

# ACCESS CHAPTER 2 COMMEMORATES IDAHOT 2017

17May 2017, In South Africa, we are faced with many challenges which includes increase in Hate Crimes, lack of access to competent services and high levels of intolerance by community members.

On this day we remember all the forms of violence and discrimination that we faced in our lives and also achievements we have made over the years. The theme of this year is "Equality" for AC2, while our struggle in South Africa is different.

We, LGBTQI community, continue to be subjects to different forms of violence and hate. We are deprived of the most basic rights, of existence, of freedom of expression and association, Sense of security.....not only us, but any person who is viewed different in our society even when these basic rights are enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa.

Community spaces and service points are supposed to be a public space available to all citizens, but it is seeming not for everyone. LGBTQI community experiences of the battlefield, where we can be exposed to all forms of violence, just because we are on the street, just because we have to go out or to be effective citizens in society and go to work or to study and participate in the rise of our respected country in all areas that includes politics and socio-economic environment.

However, the reality is bitter, as many members of our LGBTQI community are exposed to violence in the streets and public spaces just for being ourselves, just because someone hates, perceived and suspected our sexuality or gender identity. We are not even allowed to exist.

We are exposed to all forms of violence, ranging from despising looks of passer-by, insults, verbal violence, bullying, physical assault, harassment, sexual violence and even brutal murder. We are also exposed to rejection within our families, even churches reject us, we face discrimination in school, at hospitals and police stations, discrimination at work places where we even loose our employment just because we are LGBTI people.

In contrary, Society insists that we should hide, change, not go out, not dress the way we want, not even to come out. Although it is not all members of society, but most.

We recognise our pillars of strength friends and families whom continue to support and love us. We recognise our allies, and the little pockets of excellence by few in the Government to try reach out and provide services.

We invite you all to join us in this "Equality" campaign by blogging, tweeting and publishing posts with your stories of violence in public spaces and on the street.

Let the world see, hear and read about LGBTI people and the road to "EQUALITY".

Report inequality, report human rights violation, report hate crimes. Our only crime is being different.