

Jewish Delegate Assembly of Greater Pittsburgh Policy Statement on LGBT Discrimination

Throughout the world, persons who are identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT) often face pervasive discrimination which sometimes includes state-sanctioned violence and the possibility of execution. Laws that punish people for who they are or are perceived to be creating a deep culture of hatred that can place LGBT people and their allies in grave risk.

Russia, the host of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, imposed a series of draconian restrictions prohibiting positive expressions about LGBT people. The new law coincides with brutal treatment by police of those protesting the restrictions and widespread arrest of activists.

Uganda's laws, made significantly more draconian in late February 2014, criminalize homosexual sex acts, with life sentences imposed for repeat "offenders." Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe has blamed his country's economic problems on LGBT people and has increased political oppression, beating and arresting LGBT citizens. Nigeria passed a law providing a 10-year prison sentence for anyone who promotes gay rights, associates with LGBT organizations, or publically displays their same-sex relationship. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, a conviction for a non-heterosexual sexual activity frequently results in a swift, public execution. In December of 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report detailing hate-motivated bias, torture, detention, discrimination and even death suffered by LGBT people across the world, finding that violence against LGBT people tends to be even more severe than other bias-motivated crimes.

The Jewish Delegate Assembly believes that:

1. Condemning bias and discrimination faced by LGBT people is recognition of the reality that LGBT people worldwide are subject to significant incidences of biased and discriminatory laws and violence, and is not a reflection on Jewish law about homosexual activity.
2. Regardless of religious viewpoints held by citizens of any nation, no LGBT person should be publically condemned, face political retribution, or fear a violent culture of state-induced hatred as a result of their identity, associations or political speech.
3. Congress, the President and the United States Department of State should make protecting LGBT persons from discrimination – an important human rights priority.

The Community Relations Council should:

1. Advocate with members of Congress, the administration, and local Consular officials for the removal of laws that discriminate against members of the LGBT community throughout the world.
2. Educate the community about the plight of persecuted and discriminated LGBT communities and individuals throughout the world.
3. Oppose efforts to promote hatred, oppression and discrimination of LGBT people anywhere.
4. Promote efforts locally, regionally and nationally to encourage teaching of tolerance education