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Transgender Day Of Remembrance

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Today, the 20th of November, we come together for the 17th time to mourn our brothers, sisters and others who have been killed as a result of transphobia as we commemorate International Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). We aim to raise public awareness and bring to its attention the violence, hatred and discrimination transgender and gender non-conforming people face on a daily basis.

According to Transrespect.org the total number of Transgender murders up until date from the beginning of 2015 is a staggering 271. Planet Transgender is quoted stating that a transgender person gets murdered every 29 hours and as we form less than 1% of the population this number is truly disturbing, and as if these numbers are not disturbing enough we face a staggering suicide rate within the community at a whopping 41%. The numbers out of Africa are still poorly reported and only four countries were included to form a total of nine murders.

The rest of the numbers stack up as follows:

174 killings of trans people have been reported in Asia in 16 countries
134 killings of trans people have been reported in North America
104 killings of trans people have been reported in Europe in 15 countries
9 killings of trans people have been reported in Africa in 4 countries
5 killings of trans people have been reported in Oceania in 4 countries.

Most cases of Transgender murders are still not reported as the known numbers are minimums and there are many more cases which are not reported or documented around the world.

Transgender and Intersex Africa would like, once again, to take this opportunity to underscore the challenges transgender and gender non-conforming people in South Africa wakes up to everyday. Townships and rural areas are amongst the most violent of places in South Africa and this is no different for transgender and gender non-conforming people. In a previous Needs assessment by TIA it has shown that 65% out of 120 Trans* people were harassed in some form or another including physical violence. And many of them were afraid to report the matter to police for fear of ridicule or wrongful arrest.

South Africa is still struggling to transform and accept transgender and gender non-conforming people even though legislation states that no person may be discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender or sexual orientation. This is particularly true for the people in the townships and rural areas where transformation is slow to non-existent.

Our calls are once again repeated to all human rights groups and our communities to protect all persons against the gender based violence that are rampant in both our public and private spaces as such violence are on the rise and remains largely unchecked within South Africa.

We once again highlight that discrimination against any individual because of gender identity is totally unacceptable and a violation of their basic human rights. Expression of gender is a right that should be enjoyed by all. Harassment and violence that translate to hate crimes towards trans persons should be investigated and enjoy the full attention of the law and its perpetrators should be brought to justice.

The hate and violence towards trans* people across the world has reached epic proportions and needs to be addressed least we collapse completely as a civilized society. Cis and trans* people alike have a responsibility to each other to root out the unwanted elements within our communities, but without the help of people in power the fraction of people identifying as Transgender and gender non-conforming will remain the target of these elements that threaten all of us.