



Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality

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Recognition and protection of the human rights of LGTI persons reinforced at the OAS

(Castries, June 7, 2018) This is the 70th year since the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) in which thematic coalitions were invited to reflect about OAS development in the Americas. We saw allies integrate a message of equality for all and opponents promote messages that violate human dignity and undermine human rights of LGBTI citizens in the Americas. We saw a coalition of church leaders diverge with the religious rights position of exclusion and marginalisation on thematic issues about democracy, gender and security that fell short of their respect for diversity or equal treatment of LGBTI citizens in the Americas.

ECADE, the Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality, was among thirty LGBTI activists across Latin America and the Caribbean that convened to monitor language of human rights and engage the Inter-American System. Saint Lucia, Guyana, Belize and Jamaica were also represented at the 48th OAS General Assembly, held on June 2-5, 2018, in Washington DC. As a coalition we have worked for eleven years in the OAS system. Prior to 2007, there was no advocacy in the Inter-American system that advanced human rights protection of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics/intersex status (SOGIESC).

The Caribbean has advanced in rights protection and defence in decriminalising same-sexual intimacy in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago, complementing notable strides in Latin and north America in the promotion and protection of human rights on the grounds of SOGIESC. However, countries in the Anglophone Caribbean remain challenged to recognise that no CARICOM state has language in their constitutions that is retrogressive and undermines the rights of their citizens.

Our Latin America and transgender colleagues remain vulnerable to all forms of violence, while anglophone Caribbean states become complicit in perpetuating discrimination and intolerance; thus, legitimising human rights abuses and violence that oppress LGBTI persons. This is compounded by an unsafe environment, which creates further social vulnerabilities.

The participation of the LGBTI Coalition in the 48th OAS General Assembly serves to reinforce and strengthen the advocacy of previous years for human rights protection, and highlights the realities and challenges of LGBTI persons needing definitive action in legal and policy changes. This year's General Assembly approved a tenth resolution on "Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" that encourages member states to consider "adopting public policies against discrimination by reason of sexual orientation and gender identity".

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INTERVIEWS: Individual interviews can be arranged on the phone, in person or online.

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The Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality Inc. (ECADE) is a network of organisations working across the eastern Caribbean. Drawing on The Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law", ECADE works to increase the competence of activists and conscientise the people of the eastern Caribbean for the advancement of LGBTIQI and other marginalised populations in the region. Learn more at www.ecequality.org or email info@ecequality.org