



AVP MOURNS THE VICTIMS OF THE TEL AVIV LGBT CENTER BIAS MURDERS; URGES US TO ACT TO PREVENT HATE CRIMES HERE AND ABROAD

The New York City Anti-Violence Project is horrified and outraged by the murders of two people at the Tel Aviv LGBT Community Center on August 1, 2009. We extend our deepest sympathy and support to the victims, their friends and family members and the LGBT community in Tel Aviv. We denounce this violence and support the struggle for LGBT equality in Tel Aviv. We condemn this violent action and the message of fear that it sends to the LGBT youth at the Tel Aviv LGBT Community Center and throughout the world. We stand in solidarity with our allies in Tel Aviv and join the call to end this violence.

In the U.S. we know the tragedy of hate violence, not only against the LGBT communities but against any person because of who they are or what they believe. In recent months, the U.S. has experienced this insidious violence against Holocaust Museum guard Stephen T. Johns, U.S. Navy Seaman August Provost and Dr. George Tiller. We have also seen this violence in New York City where this year we documented 84 LGBT victims of hate violence in May and June alone. This violence not only affects the individual victims targeted but also sends a message of fear throughout the community and the world. In today's world, which is so diverse, we cannot condone violence based on actual or perceived identity – because if we do, we are all vulnerable. We will not tolerate this bias rooted in discrimination and ignorance and we must end violence against all LGBT people now – in Tel Aviv, in the United States and in the world.

The United States government must act to prevent this violence. In 2009 only 20 states have LGBT anti-violence programs, many run by volunteers or a very small staff. The work of the programs is vital to not only support the victims of violence but also to do the prevention and education work so desperately needed to end discrimination and violence against LGBT people. The federal government must provide specific funding streams for this work to provide anti-violence programs the capacity to fully address this problem.

The New York City Anti-Violence Project encourages people who are affected by this tragedy to call AVP's 24 hour, bilingual hotline at 212.714.1141. All calls are confidential.

The Congregation Beth Simchat Torah is sending messages of support and donations to the LGBT community in Israel. For more information, go to <http://www.cbst.org/About/News/In-the-wake-of-tragedy-we-will-support-our-LGBT-friends-in-Israel>.