed and 53 people wounded in a shooting at a nightclub popular with members of the LGBTIQ communities. Most of those killed were LGBTIQ People of Colour, primarily Latino and Black.

This horrible event has shaken members of our communities regardless of racial identity, faith, age or background. Many LGBTIQ people and people with HIV and AIDS have faced issues of rejection, trauma and discrimination. We understand what it means to be faced with bigotry and stereotyping based on our identity. Violence targeting LGBTIQ communities is not a new problem rather it is a systemic one, with threats to LGBTIQ safety happening every day and everywhere - here in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and around the world.

For people in LGBTIQ communities who identify as Muslim, this past week has also been particularly challenging as they deal with the shock and pain of the attack on LGBTQ people as well as facing the fear of increased racial profiling and Islamophobia.

While we do not know the exact motivations of the shooter, who was born and raised an American national, the fact that he was the son of Afghan immigrants is, sadly, being used to make assumptions about all Muslims. Some media outlets and some politicians have conflated his actions with his identity and have misguidedly called for increased surveillance of Muslims. There has been a rise in hate speech against Muslims. Some are using this attack on LGBTIQ people to justify their racism and Islamophobia. We strongly believe that homophobia cannot be fought with Islamophobia, racism or any other form of xenophobic actions.

We are concerned about this rise in Islamophobia and racism that unfairly targets Muslim communities - of all backgrounds. As LGBTIQ-identified communities, we well understand the pain of stigma, discrimination and stereotyping. We call on all people to stand up against Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia and all other forms of discrimination during this difficult time. Together we must all reject fear. We must stand together against those forces that would try to divide us all. We believe that we are all parts of the same humanity, and if one part bleeds then we must all mend the wound.

List of organizations & individuals signing the Solidarity Statement from LGBTIQ communities against Islamophobia:

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services
Action Positive VIH-SIDA
Africans in Partnership Against AIDS
AIDS Action Now!
AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area
AIDS Committee of Ottawa
AIDS Committee of Toronto
AIDS Committee of Windsor/AIDS Support Chatham Kent
AIDS Committee of York Region
AIDS Network, Hamilton
Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
Amy Gottlieb, Teacher and Activist
Andrea Houston, LGBTQ Advocate & Journalist
Arab Community Centre of Toronto
Asian Community AIDS Services
Association of Ontario Health Centres
Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies
Bruce House, Ottawa
Buddies in Bad Times Theatre
Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity
Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Canadian Positive People Network
CATIE
Centre de santé communautaire Chigamik Community Health Centre
Centre Francophone de Toronto
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
Cheri diNovo, Member of Provincial Parliament, Parkdale-High Park
Chris Moise, TDSB School Board Trustee
Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT)
Conchita Fonseca, Family Doctor, Ottawa
CTAC
CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle Committee
Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre
Doug Kerr, Consultant & LGBTQ community advocate
El-Tawhid Juma Circle Unity Mosque
Elevate NWO
#EndHateLaws
Fanta Ongoiba, ED, Africans In Partnership Against AIDS
Fife House
Flemingdon Health Centre
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
Glad Day Bookshop
HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario (HALCO)
HIV/AIDS Regional Services, Kingston
HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health, Guelph
Indigenous Solidarity Coalition at Brock University

Inspired Media
Inspire Awards
Iranian Women's Organization of Ontario
Ismaili Queers
Kind Space, Ottawa
Kristyn Wong-Tam, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 27
LAMP Community Health Centre
Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans Youth Line
Maura Lawless, ED, the 519
Metropolitan Community Church Toronto
Nancy Nicol, Associate Professor, York University
North Hastings Family Health Community Clinic
OCASI
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
Ontario AIDS Network
Ontario Positive Asians Network
Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) Canada, Durham Region
Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) Muskoka
Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) Toronto
Parkdale Community Health Centre
PASAN
Peel HIV/AIDS Legal Network
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Planned Parenthood Toronto
Positive Living Niagara
Pride Toronto
Queen West – Central Toronto Community Health Centre
Rainbow Railroad
Ralph Wushke, The Ecumenical Chaplaincy at the University of Toronto
Regent Park Community Health Centre
Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, London, Ontario
Réseau ACCESS Network
Rev. Brent Hawkes, Metropolitan Community Church Toronto
Rev. John Joseph Mastandrea, Metropolitan United Church
Rob Oliphant, Member of Parliament, Don Valley West
Salaam: Queer Muslim Community
Salah Bachir
Self-Help Resource Centre
Sherbourne Health Centre
South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
South Riverdale Community Health Centre
The 519 Church Street Community Centre
The AIDS Network Hamilton
The Teresa Group
Toronto HIV/AIDS Network
Toronto People With AIDS Foundation
University Health Network LGBT Committee
WellFort Community Health Services, Brampton
Women's Health in Women's Hands