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## **Intersex Asia statement for IDAHOBIT during pandemic 2020**

### ***Breaking the silence of intersex people in Asia.***

Intersex Asia (17.05.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3g5YbxA> - May 17th marks the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), a time to celebrate all variances in sexualities, genders and sex characteristics. Normally our members would be joining parades and campaigning on the streets, but the 2020 coronavirus crisis means that the day will have to be marked in different ways. In the Philippines, our member organisation Intersex Philippines has been practicing singing "Heal The World" together, as a way to come together online, celebrate being intersex, and to encourage others to have the courage to join them in coming out as intersex. In Nepal, our co-chair Esan Regmi and founder of Nepal's Campaign for Change, is joining a Webinar on Contemporary Queer Rights Issues in Nepal and talking about intersex rights in particular. In India, Gopi Shankar-Board Member, Intersex Asia and Founder, Srishti Madurai will be organising an online meeting in remembrance of all the volunteers and activists who lost their lives while advocating for rights of LGBTI+ community in India. In the meeting, the members of Srishti Madurai will perform rituals of indigenous gender variant communities in India to honor each person who has contributed to the equal rights movement in India.

While we celebrate, we also need to use this day to speak out against the violence and discrimination faced by intersex people in Asia. During the COVID crisis, intersex people have been hit particularly hard. Intersex Asia has been reaching out through our networks to find out the situation in different countries and where possible providing financial assistance. We are so grateful to our members and allies who have been in constant communication with their intersex communities, providing encouragement and advice to help them through these difficult times: Campaign For Change (Nepal), Srishti Madurai (India), Intersex Philippines, Born in This Body (Bangladesh) and OII-Chinese. So far we have provided support to 95 individuals in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines. Some of them are affected because they have lost their source of income and are now struggling for their basic living costs. In Bangladesh, we heard that some intersex people there have no ID and so cannot access government support. In Nepal, our partner explained how the gender listed on their ID cards does not reflect how they present in public and they are afraid of the consequential discrimination if they reach out for official support. In Pakistan, we heard how the gender identity that intersex people have chosen means that they are not entitled to government support. In Indonesia, our allies conducted a short survey and found that levels of anxiety and stress were exceptionally high.

Intersex Asia welcomes the statement by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner calling for states to include the LGBT community in their COVID response. It's essential that LBGTQIA voices are included in this pandemic response and

that funds are provided for LGBTQIA organisations who are best placed to identify how to rapidly and effectively provide protection and support for our communities. However, we would urge that the mandate of the *UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity* includes intersex people. Not all intersex people identify as LGBT, but they also face specific discrimination and struggles which have become worse during this crisis. Too often we have experienced intersex people being left out and even when organisations remember to include the “I” for intersex, they don’t always remember to consult with the intersex community.

We also welcome the statements by the ASEAN Sogje Caucus calling on:

“All donors, international organizations, humanitarian agencies, and governments to roll out — proactively and without delay — emergency and solidarity support for LGBTIQ activists and their communities.”

As well as ILGA Asia’s joint statement calling on specific protection for LGBTQIA youth and adolescents who are living with unsupportive families during lockdown, quarantine or isolation.

Intersex Asia will continue to reach out to our Asian intersex community working to increase the visibility of our people, build awareness about what it is like to be intersex in Asia and calling for an end to discriminatory practices against our communities.

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## **Learn intersex human rights issues by reading our UN Intersex Factsheets in 11 Asian languages**

Intersex Asia (10.03.2020) - <https://bit.ly/38ODCKA> - Intersex Asia is proud to announce the launch of our Asian languages translations of the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Free and Equal Campaign Intersex Fact Sheet in 11 languages. The fact sheet is now available for download from Intersex Asia’s website in Bengali, Filipino, Hindi, Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Nepali, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Vietnamese.

The UNFE Intersex Fact Sheet was released in 2015, in 5 official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. This was the first time that an international body recognised the specific human rights of intersex people and was welcomed by the global intersex community.

The fact sheet lays out a definition of intersex people and recognises the right of intersex people to physical integrity, as well as highlighting the myriad ways that intersex people are discriminated against and proposes a set of recommendations to States, the media and individuals on how to promote and protect the rights of intersex people.

Key to the development of the UN Fact sheet in the original 5 languages was that each translation was reviewed and edited by intersex activists who were native speakers of that language. Intersex Asia continued with this model and was able to get each of the 11 translations checked and edited by intersex activists of that language group.

Intersex Asia worked closely with an Asian network of LGBTI activists in Asia for the translations, and appreciates their role as allies to the intersex movement. Intersex people are very much a minority and depend on allies to help them to raise their voices.

Intersex Asia would also like to thank our donors: Astraea, Mamacash and RFSL without which these translations could not have been completed.

The Fact Sheets can be downloaded [here](#).

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