Trans Day of Remembrance 2011: Again Alarming Figures

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Transgender Europe's Trans Murder Monitoring project reveals 221 killings of trans people in the last 12 months. In total, since January 2008 the murders of 755 trans people have been reported.

The 13th International Transgender Day of Remembrance is being held on November 20th 2011: Since 1999, the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), on which those trans people who have been victims of homicide are remembered, takes place every November. The TDOR raises public awareness of hate crimes against trans people, provides a space for public mourning and honours the lives of those trans people who might otherwise be forgotten. Started in the USA, the TDOR is now held in many parts of the world. In the past, the TDOR took place in more than 180 cities in more than 20 countries in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania.

Sadly, this year there are 221 trans persons to be added to the list to be remembered, mourned and honoured as an update of the preliminary results of Transgender Europe's Trans Murder Monitoring project reveals.

The Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) project started in April 2009 and systematically monitors, collects and analyses reports of homicides of trans people worldwide. Updates of the preliminary results, which have been presented in July 2009 for the first time, are published on the website of the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide project three to four times a year in form of tables, name lists, and maps.

Every year in November, Transgender Europe provides a special update of the TMM results for the International Transgender Day of Remembrance so as to assist activists worldwide in raising public awareness of hate crimes against trans people.

The TDOR 2011 update has revealed a shocking total of 221 cases of reported killings of trans people from November 20th 2010 to November 14th 2011.

In comparison to the TDOR updates of the last years (162 reports 2009, 179 reports in 2010), we are witnessing a significant increase, which points to the extreme level of violence many trans people continue to be exposed to. However, this increase may also reflect the TvT project's intensified cooperation and data exchange with trans and LGBT organizations, which document murders of LGBT or trans people in local and national contexts such as Grupo Gay da Bahia (Brazil), Observatorio Ciudadano Trans (Cali, Colombia), Pembe Hayat (Turkey), or TVMEX – Travestis México.

The update shows reports of murdered or killed trans people in 26 countries in the last 12 months, with the majority from Brazil (97), Mexico (23), Colombia (19), and Venezuela (14) followed by Argentina (9), Honduras (9), and the USA (9). In Asia most reported cases have been found in Pakistan (6), and the Philippines (5), and in Europe in Turkey (5).

As in the previous years, most reported cases were from Central and South America, which account for 80 % of the globally reported homicides of trans people since January 2008. In Central and South America, in 2008, 96 killings were reported in 13 countries, in 2009, 165 killings in 16 countries, in 2010, 174 killings in 13 countries. In 2011, so far 188 killings were reported in 15 Central and South American countries. The starkest increase in reports is also

to be found in Central and South America, e.g. in Brazil (2008: 57, 2009: 69, 2010: 101, January-November 2011: 97) and Mexico (2008: 4, 2009: 10, 2010: 12, January-November 2011: 23). The data also show an alarming increase in reported murders in Turkey in the previous years (2008: 2, 2009: 5, 2010: 6, January-November 2011: 5).

In total, the preliminary results show 755 reports of murdered trans people in 51 countries since January 2008.

The new result update reveals that in the last 47 months, 57 homicides of trans people were reported in Asia (2008: 11, 2009: 14, 2010: 17, January-November 2011: 15), 48 in North America (2008: Canada: 1, USA: 17, 2009: USA: 13, 2010: USA: 8, January-November 2011: USA: 9), 45 in Europe (2008: 11, 2009: 17, 2010: 9, January-November 2011: 8), and 4 in Oceania (2008: 3, 2009: 1) as well as 2 in Africa (2008: 1, 2009: 1).

The TDOR update of the preliminary results also reveals that since January 2008 45 killings of trans people have been reported in 10 European countries (Albania: 1, Germany: 2, Italy: 14, Poland: 1, Portugal: 1, Russia: 1, Serbia: 1, Spain: 3, Turkey: 18 and, UK: 3). In Asia, since January 2008 57 killings of trans people have been reported in 12 countries (Azerbaijan: 2, China: 6, India: 8, Indonesia: 4, Iran 1, Iraq: 3, Malaysia: 6, Pakistan: 12, Philippines: 11, Republic of Korea: 1, Singapore: 1, and Thailand: 2). In Oceania, 4 killings have been reported since 2008 (Australia: 1, Fiji: 1, New Caledonia: 1, and New Zealand: 1) and in Africa 2 (South Africa: 1, and Algeria: 1).

Yet, we know, even these high numbers are only a fraction of the real figures; the truth is much worse.

These are only the reported cases, which could be found through internet research. In most countries, data on murdered trans people are not systematically produced and it is impossible to estimate the numbers of unreported cases. Another finding of these updates is that while Brazil has received special attention due to the elevated number of killings, the number of killings in other South and Central American countries like Venezuela, Honduras and in particular Guatemala is equally or even more worrying in view of the much smaller population sizes of these countries.

While the documentation of homicides against trans people is indispensable for demonstrating the shocking extent of human rights violations committed against trans people on a global scale, there is also a need for in-depth research of various other aspects related to the human rights situation of trans people. Therefore, Transgender Europe developed the Trans Murder Monitoring project into the ‘Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide’ (TvT) research project. TvT is a comparative, ongoing qualitative-quantitative research project, which provides an overview of the human rights situation of trans persons in different parts of the world and develops useful data and advocacy tools for international institutions, human rights organizations, the trans movement and the general public. A research team from Transgender Europe is coordinating the project, which is funded by the Open Society Foundations, the ARCUS Foundation, and partly by the Heinrich Boell Foundation. The TvT research team is assisted by an Advisory Board, composed of 20 international LGBT, trans and human rights activists and academics from Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Europe, North America, and Oceania. It furthermore cooperates with 15 partner organizations in these six world regions. After having completed a survey on the social and legal situation of trans people in more than 50 countries in all six world regions, in November 2011, the TvT project research team together with 7 partner organizations from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Oceania, and South America start a new survey in form of a peer research on trans people’s experiences with Transrespect and Transphobia.

If you have further questions or if you want to support the research project,please contact the TvT research team:

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