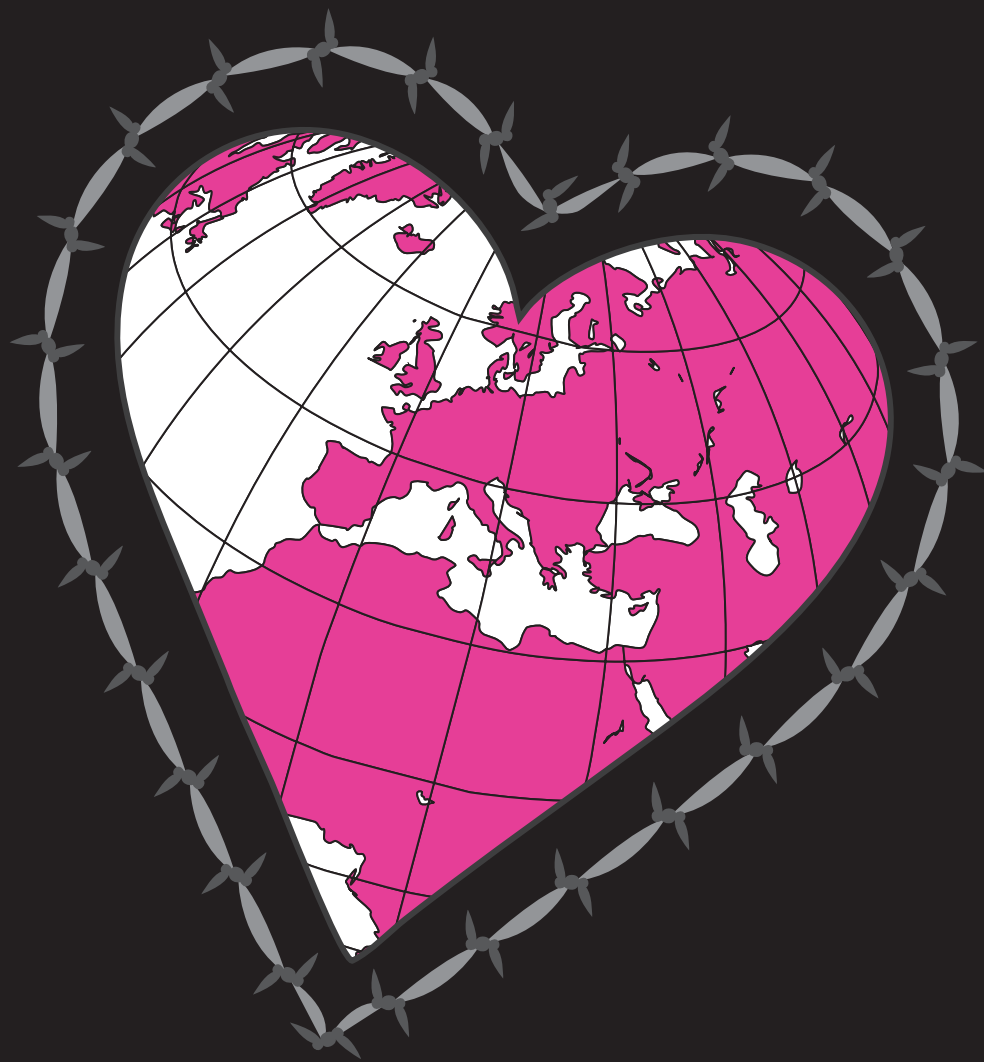


Love
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BORDERS**



n u s lgbt

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Welcome to your guide to international LGBT activism!

This guide contains all the information and inspiration that you need to run a fantastic campaign for LGBT human rights, in the country of your choice. The campaign that you run is entirely up to you and your LGBT society – the more creative and original your ideas, the better!

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans people in the UK have won many rights over the past few years, and our lives have changed dramatically as a result. We have a legal system that supports our right to be who we are, and express our love. But around the world, many LGBT do not share our rights. Instead, they are criminalised, persecuted, imprisoned and even murdered by their own governments, just because of who they are, and who they love. Their governments not only ignore their human right to protection from attacks, but actively sponsor them.

We must use our rights to fight for the rights of those who can't fight for them themselves.

This campaign will give you opportunities to make links with LGBT students and others who live their lives under very different conditions from our own. It will allow your student society to play an important part in something much bigger – the international LGBT rights movement.

The campaign pack includes examples of times when LGBT student societies and individuals have made a positive impact on the lives of LGBT people in other countries.

We live in a global community and no longer can we stand by while the suffering continues. We can, and must, make a difference for LGBT human rights worldwide.

This guide is your starting point. Good luck!

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Because we're stronger together!

For anyone who doesn't see the point of international activism, that's why it matters.

Fighting together at the international level allows people from different countries to gather and exchange information on their situations in different places in the world, whether these are good or bad. It's where we can exchange best practice and examples of what works at many different levels, from people who have the experience of activism at local or national levels. It is where international solidarity surges up, and most importantly, where we can make our many voices heard by international institutions who play a strong role in policy-making that affect the lives of tens of thousands of LGBTQ students and young people.

The advantages of working together with people from many different cultures and countries for a same cause reminds us, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., that "either we go up together, or we go down together". This is a truth that still very much applies today, and be it for cross-border solidarity, learning between peer organisations or high-level representation, international activism is the place to be.

I hope you enjoy this guide and are inspired to take forward international LGBTQ activism through your student society!

In Pride and Solidarity for all,



Bruno Selun
Board member, International LGBTQ Youth Organisation (IGLYO)

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International LGBT Rights – the cold hard facts

It is 35 years since the first gay pride march in Britain. Since then, LGBT people in the UK have made some huge legislative gains, and there are now very few inequalities left in law and our movement has a new focus on achieving equal representation in society as well as changing hearts and minds.

But for so many LGBT people around the world, our situation is a distant dream. In some countries, if you love the wrong person, the punishment is death. In others, it's a fate nearly as bad – public beatings, hard labour, and imprisonment.

Here in the UK we enjoy such basic rights as being allowed to meet together. This is something that so many LGBT people across the world do not have. Our law is designed so that we receive protection, not abuse at the hands of the police. Our law recognises our oppression, and takes steps towards equality. Our state allows us to register our relationships to be recognised in law.

For millions of LGBT people across the globe, life isn't so easy, and for too many, the right to exist is still under threat. In far too many countries, being LGBT is a ticket to persecution, intolerance and injustice and what should be a celebration of identity, is turned into a display of state-sponsored hatred.

The experiences of LGBT people are different in every country of the world, but these can often be grouped in terms of the LGBT rights or restrictions that countries enshrine in law.

- Same-sex sexual activities for men are explicitly illegal in more than 85 states around the world, and for women in more than 40 states.
- LGBT people are officially subject to the death penalty in ten countries across the world, in 3 of which recent executions took place.
- Three countries have amended their constitutions to ban marriages between same-sex couples – Honduras (2005), Latvia (2005) and some US states.
- Thirteen countries prohibit gay men, lesbians and bisexuals from serving in their army. One of these is the US.
- Only fourteen countries worldwide recognise asylum for LGB people.
- It wasn't until 1993 that the World Health Organisation officially removed homosexuality from its list of diseases.

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Case study

Innovative international campaigning at Lancaster University



On 27th May, 2007, a small group of human rights activists and MEPs attempted to present a letter of protest over the banned Pride march to the Mayor of Moscow.

Among them was veteran human rights activist Peter Tatchell, who was punched in the face by a homophobic protester. Others were verbally assaulted.

Rather than move to arrest the right-wing nationalists who perpetrated these attacks, the Russian police chose instead to arrest up to 20 of the LGBT rights activists, including two MEPs, sparking outrage across the world.

The LGBT Association at Lancaster University Students Union (LUSU), YOURlgbt*, decided that they wanted to add their voice to the global call for justice by starting a letter-writing campaign. We talk to **Jen Daffin**, LUSU LGBT Officer, about the campaign.

Q: How did the LGBT group reach the decision to write the letters?

JD: YOURlgbt* has previously conducted campaigns on many occasions through online or paper petitions. On this occasion we originally started out with a similar statement and an online petition. We were however challenged by some students who felt that online petitions are not a valid resource and did not feel they brought about results. We therefore opened up the campaign and redrafted our statement as a letter to go straight to the Prime Minister via post, as well as an online petition at the Prime Minister's petitions page.

Q: Why did you feel that this was the best method of making an impact on the situation?

JD: Our original thinking was that an online petition would reach more people faster. However we quickly found that giving people a letter was far more personal than a sheet of paper to sign and it provoked a lot more interest and questions from people. The fact that people received a response from the PM and the foreign secretary reconfirmed that their voice was actually being listened to. This then inspired some to follow up the results of the letter, which may not have been achieved via a petition.

Q: How did you get other students inspired and interested in campaigning?

JD: We started out by attending the Lancaster University Students Union LGBT night (JUICY) and spoke to LGBT or LGBT-friendly students about the campaign and their thoughts about the situation. We encouraged them to take letter for their friends to sign. We offered to send the letters for students so that no extra cost was incurred to them, all they had to do was read the letter, sign it and hand it back to us.

Q: What were the results of the letter writing campaign?

JD: We received responses from the prime minister, and the foreign secretary (see picture).

Q: Is there anything you would do differently next time?

JD: Next time we would look to target more people. Although we started an online group to share the letter nationally, next time we would personally approach other universities to get involved.

Q: What would you say to LGBT societies/associations who want to start running campaigns like this?

JD: There is nothing complicated about this method of campaigning. You can save on postage by sending all your letters together and they will still respond to them all. It's as easy as a petition but it's far more effective, and you'll actually receive a response, which will encourage your students to do more international campaigning.

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Name:

Date:

Address:
.....
.....

10 Downing Street,
London,
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister

I call upon you to urge Russia to start recognising human rights such as the freedom of speech, of assembly and crucially, to accord rights to homosexuals living in the near totalitarian regime now in power in Russia.

Following the assault of gay rights activists in Moscow on Sunday May 27th 2007, and the non-arrest of right-wing nationalists who perpetrated said attacks, the situation in Russia has become wholly unacceptable. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community in Russia must now live in fear of being beaten or killed, and rights to protest and of assembly have been severely curtailed. Given Russia's status in the world, it is high time that human rights ought to be given credence to, and that LGBT-orientated human beings living in Russia are not condemned as "satanic" or treated as inferior minorities whose rights may be trampled on.

I am writing to you urging you to publically condemn discriminatory actions and attitudes towards gays and lesbians in Russia.

Sincerely,

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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA
www.pmi.gov.uk

From the Direct Communications Unit

17 July 2007

Ms Beccy Weston
2 Denis Street
Lancaster
LA1 1QX

Dear Ms Weston

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your recent letter.

Mr Brown was pleased that you felt able to write to him about this matter, a careful note has been made of your comments.

He has asked me to send your letter to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who are responsible for this subject, as he feels that it is important that they are aware of your concerns and can send you any comments they may have.

Yours sincerely

M DAVIES

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Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

W2.87
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London

Tel: 0207 048 4015

24 July 2007

Becky Marston
2 Denis Street
Lancaster
LA1 1QX

Dear Ms Marston

Thank you for your letter of 6 June to the Prime Minister about the events in Moscow on 27 May. I am replying as officer in the Russia Section at the FCO.

We were concerned by the events surrounding the gathering organised by gay rights activists in Moscow on Sunday 27 May. We deplore the acts of violence committed by a number of extremists against the peaceful demonstrators, including two British subjects. We are disturbed by reports of the failure of police to protect protestors.

Our Ambassador in Moscow has written to the Russian authorities expressing the concerns of the British Government about the treatment of the demonstrators and policing of the demonstration.

We monitor the rights of minority groups in Russia closely. We raise our concerns about the treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups in the course of our ongoing dialogue with the Russian authorities, as well as during structured EU/Russia and UK/Russia human rights dialogues.

The FCO will continue its efforts to defend the right of people not to be discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation. We actively promote their rights, particularly through the UN. We support calls for the universal decriminalisation of homosexuality. Working with our European partners, the FCO raises with individual countries cases of people arrested, tortured or killed on the grounds of their sexual orientation. As Minister with responsibility of our international human rights policy, Ian McCartney, said in his address to the Human Rights Council on 13 March 2007, the international community needed 'to confront the persistent discrimination against people world-wide based on their sexual orientation'.

Alison Wilmshurst
Russia, South Caucasus & Central Asia Directorate

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Step-by-step successful campaigning

This year NUS LGBT is making the call for love without borders our priority. We are co-ordinating national work, encouraging LGBT societies to work on the particular issues of individual countries. This ensures a focus for the campaigning work of each LGBT society, and that together, we're campaigning for LGBT human rights worldwide. NUS LGBT will be working on a national level to lobby for the UK government to support the fight for international LGBT human rights, by supporting the Brazilian Resolution at the UN, promoting the Yogyakarta Principles, and condemning repressive regimes that persecute LGBT people all over the world.

Campaigning on an issue as big as international LGBT rights can be daunting, but we've made it easy for you. This section of the guide takes you through a step-by-step process to developing and delivering a successful campaign.

NUS LGBT is here to support you in your campaigning. We've produced Love Without Borders materials that you can order from us. Click on the order form at www.officeronline.co.uk/lgbt to order the Love Without Borders poster, which features some key facts and statistics on international LGBT rights, and the Love Without Borders Dossier. The Dossier contains information on the LGBT human rights of every country in the world, in an easy to follow symbol format. It's a great resource to use if you want an at-a-glance picture of what life is like for LGBT people in your chosen campaign country, and allows a simple basis for comparison between countries.

We are encouraging LGBT societies to work in regions on this issue, and so have allocated world continents to regions. Please see below for the continent that your region has been allocated, and choose your campaign country from this continent.

1. Choose your 'campaign country'

This can be anywhere in your NUS region or nation's allocated continent. These are as follows –

Region or Nation	Allocated Continent
London	Africa
Scotland and Wales	Asia and the Pacific
South	Americas
Midlands and East	Europe
North	Middle East

If you're not sure which NUS Region you're in, speak to a member of your Student Union Executive.

Once you know which continent you've been allocated, it's up to you which country you choose to campaign on. Read the Love Without Borders Dossier carefully to select a country for which you can highlight one or more issues to campaign around.

2. Choose a day of action

The day that you decide to run your action, stunt or event should be one on which as many students as possible can get involved with what you're doing. So consider criteria such as when your institution's examination periods are, which days most students are around on campus, and what time of day you are going to get the most exposure.

There are several dates which have been designated as specific days to fight homophobia and transphobia, so you could think about holding your action or event then, in order that it has increased significance. Your work could even be part of a more co-ordinated effort with other organisations.

Some of these dates are:

International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO)	17 May
International Transgender Day of Remembrance	20 November
LGBT History Month UK	February, all month

See www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/events/main.htm for a co-ordinated calendar of LGBT History Month events and for information about adding your event to the calendar.

3. Do your research

Once you've decided which country to go for, use the information in the Dossier as a starting point to find out what life is like for LGBT people living there.

Use internet search engines to find out if there have been any recent developments with respect to LGBT rights in that country. LGBT issues are pretty high on the agenda of many countries worldwide at the moment, so chances are you'll find something to which you can offer your support, or campaign against! Students are often at the forefront of social change movements; are there students involved in fighting discrimination in your campaign country?

Find out if there are LGBT Rights campaigning organisations in your campaign country, especially LGBT student organisations. You might be surprised to find that they exist even in countries which heavily criminalise homosexuality. If you can find an email address for the organisation, send them a message of solidarity to let them know you care about their fight too. You could ask them for more information about life as LGBT people living there, or if there's any work they're doing at the moment that you can especially support them on. If you can create a 'twinning' relationship with the organisation, this can play a key role in your campaigning by making their situation more 'real' for students and others involved.

Once you know a bit more about the country, you could make a poster illustrating what life's like of LGBT people in your campaign country and display it on a student noticeboard or in your LGBT office if you have one.

4. Decide on an objective

Raising awareness of what life's like in your campaign country is important, but is that all you can do? Have there been any recent events in your campaign country that you can use to highlight a broader issue of a lack of human rights for LGBT people? What does the law do (if anything) to protect LGBT people there? Could it be doing more?

Maybe your objective is to help support work already being done in your campaign country. Organisations there might want you to publicise what they're doing, officially support it or even just show your solidarity so that they know that they're not the only ones fighting for LGBT rights in their country.

Your objective could be to attract the UK government's attention to the issue. You can do this by producing a petition, or running a letter-writing campaign to the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary or Immigration Minister. You could also lobby your local MP to see if they would be interested in taking the issue forward. Lobbying can seem a little daunting at first, especially if you've never done it before, but NUS has plenty of resources to help you.

For more information about how to lobby MPs, see www.officeronline.co.uk/activism/articles/273613.aspx

Also look at www.officeronline.co.uk/lgbt for more information about LGBT activism, especially this page on campaigning: <http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/template%20a-z%20lgbt%20Campaigning.DOC>

If your campaign country is a member of the European Union, you could lobby your MEP (Member of European Parliament) to take this issue on. The European Parliament has a sub-committee, the European Parliament Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights, whose President, Michael Cashman, is British, so you could lobby him. See www.lgbt-ep.eu/news.php for more info.

Lobbying the United Nations can be more difficult, as there are only a few LGBT organisations which are officially allowed to lobby. However, you can talk to them about taking your issues forward. The best one to speak to is the International Lesbian and Gay Association – Europe (ILGA – E). Contact them through their contact form at www.ilga-europe.org/europe/about_us/contact_us

You can also influence the UN through the British Foreign Secretary, David Miliband. To do this, you'd need to lobby him on your issue and persuade him to take it forward to the UN.

Before you start campaigning, a word of caution:

- Be very careful what you promise LGBT organisations in other countries. Promising too much, and failing to deliver, could jeopardise projects, funding bids, and even lives.
- Don't do anything that might put the LGBT organisation at risk.
- Take your lead from the LGBT organisation, and check with them before you do anything – including posting them letters of support and solidarity.
- Do your research. Find out if the LGBT organisation is linked up with other LGBT organisations, some of which might be UK-based. You might be able to better support LGBT organisations in other countries through UK-based groups.

Decided on an objective, or two, and made sure they're realistic? Onwards...

5. Campaigning Tactics

There are many different ways to work on international issues, and these methods will be especially diverse for this campaign, as LGBT societies all over the country will be working on different issues in different campaign countries. You need to think outside the box, and work out which tactic will work best for you.

Remember, it's important to involve as many students as possible in everything you do, and to publicise what you're doing as much as possible! There's no sense running a fantastic demonstration or event, and no-one knowing about it.

So, what are you going to do? The following cover some of the broad range of options you have:

- Run an awareness stall with some form of action associated
- Stage a demonstration
- Hold an event that students can get involved with creatively
- Hold an event that will raise money for your cause
- Stage a stunt which will grab media attention to highlight your cause

The best way to ensure that your stunt or event has the impact that it deserves is to get your local media involved. One way of encouraging local media to come to your event or stunt is by making it look unusual! In addition, the more colourful and creative your action is, the more approachable you will look - don't forget you want to encourage as many people as possible to come and talk to you, find out more about what you're up to, and sign your lobbying and support letters, so looking friendly and interesting is really important.


When thinking about ways to make your stunt or event colourful, start by thinking about the themes of the campaign and what we are trying to achieve. For the Love Without Borders campaign, it's all about tailoring your campaigning and messages to a specific country, and persuading students to get involved in challenging policy makers to champion the issues of LGBT people in that country. So get creative! How can you make an impact?

Stalls

- Think about the use of colour. Can you get hold of (or make) a large flag for your campaign country? It could provide the ideal backdrop to your stall.
- Make sandwich boards with your message on and walk around campus. These are easy to make with two large pieces of cardboard and some tape. Think of them like a movable poster.
- International LGBT rights issues can get complicated, so make sure that your message is simple enough for passers-by to understand. Think about creating a slogan just a few words long which will tell them what you're trying to achieve.
- Make sure you've ordered your Love Without Borders poster. This includes the major facts and figures of global LGBT oppression.
- Use your own posters to make sure your specific message gets everywhere! Take facts and figures for your campaign country from the Love Without Borders Dossier, and add them to the poster template in this pack. Print off as many as you need and put them everywhere – in corridors leading to your stall, on the backs of toilet doors, and all over your students union. Some students unions have policies around how many posters you can put up, so check with them first.
- What's the action of your stall going to be? Are you just trying to make a point, or do you want to get something out of it too? Prepare model lobbying letters to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Immigration, or the Foreign Secretary, or model solidarity letters for those you know are suffering at the hands of oppressive governments. Then use these as an engagement tool to get people talking about LGBT issues in other countries – and make sure they sign them too of course!
- If you're getting people to sign letters, think outside the box. Will you be most effective running a stall in your students union? How about going to other places that students go, like the SU bar, or using contacts in sports teams or halls?
- Rubber stamps are fairly cheap to make and you can get them from stationery shops like Staples, or online shops such as www.rubberstampsdirect.co.uk. You could get one designed in the shape of the Love Without Borders logo, or with a statistic or fact that is key to your campaign and stamp it on the hands or arms of people signing the letters. It'll be a great talking point when they're with their friends later in the pub, ensuring your message gets spread far and wide!
- Think about more creative ways of letting people show their support. You could create a great visual representation of support by using your country's flag as a background, and getting people to print their hand in red paint on the flag, to demonstrate the lives lost to homophobia. This is something you could run as part of your stall, a society event, or even at a fundraiser.

Demonstrations

- First you need to decide the reason for your demonstration. What's your key message? How can you best get this across? Is staging a demonstration the absolute best way of getting your voice heard by policy makers?
- Where should you run your demonstration? A common choice is outside the embassy of the country you're working around.

- 
- You will need to inform the police that you intend to demonstrate. They will not try to stop you (unless you want to demonstrate in the restricted zone around Westminster – this is illegal).
 - Do you have materials which are colourful and clear?
 - Have you told the press that you will be there?
 - Do you have enough people to participate in the demo? It's important that there enough of you so that press coverage makes a positive impact.
 - Should there be a centrepiece to your demonstration? Perhaps you could take in a letter addressed to your campaign country's ambassador, signed by a large number of students.

Run an event that students can get involved with creatively

- You could organise a letter-writing event, where students can come together and write their own letters. You might find it helpful to do a little research in advance, and hold a discussion of the key issues at the beginning of the event. Letter-writing events are great, because everyone's letter is different, meaning it has so much more impact on policy makers.
- You could make a banner to display on a stall or a wall in your students union. Get your LGBT society together with some paints, brushes, a large sheet and some bamboo poles to hold up your finished product, and get creative! Banner making workshops could also be an opportunity to discuss campaign objectives in an informal way with a wide group of people. If you're painting lettering on your banner, make sure it's large enough to be read from a distance and looks good when photographed. You could even make matching tshirts.
- Use the images that people already associate with the LGBT movement. If they recognise something, they are more likely to try to understand it. The rainbow flag is a powerful and colourful image that you can use in many different ways to symbolise the LGBT community. If you wanted to demonstrate that in your campaign country, LGBT people are killed for being who they are, you could show the flag torn in two, or with painted 'bullet-holes' through it, or hanging from a tree on a noose.
- Think about what you'd like to receive in the post if you were a struggling LGBT rights organisation in a hostile country. What about a creative and colourful solidarity message? You could create a collage of images and messages from members of your society and post it to them. If they don't have a postal address, you could create a bumper-email with lots of messages and photos attached (make sure to reduce their size first) and email it to them. It'll let them know that you recognise their struggle, will be something they can display to remind them that others are fighting for their rights too, and it'll be fun to make!

Make sure you ask them first by email, so you don't send something over which could cause them problems.

Fundraising Events

You could theme it around your campaign country, and then give the money to an appropriate charity or organisation that works for LGBT rights or welfare in that country:

- Music from your campaign country
- Team up with the international society, or another relevant society
- Serve food from your campaign country
- Use a rubber stamp to identify people who have paid on the door. This will serve as a reminder to them of the importance of LGBT rights in that country.
- Activities that will engage people in your campaign (see above for ideas)

Media Stunt

- A cleverly-constructed and well-planned piece of street theatre can be more effective than simply standing around, and is more likely to attract press coverage. Think about how you can use music, colour, shocking images and even humour to get your message across.
- If you're stuck for inspiration, think about what the daily experiences of LGBT people in your campaign country might be like, and see if any of them lend themselves to a short piece of theatre or stunt.
- If you'd rather attract attention in other ways, you could wear masks to show the hidden lives LGBT people lead in oppressive countries. Or you could use other ways of covering your heads or faces – several students standing in a row covering their heads and faces can be effective if you want to demonstrate the way that LGBT people's human rights are ignored by some countries. Theatre like this can be great for a press stunt!
- If you want to run a media stunt which is more symbolic, one which works well is a balloon-release. You could release 85 balloons, to symbolise the number of countries in which homosexuality is criminalised, with 10 of those balloons being black, to symbolise the countries where it bears the death penalty. Tell your local police station what you are planning.

6. Getting good press coverage

It's essential that whatever you do receives the publicity that it deserves, so make sure you contact local and student press well in advance so that as many people as possible hear about the work you're doing, and why you're doing it.

For information about getting good press coverage, see <http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/press.pdf>

Whatever you do, use lots of colour, be friendly and approachable, and have fun!



Winning the arguments for international LGBT campaigning

People frequently ask why NUS LGBT works on international issues. The answer is simple. We're just one piece of the jigsaw of a much bigger picture. In order for us to truly win the fight for LGBT rights, we need to join with other organisations to work on issues that affect all LGBT students, not just those who are lucky enough to live here in the UK. We believe that we live in a global community and with that comes global responsibilities. We are proud to join the international fight against homophobia and transphobia.

NUS LGBT is a proud member of the International LGBTQ Youth Organisation (IGLYO), and the European branch of the International Gay and Lesbian Association (ILGA – Europe).

1. Why should LGBT student groups campaign for the rights of LGBT people in other countries? We should be focusing on our own issues here in the UK!

Here in the UK, life for LGBT people certainly isn't perfect, and much work has still to be done, especially around changing attitudes. But we've won many legislative battles in the past few years and now's the time for us to use our rights to stand up for the rights of others. All over the world, LGBT people are persecuted, attacked and even killed, simply because of who they love. Many states ignore, endorse or even sponsor these attacks on LGBT people. It's time that we, the privileged ones, stood up for the rights of all LGBT people, worldwide.

Furthermore, just because we campaign on this issue, it doesn't mean we don't do anything else! NUS LGBT holds events to train LGBT students to develop their LGBT societies, carries out research and lobbying on education funding for LGBT students and childcare for LGBT student parents, provides resource packs for FE LGBT students, holds training programmes for college and university staff on LGBT issues and produces resources and information for LGBT groups all year round. It is our privilege to be able to do all this and to stand up for the rights of our brothers and sisters across the world.

2. Won't we contravene ultra vires legislation if we campaign on issues like this?

This campaign advocates fighting for the rights of students, and others, who are members of a persecuted minority. Education is a huge catalyst to mobility between states, and here in the UK we have many LGBT international students who do not have the same rights at home that they enjoy whilst they study here. These students deserve to have their issues campaigned on as much as any other students. NUS LGBT conference 2007 demonstrated overwhelming support for this campaign, showing clearly that it is a student issue.

You can run a fundraising event, so long as the money raised goes through the same financial procedures as other fundraised money that your union might generate from activities such as RAG (Raise and Give) week. This will ensure that this fundraising complies with student union policies.

3. The human rights abuses of LGBT people worldwide are appalling. How can a student LGBT society make any difference at all?

The biggest difference that LGBT societies can make is by making a noise about international issues. By adding their voice to the voices of others calling for human rights for all, LGBT societies can add weight to the work being done by other organisations, and we've seen some great examples of how this can make a dramatic difference, particularly around asylum work. By being active in the student community, they can raise awareness of the amount of work that there is to be done. By twinning with LGBT student groups, and other LGBT organisations in other countries, they can support their work and demonstrate their solidarity in the fight for rights.

For those who think that by winning many of our battles here in the UK, we've done our bit to win the war, international campaigning issues are a timely reminder of how precious our rights are, and just how easily they can be taken away.

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Model policy

It's a good idea to get as many people on board with your campaign as possible, and the best way to do this is to pass supportive policy. You can pass this through your LGBT society committee by debating it and holding a vote, and/or through your Union Council, to gain wider support.

Below is a generic motion calling for the LGBT society to take part in international campaigning. This motion is based on the internationalism motion passed at NUS LGBT Conference 2007. You might like to modify this motion to suit your needs, or write a more specific motion on your campaign country, including relevant facts and information.

Heading: Love without Borders

LGBT Society Committee/Union Council Believes:

1. That ten countries still impose the death penalty for homosexuality, and more than ten times that many criminalize and persecute their LGBT citizens.
2. That European Union countries and council of Europe members such as Russia and Poland discriminate against their LGBT citizens.
3. Refugees fearing for their lives due to their sexual orientation or gender identity are asking for asylum in the UK.
4. At least 14 refugees in the past few years have committed suicide to avoid going back to face persecution in their home country.
5. That some countries have in recent years brought in deeply discriminating laws against 'sodomy'.

LGBT Society Committee/Union Council Further Believes:

1. That the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) [articles 2 and 26] protects LGBT people from discrimination.
2. Many signatory nations to the ICCPR are continuing to victimise LGBT people within their borders.
3. Articles 2 & 3 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights also protects the rights of LGBT people, many African nations are signatories.
4. The European Union has as a rule of membership, a right to freedom of sexuality – a rule blatantly flaunted by some of the new accession countries.
5. There is no official policy supporting the right of refugees to claim asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation. This means that there is no maintained database of accurate, up-to-date information on the violent victimisation of LGBT people in other countries.
6. There is no policy for asylum staff and adjudicators to undergo training on sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

LGBT Society Committee/Union Council Resolves:

1. To prioritise the fight for international LGBT rights, lobbying the United Nations, European Union and other cross-continental bodies such as the African Union.
2. To use the free resources provided by NUS LGBT Campaign to work on such issues.
3. To promote active campaigns like letter-writing and contacting local MPs with international links.
4. To contact overseas students' unions to find out about their work in their field of equality and offer our support and solidarity.
5. To show support in favour of the Brazilian Resolution: to include sexual orientation along with race, religion, political affiliation, disability and other categories of persecution.
6. To mark IDAHO by publicising the treatment of LGBT people across the world.

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Collectivism in action: the Moses Must Stay Campaign



Moses Kayiza fled Uganda in May 2004, and arrived in the UK as a gay asylum seeker. According to the law, religion and culture in Uganda, homosexuality is criminalised. The official maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

Yoweri Museveni, the President of Uganda, once proposed the arrest of all homosexuals - though he subsequently modified his position and called for a return to the good old days when "these few individuals were either ignored or speared and killed by their parents".

Moses lived in secret for a number of years in Uganda as a young gay man. In 2003, the pressure from Moses' family and tradition mounted and he succumbed to an arranged marriage. One day, he was discovered with his long-term male partner, and on the basis of evidence gathered, the police subsequently arrested Moses. As is not uncommon in Uganda, Moses was tortured and sexually abused for 7 days by the security forces until his escape from custody.

On arrival here in the UK, the Adjudicator refused Moses' asylum claim, stating, "The objective material shows that homosexuality is still criminalised in Uganda. However it does appear that little if anything is actually done to enforce the law". Under intense mental pressure, Moses was admitted to hospital for mental health reasons, and missed the date by which he was able to lodge an appeal. Moses then faced imminent deportation.

Moses' arrest and torture in prison is not unusual in Uganda. Since the President's comment in 1999, the Minister for Ethics and Integrity Miria Matembe has ordered the police to arrest and prosecute homosexuals, adding that she will fight gays until they are wiped out of the country. Amnesty International has documented cases of homosexuals being tortured in Uganda, and Moses' own medical evidence supports his own experience of torture.

Moses' friends and supporters decided that it was worth trying again to win him asylum. They set up a letter writing and petition campaign to persuade Des Browne, then Minister for Immigration, on the strength of Moses' links to the community and the community's links to Moses, that he should be allowed to remain in the UK. This support added an enormous amount of weight to his asylum claim. It also demonstrated to Moses how much others cared about his welfare, which helped him through such a difficult time. His friends also funded a solicitor to put Moses' case to the court on this second attempt.

Moses won his second attempt at gaining asylum, and a strong influence in the judge's decision to allow him to remain here was based on the tangible support that Moses had. Thirteen of his friends took time off work on the day of his court appearance, in order to attend and support him, and the overwhelmingly supported petition also helped demonstrate to the judge that many people wanted Moses to stay here: that he was a valued member of the community. Moses was granted the right to remain in the UK for five years, under the European Convention on Human Rights.

By making a fuss, just a few people were able to change the life of someone like Moses, who was at the mercy of a system which is not usually favourable to asylum seekers. This is a really important example of how just a few people can make such a huge difference.

When his five years here are up, Moses will have the opportunity to apply for citizenship here in the UK, but he will have to prove once more that his life would be in danger if he was made to return to Uganda.

Moses is one of the lucky ones, with friends and an extended 'LGBT family' around him to help campaign with him and on his behalf. There are many other LGBT asylum seekers whose claims are rejected at each stage of the appeals process, and are deported back into the hands of their abusers.



The community who worked on the Moses Must Stay campaign have a new campaign – Florence and Michael Must Stay. Florence is from Sierra Leone and is seeking asylum for herself and her young son, Michael. Florence fled Sierra Leone because she was suffering physical abuse including beatings by her parents and rape by her cousin, who she had been forced to marry. This all happened because Florence told her parents she is a lesbian, a fact that she had previously kept secret.

When Florence turned to the police for help they turned her away, saying it was a family matter. She tried to find a safe place to stay but could not and was forced to return home to face more abuse and violence.

She was horrified when told her parents were planning to force her to undergo female genital mutilation, commonly called female circumcision, as they believed this would 'cure' her. This process involves mutilating a woman's genitals, often resulting in serious infection and illness, and sometimes death.

The Home Office, and courts, have turned down Florence's application for asylum on the basis that her story is not credible, and that she could simply move to another area of Sierra Leone. Homosexuality is illegal all over Sierra Leone and it is a very homophobic society.

Florence's application has been refused because she could not prove that there was "a sustained pattern or campaign of persecution against ... (her) which was knowingly tolerated by the authorities". Yet in September 2004 Fannyann Eddy, the founder and director of Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Foundation (SLLAGA) was brutally attacked, gang raped and murdered in her office at SLLAGA. The police have yet to arrest anyone. If a person in Fannyann's position could not get protection from the Sierra Leone government, then what chance does Florence stand?

How you can help

Florence's friends and supporters organise regular fundraisers to raise money to support Florence and her campaign, including the costs of childcare, travel expenses, internet access, banners, postage and photocopying. These take usually take place in Chorlton, Greater Manchester, and are a lot of fun! You can help Florence's campaign by attending one, and have a great night out at the same time!

Florence has submitted a fresh claim for asylum to the Home Office, and she and her supporters are currently awaiting a decision, but it's essential that in the mean time, supporters keep up the pressure on the Home Office in the form of letters and petitions.

For information about the next fundraiser, to download model letters and petitions, and to find out about other ways that you can support Florence, please visit www.manchesterlcp.org.uk/florence/

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International LGBT campaigning and lobbying organisations

IGLYO – The International LGBTQ Youth and Student Organisation

IGLYO represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students and young people throughout Europe. Gathering over 50 national and local organisations, NUS being one of them, our activities aim to empower LGBTQ young activists, and we strive to make their voices heard at the international level.



IGLYO activists at a seminar in 2006 in Riga, Latvia, on LGBT Mental Health

We regularly organise international events to reflect, with our members, on specific topics (e.g. LGBT-friendly policies in secondary schools, France, April 2007; LGBT and faith-based communities, Hungary, November 2007).

We also represent LGBTQ youth and students at various occasions, for instance when international institutions want to hear about LGBTQ youth's opinion or situation. We are able to lobby international stakeholders strongly, thanks to various pieces of research that we have produced (e.g. the Report on Social Exclusion of LGBT Young People in Europe, IGLYO & ILGA-Europe, 2006), and the wide scope that our members represent.

For more information, visit www.iglyo.com, or contact info@iglyo.com

ILGA – The International Lesbian and Gay Association

The International Lesbian and Gay Association is a world-wide network of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people everywhere.

Founded in 1978, it now has more than 560 member organisations. Every continent and around 90 countries are represented. ILGA member groups range from small collectives to national groups and entire cities.

ILGA is to this day the only international non-profit and non-governmental community-based federation focused on presenting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation as a global issue.

For more information, visit www.ilga.org/getinvolved.asp

AI LGBT – Amnesty International LGBT Network

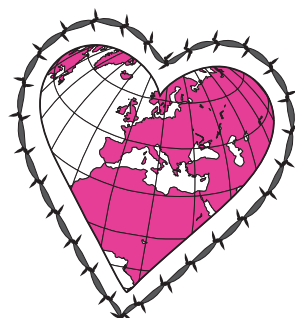
As far back as 1979, AI recognized that "the persecution of persons for their homosexuality is a violation of their fundamental rights" (Decision 7 of its 1979 International Council Meeting). However, it was only in the early 1990s that AI began to campaign in earnest against this kind of persecution.

As a grassroots international human rights organization, AI has a particular and useful role to play in locating LGBT rights in the consideration of human rights generally, not as special rights, but as fundamental rights ensured to each and every member of society. AI has also provided valuable support to lesbian and gay human right defenders, who are among those under threat. They frequently operate in environments where the very right of their organizations to exist is denied by the law because what they are advocating - the right to love and live with who you want - is a criminal offence.

AI is uniquely placed to consolidate this international movement by helping to provide safe spaces for discussion and networking, by helping to protect the space in which LGBT right defenders can work, and by sharing its skills in research, campaigning and advocacy.

You can join AI in working against global homophobia, by signing up to their Action Alerts. See <http://action.web.ca/home/lgbt/alerts.shtml> for more details.

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The Yogyakarta Principles

The Yogyakarta Principles is a document prepared by an international group of human rights lawyers and experts and is the application of human rights principles to sexual orientation and gender identity issues. The group was convened by the International Service for Human Rights and the International Commission of Jurists. This group was supported by a secretariat representing international LGBT organisations including ARC International, Human Rights Watch, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Campaign (IGLHRC), International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and ILGA-Europe. The Yogyakarta Principles have been unanimously adopted by all these groups and were launched on 26th March 2007 in Geneva.

The United Nations has key human rights mechanisms which affirm States' obligation to ensure effective protection of all persons from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. However, the international response has been fragmented and inconsistent to say the least, creating the need for a consistent understanding of the comprehensive regime of international human rights law and its application to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Yogyakarta Principles do this.

The Principles were developed and unanimously adopted by a distinguished group of human rights experts, from diverse regions and backgrounds, including judges, academics, a former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Procedures, members of treaty bodies, Non-governmental Organisations and others.

Each Principle is accompanied by detailed recommendations to States. Additional recommendations are addressed to the UN human rights system, national human rights institutions, the media, non-governmental organisations, and others. The Human Rights which the Principles discuss and make recommendations on are that LGBT people deserve:

- Rights to universal enjoyment of human rights, non-discrimination and recognition before the Law
- Rights to human and personal security
- Economic, social and cultural rights
- Rights to expression, opinion and association
- Freedom of movement and asylum
- Rights of participation in cultural and family life
- Rights of human rights defenders
- Rights of redress and accountability

If your campaign country is a member of the UN, you can use these Principles to clarify which rights LGBT people in that country do and don't enjoy in their Member State. This could be useful when lobbying – not only are you able to say that something is wrong and should be addressed, but you'll have Principles agreed by the world's leading human rights organisations to back you up!

The information in this section is taken from www.yogyakartaprinciples.org and <http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/news>

The role of the United Nations in fighting homophobia and transphobia

The UN has a role to play in challenging the actions of Member States where they disregard the human rights of their citizens. The United Nations uses "sanctions", or the necessary means to combat violations of agreements regarding human rights among the member nations. These include:

- Embargos: may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations. This type of sanction was used against South Africa to combat Apartheid.
- Suspension: the General Council has the power to suspend the privileges of a member state.
- Expulsion: considered a very serious form of sanction, entailing the involuntary withdrawal of a member state from the United Nations.
- Military Force: used as a last resort. Should the Security Council deem peaceful sanctions ineffective, it may recommend other member states of the United Nations to use military force against the offending nation. Military sanctions have been used against Iraq successfully in the past.

The UN has specific 'Conventions' or charters dealing with racism, sexism, torture, as well as a number of other human rights violations which Member States are expected to adhere to. Consequently, the UN has a greater degree of leverage when challenging a Member State over these issues than others. The degree of scrutiny to which they are subjected is greatly enhanced around these issues, which facilitates the use of sanctions in the event of violations.

There is still no Convention dealing with sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2003, Brazil put forward a resolution (known as the 'Brazilian Resolution'), which sparked a furore. This resolution attempted to put LGBT rights on the UN human rights agenda. Part of the resolution is as follows:

The Member State...

1. Expresses deep concern at the occurrence of violations of human rights in the world against persons on the grounds of their sexual orientation;
2. Stresses that human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, that the universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question and that the enjoyment of such rights and freedoms should not be hindered in any way on the grounds of sexual orientation;
3. Calls upon all States to promote and protect the human rights of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation;
4. Notes the attention given to human rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation by the special procedures in their reports to the Commission on Human Rights, as well as by the treaty monitoring bodies, and encourages all special procedures of the Commission, within their mandates, to give due attention to the subject;

5. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to pay due attention to the violation of human rights on the grounds of sexual orientation;
6. Decides to continue consideration of the matter at its sixtieth session under the same agenda item.

On 25th April 2003, when it was due to be debated at the UN Commission on Human Rights, the ambassador of Pakistan put forward a 'no-action' motion to avoid having to go to a vote. He stated that the resolution was 'politically incorrect' and acted as a 'direct insult to all 1.2 billion Muslims in the world'. This no-action motion narrowly fell by 24 votes to 22, with 6 abstentions, demonstrating the reluctance to even debate this resolution. When the time came to debate it, ambassadors from countries including Pakistan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Zimbabwe implicated the Commission in a procedural debate which lasted one and a half hours, cumulating in a decision to postpone the consideration of the resolution to next year. The following year, the resolution again was not debated, with a vote to post-pone this to 2005.

Though the Brazilian resolution did not succeed in putting LGBT issues on the UN human rights agenda, the uproar it created at the time of its proposal was not in vain from the point of view of LGBT rights. Over the past three years since controversy led Brazil to drop the topic for the time being, social and civil movements worldwide have increasingly directed their concerns and involvement toward sexual orientation and gender identity. International human rights NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, Global Rights, the International Commission of Jurists, Amnesty International and the International Service for Human Rights have directed new energy and resources to LGBT issues, sometimes launching specialised departments dedicated to research and advocacy of LGBT rights.

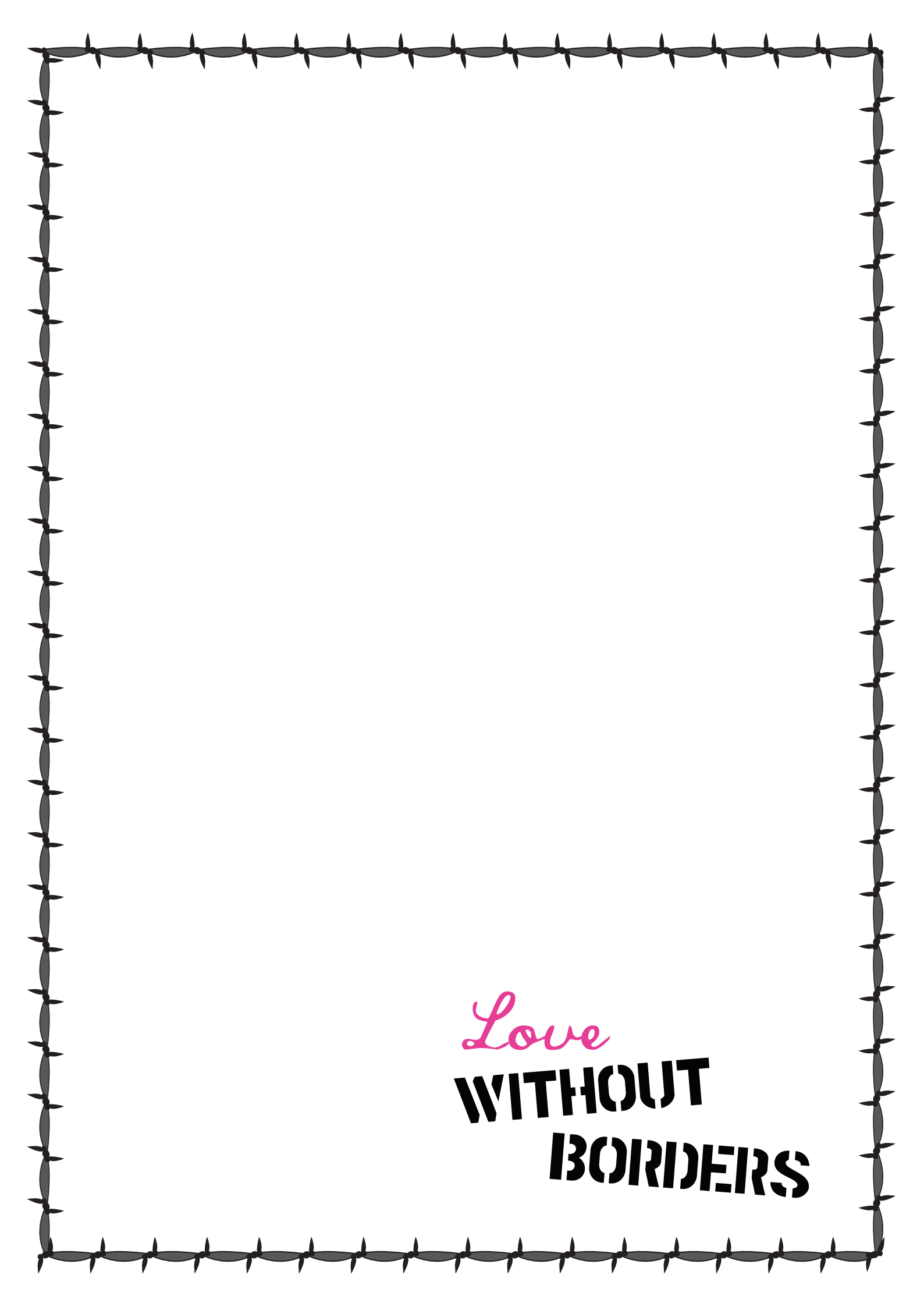
In a move viewed as "historic" by LGBT rights advocates, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has also conceded its approval of three gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organizations. Consultative status, granted on 11 December 2006 to the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA)-Europe and to the Danish and German national lesbian and gay association, LBL and LSVD, enables NGOs to enter the United Nations, participate in working sessions and speak in their own name. This is a very exciting development for international LGBT rights as it means that any future calls for the UN to legislate on LGBT rights can be supported by intense lobbying at the highest level.

For now, it's a case of 'watch this space'. It's still possible to sign the petition calling for the Brazilian Resolution to show your support and keep up the pressure on the UN to take human rights for all seriously. You can do so by clicking here
www.ilga.org/brazilianresolution/petition.asp?LanguageID=1

The information in this section is taken from
http://www.ilga.org/news_results.asp?LanguageID=1&FileCategory=44&FileID=406
http://www.iglhrc.org/files/iglhrc/program_docs/actionkitfinal%5B1%5D.doc.pdf
<http://www.worldmun.org/MUNBase2007/files/downloads/updates/UNHCRUpdateA.pdf>
<http://library.thinkquest.org/C0126065/billsanctions.html>

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National Union of Students

2nd floor, Centro 3
19 Mandela Street
London NW1 0DU

t. 0871 221 8221

f. 0871 221 8222

w. www.officeronline.co.uk/lgbt

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