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Iceland called upon the U.S. to strengthen activities and laws aimed at eliminating discrimination in society and other forms of intolerance against minorities and other groups, including based on sexual orientation and gender identity.[1] Belgium recommended that the U.S. [t]ake all possible steps at the state and federal levels to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in credit, education, employment, housing, jury service, public accommodation and taxpayer-funded programmes.[2] Subsequently, France advised the U.S. to [g]uarantee the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and put an end to the discrimination they suffer.[3] Malta further urged the U.S. to [s]trengthen measures to prevent and combat violence, especially the rate of murder of transgender women of colour, as well as the violence experienced by the broader lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.[4]The U.S. accepted these recommendations, citing Executive Order 13988, Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation, which directed federal agencies to develop a plan to fully implement laws that prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination.[5] In January 2025, however, the Trump Administration issued Executive Order 14168, titled Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, stating that the federal government recognizes only two sexes, male and female, and that gender identity does not provide a meaningful basis for identification.[6] The order rescinded the previous administrations Executive Order 13988 and instructed agencies to engage in gender identity discrimination by excluding transgender people from spaces and services inconsistent with their sex assigned at birth.[7]In recent years, at the state and now the federal level, discrimination against LGBTQ+ people has worsened significantly. In 2024, the American Civil Liberties Union tracked 533 bills that it described as anti-LGBTQ+ in the U.S. [8] Although not all of these bills became law, they demonstrate the widespread danger that LGBTQ+ people face.Recent state laws particularly target the rights of transgender people. Alarmingly, many states maintain harsh restrictions on health care for transgender children despite this being a group disproportionately at risk for harm. (The term children is used in the Convention on the Rights of the Child to describe those below the age of eighteen; in this submission youth is at times used to refer more generally to children and young adults.) As of March 2025, twenty-seven states ban some form of gender-affirming health care for transgender children, and six of these states make it a felony crime to provide them with certain forms of medical care that are widely regarded as best practice.[9] Fourteen states explicitly exclude gender-affirming care from their state employee health benefits, and two states passed legislation that explicitly permits private insurers to refuse coverage for gender-affirming care.[10] Restrictive laws extend to educational settings as well. Half of U.S. states ban transgender students from participating in sports that align with their gender identity.[11] In eighteen states, transgender individuals are banned from using bathrooms and other facilities consistent with their gender identity in schools and some public spaces.[12] Seven states require school staff to out transgender students to their families if they learn a student is transgender or a students parent asks for that information.[13] Nine states explicitly censor discussions of LGBTQ+ issues throughout all school curricula, and eight states require advance parental notice of any LGBTQ+ related curricula and allow parents to opt their children out of receiving such classroom instruction.[14]As stated by the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights, the [a]pplication of international human rights law is guided by the fundamental principles of universality, equality, and non-discrimination. All human beings, irrespective of their sexual orientation and gender identity, are entitled to enjoy the protection of international human rights law. [15] This submission relies on the following in its analysis:UN human rights treaties the U.S. has ratified: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),[16] Convention Against Torture (CAT),[17] and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);[18]The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR),[19] the foundational document for the UN human rights system, which the U.S. played a pivotal role in drafting;Three treaties the U.S. has signed although not yet ratified: the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),[20] Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),[21] and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[22]as a signatory, the U.S. has an obligation to refrain, in good faith from acts that would defeat the object and the purpose of the treaty.[23]Laws promoting discrimination against LGBTQ+ people undermine the fundamental human right to equality.[24]Additionally, LGBTQ+ people in the U.S. face intersectional discrimination based on factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status. While LGBTQ+ individuals experience higher rates of homelessness than non-LGBTQ+ individuals, for example, this disparity is particularly pronounced among transgender individuals and LGBTQ+ people of color.[25] One study found that while only three percent of cisgender and genderqueer sexual minority adults had a recent experience with homelessness, that statistic rose to eight percent for transgender adults across all sexual orientations.[26] Racial and ethnic differences were also significant, with six percent of Black sexual minority people experiencing recent homelessness as compared to two percent among their white counterparts.[27] While more than one in five LGBTQ+ adults are living in poverty,[28] these rates increase for transgender people of color. Forty-eight percent of Latinx transgender adults and thirty-nine percent of Black transgender adults are living in poverty.[29] Transgender individuals are particularly at risk of violence. Since 2013, 372 transgender and gender-expansive individuals have been victims of fatal violence in the U.S.,[30] and sixty-one percent of these victims were Black transgender women.[31]Further, discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals exists to an alarming degree against children, with lawmakers failing to protect and sometimes actively targeting these vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community. Despite the obligation of states to respect the rights of all children and protect them from discrimination,[32] lawmakers have isolated transgender children by limiting their health care, freedom of expression, access to information, and access to facilities. These policies are particularly dangerous because LGBTQ+ children are already disproportionally faced with hardships that yield negative effects later in life.[33] Regarding homelessness, for example, LGBTQ+ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth, in part because of family rejection.[34] Even though only ten percent of the general youth population identifies as LGBTQ+, they make up forty percent of the total homeless youth population.[35] Studies show that LGBTQ+ individuals tend to face a higher risk of developing mental health conditions compared to as compared to heterosexual individuals because of an increased exposure to hardships such as child abuse, housing adversity, and intimate partner violence.[36] These mental health conditions are exacerbated by the lack of gender-affirming care in many states.[37]This climate of animosity, fueled in part by discriminatory laws, erodes LGBTQ+ peoples ability to enjoy their rights, impacting every aspect of daily existence, including education,[38] health, and housing.[39] It also threatens the fundamental right to live with dignity that underpins all human rights.[40] As the Human Rights Committee has explained, the right to life is a right that should not be interpreted narrowly. It concerns the entitlement of individuals ... to enjoy a life with dignity.41] Thus, states must take appropriate measures to address the general conditions in society that may give rise to direct threats to life or prevent individuals from enjoying their right to life with dignity. [42]AnalysisEducationBook banning is part of a larger scheme to erase LGBTQ+ people from schools. - Simone Chriss, Director of Transgender Rights Initiative, Southern Legal Counsel [43]You dont need to punish that many teachers to make them afraid. - Trey Walk, Human Rights Watch Researcher [44]Since 2021, states and school districts across the U.S. have enacted bans on educational materials and books addressing gender, sexuality, and race, both in school curricula and in public libraries,[45] as well as prevented classroom discussion on sexual orientation and gender identity.[46] These discriminatory bans and censorship violate the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds,[47] and the right to education,[48] erasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ communities. As the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression has noted, banning of books is an undemocratic practice in any part of the world.[49] The Yogyakarta Principles, which provide expert guidance on the application of international human rights law to sexual orientation and gender identity, further explain that the right to freedom of expression includes the expression of identity or personhood through ... choice of name, or any other means, as well as the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, including with regard to human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity.[50]PEN America reports that a higher percentage of books faced complete bans in the 2023- 2024 school year compared to previous years, with 39% of banned books focusing on LGBTQ+ topics.[51] This censorship actively erases vital resources and representations. Books on topics like transgender identities are no longer available in many libraries.[52] Books with these topics are crucial guides for families and act as a resource for LGBTQ+ individuals.[53] Additionally, government websites have been scrubbing the TQ from LGBTQ+, signaling a larger effort to erase transgender and queer identities from public discourse.[54] This broader coordinated effort functions to push LGBTQ+ identities and issues out of schools and public spaces.[55]Executive Order 14190, Ending Radical Indoctrination in Schools, issued by President Trump in January 2025, directs federal agencies to eliminate funding for schools that incorporate what it calls gender ideology and discriminatory equity ideology, effectively censoring LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula.[56] Additionally, it encourages the prosecution of teachers and school officials who support students in their gender transition, labeling some such actions illegal.[57]Under the Biden Administration, Title IX was interpreted to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity; under new Executive Order 14168, titled Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, however, the current administration has reversed this stance.[58] This executive order also pledges to defund universities that provide key protections for transgender students.[59]At the state level, a flurry of Don't Say LGBTQ+ laws and restrictions in school districts and schools have been sweeping the country that effectively prevent classroom discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity and even the use of transgender students names and pronouns. Many of these laws violate the right to freedom of expression [60] and are inconsistent with the right to education.[61] As of 2025, thirteen states have laws restricting LGBTQ+ topics in schools, with eight states requiring parental notification for LGBTQ+ inclusive instruction, either allowing parents to opt out or requiring them to opt in. Between 2022 and 2025, nine states passed Dont Say LGBTQ+ laws.[62] Additionally, fifteen states have censored discussions on sex-based structural inequality in schools.[63]Moreover, these laws are often coupled with legislation to restrict classroom discussions of race and racism, and a number of states have distorted the teaching of Black history.[64] At the federal level, the current administration has suggested that teaching about concepts of systemic and structural racism, white privilege, and unconscious bias is illegal and has threatened federal funding for schools that engage in discussions of race or racism that the agency determines create a hostile environment based on race for students who participate.[65] ICERD obligates states to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination.[66] Education about historical injustices and education about racism play a critical role in preventing future prejudice and discrimination. While proponents frame these restrictions on teaching and expression in the classroom as an exercise of parental rights, in practice these are discriminatory and censor instruction for all students, even those whose parents might support a more inclusive education, and function to deprive others of their freedom of expression.[67]State and federal restrictions on inclusive education have also limited LGBTQ+ youths access to adequate sexuality education.[68] Comprehensive sexuality education is a necessary factor in building awareness of healthy relationships, sexuality, bodily autonomy, and health care resources.[69] Schools with LGBTQ+-inclusive sexuality education curricula see improvements in mental and sexual health for LGBTQ+ students and in school climate for all students.[70] However, despite public and professional support for comprehensive sexuality education, a 2021 GLSEN national study found only 7.4% of youth received LGBTQ+-inclusive sexuality education.[71] As of 2025, only seven states explicitly require an inclusive curriculum, while thirteen other states curricular standards restrict LGBTQ+ specific topics.[72] The Trump Administrations recent executive orders censoring gender- inclusive curricula[73] actively disincentivize inclusive, comprehensive sexuality education and make it more likely that schools will implement harmful, non-inclusive, abstinence- only curricula.This rollback exacerbates existing disparities by limiting access to medically accurate and inclusive sexuality education, leaving many students without essential knowledge. The lack of inclusive, comprehensive sexuality education curricula exacerbates the negative sexual health outcomes experienced by LGBTQ+ youth, as compared with their non- LGBTQ+ peers.[74] Additionally, exclusive sexuality education promotes a heteronormative environment, fostering homophobic bullying and marginalizing LGBTQ+ youth.[75] Research links homophobic school environments and inadequate sexual health resources to the disproportionately negative mental health outcomes, such as depression and suicidality, faced by LGBTQ+ youth.[76] These issues are even more prevalent among LGBTQ+ youth of color.[77]HealthI can say that if I hadn't sought gender-affirming care, I wouldn't be here now. - Nico Watson, Former Miami Teacher [78][Gender-affirming care bans] will leave us incapable of treating a large number of patients. It never occurred to me when I became a doctor that I would ever, in this country, be forced to withhold care of a treatable condition. - Dr. Sara Danker, Assistant Professor of Surgery, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine [79]U.S. policy at both the federal and state levels has impeded access to critical health care for LGBTQ+ individuals in general and transgender individuals in particular. Denial of gender-affirming care forces incongruence with ones gender identity for individuals with gender dysphoria[80] and implicates the overarching rights to physical and mental integrity,[81] consisting of the rights to privacy,[82] security of person,[83] and freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment,[84] as well as the rights to health[85] and life.[86] Yogyakarta Principle 6, which examines the right to privacy, specifically calls on states to [r]epeal any law. . . that denies to individuals the opportunity to change their bodies as a means of expressing their gender identity.[87]Gender affirming care is considered the gold standard in medical care by numerous health care providers and practitioners. The American Medical Association,[88] American Academy of Pediatrics,[89] American Psychological Association,[90] American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,[91] and World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)[92] have all published guidelines and policy statements on the provision of appropriate gender-affirming care, including care that is essential in treating gender dysphoria.[93] According to one author, more than a dozen studies of more than 30,000 transgender and gender-diverse young people consistently show that access to gender-affirming care is associated with better mental health outcomes.[94] In fact, impeding access to medically necessary treatment to alleviate gender dysphoria is linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality,[95] jeopardizing the right to life.[96]As noted above, within hours of his inauguration, President Trump signed an executive order titled Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.[97] This order recognizes only two sexes male and femalebased on biological characteristics and directs agencies to immediately withdraw federal funding from any entity promoting gender ideology, or the false claim that males can identify as and thus become women and vice versa.[98] Additionally, the order directs federal employees to interpret the terms sex, male, female, women, boys, and girls in line with the orders definitions, and to apply this to all statutes, regulations, or guidance in all other official agency business, documents, and communications.[99] This means that federal documents like passports, social security records, and other government-issued identification now have to change to reflect an individuals sex assigned at birth.[100] Moreover, under the direction of President Trump, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth indefinitely paused all gender-affirming care for transgender active-duty service members,[101] and the Veterans Administration ended such care for veterans.[102]Executive Order 14187, Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation, signed on January 28, 2025, severely restricts access for transgender youth to best practice gender-affirming care.[103] The order calls for heads of federal agencies to immediately take appropriate steps to ensure that institutions receiving Federal research or education grants end support for gender-affirming care for youth.[104] The language of the executive order defines child to mean an individual 19 years old or younger, encompassing some youth who are over 18 years old.[105] The order prohibits the following:[T]he use of puberty blockers, including GnRH agonists and other interventions, to delay the onset or progression of normally timed puberty in an individual who does not identify as his or her sex; the use of sex hormones, such as ... estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone ... and surgical procedures that attempt to transform an individuals physical appearance to align with an identify that differs from his or her sex ...[106]In response to the executive orders, many U.S. hospitals paused gender-affirming care for patients under 19, although the Los Angeles Childrens Hospital and some other facilities subsequently restored that care.[107] The administration has praised health systems in Colorado, Virginia, and other states [that] had paused such services or canceled appointments.[108] The ensuing denial of care and legal confusion around the litany of executive orders signed by President Trump have left LGBTQ+ youth depriv[ed] . . . of necessary medical care solely on the basis of their sex and transgender status.[109] The administrations executive orders have also had a broader chilling effect on critical health information.[110] In response to funding threats, universities and hospitals are defunding or revoking research grants in a proactive manner.[111] The Food and Drug Administrations website has deleted previous summaries of listening sessions with transgender adults and teens aimed at understanding barriers to obtaining healthcare and unmet medical needs.[112]At the state level, twenty-five states ban both gender-affirming medication and surgical care for transgender children, and two states ban gender-affirming surgical care for children. Six of these states make it a felony to provide gender-affirming care to transgender children.[113]In addition to specifically targeting gender-affirming care for transgender individuals, U.S. health care law, policy, and practice impose upon LGBTQ+ people broad systematic barriers to accessing general health care. In one study, 8% of LGBQ individuals reported that a health care provider has refused to see them due to the individuals actual or perceived sexual orientation.[114] Additionally, in that same study, 29% of transgender individuals reported that a health care provider has refused to see them due to their actual or perceived gender identity.[115] Even when not barred from care altogether, many LGBTQ+ individuals experience discrimination and mistreatment when seeking health care. One recent study found that LGBT adults were twice as likely as non-LGBT adults to report having had a negative experience while receiving health care in the past three years, including having a provider ignore a question or request or blame them for a health problem.[116] Moreover, many health care professionals lack adequate training in LGBTQ+ health issues and may be unaware of the unique health risks LGBTQ+ individuals face or hold unconscious biases that affect their treatment decisions.[117]Discrimination that impedes access to health care leads to negative health outcomes for members of the LGBTQ+ community. LGBT adults are more likely than non-LGBT adults to report adverse health consequences due to discrimination or mistreatment by a health care provider.[118] Lack of adequate health care and discrimination contribute to higher rates among LGBTQ+ individuals of mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety, delayed diagnoses, substance abuse, and premature mortality due to suicide, homicide, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and HIV/AIDS-related causes.[119] According to a 2022 survey, 26% of LGBTQ+ individuals avoid medical offices, mental health providers, or hospitals to avoid discrimination.[120] Moreover, a shortage of health care providers, especially in rural areas, means that many LGBTQ+ individuals cannot find alternative care providers after experiencing discrimination.[121] LGBTQ+ patients are also less likely to disclose their identity to providers due to mistrust and fear of discrimination, resulting in a decreased standard of care and lack of education on relevant health issues affecting sexual minority populations.[122]Discrimination in the provision of health care is legally allowed in some states with religious exemption laws. Ten states in the U.S. have targeted religious exemption laws that allow health care providers to discriminate against LGBTQ+ patients based on the providers own religious views.[123] Twenty-eight states have broad religious exemption laws that permit individuals or organizations to seek exemptions from state laws that burden religious belief.[124] Some of these broad exemption laws afford providers an avenue through which they may seek and receive license to discriminate against LGBTQ+ patients.[125] Moreover, the actions of President Trump in his second term have exacerbated the lack of access to health care for LGBTQ+ individuals. In addition to its executive orders targeting transgender individuals, the Trump Administration has rolled back previous expansions to the Affordable Care Act[126] and prohibited programs that receive federal funds from recognizing gender identity other than sex assigned at birth. Following the recent executive orders, federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) removed webpages containing crucial information about LGBTQ+ health.[127] In particular, the CDC removed access to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which previously provided data from studies on LGBTQ+ youth health trends.[128] Health experts have warned that the data, which is now inaccessible, was crucial to providing health care services to LGBTQ+ individuals.[129]HousingMany states are now environments that are hostile for members of LGBTQ+ communities to live in. - Yasemin Smallens, LGBT Rights Program Officer at Human Rights Watch [130]LGBTQ+ individuals in the U.S. face disproportionate housing insecurity and homelessness due to factors including discrimination, exclusion based on gender identity, and economic barriers to the right to adequate housing. [131]A disproportionately high number of unhoused youth identify as LGBTQ+ or gender non- conforming.[132] Youth who identify as LGBTQ+ have been found to have a 120 percent higher risk of reporting homelessness compared to youth who identify as heterosexual and cisgender.[133] According to the Human Rights Campaign, LGBTQ youth comprise up to 40 percent of the total unaccompanied homeless youth population, despite [being] just [5] to 10 percent of the overall youth population.[134] Homelessness in the LGBTQ+ community often begins during youth due to stigma and family rejection. 75% of LGBTQ+ youth surveyed by True Colors United identified parental abandonment and abuse at home, triggered by their LGBTQ+ status, as the reasons for their homelessness.[135]Many transgender individuals face a hostile environment and particular obstacles in securing housing due to federal orders and state laws specifically targeting transgender individuals and a cultural and political narrative that portray[s] transgender people in a dehumanizing or stereotypical light.[136] Utah recently passed legislation that bans transgender students from living in public college dorms consistent with their gender identity.[137] Additionally, structural inequalities like a lack of access to economic resources, diminished educational opportunity, and workplace discrimination often make it harder for transgender people to secure adequate housing, particularly in combination with racial discrimination.[138] According to one study, 51% of Black transgender women and 59% of Native American transgender women have experienced homelessness.[139] The 2022 U.S. Transgender Survey found that 34% of respondents were experiencing poverty, the unemployment rate of respondents was 18%, and that 30% of respondents had experienced homelessness in their lifetime.[140]On his first day in office, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary announced that HUD would stop enforcing the Equal Access Rule, which requires homeless service providers to ensure equal access for individuals based on their gender identity, making it more likely that transgender individuals will be refused services.[141] The agency later included a provision in grant agreements requiring grantees to certify they would not promote gender ideology in line with the Administrations discriminatory Executive Order 14168.[142] Because of the gendered nature of many homelessness services, many are not accessible to unhoused transgender people and transgender survivors. According to Human Rights Watch, many religiously affiliated providers [will] not shelter or counsel people if they are transgender.[143] In one survey of more than 27,000 transgender respondents, 12% of transgender people said they had experienced homelessness because of anti-transgender bias in the past year alone.[144] Six percent of those who experienced homelessness and sought shelter said they were denied access to one or more shelters.[145] Another 26% did not seek shelter in the first place out of fear of being mistreated.[146] Of those who did find shelter, 70% reported a negative experience like harassment, assault, or being forced out of the shelter because they were transgender.[147]RecommendationsGeneralThe U.S. should immediately repeal the executive order, Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.The U.S. should enact comprehensive legislation to expressly prohibit any discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in areas such as education, health care, housing, and public accommodations.States should repeal discriminatory laws targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and should enact comprehensive protections prohibiting discrimination on those grounds.States should enact legislation expressly prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.U.S. governments at both the federal and state level should remove legal barriers to inclusive sexuality education, expand access to LGBTQ+ specific sexual health resources, and align federal and state policy with expert guidance on effective sexuality education programs.EducationThe U.S. should immediately repeal the executive order, Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling.The U.S. should either clarify that Title IXs prohibition against sex discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation or enact new legislation that codifies such protections.The U.S. Department of Education should continue its work investigating complaints of discrimination and rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The U.S. should robustly fund and promote this mechanism.The U.S. should provide resources to incentivize increased access to books and curricula with LGBTQ+ themes and history.States should lift bans on books and classroom instruction with LGBTQ+ themes and prohibit such bans by school districts.States should adopt rights-respecting policies ensuring coverage of LGBTQ+ topics in school curricula.U.S. and state governments should require and ensure resources for inclusive, comprehensive school sexuality education programs.HealthThe U.S. should immediately repeal the executive order, Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation.Through the Office of the Surgeon General or the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. should provide detailed guidance to states on rights-respecting, medical best practice for the provision of gender-affirming care.States should create safeguards that ensure transgender people, including youth, will have access to necessary gender-affirming care.[148] States should rely on the evidence-based, best practice standards for transgender health established by professional organizations such as WPATH in lifting barriers to medically prescribed gender-affirming care.[149]States should amend broad and targeted religious exemption laws to prevent health care providers from using religious exemptions to discriminate against LGBTQ+ patients.The U.S. should strengthen federal protections for health care and insurance for LGBTQ+ individuals as well as strengthen the Affordable Care Act.HousingThe U.S. should increase funding for HUD to address discrimination in housing based on gender identity or sexual orientation.States should implement policies that ensure LGBTQ+ people do not face discrimination in access to shelters, rental housing, or homeownership.Federal, state, and local actors should ensure that LGBTQ+ people have adequate access to shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and other options to alleviate homelessness.Federal and state actors should provide funding for emergency and transitional housing for LGBTQ+ youth and ensure social service providers are adequately trained and culturally competent.Please direct any inquiries to Ryan Thoreson at thoresrn@ucmail.uc.edu.

[1] Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review for the United States, Recommendation 26.140, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/15 (Dec. 15, 2020).[2] Id. Recommendation 26.146.[3] Id. Recommendation 26.147.[4] Id. Recommendation 26.148.[5] Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review for the United States, 6, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/46/15/Add.1 (Mar. 4, 2021); Exec. Order No. 13988, 86 F.R. 7023 (2021).[6] Exec. Order No. 14168, Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, 90 Fed. 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United States Racial Justice LGBT Rights United Nations January 23, 2025 Dispatches June 14, 2018 News Release Within hours of returning to power Monday, United States President Donald Trump issued a stunningly broad executive order that seeks to dismantle crucial protections for transgender people and denies the validity of gender identity itself.The new order withdraws a range of executive orders issued by former President Joe Biden, including those allowing transgender people to serve in the military, advancing the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth, and interpreting federal sex discrimination protections in domains like education, housing, and immigration to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.The order states that the US government will recognize only two sexes, male and female, that are fixed at birth, and orders government agencies to end all reference to and consideration of a persons gender identity. This sweeping redefinition threatens federal programs used by transgender people and impacts federal documentation such as passports, which can currently reflect the gender identity of transgender and nonbinary people.The order also pledges to withhold federal funding from any programs that promote gender ideology, echoing language used by right-wing movements across Europe and Latin America to oppose not only recognition of transgender people but broader sexual and reproductive rights.Worryingly, it instructs agencies to house transgender people in detention according to their sex assigned at birth, putting them at extreme risk of physical and sexual violence, and to withhold gender-affirming care in prisons, which can amount to cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment under international law. The order further instructs the Department of Justice to help agencies reinforce sex-segregated spaces that exclude transgender people, potentially excluding transgender individuals from everyday facilities like bathrooms but also from crucial services like shelters for those facing homelessness and intimate partner violence.Some of the orders provisions will face legal challenges, as they seem to squarely conflict with federal law and judicial precedent. However, the orders scope underscores the administrations intention to erase transgender people from public life and strip them of basic protections.In 2023, the United Nations Human Rights Committee urged the US to address persistently high rates of discrimination and violence against transgender people. Instead, these actions are poised to exacerbate this mistreatment.In this increasingly hostile environment, lawmakers across the political spectrum should reaffirm that transgender people have the right to live free from discrimination and work to enshrine that basic principle into lasting and meaningful protections. Municipal officials in the town of acut, Poland, haveabolished the countrys last remaining LGBT Ideology Free zone, righting more than five years of political assault on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) people across the country.Between 2019 and 2024, while the right-wing Law and Justice party was in power, provinces, towns, and municipalities across Poland adopteddiscriminatory family charters pledging to protect children from moral corruption or declared themselves free from LGBT ideology.Over time, authorities in one-third of the country adopted anti-LGBT resolutions after the Law and Justice ruling party made protecting Poland from LGBT ideologya centerpiece of its successful 2019 electoral campaign. Under the resolutions and charters, regional and local governments were to refrain from encouraging tolerance toward LGBT people and cut funds to organizations promoting nondiscrimination and gender equality.Although legally unenforceable, LGBT activiststold Human Rights Watch the LGBT Ideology Free zones in their attempts to stigmatize, exclude, and indirectly discriminate against LGBT people sent the message that LGBT people were not welcome in these areas. As a gay man in eastern Poland told Human Rights Watch: In 2020, one of my good friends who had never before had an issue with my sexual orientation suddenly accused me of being an ideology.Courts in Poland pushedback against the zones, defending activists rights todocument and critique them. Over time, authorities repealed the zones.The situation in Poland offers a lesson for the region. In recent years, alongside the rise of right-wing populism, there has been manufactured hostility towards the concepts of gender and genderism in Europe, with opponents labeling it gender ideology.Opponents have weaponized undefined gender ideology as a tool to curtail sexual and reproductive rights and LGBT equality by playing on peoples fear of social change and claiming a global conspiracy of great influence and scale.Some observers refer to gender ideology as symbolic glue, or an empty signifier: it simultaneouslymeans nothing and everything, and is consistently used to attack feminism, equality for trans people, the existence of intersex bodies, the elimination of sex stereotyping, family law reform, same-sex marriage, access to abortion, contraception, and comprehensive sexuality education.The removal of Polands last LGBT free zone is reminder of the profound harm such symbolic policies inflict on peoples lives, a lesson that should be heeded across the region and the world. On February 15, Muhsin Hendricks, an openly gay imam, Islamic scholar and LGBT rights activist washot and killed in Gqeberha, South Africa as he was leaving toofficiate an interfaith marriage.Hendricks came out publicly as a gay imam in 1996 and went on to establish a supportnetwork and later a mosque for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) and other marginalized Muslims. He dedicated his life to helping LGBT Muslims reconcile their sexual orientation and gender identity with their faith, amidbacklash from other members of the Islamic faith.Policesaid two unidentified assailants with covered faces fired multiple shots at the vehicle Hendricks was traveling in. CCTV footage circulating on social media seems to show the moment Hendricks was killed as a masked assailant fires multiple shots into the back window of a car before fleeing. While an investigation into his death is ongoing, many believe the attack wastargeted. Concerns have been raised that his killing may have been ahate crime, motivated by his activism for LGBT rights, religious tolerance, and inclusivity in faith. Hendricks family confirmed that he had regularly received deaththreats before his murder.Steve Letsike, Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilitiesstated that the killing must be investigated as a hate crime. In a separatestatement, South Africas Department of Justice and Constitutional Development called for the safeguarding of constitutional values and ensuring a society where no one faces discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, or other identity markers.Despite South Africas progressiveconstitution and legislative framework, including the 2006 Civil UnionAct and the 2023 Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate SpeechAct, LGBT people in the country face highrates of harassment, discrimination, and violence, too often resulting in loss of life.South African authorities should intensify efforts to bridge the gap between legal protections and the realities on the ground. They should conduct a thorough and expedited investigation into Hendricks killing, and in line with the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Act, determine the motive behind the attack, properly classify it, and ensure those responsible are held to account.By addressing this crime with urgency and accountability, authorities could move closer to reaffirming South Africas commitment to equality and the protection of all its residents, including LGBT people. I had no choice but to submit to being Inmate B's prison wife. Out of fear for my life, I submitted to sucking his dick, being fucked in my ass, and performing other duties as a woman, such as making his bed. In all reality, I was his slave, as the Officials of the Arkansas Department of Corrections under the color of law' did absolutely nothing. M.P, Arkansas, pro se federal civil rights complaint filed 8/2/96 Most of the prisoners who rape are spending from 5 to life. And are part of a gang. They pick a loner smaller weaker individual. And make that person into a homosexual then sell him to other inmates or gangs. Anywhere from a pack of cigarettes to 2 cartons . . . . No one cares about you or anyone else. If they show

kindness or are trying to be helpful, it is only because they want something. And if there offering you protection you can guarantee that there going to seek sexual favors. . . . When an inmate comes in for the first time and doesnt know anyone. The clicks and gangs. Watch him like Wolves readying there attacks. They see if he spends time alone, who he eats with. Its like the Wild Kingdom. Then they start playing with him, checking the new guy out. (They call him fresh meat.) J.G., Minnesota, 8/8/96 I've been sentenced for a D.U.I. offense. My 3rd one. When I first came to prison, I had no idea what to expect. Certainly none of this. I'm a tall white male, who unfortunately has a small amount of feminine characteristics. And very shy. These characteristics have got me raped so many times I have no more feelings physically. I have been raped by up to 5 black men and two white men at a time. I've had knifes at my head and throat. I had fought and been beat so hard that I didn't ever think I'd see straight again. One time when I refused to enter a cell, I was brutally attacked by staff and taken to segragation though I had only wanted to prevent the same and worse by not locking up with my cell mate. There is no supervision after lockdown. I was given a conduct report. I explained to the hearing officer what the issue was. He told me that off the record, He suggests I find a man I would/could willingly have sex with to prevent these things from happening. I've requested protective custody only to be denied. It is not available here. He also said there was no where to run to, and it would be best for me to accept things . . . . I probably have AIDS now. I have great difficulty raising food to my mouth from shaking after nightmares or thinking to hard on all this. . . . I've laid down without physical fight to be sodomized. To prevent so much damage in struggles, ripping and tearing. Though in not fighting, it caused my heart and spirit to be raped as well. Something I don't know if I'll ever forgive myself for. A.H., Indiana, 8/30/96 If a person is timid or shy or as prison inmates term him "Weak," either mentally or physically, he stands to be a victim of physical and/or sexual assault. R.B., Colorado, 9/1/96 I am giving you a breif description of the incient's i have suffered from while I've been in this institution. To begin with on Aug 1, 1996 Approx: 12:30 pm i was housed in E building i went to the officials on duty about a problem i was having with two (2) inmate's but it was disreguard. Than around and about Aug 16, 1996 i was sexual assaulted by the same two (2) inmate's. I was then taking to the medical department in cristeanna hospital for treatment. It's a big Rumor that one inmate has Aid's. T.A., Delaware, 9/2/96 Inmates confined for sexual offenses, especially those against juvenile victims, are at the bottom of the pecking order and consequentially most often victimized. Because of their crime, the general population justifies using their weakness by labling rape "just punishment" for their crime. Sexual offenders are the number one target group for prisoner rape. Inmates who come to prison at an early age are the second target group. Being younger, more physically attractive, and less likely to be infected with H.I.V., this group "needs to learn not to come back to prison a second time." Obviously this is a poor justification for rape, but in the prison social structure any excuse will do. L.V., Arkansas, 9/3/96 I hate to say this but if you weren't racist when you came to prison more than likely you will be when you leave. In Texas prisons race is the main issue and until people wake up and realize that nothing will change! T.B., Texas, 9/3/96 I was raped in prison from Feb 1991 through Nov 1991. From that it left me HIV positive. K.S., Arkansas, 9/4/96 I have been sexually assaulted twice since being incarcerated. Both times the staff refused to do anything except to lock me up and make accusations that I'm homosexual and that if I pursue legal action they'd ship me and both times they did. J.G., Florida, 9/4/96 What is more prevalent at TCIP (which, by the way, is a medium security, rural institution) is best called "coercion." I suppose you have an idea what these engagements entail. The victim is usually tricked into owing a favor. Here this is usually drugs, with the perpetrator seeming to be, to the victim, a really swell fellow and all. Soon, however, the victim is asked to repay all those joints or licks of doperight away. Of course he has no drugs or money, and the only alternative is sexual favors. Once a prisoner is "turned-out," it's pretty much a done deal. I guess a good many victims just want to do their time and not risk any trouble, so they submit. . . . The coercion-type abuses continue because of their covert nature. From the way such attacks manifest, it can seem to others, administrators and prisoners, that the victims are just homosexual to begin with. Why else would they allow such a thing to happen, people might ask. J.S., Tennessee, 9/5/96 I was young and yes i was weak. My weight was only 120 lbs, the first few months i was raped and beat up many times, i would always Fight back, i wanted my attackers to know i was not a Willing Subject for their evilness. I went to the Guards for help and was told there was nothing that could be done, that i would have to stand up like a Man and Take Care of my own troubles. B.L, Florida, 9/5/96 Some prison rapists are so ignorant or delusional, they imagine the rape victim to be the homosexualbecause he's doing the taking, not dishing it out (he's gay! he's performing a homosexual act!) J.J., California, 9/6/96 The rapes seem to be for two main reasons. 1. They hurt, someone must pay. 2. Being deprived of consensual sex, and self-centered, any hole will do. Power, control, revenge, seem to top the "reasons" for rape. The person assaulted is either seen as weaker, or gang banged if seen as stuck up kind of person. You know, refuses to swear, actually admits he is guilty, is seeking help etc. . . . I have yet to hear of an inmate being charged in court with sexual assault of an inmate. Have you? If just one was found guilty, got more time, things would change. D.A., Nebraska, 9/6/96 On January 27, 1993, I was forcefully raped! I was held down while at least 3 black inmates had anal intercourse using my rectum as their sexual pleasure release! From that day on, I was classified as a homosexual and was sold from one inmate to the next. I was sold for a $2.25 bag of coffee! . . . Blacks tend to rape the white inmates and force themselves on weaker inmates! I am one of the weaker inmates! J.D., Texas, 9/6/96 Most guys raped are guys for there first time locked up, between the ages 18-30 that looks young, not strong, looks lonely, scared. Guys watch these things. M.F., Ohio, 9/6/96 A lot of guys don't say anything about what happens to them, because they got to live there. What if they told, what could happen to them . . . I know you think they should tell what happens to them. But until you put yourself in there shoes you don't know what you do. Some prisons are hard. Fights, killings, ect. everyday. One thing guys don't like is guys who tell on others. What are your chances if you told on someone? M.F., Ohio, 9/6/96 I'm in protective custody have been since Feb of 95. My rape is known thru out the system as everyone know the person who did it likes to brag so its unsafe for me to be in population as now I'm a snitch, homo and my safety would be in jeopardy. R.G., Delaware, 9/6/96 When a man gets raped nobody gives a damn. Even the officers laugh about it. I bet he's going to be walking with a limp ha ha ha. I've heard them. J.G., Minnesota, 9/7/96 Most often the victom who reports a rape is again victomized by officials who write this inmate victom a disciplinary report of propaganda; officials do this in order to avoid law suits resulting from the rapes. E.R., Iowa, 9/9/96 When a man finally gets his victim, he protects him from everyone else, buys him anything, the victim washes his clothes, his cell, etc. In return, the entire prison knows that this guy has a "BITCH" or "girl." This gives power to the aggressors ego. In here, the egos multiply a lot more than in society. Now I've seen this happen many many times. The response from the guards is "the strong survive," "who cares," or they join in on the teasing, tourmenting, etc. R.L., New York, 9/9/96 I've seen inmates attacked by two or three men at a time and forced to the floor, while two or three hold him down, the fourth man slaps vaseline on his rectum and rapes him. I knew two men who hung themselves after this. R.L., New York, 9/9/96 The more time a man has, the more respect he gets, the more he is feared, the more the guards ignore his misbehavior and let him do what he wants, including rape! The mentality of a lot of guards is that it's only a convicted felon screwing another, so who cares? R.L., New York, 9/9/96 The DOC covers their actions under the guise of security and the state court wears blinders. J.G., Florida, 9/9/96 I didn't want to tell on the inmates who raped me because I didn't want to be killed. If I had told on the inmates, They would have gotten me in another part of the Prison. Even Protective Custody Facility. R.H., Utah, 9/10/96 Why prison sexual assault occurs: Part of it is revenge against what the non-white prisoners call, "The White Man," meaning authority and the justice system. A common comment is, "ya'll may run it out there, but this is our world!" More of it I think is the assaulters own insecurities and them trying to gain some respect in their peer group by showing that they "are a man." This subculture is concerned with appearances, and the more imposing an appearance, the more respect you command. Some of the guys I rode with didnt want any sex or $. They just wanted the status of having a "Kid." Naturally, I liked them best. S.H., Texas, 9/10/96 I was "rented out" for sexual favors, and a lot of the guys who rented me are not rapists, or assaulted as children, or any other stereotypical model. They just wanted some sexual satisfaction, even though they knew I was not deriving pleasure from it, and was there only because I was forced to. . . . I was with the Valluco (Valley) crowd, so I was only passed around to them for free. D. Town Hispanics had to pay. They were charged $3 for a blow-job, $5 for anal sex. S.H., Texas, 9/10/96 I had an officer tell me that "faggots like to suck dick, so why was I complaining." You and I realize that non-consensual sex is rape, regardlessa leap in thinking not possible for prison officials. S.H., Texas, 9/10/96 Defendant J.M, a security officer with the rank of sargeant, came to investigate the series of latest allegations. Defendant J.M. refused to interview the inmate witnesses and told plaintiff that he was lying about being sexually abused. After plaintiff vehemently protested that he was being truthful, defendant J.M. made comments that plaintiff "must be gay" for "letting them make you suck dick." S.H., Texas, 9/10/96 (legal papers) [When I was sent to prison,] I was just barely 18 years of age, about 90 pounds. I did nine years from March 1983 to November 1991. In that 9 years I was raped several times. I never told on anyone for it, but did ask the officer for protective custody. But I was just sent to another part of the prison. Than raped again. Sent to another part of the prison. Etc. This went on for 9 years. I didn't want to tell on the inmates who raped me because I didn't want to be killed. . . . I came back to prison in 1993. In 1994 I was raped again. I attempted suicide. . . . The doctors here in the prison say "quote" major depression multiple neurotic symptoms, marked by excessive fear, unrelenting worry and debilitating anxiety. Antisocial suicidal ideation, self-degradation, paranoia and hopelessness are characteristic, "unquote." R.H., Utah, 9/10/96 [With coercive sex], one inmate will sidle up to another inmate and try to play on the inmate's emotions, as well as befriend him; this inmate usually being a "first-timer" who is quiet and reserved and without any established friends yet . . . . Eventually the weaker inmate is compelled to perform masturbation on the domineering inmate, or at first to pose nude before the domineering inmate while he masturbates. . . . Once the weaker inmate is hooked, the domineering inmate will share the details of his conquest with his buddies and then the weaker inmate finds himself dealing with more and more inmates vying for his services. By this time, the weaker inmate has had his self-esteem so lowered that he no longer cares and becomes a sexual substitute for whomever needs him. P.S., Texas, 9/10/96 I found out how people earn respect in here, you have to beat someone or shank them. J.G., Minnesota, 9/12/96 It's either rape or be raped and the racial tension doesn't help any. W.M., Texas, 9/13/96 Officers can't do anything unless an inmate say's something. If an inmate does, not only is that a sure sign of weakness, but a weak snitch to boot. Not worthy of living. W.M., Texas, 9/13/96 [You have to fight to be safe.] To give you an idea what I mean . . . I now have scar's where I've been gutted, under the right side of my chest below my heart, where my neck was cut open and under my left arm. That's not the many minor cuts and wound's can't include in this letter because of lack of times & space. People start to treat you right once you become deadly. W.M., Texas, 9/13/96 It's fixed where if you're raped, the only way you [can escape being a punk is if] you rape someone else. Yes I know that's fully screwed, but that's how your head is twisted. After it's over you may be disgusted with yourself, but you realize you're not powerless and that you can deliver as well as receive pain. Then it's up to you to decide whether you enjoy it or not. Most do, I don't. It's sick and depraved. It's also depressing when one of these boy's (another name for turn out), come up to you for protection because they know you won't hurt them as much because you've been through it & they don't have the nuts to break out themselves even when you tell them how. W.M., Texas, 9/13/96 My celly tried to rape me with a knife for a weapon, we fought and I got the knife and stabbed him to fight him off, I was charged with attempted murder and felonious assault and taken to trial, found guilty and received 12 to 15 years. The system feels that justice was done. L.L., Ohio, 9/14/96 What is needed in prison is one man cells, one man showers and for the officials to prosecute attackers instead of just locking them up in the hole. L.L., Ohio, 9/14/96 While serving my sentence at a former institution, I was severely beaten and gang raped, both orally and anally, by six black inmates . . . . It started by inmate [A] coming by my cell and waking me up at approximately 4:00 a.m. He said he wanted to come in and watch television with me. I said, "No, I'm trying to sleep." He said he's going to the booth and get my door open. I saw him go to the booth and told the booth officer to open my cell door . . . My cell door was not authorized to be opened. By this time, I had turned on my overhead light and heard inmate [A] say to [the officer], "Open #222, so I can get his laundry." I didn't think nothing of it because we've had no prior problems before. I did think it was odd though. So he came in and sat on my bed . . . . About 5 to 10 minutes after that, inmate [B], [C], and [D] came into my cell. Then inmate [D] said, "We want some ass." I said, "I don't think so, I don't play that shit." When he said this, I said to myself, "Oh no! I'm in trouble!" I looked toward the door for an escape route finding it blocked, I went into myself to prepare for the worst. Inmate [D] then said, "Either give it to Jesus or give it up." . . . . It was at this time that the floor officer came by on the bottom tier (I was on the top tier), doing or supposedly doing, his rounds. He noticed the inmates in my cell and asked if everything was all right. Too terrified to answer, I just nodded. [The officer] never came to the top tier during his round. I was then directed back to my bed. Inmate [B] then stood in front of me and pulled out his penis and forced it into my mouth. Inmate [C] then turn his turn. Pulling me to my feet, he then took my boxers off, bent me over and forced his penis inside. Inmate [D] laid on the bed, took my head and forced himself inside my mouth [All four of them, plus one more] took turns anally and orally raping me at the same time. All of them repeatedly did this. Somewhere in the middle of this, inmate [F] entered . . . . [D]uring the rape, I believe it was him that said "suck this dick you white bitch.". . . . [One said:] "If you snitch on us, we'll kill you!!" The other said, "And if you do and you get transferred, you'll still die." At that time, I really believed them, and I still think this today. R.D, Virginia, 9/16/96 I remember after he left, the sun was rising, I was standing there in total shock. My body and my mind was numb. I didn't know what to do, so I just sat down on the commode and let what they ejaculated in me come out. After everything was out, I cleaned myself again. As I got up, I noticed the water in the commode was red. I washed myself again, put on all my clothes, got under the covers. The fear went on a rampage in my mind, shutting down my whole system. For the rest of the day I was like this. I do remember wanting to kill them or either myself . . . . I cannot fully state to you now the actual feelings of guilt or shame I felt at the time. In retrospect, I feel now that there was more I could have done and my mindset now is one of tremendous speculation. But, it all comes down to feelings of being inadequate in the defense of myself. R.D, Virginia, 9/16/96 I am a first-time non-violent offender, and committed a white-collar offense . . . . In September, 1994, during the week of Labor Day, I was accosted and raped in the shower . . . . While the entire incident did not last more than a few minutes, it seemed like an eternity. I was certain that I had indeed been sentenced to Hell. I was left badly bruised and crying, with a pretty hopeless outlook on the whole situation. There was no guard to be found, and so I was left to fend for myself. R.S., West Virginia, 9/16/96 Prison rapes occur for a number of reasons. One such reason is the insecure, weak inmate preying on another weaker inmate, to make an impression of toughness or ruthlessness that he hopes will discourage other inmates from doing the same thing to him . . . . The main reason why sexual assaults occur is because prison officials and staff promote them. It's their method of sacrificing the weak inmates to achieve and maintain control of the stronger aggressive or violent inmates. W.F., Missouri, 9/21/96 [I] was sent to the orientation block to be cellmate with another prisoner already occupying a double cell. I did not know at the time that I was to share a double cell with him, that he was a known rapist in the prison . . . . I must point out that only a month and a half prior, he was accused of raping another man. On my fourth day of sharing the cell, I was ambushed and viciously raped by him. After being raped, I remained in shock and paralized in thought for two days until I was able to muster the courage to report it, this, the most dreadful and horrifying experience of my life. B.J., Connecticut, 9/23/96 I have long Blond hair and I weigh about 144 lbs. I am a free-world homosexual that looks and acts like a female . . . . In 1992 I came to this Unit and was put into population. There was so many gangs and violence that I had know choice but to hook up with someone that could make them give me a little respect. Well after a few days I guess he figured it was more problems than it was worth and decided to give in, "to them." A Black guy paid an officer two cartons of "Kools" to write me up so I could be moved to his block with him. Well they did just that. Money will buy anything here and I mean anything . . . . All open Homosexuals are preyed upon and if they don't choose up they get chosen. M.P., Arkansas, 9/24/96 When a new inmate enters an open barracks prison it triggers a sort of competition among the convicts as to who will seduce and subjugate that new arrival. Subjugation is mental, physical, financial, and sexual. Every new arrival is a potential victim. Unless the new arrival is strong, ugly, and efficient at violence, they are subject to get seduced, coerced, or raped . . . Psychosocially, emotionally, and physically the most dangerous and traumatic place I can conceive of is the open barracks prison when first viewed by a new inmate. L.V., Arkansas, 9/25/96 I was too embarrassed to tell the [corrections officers] what had happened [that I had been raped] . . . . The government acts as if a "man" is supposed to come right out and boldly say "I've been raped." You know that if it is degrading for a woman, how much more for a man. R.B., Kansas, 9/28/96 The guys who perform/promote these assaults are the "tough-guy" sorts. . . . [T]hese guys commit these attacks for power & control, not for the sex although they are highly interested in sex. For many (most?) of these guys, it's a "badge of honor" for them, when they can abuse a "child molester" (especially sexually) and run them into p.c. (protective custody). . . . Self-esteem is a valuable commodity, in this environment, since a pronounced lack of it is a common factor among criminals. . . . By "stealing power" from others, these individuals are able to feel superior which boosts their self-esteem. M.S., Nevada, 9/28/96 Prison officials seem to prefer the "slap on the wrist" in-house disciplinary approach over referring criminal charges against the perpetrators [of rape]. When pressed, they generally claim that this practice is to "protect the victim" (from an ugly court scene), but I believe it's to protect the prison from having to admit the problem exists. M.S., Nevada, 9/28/96 When I was sentenced I didn't hear the part of sentencing that stated, "you are hereby sentenced to six years of hard labor to the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice. While there, you will be beaten daily, savagely raped, and tortured, mentally, to the point of contemplating suicide." L.O., Texas, 9/29/96 Young men and male of small frame structure is being beaten and raped as well as gay inmates by inmates of bigger size and gang members. R.G., California, 10/1/96 My abuse started in the county jail where I was raped by four inmates . . . . When I was sent to prison I informed them that I have been raped by gang member and was on medication. . . . Still I was being asked for sex and tolded that I would have to given over myself one way or another; at this point (looking back on the matter) I can see that I was going through a brake down mentally. Anyway that night I've made of my mind that I was taking my life for it seem as if that was the only way out of that Hell. So the sleeping medication that they was giving me, I save for 8 days which came to 800 MG and I took them. I was taken to the medical center where I stayed for 18 days. Every so often 5 or 6 Doctors would come into that room and look at me talking to their self. They would ask me how I feel and say no more. This one Doctor tolded me that they was going to put me back on the same yard. I told him if they do, I would take my life. He than said that he don't give a dam. I just hung my head low and cryed. R.G, California, 10/1/96 There is no safety for gays, young men, first timers and men of small built. The most rapes that happen are with the prison gangs. Young men and first timer's believe that they must join prison gangs for fear of safty of their lives. . . . It seem that young men and gays and first timmers are used as sacrificial lamb. The reason is to use these men as a way to keep the gangs and killers from turning on the system which created prison the Hell that it is. These young men, these gays, these first timers are turning into everything their abusers are. R.G., California, 10/1/96 On 10-12-93 I was assined to [a prison unit] in Abilene Texas and sense I have been on the unit I have been bete up on and sexually assaulted. It all started a week after I got to the unit. I was confronted by inmate [F] and at that time inmate [J] come up and sed that I am going to do him a faver or I will not walk out of my cell block and that was on 10-19-93. And by the time 1994 came around I had been bete up sevrule times and had been raped 2 times by the two inmates. One 5-26-94 I got assallted by a unnown inmate and have been sexually abuesd by a number of unnown inmates seens I have been on this unit. I have told the unit werdon and a number of the officers on the unit and have not got the proper proteshone that I need and the unit classification have denide me transfer to a safe keeping unit a number of times. D.M., Texas, 10/1/96 I was dehumanzied by the lack of empathy prison officials have towards victims of sexual assault, potential victims, inmates safety in general. Inmates are looked at and treated as subhuman across the board. If an incident can be covered it will be. If it can be ignored it will be. K.J., Georgia, 10/2/96 Upon my arrival to prison, my being small, white, some what feminine and niave to the Big City and prison ways, made me appear as an easy mark as a victim. A victim for extortion, robbery and/or sexual assault. I survived the attacks only because I fought several times. The fighting led the preditors to believe that I wasn't an easy mark and there was easier prey to attack. I wish my tale ended there but it doesn't. After witnessing bigger stronger guys who had also fought back, be brutally attacked by more than one inmate and sexually assaulted, I was over-come with fear. The constant fear of being jumped by three or four guys and brutally beaten until I willingly let them sexually assault me, or was forced to endure a sexual assault, was too much for me. Wondering if I was next dominated my waking hours. I began to think of ways to escape the preditors. I chose to manipulate the psychiatric department into transferring me to a prison psychiatric hospital. I thought that I had escaped the threat of rape, but I was wrong. Another patient there in the same dorm as me said he liked me and wanted to have sex with me. It was everywhere and escape seemed utterly hopeless. I was tired of living in fear and gave in to his demands. I let him use me and my body as if I were a real woman for his personal sexual gratification. Both oral and anal sex repeatedly for hours. I was returned to the same prison I had fled from. Within 30 days I escaped from prison, the fear of being humiliated and treated as a sexual slave was too much and greater than the fear of being shot or prosecuted. . . . . My lawyer said that I had the best duress defense he'd ever seen. After beating the DOC's attempt to prosecute me for escape, they enacted their vengeance. Having just turned 19 years old, they transfered me to Jackson prison. "The World's Largest Walled Prison" known for its stabbings and sexual attacks on young white males. The memory I have of my arrival is yells, mating calls and whistling at me as I walked to my cell at 2:30 am. When in one 24 hr. period I received over a hundred notes asking who was my man, or threatening me, and more verbal threats, I attempted suicide by cutting my wrist; the only escape I could envision. When that failed the next man to approach me found me hopeless and depressed and I simply no longer cared about what happened to me. He claimed me as his property and I didnt dispute it. I became obedient, telling myself at least I was surviving. . . . He publicly humiliated and degraded me, making sure all the inmates and gaurds knew that I was a queen and his property. Within a week he was pimping me out to other inmates at $3.00 a man. This state of existence continued for two months until he sold me for $25.00 to another black male who purchased me to be his wife. It was another thirty days before an attorney was able to force the DOC to transfer me to another prison. Word quickly spread of my activities at Jackson. That was the setting for the rest of my five yr. sentence. Though I was lucky, the rest was spent with only two men, and not hundreds of men. E.S., Mississippi, 10/4/96 Often the victim will be tied up on a bed, face down and sold until the debt is finished or until the novelty is gone. C.M., Illinois, 10/8/96 I really don't think that male on male rape is primarily a sexual thing. It is probably more of a power thing by which one person can maintain absolute control over another, or use the other to settle some financial responsibility. C.M., Illinois, 10/8/96 As I told you in my last letter I was sexually assulted when I was let out of adminstrative segregation July 17/96 and it got around pretty quick that I was a "turnout" they all knew. But the dude I was riding with he protected me as long as I did sexual favors for him. But he left. So no one was there to stop this inmate from falling in my house. When he gets there he first demands money I have none so he takes my radio and headphones. He sends them to his house see he's out of place he is not supposed to be in my cell but I cant tell for fear of the other inmates. So I just stay on my bunk. Oh and we are on lock down so we only shower 3 times a week. He came in my cell Friday so he wont have a chance to go back to his cell until Monday so I just try and stay away from him. On Saturday about 10 or 11 AM he tells me that he wants a blow job or he wants to have sex with me. Now I dont know why but I refused I said please dont so he hits me 3 times in my face and upper body I come down off the top bunk to try and defend my self but before I have a chance he pulls out a knife on me! When I reach for his wrist to try and get the knife I get cut but not to bad. But I do manage to get the knife away from him. I dont remember cutting him as many times as he was cut. But I took his own knife and I defended my self. He was cut a few times got a bunch of stitches: I then layed the weapon on the ground he picked it up and threw it out of the cell. I then started yelling for the Guards. Now even though I was in my cell and he wasn't supposed to be there he was out of place even though I was cut and he admitted possion of the weapon and even though he admitted that he came in my cell to do me harm I was still given a major case "which fucks off chance of parole for me for a long time." I was still put in solitary for segregation for 15 days. Now on 10/8/96 I was put in administrative segregation for assult with a weapon I dont even know when I'll get out plus they might file a free world charge on me so that I get more time. I tryed to tell them it was self defence and that I need protective custody but they wouldnt listen. I dont know what I'll do if Im charged cause I'll have to plea bargin I'd be to scared to take it to trial for fear of losing. Those people dont care about what happens in here and if I lose I'd get more time than if I plea bargined and alls I can do is hope for the best. T.B., Texas, 10/8/96 I didn't know how the prison system work, so this inmate come up to the A & O unit and gives me three packs of cigarettes, I didn't know where they came from, or why they was given to me, I took the cigarettes, two weeks later I was placed in population, and here come this big old guy name [M], telling me that I belong to him because he had bought me, and had the same guy there who had brought me the cigarettes to verify it. C.D., Indiana, 10/8/96 I know you don't want to hear this but it is prison officials, jail officials that causes men to be fucked in prison. . . . [P]rison officials approve of men getting fucked in prison and to attack it at the prisoners level, you are fighting a losing battle, start with prison officials, people in authority, they are the one that causes people to get fucked against their will. C.D., Indiana, 10/8/96 I have seen or heard of rapes on a weekly basis at the least. Mostly it is a daily occurrence. Rapes are a very common occurrence due to the fact of coercion being "played" on ignorant first timers. Once someone is violated sexually and there is no consequences on the perpetrators, that person who was violated then becomes a mark or marked. That means he's fair game. M.B., Indiana, 10/10/96 As I go back to the time I was attacked, I was only about 145 lbs, white, blue eyed and smoothed skin. I was about 5' 10" and very disliking of crowds. It was about 1 pm or 1:30 pm before showers. 2 black males (gang related) ran into my cell, one very large and the other more my size. I was hit, and put face down on the mattress. A knee in my back and a pillow case under my chin (like a horse bridle), being weaker made me vulnerable to be taken advantage of (note: this paragraph is not detailed action for action but only a brief take). Being scared I was too much in a trance to go to the unranked officers because many at the time were promoters of the non-survival of the weak. . . . I feel that maybe some women might look at me as less than a man. My pride feels beaten to a pulp. E.R., Texas, 10/10/96. Someone with a slower mental process or lower I.Q. usually gets tricked into sexual devastation in some decivious way and the officers look the other way or leave, as Texas stays understaffed for that reason so an officer can just walk off and never see a thing. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 At least 90% of assaults are not even reported to staff. Occasionally the victim is a person who could fight off one inmate but there is a bet between groups or gangs to make him a "bitch," and the bettor will get a few of his home boys and go assault him. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 Smaller, weaker, meeker individuals are usually targets. Meeker individuals tend to "act Gay" is how it's described here and in turn invites assault through the agressors mind. A new inmate needs to come into the system ready to fight and with a strong mind. He will be approached by a bigger guy who will let him know he's going to "fight, fuck or pay protection." . . . . He will offer the new comer wire (for a radio antena) coffee or something so the new comer will come back and the subject will come up every time the new comer comes around and before long the new comer wants to know what the deal is. They go to a job or fall off in a cell agree to be easy, keep it between them, just do each other, ect. When the dude get's the new comer it's over and the dude will tell the new comer he'll take care of him or he'll tell everybody he's just a little bitch . . . . Should the new comer seek assistance of staff, staff just laughs at him, the physic department just says what do you want me to do. It's a no win situation and frustration often leads them to keep up the practice. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 Another game is to get an inmate indebted to an inmate give them a week to have your money when they don't it automatically doubles. Then the next week you take it out in trade. Even if the new comer has someone out there that will send the money, by the time they write and the money is sent and posted it's too late anyway. This way some will fight some will feel obligated. [The games] are endless but ever so real. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 I have been on 3 units on one of the units I have been on, you heard of rapes just about daily on the other 2 though maybe you heard of rape once a month maybe. The units with the younger offenders seem to carry by far the higher rates of sexual assaults. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 Texas does not pay inmates. Some inmates sell there bodies just for basics like toothpaste, soap, shampoo, tooth brush, deoderant, things others take for granted. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 On the younger units I would say you have a rape at least weekly. From the people I have known in my 10 years I would say about 50% have been forced to hook up with someone not necessarily for protection but due to survival having necessities or attention. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 I would say the bigger prisons allow more rape because of understaffing and the prisons with the younger offenders, not necessarily maximum security. R.B., Texas, 10/13/96 Even after the gang rape I endured, I was still poorly classified and two violent inmates with a record of violence threatened to sexually assault me and take my store goods. I tried to fight back, which resulted in my jaw being broke in 3 places. K.J., Georgia, 10/13/96 The man who is responsible for my rape has a history of this type of behaviour. He usually preys on young white kids. His method of approach is lending smokes and drugs to get them in debt and then asks to be repaid. When the person can't pay he offers to let them have sex, and when they say no, he rapes them. I don't know why I was a victim I owed him nothing neither did I associate with him. Did I turn him on? I porbably did, since I was 23 years old at that . . . as they say in prison--a sweet pretty young thing. My rape is known throughout the prison system as everyone knows the person who did it and likes to brag about it, so its unsafe for me to be in population as now I am a snitch, a homo and my safety is in jeapordy. R.G., Delaware, 10/17/96 Another type of coerced sex is for the dominant party to first let the intended victim know that he wants to have sex with him, then begin to wear the victim down by constantly leering at him in ways that let the victim know what's on his mind. Psychologically the victim eventually begins to believe he is a homosexual and no longer resists. It's similar to how a sexual abuse victim, afterward, begins to believe there is something wrong with them that caused the abuse to happen, which causes them to accept part of the responsibility for their abuse. P.S., Texas, 10/17/96 Being raped in prison is degrading and humiliating. It tags you as belonging to the inmate who raped you. One must never talk openly about being raped for fear of being severely beaten or killed. M.G., Oklahoma, 10/19/96 When a person come to prison, if they see fear in their face, or anywhere, they will be easy prey. M.O., Illinois, 10/20/96 While I was being uncuffed at the rec door by Officer W. he made the comment that faggots are sickening and disgusting. . . . Inmates see this type of behavior as approval to beat, rape and extort gay men in prison because of the anomosity and hateful attitudes displayed by the state. A.H., Indiana, 10/27/96 (offender grievance, denied 10/30/96, with response that "Officer W. states that he at no time mentioned the word fagget") On 10-21-96 Officer G. came to get me from rec. . . . He had the leash wrapped around my waist, then yanked on it spinning me around. Telling me "move fag." I asked him what the hell was his problem. He shoved me and then yanked on the leash several times in the course of escorting me to my cell. Then pulled out the mace as though he were to spray me. He continued calling me a faggot dick sucker throughout this process. Officer M. witnessed this. . . . I have suffered from a lot of abuse in this prison including my rape to this kind of abuse from staff. I am sick of this treatment. A.H., Indiana, 10/21/96 (grievance filed, denied with response: "WRONG FORM") Older men who have been in here for a long time like Young men because they are more healthy, better looking, and more inexperienced. The older men like the "power" they have over their victims. A Younger man is scared, nervous, shy, etc. He doesn't know what to do, so he freezes, get's very quiet, and allows himself to be victimized. R.L., New York, 10/21/96 The guards just turn their backs. Their mentality is the tougher, colder, and more cruel and inhuman a place is, the less chance a person will return. This is not true. The more negative experiences a person goes through, the more he turns into a violent, cruel, mean, heartless individual, I know this to be a fact. R.L., New York, 10/21/96 Transexuals and homosexuals are for the most part viewed as weak. One step up from rapist on the social ladder. Usually considered the property of another inmate. In prison, male on male sexual relations are viewed differently then those of free-society. The aggressive person (male role) isn't considered a homosexual, or bisexual. He's thought of as heterosexual. Only the passive (female role) is considered homosexual or bisexual. E.S., Mississippi, 10/21/96 To begin let me tell you a little about myself. I am 32 yrs of age, I'm an American of African decent. I'm currently serving a 5 yr sentence for trafficking in stolen property . . . . I feel I should also add because it has bearing on some of the observations I'll share with you, I'm gay and have been since I was aware of my sexuality . . . . Let me say I believe there are different levels or kinds of rape in prison. First, there is what I will refer to as "Bodily Force Rape" for lack of a better term. This is the kind of assault where one or more individuals attack another individual and by beating and subduing him force sex either anal or oral on him. Second there is what I'll call Rape By Threat. An example of this would be, when an individual tells a weaker individual that in order to avoid being assulted by the individual who's speaking he must submit to his demand for sex. Third and by far the most common is what I'll call using a persons fears of his situation to convince him to submit to sex. I will give you my observations on all these types of assault shortly; but first I feel I should tell you the people most at risk. And they are white males usualy slight of build and physicaly atractive, between 17-25 yrs of age. Please note although other ethnic groups such as young blacks and Hispanics have sufferd these indignities it happens to them far far less often than to young whites . . . . . The last form of "rape," using a persons fear against him. Among inmates there is a debate wheather this is in fact rape at all. In my opinion it is in fact rape. Let me give you an example of what happens and you decide. Example: A new inmate arrives. He has no funds for the things he needs such as soap, junk food, and drugs (there are a great deal of drugs in prisons). Someone befriends him and tells him if he needs anything come to him. The new arrival is some times aware, but most times not, that what he is receiving has a 100% interest rate that is compounded weekly. When the N.A. is in deep enough the "friend" will tell him he can cover some of his debt by submitting to sex. This has been the "friend's" objective from the begining. To manuver the N.A. into a corner where he's vulnerable. Is this rape? I think it is. B.H., Florida, 10/22/96 I believe only a minute amount of these incidences get reported; the individules this happens to live in fear. In fear of the perpetrators, but even more signifagant, thay fear other people knowing thay've been victomized in this mannor. They suffer in silence, think thay are less than men and fearing the world and thair familys will know of thair shame. B.H., Florida, 10/22/96 TABLE OF CONTENTS | MORE PRISONER VOICES [Senator and boxing legend] Manny Pacquiao says were not human. They should just let us be. Edgar T., an 18-year-old gay high school student in Manila, February 2017 Schools should be safe places for everyone. But in the Philippines, students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) too often find that their schooling experience is marred by bullying, discrimination, lack of access to LGBT-related information, and in some cases, physical or sexual assault. These abuses can cause deep and lasting harm and curtail students right to education, protected under Philippine and international law. In recent years, lawmakers and school administrators in the Philippines have recognized that bullying of LGBT youth is a serious problem, and designed interventions to address it. In 2012, the Department of Education (DepEd), which oversees primary and secondary schools, enacted a Child Protection Policy designed to address bullying and discrimination in schools, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The following year, Congress passed the Anti-Bullying Law of 2013, with implementing rules and regulations that enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity as prohibited grounds for bullying and harassment. The adoption of these policies sends a strong signal that bullying and discrimination are unacceptable and should not be tolerated in educational institutions. But these policies, while strong on paper, have not been adequately enforced. In the absence of effective implementation and monitoring, many LGBT youth continue to experience bullying and harassment in school. The adverse treatment they experience from peers and teachers is compounded by discriminatory policies that stigmatize and disadvantage LGBT students and by the lack of information and resources about LGBT issues available in schools. This report is based on interviews and group discussions conducted in 10 cities on the major Philippine islands of Luzon and the Visayas with 76 secondary school students or recent graduates who identified as LGBT or questioning, 22 students or recent graduates who did not identify as LGBT or questioning, and 46 parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, service providers, and experts on education. It examines three broad areas in which LGBT students encounter problemsbullying and harassment, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and a lack of information and resourcesand recommends steps that lawmakers, DepEd, and school administrators should take to uphold LGBT students right to a safe and affirming educational environment. The incidents described in this report illustrate the vital importance of expanding and enforcing protections for LGBT youth in schools. Despite prohibitions on bullying, for example, students across the Philippines described patterns of bullying and mistreatment that went unchecked by school staff. Carlos M., a 19-year-old gay student from Olongapo City, said: When I was in high school, theyd push me, punch me. When Id get out of school, theyd follow me [and] push me, call me gay, faggot, things like that. While verbal bullying appeared to be the most prevalent problem that LGBT students faced, physical bullying and sexualized harassment were also worryingly commonand while students were most often the culprits, teachers ignored or participated in bullying as well. The effects of this bullying were devastating to the youth who were targeted. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay man in Manila who was bullied throughout his education, said, I was depressed, I was bullied, I didnt know my sexuality, I felt unloved, and I felt alone all the time. And I had friends, but I still felt so lonely. I was listing ways to die. The mistreatment that students faced in schools was exacerbated by discriminatory policies and practices that excluded them from fully participating in the school environment. Schools impose rigid gender norms on students in a variety of waysfor example, through gendered uniforms or dress codes, restrictions on hair length, gendered restrooms, classes and activities that differ for boys and girls, and close scrutiny of same-sex friendships and relationships. For example, Marisol D., a 21-year-old transgender woman, said: When I was in high school, there was a teacher who always went around and if you had long hair, she would call you up to the front of the class and cut your hair in front of the students. That happened to me many times. It made me feel terrible: I cried because I saw my classmates watching me getting my hair cut. These policies are particularly difficult for transgender students, who are typically treated as their sex assigned at birth rather than their gender identity. But they can also be challenging for students who are gender non-conforming, and feel most comfortable expressing themselves or participating in activities that the school considers inappropriate for their sex. Efforts to address discrimination against LGBT people have met with resistance, including by religious leaders. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has condemned violence and discrimination against LGBT people, but in practice, the Roman Catholic Church has resisted laws and policies that would protect LGBT rights. The CBCP has sought to weaken anti-discrimination legislation pending before Congress, for example, and has opposed implementation of comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Representatives of the Church warn that recognizing LGBT rights will open the door to same-sex marriage, and oppose legislation that might promote divorce, euthanasia, abortion, total population control, and homosexual marriage, which they group under the acronym DEATH. In a country that is more than 80 percent Catholic, opposition from the Church influences how LGBT issues are addressed in families and schools, with many parents and teachers telling students that being LGBT is immoral or wrong. One way that schools can address bullying and discrimination and ameliorate their effects is by providing educational resources to students, teachers, and staff to familiarize them with LGBT people and issues. Unfortunately, positive information and resources regarding sexual orientation and gender identity are exceedingly rare in secondary schools in the Philippines. When students do learn about LGBT people and issues in schools, the messages are typically negative, rejecting same-sex relationships and transgender identities as immoral or unnatural. Juan N., a 22-year-old transgender man who had attended high school in Manila, said, There would be a lecture where theyd somehow pass by the topic of homosexuality and show you, try to illustrate that in the Bible, in Christian theology, homosexuality is a sin, and if you want to be a good Christian you shouldnt engage in those activities. Virtually all the students interviewed by Human Rights Watch said the limited sexuality education they received did not include information that was relevant to them as LGBT youth, and few reported having access to supportive guidance counselors or school personnel. When students face these issueswhether in isolation or togetherthe school can become a difficult or hostile environment. In addition to physical and psychological injury, students described how bullying, discrimination, and exclusion caused them to lose concentration, skip class, or seek to transfer schoolsall impairing their right to education. For the right to education to have meaning for all studentsincluding LGBT studentsteachers, administrators, and lawmakers need to work together with LGBT advocates to ensure that schools become safer and more inclusive places for LGBT children to learn. Key Recommendations Enact an anti-discrimination bill that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including in education, employment, health care, and public accommodations. Create a system to gather and publish data about bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Revise forms to more clearly differentiate and record incidents of gender-based bullying on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and include these categories on all forms related to bullying, abuse, or violence against children. Revise the standard sexuality education curriculum to ensure it aligns with UNESCOs guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education, is medically and scientifically accurate, is inclusive of LGBT youth, and covers same-sex activity on equal footing with other sexual activity. Issue an order instructing schools to respect students gender identity with regard to dress codes, access to facilities, and participation in curricular and extracurricular activities. Enact local ordinances to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, particularly in education, employment, healthcare, and public accommodations. Adopt anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that are inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, inform students how they should report incidents of bullying, and specify consequences for bullying. Human Rights Watch conducted the research for this report between September 2016 and February 2017 in 10 cities on the major islands of Luzon and the Visayas in the Philippines. To identify interviewees, we conducted outreach through LGBT student groups, particularly at the university level. Human Rights Watch interviewed members of those groups as well as students who were known to those groups, whether or not they had experienced discrimination in school. We sought interviews with students of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, but gay boys and transgender girls were disproportionately represented among the students identified by LGBT groups and the students who attended the group discussions. Human Rights Watch conducted a total of 144 interviews, including with 73 secondary school students or recent graduates who affirmatively identified as LGBT or questioning, 25 students or recent graduates who did not affirmatively identify as LGBT or questioning, and 46 parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, service providers, and experts on education. Of the LGBT students, 33 identified as gay, 12 identified as transgender girls, 10 identified as bisexual girls, 6 identified as lesbians, 4 identified only as LGBT, 3 identified as transgender boys, 2 identified as bisexual boys, 2 identified as questioning, and 1 identified as a panromantic girl. Interviews were conducted in English or in Tagalog or Visayan with the assistance of a translator. No compensation was paid to interviewees. Whenever possible, interviews were conducted one-on-one in a private setting. Researchers also spoke with interviewees in pairs, trios, or small groups when students asked to meet together or when time and space constraints required meeting with members of student organizations simultaneously. Researchers obtained oral informed consent from interviewees after explaining the purpose of the interviews, how the material would be used, that interviewees did not need to answer any questions, and that they could stop the interview at any time. When students were interviewed in groups, those who were present but did not actively volunteer information were not counted in our final pool of interviewees. Human Rights Watch sent a copy of the findings in this report by email, fax, and post to DepEd on May 15, 2017 to obtain their input on the issues students identified. Human Rights Watch requested input from DepEd by June 2, 2017 to incorporate their views into this report, but did not receive a response. In this report, pseudonyms are used for all interviewees who are students, teachers, or administrators in schools. Unless requested by interviewees, pseudonyms are not used for individuals and organizations who work in a public capacity on the issues discussed in this report. Glossary Bading A slang term for gay in Tagalog, usually used pejoratively. Bakla A Tagalog term for a person assigned male at birth whose gender expression is feminine and who may identify as gay or as a woman; it can be used pejoratively as a slur for an effeminate individual. Bayot A Cebuano term for a person assigned male at birth whose gender expression is feminine and who may identify as gay or as a woman; it can be used pejoratively as a slur for an effeminate individual. Bisexual A sexual orientation in which a person is sexually or romantically attracted to both men and women. Cisgender The gender identity of people whose sex assigned at birth conforms to their identified or lived gender. Gay Synonym in many parts of the world for homosexual; primarily used here to refer to the sexual orientation of a man whose primary sexual and romantic attraction is towards other men. In the Philippines, the term gay can also refer to a person who is assigned male at birth but expresses themselves in a feminine manner or identifies as a woman. Gender Identity A persons internal, deeply felt sense of being female or male, neither, both, or something other than female and male. A persons gender identity does not necessarily correspond to their sex assigned at birth. Gender-Fluid A descriptor for people whose gender fluctuates and may differ over time. Gender Non-Conforming A descriptor for people who do not conform to stereotypical appearances, behaviors, or traits associated with their sex assigned at birth. Homosexual A sexual orientation in which a persons primary sexual and romantic attractions are toward people of the same sex. Lesbian A sexual orientation in which a woman is primarily sexually or romantically attracted to other women. LGBT An acronym to describe those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender. Panromantic A sexual orientation in which ones romantic attraction is not restricted by sex assigned at birth, gender, or gender identity. Sexual Orientation A persons sense of attraction to, or sexual desire for, individuals of the same sex, another sex, both, or neither. Tibo A slang term for lesbian in Tagalog, usually used pejoratively. Tomboy A term for a person assigned female at birth whose gender expression is masculine and who may identify as lesbian or as a man; it can be used pejoratively as a slur for a masculine individual who was assigned female at birth. Transgender The gender identity of people whose sex assigned at birth does not conform to their identified or lived gender. The Philippines has a long history of robust LGBT advocacy. In 1996, LGBT individuals and groups held a solidarity march to commemorate Pride in Manila, which many activists describe as the first known Pride March in Asia. Lawmakers began introducing bills to advance the rights of LGBT people in the country in 1995, including variations of a comprehensive anti-discrimination bill that has been reintroduced periodically since 2000. In the absence of federal legislation, local government units across the Philippines have begun to enact their own anti-discrimination ordinances that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. As of June 2017, 15 municipalities and 5 provinces had ordinances prohibiting some forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Attitudes toward LGBT people are relatively open and tolerant; a survey conducted in 2013 found that 73 percent of Filipinos believe society should accept homosexuality, up from 64 percent who believed the same in 2002. President Rodrigo Duterte has generally been supportive of LGBT rights as well. During his time as mayor, Davao City passed an LGBT-inclusive anti-discrimination ordinance, and on the campaign trail, he vocally condemned bullying and discrimination against LGBT people. Nonetheless, many of the basic protections sought by activists remain elusive. A bill that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientationand in later versions, gender identityin employment, education, health care, housing, and other sectors has been regularly introduced in Congress since 2000. The Anti-Discrimination Bill, or ADB, passed out of committee in the House of Representatives for the first time in 2015, but never received a second reading on the House floor and never passed out of committee in the Senate. In the current Congress, the ADB has passed out of committee in the Senate for the first time, but at time of writing, it has not yet passed out of committee in the House. The anti-discrimination ordinances that have passed in the absence of federal legislation remain largely symbolic, as Quezon City is the only local government unit to follow the passage of its ordinance with implementing rules and regulations that are required to make such an ordinance enforceable. Even if fully enforced, these municipal and provincial ordinances would collectively cover only 15 percent of the population of the Philippines. In a pair of decisions, the Supreme Court limited the possibility of legal gender recognition, ruling that intersex people may legally change their gender under existing law but transgender people may not. The Philippines does not recognize same-sex partnerships, and although Duterte signaled openness to marriage equality in early 2016 while campaigning for the presidency and his legislative allies promised to support same-sex marriage legislation, he appeared to reverse course and express opposition to marriage equality in a speech in early 2017. Moreover, HIV transmission rates have soared in recent years among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women, due to a combination of stigma, a lack of comprehensive sexuality education, barriers to obtaining condoms, and laws that prevent children under age 18 from purchasing condoms or accessing HIV testing without parental consent. Many of the efforts to advance LGBT rights have met with resistance from the Catholic Church, which has been an influential political force on matters of sex and sexuality. While the CBCP rejects discrimination against LGBT people in principle, it has frequently opposed efforts to prohibit that discrimination in practice. In 2017, for example, the Church sought amendments to pending anti-discrimination legislation that would prohibit same-sex marriage and allow religious objectors to opt out of recognizing LGBT rights. It has also resisted efforts to promote sexuality education and safer sex in schools. The Church vocally opposes divorce, euthanasia, abortion, total population control, and homosexual marriagewhich it groups under the acronym DEATHand rejects recognition of LGBT rights with particular fervor when it is concerned those rights might eventually open the door to same-sex unions. Beyond its influence in law and policy, the Church has shaped attitudes toward homosexuality and transgender identities throughout the country; citing religious doctrine, teachers, counselors, and other authority figures often impress upon students that it is immoral or unnatural to be LGBT. In spite of this opposition, activists lengthy efforts to engage policymakers on LGBT issues have led to important protections for LGBT youth, as discussed below. But these protections have not been effectively implemented. They will need to be strengthened and expanded if they are to uphold the rights of LGBT youth in schools. Existing Protections for LGBT Youth and Their Limitations Child Protection Policy In 2012, DepEd enacted a Child Protection Policy, which it describes as a zero tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse. Among the acts prohibited by the policy are all forms of bullying and discrimination in schools, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The policy requires all public and private schools to establish a child protection committee, which is to draft a school child protection policy to be reviewed every three years; develop programs to protect students and systems to identify, monitor, and refer cases of abuse; and coordinate with parents and government agencies. The Child Protection Policy also details a clear protocol for handling bullying incidents and dictates that investigation by school personnel and reporting by the school head or schools division superintendent should be swift. As advocates have pointed out, however, monitoring and implementation of the Child Protection Policy is uneven. One analysis notes that [u]nfortunately, no monitoring is done on its implementation and hence whether it is helping LGBT children in schools. A collective of LGBT organizations in early 2017 concluded such mechanisms did not deter the prevalence of violence [LGBT] children experience. In interviews with Human Rights Watch, advocates and school personnel noted that many child protection committees are not trained to recognize or deal with LGBT issues, and overlook policies and practices, discussed below, that overtly discriminate against LGBT youth. The Anti-Bullying Law In 2013, the Philippine Congress passed the Anti-Bullying Law of 2013, which instructs elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to address the existence of bullying in their respective institutions. At a minimum, these policies are supposed to prohibit bullying on or near school grounds, bullying and cyberbullying off school grounds that interferes with a students schooling, and retaliation against those who report bullying. The policies should also identify how bullying will be punished, establish procedures for reporting and redressing bullying, enable students to report bullying anonymously, educate students, parents, and guardians about bullying and the schools policies to prevent and address it, and make a public record of statistics on bullying in the school. The Anti-Bullying Law does not specify classes of students at heightened risk for bullying. The implementing rules and regulations for the law, however, explain that the term bullying includes gender-based bullying, which refers to any act that humiliates or excludes a person on the basis of perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). With the promulgation of these implementing rules and regulations, the Philippines became the first country in the region to specifically refer to bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in its laws. The Anti-Bullying Law does not shield against all types of bullying, however. It does not account for instances where teachers bully LGBT youth. As described in this report, many students and administrators are unaware of school bullying policies. Further, many students told Human Rights Watch that they did not feel comfortable reporting bullying, or did not know how to report bullying or what the consequences would be for themselves or the perpetrator. The datasets that DepEd releases regarding reported incidents do not disaggregate bullying on the basis of SOGI, so there is no available data to identify when such bullying occurs or what steps might be effective in preventing it. As with the Child Protection Policy, the implementation and monitoring of the Anti-Bullying Law has proven difficult. A United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report observed that only 38 percent of schools submitted child protection or anti-bullying policies in 2013, and the low rate of submission has been attributed to a low level of awareness of requirements of the Act and weak monitoring of compliance. Comprehensive Sexuality Education LGBT rights activists in the Philippines have long called for comprehensive sexuality education in schools. In 2012, Congress passed the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law, which provides that [t]he State shall provide age- and development-appropriate reproductive health education to adolescents which shall be taught by adequately trained teachers. The law and its implementing rules and regulations require public schools to use the DepEd curriculum and allow private schools to use the curriculum or submit their own curriculum for approval from DepEd, promoting a uniform baseline of information in both private and public schools. In response to lengthy delays, President Duterte issued an executive order in January 2017 requiring agencies to implement the law; in part, the order instructs DepEd to implement a gender-sensitive and rights-based comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in the school curriculum. DepEd has previously incorporated some sexuality education materials into school curricula, but implementation is uneven. The sexuality education curriculum has not yet incorporated the recommendations developed by experts, teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders, nor has it been accompanied to date by training to ensure that it is taught correctly and effectively. At the time of writing, there were no sexuality education modules targeted at LGBT youth. Effects of Bullying and Discrimination As DepEd and the Congress recognized with their initial efforts to address bullying in schools, exclusion and marginalization can exact a damaging toll on the rights and well-being of LGBT youth. In addition to the documentation contained in this report, data collected by the Philippine government, academics, and civil society organizations illustrate how bullying and harassment, discrimination, and a lack of access to information and resources are adversely affecting LGBT youth across the Philippines. In the Philippines, as elsewhere, violence and discrimination place LGBT youth at heightened risk of adverse physical and mental health outcomes, including depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide. As the Psychological Association of the Philippines has noted, LGBT Filipinos often confront social pressures to hide, suppress or even attempt to change their identities and expressions as conditions for their social acceptance and enjoyment of rights. Although many LGBTs learn to cope with this social stigma, these experiences can cause serious psychological distress, including immediate consequences such as fear, sadness, alienation, anger and internalized stigma. This has been borne out in small-scale empirical studies on LGBT youth and mental health in schools. One such study found that LGBT high schoolers were preoccupied with stigma, violence, bullying, discrimination in school, and anxiety over their future career prospects. Nor do these problems end upon graduation from high school; another study determined that LGBT college students exhibited extremely underdeveloped emotional and social capacity because they continue to experience stigma, prejudice and discrimination in the Philippine society that served as specific stressors that have an impact on their emotional and social intelligent behaviors. On a broader scale, the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and attempts for LGBT youth is evident in nationally representative data. The results of the Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Survey 3, for example, indicate that 16 percent of young gay and bisexual men in the Philippines had contemplated suicide, while only 8 percent of young heterosexual men had done so. Young gay and bisexual men were also more likely to attempt suicide, with 39 percent of those who had contemplated suicide actually attempting suicide, compared to 26 percent of their heterosexual peers. A similar trend was evident for young lesbian and bisexual women; 27 percent of young lesbian and bisexual women contemplated suicide compared to 18 percent of young heterosexual women, and of those who considered suicide, 6.6 percent of lesbian and bisexual women made suicide attempts compared to only 3.9 percent of their heterosexual peers. GALANG, a Philippine nongovernmental organization that works with lesbian and bisexual women and transgender people, found even higher rates among their constituencies. In a survey conducted in 2015, researchers from GALANG found that 18 percent of LBT respondents, who were almost all between the ages of 18 and 29, had attempted suicide. II. Bullying and Harassment Whether it takes physical, verbal, or sexualized forms, in person or on social media, bullying endangers the safety, health, and education of LGBT youth. Studies in the Philippines and elsewhere have found that, among young LGBT people, low self-esteem and poor self-acceptance, combined with discrimination was also linked to destructive coping behaviours such as substance use or unprotected sex due to anxiety, isolation and depression. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay man in Manila who was bullied throughout his education, said, I was depressed, I was bullied, I didnt know my sexuality, I felt unloved, and I felt alone all the time. And I had friends, but I still felt so lonely. I was listing ways to die. When schools are unwelcoming, students may skip classes or drop out of school entirely. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, said, Ive skipped school because of teasing. In order to keep myself in a peaceful place, I tend not to go to school. Instead, I go to the mall or a friends house. I just get tired of the discrimination at school. Francis C., a 19-year-old gay student from Pulilan, said, I just felt like I was so dumb. I wanted to stay at home, I didnt want to go to school. And I would stay at home. Once I stayed at home for two weeks. In many instances, the repercussions of bullying are long-lasting. Geoff Morgado, a social worker, observed that for some students bullying turns into depression, because they feel they dont belong, and he believed that many students drop out because [t]hey feel they dont have a support group and feel isolated. Students who skip class, forgo educational opportunities, or drop out of school may experience the effects of these decisions throughout their lifespan. As a UNESCO report on school bullying notes, [e]xclusion and stigma in education can also have life-long impacts on employment options, economic earning potential, and access to benefits and social protection. Physical Bullying In interviews with Human Rights Watch, students described physical bullying that took various forms, including punching, hitting, and shoving. Most of the students who described physical bullying to Human Rights Watch were gay and bisexual boys or transgender girls. These incidents persisted even after the passage of the Anti-Bullying Law. Carlos M., a 19-year-old gay student from Olongapo City, said: When I was in high school, theyd push me, punch me. When Id get out of school, theyd follow me [and] push me, call me gay, faggot, things like that. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, said, People will throw books and notebooks at me, crumpled paper, chalk, erasers, and harder things, like a piece of wood. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay man in Manila, said that once a classmate pushed him down the stairs at his high school, and added he still avoided his assailant as an adult for fear of physical violence. As detailed below, very few of the students interviewed reported bullying to teachers, either because they felt that reporting would not resolve the bullying or because they feared that reporting would lead to retaliation by other students and make the situation worse. In some instances, teachers also participated in harassment. Such behavior is not only discriminatory toward students of different sexual orientations and gender identities, but deters students from turning to teachers and administrators for help when they are bullied or harassed by their peers. Sexual Assault and Harassment For many LGBT students, bullying is often sexual in nature. Eric Manalastas, a professor of

psychology at the University of the Philippines who has studied LGBT youth issues, observed a theme of being highly sexualized and sexually harassed, especially for the gender non-conforming male students. Geoff Morgado, a social worker, described working with LGBT youth who told him that other students grab the hand, or arm lock the child, or they force them into doggy style position. This is what you want, right, this is what you want? In interviews with Human Rights Watch, LGBT students described similar patterns of harassment and sexual assault in schools. Gabby W., a 16-year-old transgender girl at a school in Bayombong, described a series of incidents that she experienced, including other students attempting to strip off her clothes in public, being forced into a restroom and sexually assaulted, andon a separate occasionbeing locked in a cubicle in a mens restroom and sexually assaulted. Several gay or bisexual boys and transgender girls told Human Rights Watch that their fellow students had subjected them to simulated sexual activity or mock rape. Ruby S., a 16-year-old transgender girl who had attended high school in Batangas, described [s]tudents acting like they were raping me, and then my friends saying, oh you enjoyed it, hes cute. One of my classmates even said that LGBT people are lustful in nature, so its because youre a flirt. Gabriel K., a 19-year-old gay student who attended high school in Manila, similarly noted his classmates would grab my hands, and theyd touch them to their private parts, and theyll say to me thats what gay is, thats it. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, recalled: The worst thing, physically speaking, is they wouldironically, they hate gays, but they would dry hump me. It was like rape to me. I felt violated. Other LGBT students recounted slurs and stereotypes that were highly sexualizedfor example, being catcalled in school or being labeled as sex workers. Sean B., a 17-year-old gay student in Bayombong, recalled how other students would shout 50 pesos, 50 pesos! as he walked past, because [t]hey think that were prostitutes. Gabby W., a 16-year-old transgender girl at the same school, said: I feel bad about itits so embarrassing. Youre walking around hundreds of people, and they shout that and that shapes the perception of other people about us, that yelling by other people. Melvin O., a 22-year-old bisexual man from Malolos, recalled how in high school people, especially the guys, would just sexually harass you, like youre gay, you want my dick, stuff like that. Rhye Gentoleo, a member of the Quezon City Pride Council, a city commission designed to enforce LGBT rights protections, observed that LGBT youth often face considerable pressure from heterosexual, cisgender peers to be sexually active because they are LGBT: And thats how the LGBT kids are being bullied as well. Oh, youre gay, can you satisfy me? Theyre being challenged, how far can you go as a gay, how far can you go as a lesbian. And they have different ways of copingsome are hiding, but a lot of them are taking the challenge, being sexually active, without thinking of the consequences. As discussed below, the sexualization of LGBT youth is exacerbated by the absence of LGBT-inclusive sexuality education, which leaves many youth ill-equipped to protect themselves and their sexual health. Verbal Harassment The most common form of bullying that LGBT students reported in interviews with Human Rights Watch was verbal harassment. This included chants of bakla, bakla, bayot, bayot, tomboy, or tibo, using local terms for gay, lesbian, or transgender students in a mocking fashion. Daniel R., an 18-year-old gay student in Bacacay, said People will say gaytheyll say gay, gay, repeating it, and insulting us. Ernesto N., a gay teacher in Cebu City, observed, Here in the Philippines, being called bayot, its discrimination. Its being told youre nothing, youre lower than dirt. That youre a sinner, that you should go to Hell. Many students described being labeled as sinners or aberrations. Leon S., a 19-year-old gay student from Malolos, said that [s]tudents would say that homosexuality is a sin. Marco L., a 17-year-old gay student in Bacacay, said that [p]eople say ipako sa krus, that you should be crucified. Gabriel K., a 19-year-old gay student who attended high school in Manila, said people told gay students that you have to be crucified because youre a sinner. Anthony T., a gay student at a high school in Cebu City, said: Some of my classmates who are religious say, Why are you gay? Its a sin. Only men and women are in the Bible. And I say, I dont want to be like this, but its what Im feeling right now. Even if I try, I cant change it. And if they ask why I am a gay and why do I like gays, I say, its how I feel, Ive tried, and I cant be a man. Others described how they were treated as though they were diseased or contagious. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, noted: Here, they call us carrierstheres a stereotype that gays are responsible for HIV. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay man in Manila, recalled a classmate telling him dont come near me because youll make me gay. Some students noted verbal harassment that was predicated on the idea that their sexual orientation or gender identity was a choice. Analyn V., a 17-year-old bisexual girl in Mandaue City, observed, It is inevitable that theyll judgelike, you should date a real man instead of a lesbian because your beauty is wasted. Dalisay N., a 20-year-old panromantic woman who had attended high school in Manila, said: When I was walking with my girlfriend, [other students] would tease usthey would say things like its better if you have a boyfriend, or they would shout things like you dont even have a penis. The high levels of verbal harassment that LGBT youth faced in schools had repercussions for their experiences in schools. Teasing prompted some students to remain closeted, particularly in the absence of other positive resources to counteract negative messaging. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, remarked, For the majority of my life, I was in the closet. Its really hard for me to express what I feel. In my school, being gay is reallyits really the worst thing you could be. Youll be treated like shit. So being gay was a curse, I thought for a long time. Some students altered their behavior or personality in an attempt to avoid disapproval from classmates. Patrick G., a 19-year-old gay man who had attended high school in Cainta, said: They were teasing me for being effeminate. I developed this concept of how a man should walk, how a man should talk. It becamemaybe because of them calling me malamya [effeminate], I became the person that Im not. I was forced to be masculine, just for them to stop teasing me. Patricks experience is not unique. As one elementary school counselor observed, youth are quite intimidated that kids will call them gayeven in Grade Six, you can tell that they dont want to be called gay or lesbian. When verbal harassment became unbearable, some students removed themselves from the school environment entirely. Ella M., a 23-year-old transgender woman who had attended high school in Manila, noted that [v]erbal bullying was why I transferred. In addition to verbal harassment by peers, many LGBT students described verbal harassment and slurs from teachers and administrators. Patrick G., a 19-year-old gay man, said that at his high school in Cainta, [s]ometimes teachers would join in with bakla, bakla. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, said that it really feels bad, because the only figure you can count on is your teacher, and theyre joining in the fun, so who should I tell about my problems? Often, disapproval from teachers was expressed in overtly religious terms. Wes L., an 18-year-old gay student at a high school in Bacacay, said, My teacher in school told me that people are created by God, and God created man and woman. They say that gays are the black sheep of the family, and sinners. Danica J., a 19-year-old lesbian woman who had attended a high school in Cainta, described how a teacher told me not to be lesbian anymore, and then he prayed over my head. He prayed for me. There were no supportive teachers at the school. In some cases, disapproval from teachers was voiced in front of other students, reinforcing the idea that LGBT youth are wrong or immoral. Gabriel K., a 19-year-old gay student who attended high school in Manila, recalled how a teacher brought him before his peers and compared me to the othersthat being gay is not welcome into heaven, and made an example in front of the whole class. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay man in Manila, recalled how a teacher in elementary school called him and two other effeminate students in front of her biology class to tell the students: Theres no such thing as gays and lesbians. Theres man and woman, and marriage is only between a man and a woman. And I was only turning 12I hadnt hit puberty at the time, and youre telling me not to be gay!? How could I even tell? And everyone was looking at meI was like, okay, teacher, I respect your religion, but come on, Ive been bullied for five years. Havent I had enough? Cyberbullying As students interact with their peers on social media and in other virtual spaces, cyberbullying has increasingly impacted LGBT youth in schools. LGBT students described anti-LGBT comments and slurs as well as rapidly spreading rumors facilitated by social media. Leon S., a 19-year-old gay student from Malolos, said: They would post things online, which is a far easier thing to do than say it personally.... I would post something, and they would comment about my sexual orientation. It was the usual, bakla, bading. Marisol D., a 21-year-old transgender woman, similarly noted, Some of my friends would put comments like bakla, bakla on my posts. You just ignore it [b]ecause if they see that youre being affected theyll bully you more. Carlos M., a 19-year-old gay student from Olongapo City, said, My classmates would post stuff onlinememes against LGBT, Satan saying Im waiting for you here. Jack M., an 18-year-old gay high school student in Bayombong, was a victim of rumors spread through social media: Theyll make up stories. People will tell others [online] that I had sex with a person, even if its not true. Cyberbullying also draws on stereotypes about LGBT students, and particularly transgender women and girls, with harsh disapprobation for those who were perceived to fall short of social expectations. Geoff Morgado, a social worker, observed that: There are lots of trans women who are coming out on different platforms on social media, and theyre really bullied. Because people will base it on the looksif youre a trans woman, especially, theyll say youre not allowed to be a trans woman because youre too ugly, or your skin is so dark. They say you have to be pretty, you have to be white, or you have to look like a woman before they decide youre a transgender woman. Morgado added that many same-sex couples in schools must also contend with comments on social media criticizing their conformity to gender norms and the appropriateness of same-sex pairings. Intervention and Reporting Human Rights Watch heard repeatedly that schools fail to instruct students about what bullying entails, how to report incidents when they occur, and what the repercussions will be. As a result, many schools convey tacit acceptance to perpetrators and leave victims unaware of whether or how they can seek help. Both the Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Law require that schools develop and convey policies regarding bullying and harassment. Nonetheless, many students interviewed by Human Rights Watch indicated they were unaware of the policies in place. Danica J., a 19-year-old lesbian woman who had attended high school in Cainta, said, We didnt get any information about bullying as high school students. Others said they had received some instruction on bullying, but it was incomplete or did not address LGBT issues. Leon S., a 19-year-old gay student from Malolos, said [t]he school did anti-bullying seminars, but it didnt really address bullying about your sexual identitythe seminar is more general in scope. When students do not know how to report bullying and harassment or do not believe that reporting would be effective, they are unlikely to bring incidents to the attention of teachers and administrators. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, said: I would not tell the teacher. I was too ashamed. Because if I would tell the teacher, they would say, oh, youre such a gay person, you have such weak feelings, youre such a tattle tale. So I would just keep it to myself and endured the harassment for a long time, until I graduated. Some students attributed their reluctance to report bullying to the negative messages about LGBT people theyd received from teachers. Students identified negative messaging in various classes, including values education, a subject taught throughout secondary school to instill positive values and morals in Filipino youth. Although many students told Human Rights Watch that their values education courses were largely secular and focused on topics like respect and responsibility, others described overtly religious lessons that disparaged LGBT people. Dalisay N., a 20-year-old panromantic woman who had attended high school in Manila, remarked: Theres a lot of teasing and bullying, but we dont talk about it with teachers or counselors. I think thats because of what theyre trying to teach us, in values education, things like that. Interviews with LGBT students indicate that many teachers fail to intervene when they witness bullying or harassment occurring or it is brought to their attention, even since passage of the Anti-Bullying Law, which in turn discourages students from reporting cases of bullying. Analyn V., a 17-year-old bisexual girl in Mandaue City, said, Teachers dont step in. They think its a joke. But some jokes are below the belt. We conceal being hurt because maybe they think its overreacting. The teachers dont say anything or get mad if they hear people saying bakla, they just smile or laugh, said Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi. Teachers might ask the students to stop, but they dont punish them. And as soon as they leave, the bullying happens again. In some instances, teachers and administrators may not have intervened because they had not received proper training or were unsure of their responsibilities. In one interview, a high-level administrator at a high school in Mandaue City remarked that she had never heard of the Anti-Bullying Law. In another interview, a DepEd trainer and educator erroneously stated that the law did not cover LGBT students. According to Rowena Legaspi of the Childrens Legal Rights and Development Center, uncertainty about existing protections is due in part to the tendency for school administrators to simply adopt policy templates from DepEd without tailoring them to the school environment, undergoing training, or fully understanding what is being implemented. *** As a coalition of Philippine organizations has noted, in many instances, [b]ullying and other forms of violence within the schools or education settings is steered by institutional policies, for example, through gender-insensitive curricula, SOGI-insensitive school policies (e.g. required haircuts and dress codes), and [a] culture of bullying. As evidenced in the following sections, the many forms of exclusion and marginalization that LGBT youth experience in Philippine schools can reinforce one another. In schools where LGBT youth lack information and resources, for example, they may struggle more deeply with their sexual orientation or gender identity or be unsure where to turn for help. In schools where policies discriminate against LGBT youth, they may be placed in situations where bullying by peers is likely to occur and may feel administrators are unlikely to help them. III. Creating a Hostile Environment In addition to bullying and harassment, LGBT students encounter various forms of discrimination that make educational environments hostile or unwelcoming. To ensure that all youth feel safe and included in schools, school administrators should examine policies and practices that punish LGBT students for relationships that are considered acceptable for their heterosexual peers, restrict gender expression and access to facilities, and stereotype LGBT youth in a discriminatory manner. Discrimination takes a toll on LGBT students mental health and ability to learn. Some students who encountered discrimination in schools reported that they struggled with depression and anxiety. Others told Human Rights Watch that discrimination made it difficult to concentrate on the material or participate in class, or caused them to skip classes, take a leave of absence, or drop out entirely. Both the Philippine Constitution and the Philippines international treaty obligations recognize a right to education. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized that the right to education, like other rights, must not be limited on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. For educational environments to effectively serve all youth, they must treat LGBT youth the same as they treat their non-LGBT peers. School Enforcement of Stereotyped Gender Norms Uniforms and Hair Length Restrictions It is common practice for secondary schools in the Philippines to require students to wear uniforms. Under these policies, the attire is gender-specific and the two options, male or female, are typically imposed upon students according to the sex they were assigned at birth. In addition to clothing, many secondary schools have strict hair-length restrictions for their students, particularly for boys. Almost all interviewees reported that boys could not grow out their hair past ear-length or dye their hair at their schools, and many also noted that girls were prohibited from wearing their hair shorter than a permissible length. Students whose gender expression differed from the norms associated with their sex assigned at birth told Human Rights Watch how these restrictions impeded their education. Students reported that being forced to dress or present themselves in a manner that was inconsistent with their gender expression made them unhappy and uncomfortable, lessened their confidence, and impaired their concentration. As Del M., a 14-year-old lesbian student who was allowed to wear the boys uniform, remarked, Its easier for me to learn wearing the boys uniform. At many of these schools, students who did not conform to the uniform and hair-length requirements faced disciplinary action. Common punishments included being sent to the guidance or discipline offices and mandatory community service. Ella M., a 23-year-old transgender woman who had attended high school in Manila, described being punished solely on this basis of her general gender presentation. She said that her schools handbook punished an act of effeminacy, not further defined, with a conduct grade of 75, which basically means you did something really really bad. I might as well have cheated. For many transgender or gender non-conforming students, the strict uniform and hair-length requirements were sources of intense anxiety and humiliation, and in some cases led to extended school absences and even leaving schooling entirely. Marisol D., a 21-year-old transgender woman, said: When I was in high school, there was a teacher who always went around and if you had long hair, she would call you up to the front of the class and cut your hair in front of the students. That happened to me many times. It made me feel terrible. I cried because I saw my classmates watching me getting my hair cut. Other interviewees reported similar incidents in which teachers or prefects would publicly call out students in violation of the restrictions and forcibly cut their hair in front of the class. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man, said that in his high school in Cebu City: It applies for all boys. If [your hair] touches the ear and you dont cut it, the school will cut it for you, and they do it in front of your classmates. The Student Affairs Officer who enforces the rules, once a month he would go to each classroom and knock, and say, All those with long hair go outside, and he would go one by one with these large, rusty scissors like the kind you see in horror movies, and theyd cut our hair in front of everybody. I think on purpose, hed cut it very badly. In most cases, teachers and administrators provided little to no explanation for the hair-length requirements when students asked about the policies at their respective schools. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, told Human Rights Watch: Before, I used to have long hair. I entered the school grounds, but the school administrator asked me to cut [my] hair or else I couldnt go in. So I was forced to cut my hair and wear the male uniform. Theres no explanation about cutting the hair. Ive asked them if having short or long hair will affect my performance as a student, and the administrators say, No, you just have to cut your hair, youre a boy. As Lyn C., a 19-year-old transgender woman in Manila, recounted, gendered clothing requirements also extended to school-sponsored events such as prom nights: For our prom night, I asked our principal if I could wear a gown, but he didnt allow it. Back in high school I didnt have long hair or makeup, so he said, What would you look like as a boy wearing a gown? Its ridiculous! I felt really discriminated against. I had a friend who was also transgender and we were both begging the administration but they wouldnt allow it. They told us that we would be an embarrassment to the school, that people would laugh at us at prom, and that Youre guys and you need to wear guys clothes. In some instances, students were able to request a full switch of the uniforms according to their gender identity. However, agreements to alter uniform requirements were usually not the result of consistently applied policies designed to respect students right to free expression of their gender identity, but rather of the compassion of a specific school administrator or principal. In one of the few such cases Human Rights Watch documented, a lesbian student was permitted to wear the boys' uniform primarily because the schools principal was himself openly gay and supportive of the petition. Even when students are formally permitted to wear the uniforms of their choice, however, school personnel at times harass or humiliate them in practice. Gabby W., a 16-year-old transgender girl in high school in Bayombong, told Human Rights Watch: Theyre questioning us about our makeup and dress not only the students, but the teachers too. Its so disrespectful. We enter the gate and the security guard will say, Why is your hair so long, are you a girl? And it really hurts our feelings. Uniform and Hair Length Restrictions in Universities Although this report focuses on secondary schools, many interviewees said they had experienced similar issues with uniform and hair-length restrictions at the university level. In some extreme cases, students who repeatedly cross-dresseda term that schools and some students used to describe gay, lesbian, or transgender students expressing their gender in schoolwere suspended or even expelled. According to Danica J., a 19-year-old lesbian woman at a university in Manila, people are punished if they violate the uniform policy. Its like a disciplinary action. They wont let you in if youre cross-dressing, and after a couple times, you can be suspended or expelled. As one 19-year-old university student in Caloocan told Human Rights Watch, In our school, there are policies that if you cross-dress you will be suspended for one day. Your freedom of expression is very limited. I know we had policies against LGBTQ. We had hair-length restrictionsfor guys, the shaved hair has to be three inches on the side, four inches in the back. So every time, if the hair passes three to four inches, the faculty will cut our hair. And even here in the university, the handbook says male students must only have hair to their ears. Even in universities without formal uniform or hair-length policies, however, transgender and gender-fluid students sometimes reported harassment or reprisals from teachers, classmates, and administrators when they expressed their gender. Patrick G., a 19-year-old gay man in Manila, said that despite a policy at his university guaranteeing students the freedom to dress based on their gender expression, he was aware of one case in which the Discipline Office (DO) summoned a transgender woman to interrogate her about her clothing: She was within the scope of the policy, but the DO said, Are you not ashamed of what youre wearing? Are you not thinking of how others will think about how you dress? Dalisay N., a 20-year-old panromantic woman at a university in Caloocan, said: When I enrolled in college, I even talked to the head of the office for student affairs, and told her Im not comfortable wearing a skirt. They allow us to wear slacks, but its different from the male uniform. And she said, What are you, youre a female, right? I was speechless. The guards are also a headache. Theyll ask, Why are you wearing slacks? Why arent you wearing womens shoes? I tell them Im not comfortable wearing that. And sometimes theyll even look me up and down from head to toe, which is really uncomfortable. Carlos M., a 19-year-old gay student at the same university, said that university security guards forced transgender women to go home if they were wearing makeup or long hair. According to Lyn C., a 19-year-old transgender woman at a university in Manila: The first three years of my school days we were just hiding ourselves, because if the guards and administration know that were transgender well be punished. When the guard knows youre transgender, youll be sanctioned. Theyd send you to the discipline office youd get community service or suspension. It was really difficult for us, to hide our very identities. Lyns university removed its uniform and hair-length restrictions in January 2017 after years of persistent advocacy from student groups. However, even after the changes, some students still faced discrimination from teachers. Several interviewees also told Human Rights Watch that they or their classmates had dropped out of classes or transferred sections at their universities to avoid conflicts with professors who were hostile to transgender students. Certain departments and colleges also tend to have more stringent uniform and hair-length restrictions than their affiliated universities, often forcing transgender students to conform in order to matriculate. Some students and professors identified colleges of hospitality, management, and education among those requiring gendered clothing, irrespective of the broader universitys policies. Access to Facilities For students who are transgender or identify as a sex other than their sex assigned at birth, rigid gender restrictions can be stressful and make learning difficult. One of the areas where gender restrictions arose most often for LGBT interviewees was in access to toilet facilities, known in the Philippines as comfort rooms (CRs). Most interviewees said that their schools required students to use CRs that aligned with their sex assigned at birth, regardless of how they identified or where they were most comfortable. Some said that both female and male CRs posed safety risks or made them uncomfortable, but that all-gender restrooms were scarce. Requiring students to use restrooms that did not match their gender identity or expression put them at risk of bullying and harassment. Gabby W., a 16-year-old transgender girl in Bayombong, said that boys peep on us when we use the boys restroom, and they say were trying to have sex with them, things like that. Reyna L., a 24-year-old transgender woman, agreed: Boys or male persons are always vigilant when it comes to gays and transgenders. Any time they see us going in the CR, they sometimes look at you like Im going to do something, with malice, or look at us like a maniac. Because of this, Gabby said, Sometimes you dont have a choice but to go home and use your own restroom. Some schools punish students for using the CRs where they felt comfortable. Ruby S., a 16-year-old transgender girl who attended high school in Batangas, said: I was called by the administration when I used the CR for the girls. They said youre not allowed to use it just because you feel like youre a girl. They used that as a black mark on my campaign for student council. They said, even though he wants to be student council president, he doesnt follow the rules. Even students who were not formally punished described being humiliated by faculty and staff policing gendered spaces. Alon B., a gay teacher in Cebu City, said that the administration at the school where he taught had posted a printed sign that says only biological females are able to be in this bathroom. At least one secondary school has created all-gender CRs that any person can use regardless of their gender identity. But while some students may feel more comfortable using all-gender CRs, others prefer to use the same CRs that everybody else uses. Reyna L., a 24-year-old transgender woman, said, Id like to use the female comfort room, and be treated as a normal person. If I cant, Id rather not use it at all. Allowing students to use CRs consistent with their gender identity can be a simple and uncontroversial step that makes a positive difference for transgender youth. Ella M., a 23-year-old transgender woman from Manila, noted that when she transferred to a new high school: I was able to use the girls bathroom, freely, since most of the peers were really supportive. And there hasnt been any incidents of, like, adverse reactions to some guys going into the girls bathroom. My teacher knew I was doing ithe just warned me that some girls might get offended. But nobody complained. Access to Facilities in Universities Policies that prevent students from accessing restrooms consistent with their gender identity exist in post-secondary institutions as well. Dalisay N., a 20-year-old panromantic woman at a university in Caloocan, said: Some of the trans women in our support group, the guards would shout, Why are you using that restroom? Youre not allowed in there, which for me is disrespectful. Why do they care? Theyre just putting on makeup, and they just want to feel safe when they pee. Because theres a lot of teasing and bullying in the mens room. Marisol D., a 21-year-old transgender woman, said that in her university, instructors reported transgender students to the discipline office for using the wrong restroom. Ace F., a 24-year-old gay man in Manila, noted that another member of his universitys LGBT group was apprehended by our school administrationshes a transgender woman and she used a girls bathroom. The office of student behavior gave her a minor disciplinary offense. As in secondary schools, university policies that prevent students from accessing facilities on the basis of their gender identity are discriminatory and function to undermine student safety, health, privacy, and the right to education. Gender Classifications Even when students identify as transgender, some teachers and administrators insist on treating them as their sex assigned at birth. David O., a high school teacher in Mandaue City, recounted a story in which a transgender boy and his parent wanted the school to socially recognize him as a boy, but another teacher insisted that the student was female and should be treated as a girl. Imposing strictly gendered activities and requiring students to participate according to their sex assigned at birth can constitute discrimination and impair the right to education. Human Rights Watch found that some schools require boys to take physical education classes and girls to take arts classes, for example, which reinforces stereotypes and deprives boys who want to pursue art and girls who want to pursue sports of educational opportunities. It can also be profoundly stigmatizing and uncomfortable for students. As Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, said: During flag ceremony, students used to line themselves up by male or female, and I think its really difficultwhich line should I go in? I dont think Im welcome in the boys group, and Im not allowed to go in the womens group. Hostility Toward Same-Sex Relationships Many schools in the Philippines have policies restricting public displays of affection among students, and outline those policies in student handbooks or codes of conduct. Yet LGBT students reported that their relationships were policed more carefully or punished more harshly than their non-LGBT peers. In particular, young lesbian and bisexual women and transgender men who attended exclusive schoolsthose that are only open to one sexreported that their friendships and relationships were closely scrutinized and policed by school staff. Juan N., a 22-year-old transgender man who had attended high school in Manila, said: When I was in high school, I had a girlfriend, but we were really careful about it, because once it becomes knownespecially to admins, who are mostly nuns, and when your teachers know youre in a relationship with another woman, they try to correct you, they would reprimand you, give you violations based on what youve done. Angelica R., a 22-year-old bisexual woman who had attended high school in Manila, said that more masculine girls were especially targeted to keep them from becoming close with other girls: If someone is really butch, our professors are always watching us. Theyre talking among themselves and student council to pinpoint who was involved in same-sex relationships. Theres not much bullying among the students, but it was oppression from the administration. I remember this particular experience where one of our professors went into our class and said, did you know, girls are for boys, girls are not for girls, we know whos involved in same-sex relationships, and if you dont stand up, well make you stand up. So as a result, some of my butch classmates would attempt to be feminine, they would hide it, they would wear more feminine clothes. You could see they were unhappy. Its a struggle. The same standards were not applied to heterosexual students, as teachers and administrators acknowledged. Even a gay teacher defended this double standard, citing social and religious conventions. Ernesto N., a gay teacher in Cebu City, said of same-sex couples dating in schools: Its just like having sex in school! Goodness! Its really our culture.... For boys and girls its okay, but not for LGBT. Pressure to Conform to Stereotypes LGBT youth also described the pressure that teachers and administrators imposed on them to act in a stereotypical fashion. Many of the LGBT youth interviewed by Human Rights Watch emphasized that, to the extent they were respected in school, they had earned that respect by being better students than their peers. Often, this meant that LGBT students were tasked with more work or responsibilities than other students as part of the price they paid to be accepted and respected. Eric Manalastas, a psychology professor at the University of the Philippines who has conducted research on LGBT youth issues, found that: [G]ay students or those who are out or coded as gay [are sometimes] given extra work at school, including extracurricular workbeing asked to be the MC at an event, or fixing the stage for a performance, being asked to clean up after school. Because of a stereotype that theyre reliable, or combine the best of both male and female students, a kind of androgynous thing going on. I hear that from students but also teachersteachers who say, I love my gay students, theyre so helpful, I ask them to stay after school. Theyre tasked with leadership roles. In a similar vein, one university instructor told Human Rights Watch that as faculty members, were often delegating responsibilities to members of the LGBT community because we know theyll do it well. Rodrigo S., a gay high school teacher in Dipolog City, observed: I guess there are pressures for gay childrenand I see thisto do really well in class, I guess, because that kind of saves you from being bullied. Like, you ought to get somewhere so people wont make fun. A lot of my students wanted to excel in whatever they were doing, being artistic, because they wanted to be accepted. A lot of my gay students were at the top of the class. In interviews, it appeared that many LGBT students had internalized the message that their acceptance as LGBT was conditional on being dutiful, talented members of the school community. Virgil D., a 20-year-old gay man in high school in Bacacay, said, I think the gays should dress properly and be responsible. And then theyll be treated well. Mary B., an 18-year-old transgender woman in a high school in Manila, said: For us to be better accepted, were taking proactive measures to be accepted into the community. Were setting good examples. We engage in extracurricular activities, we organize events for the school, we stop bullying when we see it, we promote child protection. We become model citizens, model students, and it improves our stature. Manalastas found that the demand to be respectable put a heavy burden on LGBT students who did not conform: It may be that gay students are warmly received, generally speaking, but if youre characterized as one of the indecent onesperceived as very sexual, very loud, very gender non-conforming or outr, its different. He added that LGBT people from lower socioeconomic strata often face double discrimination, as exemplified by the common insult baklang kalyeyoure bakla and also you come from the streets, you dont have a proper house, youre poor. Some students were keenly aware of these conditions and expressed frustration with them, voicing a desire to be treated with the same inherent respect as their non-LGBT classmates. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, said: Sometimes teachers say things like you have to respect gays and lesbians because theyre the breadwinners for their family, theyre reliable, theyre good at makeup, costume making, talent. Im proud of being gaymy teacher says something good about being gay, but why do I have to earn that respect? Its not 100 percent good. Some of my gay classmates dont have those talents, and how does that make them feel? Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, described another stereotype that he found oppressive: the idea that gay males should be entertainers, jokers, and talented performers. He said classmates and teachers: put so much pressure on me that because Im gay, I should be comedic, I should be funny all the time, I should jokeand Im not that kind of person, to crack jokes and sing and entertain. In our entertainment industry, gays are usually presented as comic relief. And thats okay at some point, but thats it? Theres more to being gay than being funny and entertainers. And because of that, usually our job opportunities are being limited to being a hairdresser, working at a salon, being a comedian. And Id like to be a researcher or a lawyer. Were diverse people, like straight people. When students and teachers reinforce these stereotypes, they put pressure on those who do not fit preconceived notions of being gay and constrain their education and employment options. In an interview with Human Rights Watch, a local government official who had organized a job training program for LGBT people noted that the program specifically trained LGBT people to be clowns and hosts for pageants and other events. Young lesbian women encounter different stereotypes. Dalisay N., a 20-year-old panromantic woman who had attended high school in Manila, observed that lesbian girls were particularly disadvantaged by teachers because the lesbian community, they dont see us like that, like the gays, the creative ones who do something artsy, that gay people are at the top of the list.Instead, according to Eric Manalastas, the stereotype with lesbians is that theyre dangerous, a danger to other female students. Not in terms of being violent, but maybe as predatory. Or generally a bad influencenot good for moral developmentas though they arent also adolescents themselves. In interviews with Human Rights Watch, young bisexual women recounted how teachers scrutinized girls they considered butch or masculine, and took steps to separate them from other girls to prevent them from becoming close. For youth who are transgender, pressure to pass according to their gender identity and, for transgender girls, to achieve high standards of physical beauty, were a serious source of stress for those who felt they lacked the ability or resources to meet the expectations of others. These stereotypes were among the most consistent themes in interviews with LGBT youth. They illustrate how attitudes and informal practices, even when well-intentioned, can place heavy expectations on LGBT youth and undermine the notion that all youth are deserving of respect and acceptance. They underscore the importance of anti-bullying efforts, information and resources, and antidiscrimination policies that emphasize that all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, have rights that must be respected in schools. IV. Exclusion from Curricula and Resources When LGBT students face hostility in their homes, communities, and peer groups, access to affirming information and resources is vitally important. In interviews, however, few LGBT students in the Philippines felt that their schools provided adequate access to information and resources about sexual orientation, gender identity, and being LGBT. As scholars have noted, heterosexismor the assumption that heterosexuality is the natural or preferable form of human sexualitycan take two different forms in educational settings: (1) denigration, including overt discrimination, anti-gay remarks, and other forms of explicit homophobia against gay and lesbian students and teachers, or (2) denial, the presumption that gay and lesbian sexualities and identities simply do not exist and that heterosexual concerns are the only issues worth discussing. By neglecting or disparaging LGBT youth, both forms of heterosexism, alongside cisnormativitythe assumption that peoples gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth, sometimes accompanied by denigration of transgender identitiesare harmful to the rights and well-being of LGBT students in the Philippines. A recent analysis of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the Philippines found that LGBT youth are often neglected in school environments, particularly in light of strong constitutional protections for academic freedom, which give schools considerable leeway to design curricula and resources. In interviews with Human Rights Watch, LGBT students described how the absence of information and resources proved detrimental to their rights and well-being and why DepEd, lawmakers, and school administrators should embrace inclusive reforms. School Curricula Very few of the LGBT students interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they encountered positive portrayals of LGBT people as part of the school curriculum. In many cases, LGBT people were simply invisible, with no acknowledgment that people are LGBT or discussion of LGBT history, literature, or other issues. One study found that, in elementary school textbooks required by DepEd: [C]haracters that portray femininity are always women, while men always portray masculinity. There is a clear binary and strict gender attributes and roles between the two genders; and both gender are always portrayed in a fixed stereotypical manner. Hence, with the strict portrayal of women as feminine and continuously at home, while men [are] masculine as the breadwinner, couples, as heterosexuals, are legitimized and naturalized, leaving no room for other forms of sexuality. These discourses do not leave any room for diverse forms of family, such as single-headed families, families with overseas contract workers, families that are cared for by young or aging people, homosexual couples, to name a few. It only legitimizes the heterosexual couple and renounc[es] other forms. Students confirmed that discussions of LGBT people in classes where LGBT issues might arisefor example, history, literature, biology, or psychologyare exceedingly rare. As Leah O., a 14-year-old bisexual girl in Marikina, said, The teachers dont mention LGBT. Alex R., a 17-year-old gay boy from San Miguel, similarly noted, I didnt hear teachers say anything about LGBT issues in class. Interviews with teachers and administrators illustrated why LGBT issues are absent from the curriculum. Alon B., a gay teacher in Cebu City, recalled how a gay student asked a question about LGBT identities, which he answered in front of the class. Alon's department chair overheard the conversation and reprimanded him, and relieved him of his teaching load the following semester. One LGBT advocate recalled asking his aunt, who was a high school principal, how LGBT issues were handled in the school: She told meI was surprised, she said, I dont want to touch on that subject. And I asked why immediately, and she said it was a sensitive issue. [T]heyre careful not to offend parents. Interviews with LGBT students suggest that when LGBT issues are discussed in class, teachers frequently portray them in a negative light. Often, this was the case in values education or religion classes, which were offered in public as well as private schools but often had a strongly Catholic orientation. Juan N., a 22-year-old transgender man who had attended high school in Manila, said that in theology classes, There would be a lecture where theyd somehow pass by the topic of homosexuality and show you, try to illustrate that in the Bible, in Christian theology, homosexuality is a sin, and if you want to be a good Christian you shouldnt engage in those activities. Jessica L., a 22-year-old transgender woman from Pampanga province, noted how challenging this was as a student who was questioning her gender identity: [T]eachers would say, oh God only created man and woman, and so Im like who created me, I want to know? And who created us? So were the imperfections of God? Its so hard. Its like youre taking the bull by the horns every day. Ernesto N., a gay teacher in Cebu City, recalled walking down a hallway past a class being taught by a values education teacher, who says that you should not be gay because you will go to hell. You will no longer go to heaven. One values education teacher explained why she taught students that a proposed anti-discrimination bill protecting LGBT rights was wrong: I informed them of the SOGI bill, I told them that it will become a law soon. For some of us Christians its alarming, because for example two boys will be approaching a priest, and will ask them to be married. And if the priest wants to marry them, again as Christians, we have this kind of same-sex marriage, what can be nextits a slippery slope, there will be sexual intercourse, I dont think that will be good. Juan N. said, I remember even in a physics class, we had the topic of negative and positive attraction, and negative doesnt attract, and [the teacher] said men are for women only, and never men for men or women for women. And I remember it because it came out of nowherewe were talking about magnets! In a speech class, Ruby S., a 16-year-old transgender girl who had attended high school in Batangas, recalled delivering a presentation about coming out, coming out of your shell, coming out as a gay manwhich I was thenand I said coming out was a good thing to do, but the teacher commented, I support you gay people, but if you have a relationship with a man, its a sin, the Bible says this, the Bible says that. Pablo V., an 18-year-old gay student who attended high school in San Jose, said: In our school, we presented a playtheres a gay characterand then our principal told me that its not possible for us to present because theres a gay character in our presentation. Without training teachers about LGBT identities and issues, stereotypes and misinformation spread unchecked. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, recalled an instance in high school where one teacher said that if you eat a lot of chicken, you turn gay. And she said if you would eat a lot of ramen, you turn lesbian. I wouldnt dare question her, because shes in charge of my grade, but deep inside I was shakingI mean, how unbelievable. Eating chicken will turn you gay? Thats crazy. It would really help if they would undergo training. Because theyre teaching the kids wrong stuff. Its a cycleif they teach this, they pass it on to the next generation. In discussions about curricular offerings, students of all sexual orientations and gender identities voiced a desire to learn about LGBT topics in school. As Isabel A., a 16-year-old heterosexual girl in Cebu City, observed: We want to understand, even if were not lesbian or gay, so we can understand gays and lesbians. For LGBT students, discussing LGBT issues was particularly important. Felix P., a 22-year-old gay high school student in Legazpi, suggested that it would be better if there was education on LGBT rights in the school, because it would be easier to respect and value individuals, regardless of whether theyre women or menand LGBT people in school wouldnt be stereotyped as infected with HIV. Discussions of LGBT topics in high schools were rare, but occurred more frequently at the university level. There, professors who were open to discussing LGBT topics observed how inclusivity improved the educational environment. According to one literature professor, If theyre out as members of the LGBTQ community, I can ask them questions about it, and theyre more engaged. When Im open with my students about their relationships, they tend to study better. Theyre never absent. Theyre more comfortable. If the teacher is more discriminatory, they wont be open to talking about how it affects them and what they think about it. Comprehensive Sexuality Education In order to understand their own sexuality and to make responsible choices, LGBT students, as well as other students, need access to information about sexuality that is non-judgmental and takes into account the whole range of human intimacy. In recent years, many countries have moved toward providing comprehensive sexuality education, which UNESCO describes as an age-appropriate, culturally relevant approach to teaching about sex and relationships by providing scientifically accurate, realistic, non-judgmental information. As part of comprehensive sexuality education, LGBT students as well as their heterosexual, cisgender peers should have access to relevant material about their development, relationships, and safer sex. Scholars in the Philippines have found that [r]esearch on Filipino young adult sexuality has been explicit in stressing the need for a comprehensive educational framework that addresses gender and sexuality issues. One study found that gay learners expressed dissatisfaction about sexuality education in high school, both for its heterosexist bias and its restrictive philosophy, and desired more information about sexual identity and orientation, body image, love and friendship, HIV/AIDS, and gender roles. This is more generally true across the Asia-Pacific region, where UNESCO has found that young people want more inclusive content that address same-sex attraction and diversity. The passage of the 2012 Reproductive Health Law, which calls for DepEd to issue a sexuality education curriculum and for schools to adopt minimum standards, created an opening for accurate and non-judgmental discussions of LGBT identities and sexuality. UNESCO, in a 2015 report, noted that NGOs are working with experts and Department of Education officials to establish minimum standards on sexuality education that include anti-bullying standards addressing both gender-based violence and other bullying and violence on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. However, at the time of this writing, DepEd had only recently incorporated sexuality education into school curricula, five years after the passage of the law, without adopting standards developed by a panel of experts or training teachers in sexuality education. Both the UN Population Fund and the governments task force on the implementation of the law have noted that implementation of the law has fallen short, leaving students across the Philippines without access to comprehensive sexuality education. Professionals who work with students have found that existing sexuality education modules are limited for youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities but also routinely exclude instruction about LGBT concerns. Perci Cendana, a commissioner with the National Youth Commission, explained that at present, Young people dont get information about safer sex, period. And young [men who have sex with men] and [transgender] kids dont get it from the sources where they should get it. Human Rights Watch recently documented how resistance from conservative lawmakers and school administrators has stymied comprehensive sexuality education in schools in the Philippines, exacerbating rapidly rising rates of HIV transmission among MSM and transgender women. In interviews with Human Rights Watch, students who received sexuality education described receiving that education at various grade levels, with varying degrees of comprehensiveness. But across the board, they stated that their sexuality education classes either excluded any discussion of LGBT people or conveyed inaccurate and stigmatizing messages about same-sex conduct and the existence of transgender people. While some students only discussed anatomy and reproduction in their sexuality education curriculum, others learned about sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, safer sex, and family planning. In virtually all cases, however, sexuality education was limited to discussions of heterosexual reproduction and sex. Mary B., an 18-year-old transgender woman in a high school in Manila, said, We had classroom instruction on sexual health. They told us about sexualitymy teacher strongly believes in the Bible, and the idea that God created only men and women. They havent mentioned LGBT people. Efren D., an 18-year-old bisexual man who had attended high school in Quezon City, said, we tackled the planning methods, the condoms, other contraceptives. But its basic. Not deeper than that. And it was all boy-girl. Id like LGBT sexuality education, to be a little more aware, as LGBT people. In many instances, sexuality education conveyed misinformation or disapproval about LGBT identities and relationships. Gabby W., a 16-year-old transgender girl at a high school in Bayombong, said that teachers always say that gay is a disease, that its a contagious disease. Or say being gay is a sin. Bea R., a 22-year-old transgender woman at another school in the area, said that although science teachers do cover safer sex at her school, They say that LGBT are the ones spreading HIV and chlamydia. Francis C., a 19-year-old gay student from Pulilan, was similarly told by teachers that there were same-sex who were doing those activities, but they would say that if two males or two female did those activities, they would become sick or ill. Jonas E., a 17-year-old gay boy in high school in Mandaue City, noted: I get really offended when they talk about HIV. They say that gays are the main focus of HIV Im a bit ashamed of that, because I was once in section where Im the only gay, and they kept pointing at me. When comprehensive sexuality education is not provided in schools, students may not receive information about their physical and emotional development, relationships, decision making, HIV and sexually transmitted infections, safer sex, contraception, and reproductive health at all. Past research has suggested that, especially for LGBT youth, [s]exuality is rarely discussed informatively in the home, and being gay not at all. Rodrigo S., a gay high school teacher in Dipolog City, observed that parents avoid [sexuality] as much as possible. I dont know if its actually easy for students to find a figure, someone they can ask about things like that. With little guidance at home or in school, LGBT students turned to various sources of uncertain quality for information about sexuality. Students told Human Rights Watch that they had learned what they knew about LGBT identities, relationships, and sexual health from friends, the internet, pornography, and experience. As previous research has suggested, [p]eers may provide very vivid information presented using shared meanings, but the adequateness of this information is, in hindsight, suspect. Students themselves doubted the information they received. Tricia C., a 14-year-old girl in Marikina, admitted, The information we get from other people is not accurate. Its too early for us to know whats true. Reports that LGBT students learned about sexuality from what Jin W., a 20-year-old man who attended high school in Manila described as live action are particularly worrying, as they illustrate how LGBT youth engage in sexual activity before they have access to information about how to keep themselves safe. Counseling and Support In addition to formal curricula, schools provide a variety of resources to students. Support from teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, and other school personnel is a valuable asset, and should be available to guide LGBT youth as well as their non-LGBT peers. According to UNESCO, support from teachers can have a particularly positive impact on LGBT and intersex students, improving their self-esteem and contributing to less absenteeism, greater feelings of safety and belonging and better academic achievement. Students in the Philippines have signaled a desire for faculty and staff support. As one study found, [s]tudents want their teachers, who are in a position of influence and credibility, to dispel common misconceptions and misperceptions about gay and bisexual people. Nonetheless, few teachers or guidance counselors are trained to provide support for LGBT youth. As Rina Fulo of the Women and Gender Institute at Miriam College noted, We do a lot of training related to gender fair education, and we see that teachers and administrators have their biases. Were worried if they can actually follow through. Remedios Moog, a guidance counselor at the University of the East in Caloocan, similarly recalled that when she presents papers on LGBT-inclusive counseling, there are different reactions, negative, positive, some counselors saying great job, and you see the affirmation, and other counselors, No, you should not label, you should not call them lesbian, gay, bisexual, seeming to suggest that guidance counselors should ignore students sexual identities altogether. Although some counselors have created successful programs for LGBT students, such as support groups, such efforts need to have support from the school administration to ensure counselors are recognized as affirming, non-judgmental resources. As one study found, it has been the experience of gay students (or perhaps students in general) that the guidance counselor is associated with delinquent and problem students. This image of the guidance counselor may contribute to the problematization of gay identity in school settings, that being gay is something that has to be dealt with with and by these counselors. Interviews with LGBT youth in the Philippines underscore the urgent need for resources and support. Jerome B., a 19-year-old gay man from Cebu City, recalled that in secondary school, I was questioning for a long timeis there something wrong with me? Am I mentally ill? I planned to talk to a psychiatrist because I thought I had a mental illness. We had a guidance counselor. But I wouldnt go to them, because I was too ashamed. For some students, bullying and a lack of resources led to depression and thoughts of suicide. Benjie A., a 20-year-old gay student from Manila, recounted struggling to make sense of his identity until I thought about getting a gun from a policeman and shooting myself. Many students declined to go to counselors for help and support, expecting that they would be hostile to LGBT youth. Patrick G., a 19-year-old gay man who had attended high school in Cainta, recalled that his high school guidance counselor would quote Bible passages and say that God created Adam and Eve, and not Adam and Steve, things like that. As a result, Patrick said, I didnt really have the courage to come out of the closet, or at least accept or think I was gay. I think it made me step back farther in the closet. When students did seek out help, some counselors declined to discuss LGBT issues. Ella M., a 23-year-old transgender woman who had attended high school in Manila, recalled an instance when a counselor asked about her personal life. When she confided that she thought she might be attracted to a boy, the counselor told her Im not going to comment on that, because I dont have any information on that. Other LGBT students described going to counselors and facing outright hostility or condemnation. Ace F., a 24-year-old gay man who had attended high school in Manila, said that his school counselor used decades-old psychological materials: What they taught us was DSM-3 or DSM-2where being gay is still classified as a mental disorder. Thats what they taught us. I was pretty well informed because I was a debater, so I would question them about it: its already outdated, its not the standard, its not considered a mental disease. But they would institutionally still say that it was a disease, a mental disorder, its bad. LGBT students interviewed said some counselors passed moral judgment on them. Reyna, a 24-year-old transgender woman, recalled being told to go to her high school counselor because she wore nail polish and makeup, and said they would read some biblical passage or verses that includes, you know, Sodom and Gomorrah. They would always tell me, Reyna, you will go to Hell if you dont change. And I was afraid that time, because of course, who wants to go to Hell? When guidance counselors were willing to discuss LGBT identities in an open and non-judgmental way, many LGBT students said they felt affirmed and supported. For instance, Nathan P., a 19-year-old gay man who attended a high school in Bulacan, said I did talk to my counselors in high school, and I was thankful theyre so open minded, and helping me, when Im so confused. For Nathan, whose friends were pressuring him to disclose his sexuality and causing him stress, having a supportive counselor was a source of comfort that ultimately helped him resolve the situation with his peers. Student Organizations LGBT student groups are extremely rare at the secondary school level in the Philippines. Yet at the university level, these groups have been a powerful resource for LGBT students. Since at least 1992, when UP Babaylan formed at the University of the Philippines, these groups have provided educational programming to the university community, advocated for policy changes, and offered peer support to LGBT members. As a recent UNESCO study notes, these organizations can be powerful sources of information and support in school environments: School-based and school-linked programmes providing peer support [for LGBT students] engage students in rejecting bullying, violence and other forms of discrimination. These can include student associations, youth groups, peer mentoring systems, extra-curricular or club-based activities as well as other pairing or peer networks within schools. These programmes can help to create feelings of connectedness, and respectful and supportive relationships that develop empathy, responsibility and concern for others. They can also build confidence, leadership behaviours and social skills. LGBT students have expressed a need for organizational support structures such as LGBT student groups. Yet despite their many advantages and student demand, LGBT groups in Philippine secondary schools are rare. As Carlos M., a 19-year-old gay student from Olongapo City, observed: I wish they had it when I was in high school. There were so many of us LGBT when I was in high school. I wish they had a program to strengthen the bonds of LGBT students. Gloria Z., a 22-year-old bisexual woman from Cavite, said: "I wish we had a support group. There were other female students, lesbians, and they were forced to be straight because of our Catholic upbringing. They would discriminate [against] them, just like me. And there were so many of us trying to act straight, and we were part of the rainbow community. In some instances reported to Human Rights Watch, school personnel have been unsupportive of LGBT groups. Sean B., a 17-year-old gay student in Bayombong, said: I tried to start a student organization, but we dont have enough allies with teachers. Its all about awareness, to make other students understand what we are, to be able to reach out to them, to make them feel, were gays, were also humans, not animals or trash. Student Organizations in Universities LGBT organizations are increasingly prevalent at the university level, but many groups encounter obstacles from administrators in post-secondary settings as well. In interviews with Human Rights Watch, some university students also described difficulties forming or operating LGBT groups. Students from one university in Manila told Human Rights Watch that, after creating an LGBT organization in 2012, they were instructed in 2016 to rename the organization and work on the broad topic of gender sensitivity, as the university did not want a group overtly focused on LGBT issues. Rosamie T., an 18-year-old bisexual woman, noted the group had been active and well-known as an LGBT organization, and they wanted us to rebrand because its known for that. She said that, after losing a large number of members and becoming less active as a result of the reorganization, Its like were starting again from zero. Although this report focuses on secondary schools, universities should also recognize the importance of LGBT organizations and take steps to foster and sustain them. V. Philippines Legal Obligations to Protect LGBT Students In recent years, the Philippines has enacted important laws and regulations that affirm the rights of LGBT learners in schools. DepEds Child Protection Policy, the Anti-Bullying Law, and the Reproductive Health Lawas well as anti-discrimination ordinances at the local levelreiterate the governments commitment to ensuring that all youth are safe, healthy, and able to learn in schools. The Philippines has also ratified core international agreements that obligate lawmakers, administrators, and teachers to protect the rights of LGBT youth, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The UN expert bodies that interpret these agreements have expressed concern about discrimination against LGBT students in schools, prompting the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to recommend that States establish national standards on non-discrimination in education, develop anti-bullying programmes and helplines and other services to support LGBTI youth, and to provide comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education. Right to Education The right to education is enshrined in international law, notably in the ICESCR and the CRC, both ratified by the Philippines. The CRC specifies that education should be directed toward, among other objectives, [t]he development of the childs personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, [t]he development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and [t]he preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin. LGBT students are denied the right to education when bullying, exclusion, and discriminatory policies prevent them from participating in the classroom or attending school. LGBT students right to education is also curtailed when teachers and curricula do not include information that is relevant to their development or are outwardly discriminatory toward LGBT people. To make the right to education meaningful, schools should ensure that school curricula, interactions with school personnel, and school policies are non-discriminatory and provide information to LGBT youth on the same terms as their non-LGBT peers. The right to education includes the right to comprehensive sexual education, which is especially lacking for LGBT youth in the Philippines. As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education has explained: The right to education includes the right to sexual education, which is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights, such as the right to health, the right to information and sexual and reproductive rights. A curriculum that only prepares students for heterosexual sex inside of marriage normalizes, stereotypes, and promotes images that are discriminatory because they are based on heteronormativity; by denying the existence of the lesbian, gay, transsexual, transgender and bisexual population, they expose these groups to risky and discriminatory practices. The Philippine Congress recognized the importance of sexuality education with the passage of the Reproductive Health Law, which mandates age- and development-appropriate sexuality education in schools. The Philippines should take further steps to implement the law in a manner that is consistent with its treaty obligations. To ensure the right to education is respected, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has said that sexuality education provided by schools: should include self-awareness and knowledge about the body, including anatomical, physiological and emotional aspects, and should be accessible to all children, girls and boys. It should include content related to sexual health and well-being, such as information about body changes and maturation processes, and designed in a manner through which children are able to gain knowledge regarding reproductive health and the prevention of gender-based violence, and adopt responsible sexual behavior. This information must not only be provided to heterosexual, cisgender students. Schools must also provide LGBT students with relevant content to ensure they enjoy the same right to education without discrimination. Comprehensive sexuality education must be free of prejudices and stereotypes that could be used to justify discrimination and violence against any group, and must pay special attention to diversity, since everyone has the right to deal with his or her own sexuality without being discriminated against on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Violence and Bullying Under domestic and international law, LGBT children in the Philippines have the right to be free from bullying, harassment, and violence. The Constitution of the Philippines obligates the government to defend [t]he right of children to assistance, including special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development. To this end, the Anti-Bullying Law requires elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to address the existence of bullying in their respective institutions, and outlines baseline requirements for such policies. Similarly, DepEds Child Protection Policy requires that school administrators, among other responsibilities, [e]nsure the institution of effective child protection policies and procedures, and monitor compliance thereof, [c]onduct the appropriate training and capability-building activities on child protection measures and protocols, and [e]nsure that all incidents of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and other similar acts are addressed. The terms of the Anti-Bullying Law and Child Protection Policy echo the Philippines obligations under international law. The ICCPR states that "[e]very child shall have the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State," while the CRC requires governments to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation. The government of the Philippines signed UNESCOs Call for Action on Homophobic and Transphobic Violence, issued in November 2016, which commits it to monitoring the prevalence of homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, providing students with information about harmful gender-based stereotypes, training school personnel, and taking steps to make schools safe for LGBT youth. Children who are especially likely to face violence, including bullying, merit specific attention and protection from the state. As the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN body that monitors implementation of the CRC, has noted, [g]roups of children which are likely to be exposed to violence include, but are not limited to, children who are lesbian, gay, transgender or transsexual. The committee has repeatedly described bullying, harassment, and violence against LGBT youth as violations of childrens rights, and emphasized that [a] school which allows bullying or other violent and exclusionary practices to occur is not one which meets the requirements of article 29(1), the CRC provision specifying the aims of education. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has identified steps that

governments should take to protect children from bullying, harassment, and other forms of violence. These include challenging discriminatory attitudes that allow intolerance and violence to flourish, establishing reporting mechanisms, and providing guidance and training for teachers and administrators to know how to respond when they see or hear about incidents of violence. When taking these steps, the committee has stressed that children themselves should be involved in the development of prevention strategies in general and in school, in particular in the elimination and prevention of bullying, and other forms of violence in school. Right to Health Bullying, exclusion, and discrimination generate physical and mental health risks that threaten the right to health for LGBT youth. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concern about the health consequences of bullying, including suicide, and has urged governments to take the necessary actions to prevent and prohibit all forms of violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, corporal punishment and other inhuman, degrading or humiliating treatment or punishment in school, by school personnel as well as among students. The ICESCR recognizes the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The CRC reinforces that children must enjoy this right, and states that, in pursuit of that goal, governments will ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed [and] have access to education, and will develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has said that [i]n order to fully realize the right to health for all children, States parties have an obligation to ensure that childrens health is not undermined as a result of discrimination, which is a significant factor contributing to vulnerability, including discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and health status. The significant shortcomings of sexuality education in schools in the Philippines also undermine the right to health for all students, but particularly LGBT students. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has explained that youth are "vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because their first sexual experience may take place in an environment in which they have no access to proper information and guidance. Omitting information about same-sex activity and transgender identity from sexuality education curricula undermines LGBT students right to health. To ensure their rights are respected, the committee has said that governments must refrain from censoring, withholding, or intentionally misrepresenting health-related information, including sexual education and information, and ensure children have the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others as they begin to express their sexuality. Freedom of Expression The ICCPR recognizes that everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression, and the CRC expressly recognizes that the right extends to children. The right to free expression is violated when schools limit displays of same-sex affection or gender expression solely for LGBT youth. Schools need to ensure that LGBT students are able to participate in the school environment on the same terms as other students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Freedom from Discrimination Even as municipalities and provinces pass anti-discrimination ordinances to protect the rights of LGBT people, the Philippines has not passed comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited under many of the treaties the Philippines has ratified. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has concluded: freedom from discrimination is a fundamental obligation of States under international law, and requires States to prohibit and prevent discrimination in private and public spheres, and to diminish conditions and attitudes that cause or perpetuate such discrimination. To this end, States should enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes sexual orientation and gender identity among protected grounds. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has explained that discrimination in the school setting, whether it is overt or hidden, offends the human dignity of the child and is capable of undermining or even destroying the capacity of the child to benefit from educational opportunities. Because of the dangers that discrimination poses to health and development, children at risk of discrimination are entitled to special attention and protection from all segments of society. The committee has specifically expressed concern about discrimination against children on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity in its review of state policies. Students who are transgender or do not identify as their sex assigned at birth face especially pervasive discrimination as a result of uniform and hair-length policies and other gendered restrictions. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has expressed concern about discriminatory dress codes that restrict men dressing a manner perceived as feminine and women dressing in a manner perceived as masculine, and punish those who do so, and noted that United Nations mechanisms have called upon States to legally recognize transgender persons preferred gender, without abusive requirements. To make schools less discriminatory and more inclusive of transgender youth, UNESCO recommends that laws and policies should recognise self-defined gender identity with no medical preconditions or exclusions based on age, marital or family status or other grounds. Recommendations Speak out, as you have done in the past, against bullying in schools, reiterating that bullying of LGBT youth is harmful and unacceptable. Speak out in support of an anti-discrimination bill that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including in education, employment, health care, and public accommodations. Enact an anti-discrimination bill that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including in education, employment, health care, and public accommodations. Authorize funding for the implementation of the Reproductive Health Law and any necessary support for comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Undertake a comprehensive review of school compliance with the provisions of the Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Law. Collect and publish data on the number of schools nationally that address sexual orientation and gender identity in their Child Protection Policy and Anti-Bullying Law. Recommend that schools that do not address sexual orientation and gender identity revise their policies to do so. Create a system to gather and publish data about bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools. Revise forms to more clearly differentiate and record incidents of gender-based bullying on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity, and include these categories on all forms related to bullying, abuse, or violence against children. Immediately review all curricula, including textbooks and teaching materials, to ensure that LGBT issues are incorporated. Remove content that is inaccurate or derogatory toward LGBT people and include content that is relevant to LGBT youth and promotes respect for gender diversity. Revise the standard sexuality education curriculum to ensure it aligns with UNESCOs guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education, is medically and scientifically accurate, is inclusive of LGBT youth, and covers same-sex activity on equal footing with other sexual activity. Issue an order instructing schools to respect students gender identity with regard to dress codes, access to facilities, and participation in curricular and extracurricular activities. Conduct trainings, in collaboration with LGBT rights groups where possible, to familiarize DepEd personnel at the division and district levels with LGBT terminology and issues. Enact local ordinances to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including in education, employment, health care, and public accommodations. Promulgate implementing rules and regulations to ensure that existing anti-discrimination ordinances are applied and enforced. Adopt anti-bullying and anti-discrimination policies that are inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity, inform students how they should report incidents of bullying, and specify consequences for bullying. Conduct trainings, in collaboration with LGBT civil society groups where possible, for child protection committees and school staff to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of LGBT youth. The trainings should inform school staff about proper terminology, the forms of bullying and discrimination that LGBT youth face, the rights that LGBT youth enjoy under domestic and international law, and resources and services available for LGBT youth. Conduct trainings, in collaboration with childrens rights groups where possible, for child protection committees and school staff to ensure they are able to recognize and intervene in bullying and harassment when they witness it occurring or it is brought to their attention. Promulgate guidelines instructing school staff to respect the gender identity of students with regard to dress codes, access to facilities, and participation in curricular and extracurricular activities. Commemorate occasions like Human Rights Day and National Womens Month with programming that promotes human rights and respect for gender diversity in schools. Ensure that the school has resources available for LGBT youth, for example, books and printed material, access to counselors or other supportive personnel, and curricular resources that are inclusive of LGBT youth. Ryan Thoreson, a researcher in the LGBT Rights Program, wrote this report based on research that he undertook from September 2016 to February 2017. Daniel Lee, associate with the Asia division, conducted additional interviews and wrote a section of the report. The report was reviewed by Neela Ghoshal, senior researcher in the LGBT Rights Program; Michael Bochenek, senior counsel in the Childrens Rights Division; and Carlos Conde, Philippines researcher in the Asia Division. James Ross, legal and policy director, and Joe Saunders, deputy program director, provided legal and program review, respectively. Production assistance was provided by Olivia Hunter, publications associate; Fitzroy Hepkins, administrative manager; and Jose Martinez, senior coordinator. Human Rights Watch would like to thank the experts and organizations that provided information for the report, including ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, Babaylanes, Inc., Bisdak Pride, Bulsu Bahaghari, ChildFund Philippines, the Childrens Legal Rights and Development Center, GALANG, Gayon Albay, Happy Hearts, Lagablab, MCC Marikina, Side B, TransMan Pilipinas, and UP Babaylan. Particular thanks go to the many students who shared their experiences with us. US President-elect Donald Trumps inflammatory rhetoric concerning the rights of lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual (LGBT) people is nothing new. His first term in office from 2017 until 2021 resulted in a wave of discriminatory measures aimed at limiting protections for LGBT people across the United States. Since then, state legislatures around the country have continued to pursue or pass draconian bills to limit the presence of LGBT people in public life, including rolling back freedoms for trans children. Senior Web Producer Paul Aufiero spoke with LGBT rights specialist Ryan Thoreson about whats at stake under a second Trump presidency.What does a second Trump term mean for the rights of LGBT people in the US?Donald Trumps first term gives us a glimpse of what we can likely expect to see this time around. He previously stacked his administration and the judiciary with people who are overtly hostile to LGBT rights. We saw the consequences of that in a lot of the administrations policies and executive orders, including one that banned transgender people from serving in the US military.Trump and other Republican Party candidates also targeted transgenderpeople during the 2024 campaign, running anti-trans attack ads in various states and making absurd claims about schools performing gender surgeries on children. So I think were likely to see the federal government turn against trans people in the way that individual US states have in recent years.How have US states already been curbing LGBT peoples rights?Since about 2021, on the heels of the first Trump administration, theres been a significant uptick in state legislatures proposing or passing laws targeting LGBT people, and trans kids in particular. Some of the worst trends involve denying trans childrenaccess to sports, barring them fromappropriate bathroom facilities, andouting them to family members.More than half of US states also prohibit transgender children fromobtaining often life-saving, gender-affirming medical care. Major medical associations consider this type of care best practice for many transgender children, as it can alleviate a lot of the mental health stressors of gender dysphoria they can experience as they grow and their bodies change. Some states have also sought to exclude transgender girls from participating in sports, including some imposing blanket bans. This has the detrimental effect that trans kids who are often bullied or face isolation at school cant take part in and get the benefits of the teamwork and physical activity that school sports provide.Seven states also limit or ban discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity in schools, and four more restrict whether and how same-sex activity can be discussed in schools. These laws are passed to prevent children from learning about diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, with little regard for the harmful effects that isolation and invisibility can have on young people who do or will identify as LGBT or have LGBT family members.How could this kind of discrimination and erasure play out on the national stage under the next Trump administration?Well, one example is Trump saying that hell outright ban gender-affirming care for minors in the US.He also said hell ask Congress to establish that only two genders will be federally recognized. This would stop progress currently being made in the country to recognize non-binary individuals, which weve seen in federal and state efforts to allow people to choose a third gender option of X on passports, licenses, and other documents.This is also problematic for trans people generally, as it lays the groundwork for laws and policies that Congress could pass. Some Republicans in Congress have already introduced legislation that would make providing gender-affirming care a crime in the US or that would prohibit transgender girls from playing sports nationwide.Many of the changes proposed by lawmakers and Trump would exclude transgender students fromTitle IX protections, a federal law banning sex discrimination in federally funded educational institutions. This would affect school policies on students use of pronouns, bathrooms, and locker rooms.Trump also said during the campaign that he would roll back federal policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. During his first term, his administration weakened some of these protections.What about LGBT peoples rights globally?Trumps previous administration made some gestures toward respect for LGBT rights abroad, but they didnt go far in terms of policy. The Biden administration went much farther, for example by promoting non-discrimination through State Department programming. The next Trump administration could roll some of that back.Trumps past unwillingness to discuss human rights issues with foreign leaders could prove very harmful to LGBT people abroad. As Russia, Hungary, and other governments pass anti-LGBT legislation including laws that have cracked down on LGBT families, discussions of LGBT topics in public, and organizations working to promote LGBT peoples rights the US voice on LGBT issues around the world could be lost.How do you see your work changing?I dont think the guiding principles of Human Rights Watchs work will change much. As we discussed, even under the Biden administration, weve been vocally critical of lawmakers at the state level passing legislation targeting trans kids and their families. Well also need to expand on work we did during the first Trump administration around erosions of non-discrimination protections and access to health care.That said, I think one of the lessons from the first Trump administration is that there will be things that nobody expected. Banning trans people from the military was one of those. Advocates and LGBT people have to be nimble and responsive to threats as they come up.What can LGBT people and advocates in the US do to prepare? Over the next couple months, before the new administration takes office, people who feel they might be at risk should get their paperwork or documentation in order. That could be legal recognition of parentage or other family documentation. Many organizations are recommending that people shore up anything that bolsters legal recognition of their marriages, such as additional estate planning and powers of attorney. Also, if its important for someone to get a passport or birth certificate that reflects their gender identity, this is a good time to do that.I think its important to prepare for institutions to be attacked. Lawmakers at the national level have proposed limiting federal funding for organizations that work on sexual and reproductive rights issues, including trans health and rights. Trump has likewise said that federal dollars shouldn't go to institutions that promote gender ideology.That could mean that comprehensive sexuality education may not be offered to LGBT, or any, kids through schools, so it will fall on community organizations and families to provide that education. And as books about LGBT people and issues may be removed from school and public libraries, donating resources or otherwise helping to fund and support community organizations that help marginalized LGBT communities might be helpful in the coming years.Anything else we should look out for?We talked about threats to gender-affirming care, but I think broader attacks on health care for LGBT people are likely to be a constant concern over the next four years.The administrations unwillingness to enforce civil rights could leave those alleging LGBT discrimination without much hope, especially if judges become more hostile to LGBT discrimination claims.And having sex and gender defined federally as just that assigned at birth will likely exacerbate problems LGBT people already have in finding affordable, accessible care.On a more positive note, watch out for opportunities to be an advocate and show support for LGBT peoples rights in any way you can. Many local organizations have been doing critical work meeting the needs of the most marginalized LGBT communities, and giving them your time, money, and energy goes a long way. Just being a vocal ally matters too. Supportive adults can make an enormous difference in LGBT kids mental health and well-being, and showing support is even more critical as policymaking and rhetoric become more hostile.However you can, find ways to make a difference in your community to pave the way for stronger protections for human rights. Hungary deepened its repression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people on March 18 as the parliamentpassed a draconian law that will outlaw Pride and similar events, thereby penalizing public support for LGBT people in the country.The law, which curtails the right of assembly when it pertains to supporting LGBT rights, also authorizes authorities to use facial recognition technology to identify event organizers and attendees, with both groups facing fines of up to 500 for exercising their freedoms of assembly and expression. The prime minister made clear the intention of the law is to ban Pride.Submitted and signed into law by the president over just one day, the lightning speed of the laws adoption is the latest disturbing example of the ruling partys blatant disregard for the rule of law and democratic checks and balances.The law is also the Hungarian governments latest move to scapegoat LGBT people. In 2021, the governmentadopted a repressive law banning the portrayal and promotion of LGBT content to children. The law resulted in anti-LGBT smear campaigns, leading the EU Commission tobring a case against Hungary before the EU Court of Justice.The new law againmisuses rhetoric around protecting children to justify repression of freedom of assembly and speech and to promote discrimination. Children need no protection from exposure to diversity. But they and their families do need protection from violence and discrimination.The law comes alongside proposedchanges to the fundamental law (constitution) currently pending before parliament, stating that the protection and care of a childs proper physical, mental, and moral development shall supersede all other fundamental rights, with the exception of the right to life. Other proposed amendments would further curtail transgender peoples right to legal gender recognition.The anti-Pride law has sparked widespread criticism. On March 18,thousands gathered on the streets of Budapest to protest it and the ruling partys attacks on the rule of law. Despite the ban, organizersplan to go ahead with Pride in late June and Budapests Lord Mayorsaid that Pride will happen in the city. Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Michael OFlahertycalled on the Hungarian president to veto the law.The EU Commission should call on the Orban government to repeal the discriminatory law and launch new legal action against Hungarys government for its brazen assaults on the rights of LGBT people and freedoms of assembly and expression. Skip to cookie privacy notice Skip to main content Would you like to read this page in another language? Would you like to see a version of this page that loads faster by showing text only? People around the world face violence and inequalityand sometimes torture, even executionbecause of who they love, how they look, or who they are. Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral aspects of our selves and should never lead to discrimination or abuse. Human Rights Watch works for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender peoples' rights, and with activists representing a multiplicity of identities and issues. We document and expose abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity worldwide, including torture, killing and executions, arrests under unjust laws, unequal treatment, censorship, medical abuses, discrimination in health and jobs and housing, domestic violence, abuses against children, and denial of family rights and recognition. We advocate for laws and policies that will protect everyones dignity. We work for a world where all people can enjoy their rights fully. I'm A Victim Of Digital Targeting In The Middle East and North Africa Region Trans People in El Salvador: "For them we are not human" The Fight for Marriage Equality in Panama (Geneva) A groundbreaking set of principles on sexual orientation, gender identity, and international law is a landmark advance in the struggle for basic human rights as well as gender equality, Human Rights Watch and the Center for Womens Global Leadership said today. The document, known as the Yogyakarta Principles after the city where it was adopted, was launched today in Geneva by a group of 29 international human rights experts. These principles establish basic standards for how governments should treat people whose rights are too often denied and whose dignity is too often reviled, said Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights Program at Human Rights Watch. Firmly grounded in law and precedent, they enshrine a simple idea: human rights do not admit exceptions.The Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Law in Relation to Issues of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity were adopted by a meeting of experts in international law in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in November 2006. They confirm legal standards for how governments and other actors should end violence, abuse, and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and ensure full equality. The experts launching the principles include a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as UN independent experts, members of UN treaty bodies, judges, activists, and academics. Human Rights Watch was part of a secretariat supporting the work of the experts who developed the principles. The Center for Womens Global Leadership was a member of the advisory committee to the secretariat.For more than three decades, lesbians have been among the millions of womens rights activists pressing the international community to put gender equality at the heart of the human rights agenda, said Charlotte Bunch, executive director of the Center for Womens Global Leadership. These sweeping principles are a bold and important step forward. Addressing civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, they show how sexual rights and gender equality are inextricably interwoven with the full scope of rights protections.The Yogyakarta Principles were developed in response to well-documented patterns of abuse around the globe. These abuses, perpetrated because of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, have affected millions. The principles address: rape and other forms of gender-based violence; extrajudicial executions; torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; medical abuses;repression of free speech and assembly; and discrimination in work, health, education, housing, access to justice, and immigration. The principles also map out a positive road to full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people around the world. Each principle is accompanied by detailed recommendations to states on how to end discrimination and abuse. The principles also call for action from the UNs human rights system, national human rights institutions, the media, nongovernmental organizations, and others.The principles were launched today at the UN Human Rights Councils session in Geneva, where last year 54 states called for the council to act against egregious violations of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.The full text of the Yogyakarta Principles, along with supporting materials, can be found online at yogyakartaprinciples.org The experts who adopted the Yogyakarta Principles are:Philip Alston (Australia), UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions and Professor of Law, New York University School of Law, USAMaxim Anmeghichean (Moldova), European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay AssociationMauro Cabral (Argentina), Universidad Nacional de Cordoba, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights CommissionEdwin Cameron (South Africa), Justice, Supreme Court of Appeal, Bloemfontein, South AfricaSonia Onufer Corra (Brazil), Research Associate at the Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association (ABIA) and co-chair of the International Working Group on Sexuality and Social Policy (Co-chair of the experts meeting)Yakin Ertrk (Turkey), UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Professor, Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, TurkeyElizabeth Evatt (Australia), Former member and chair of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, former member of the UN Human Rights Committee and Commissioner of the International Commission of JuristsPaul Hunt (New Zealand), UN Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health and professor, Department of Law, University of Essex, United KingdomAsma Jahangir (Pakistan), Chairperson, Human Rights Commission of PakistanMaina Kiai (Kenya), Chairperson, Kenya National Commission on Human RightsMiloon Kothari (India), UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housingJudith Mesquita (United Kingdom), Senior Research Officer, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, United KingdomAlice M. Miller (United States of America), Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, Co-director, Human Rights Program, Columbia UniversitySanji Mmasenono Monageng (Botswana), Judge of the High Court (The Republic of the Gambia), Commissioner of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, Chairperson of the Follow Up Committee on the implementation of the Robben Island Guidelines on prohibition and prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights)Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand), UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea and professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (Co-chair of the experts meeting)Lawrence Mute (Kenya), Commissioner, Kenya National Commission on Human RightsManfred Nowak (Austria), Professor and co-director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights, Austria and UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading TreatmentAna Elena Obando Mendoza (Costa Rica), feminist attorney, womens human rights activist, and international consultantMichael OFlaherty (Ireland), Member of the UN Human Rights Committee and Professor of Applied Human Rights and Co-director of the Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Nottingham (Rapporteur for the development of the Yogyakarta Principles)Sunil Pant (Nepal), President of the Blue Diamond Society, NepalDimitrina Petrova (Bulgaria), Executive Director, The Equal Rights TrustRudi Muhammad Rizki (Indonesia), UN Special Rapporteur on international solidarity and senior Lecturer and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs of the Faculty of Law at the University of Padjadjaran, IndonesiaMary Robinson (Ireland), Founder of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative, former President of Ireland and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human RightsNevena Vuckovic Sahovic (Serbia and Montenegro), Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and President of the Child Rights Centre, Belgrade, Serbia MontenegroMartin Scheinin (Finland), UN Special Rapporteur on counterterrorism and professor of Constitutional and International Law, Director of the Institute for Human RightsWan Yanhai (China), founder of the AIZHI Action Project and director of Beijing AIZHIXING Institute of Health EducationStephen Whittle (United Kingdom), Professor in Equalities Law at Manchester Metropolitan University, United KingdomRoman Wieruszewski (Poland), Member of the UN Human Rights Committee and head of Poznan Centre for Human Rights, PolandRobert Wintemute (United Kingdom), Professor of Human Rights Law, School of Law, Kings College London, United Kingdom

Gay dance clubs near me. Gay night clubs near me. Gay social clubs near me. Gay black clubs near me. Gay and lesbian clubs near me. Gay latin clubs near me. Gay motorcycle clubs near me. Gay cruising clubs near me. Gay men's clubs near me. Gay book clubs near me. Gay male clubs near me. Gay hip hop clubs near me. Gay latino clubs near me. Gay bars and clubs near me. Gay friendly clubs near me.