



The Council for Global Equality

Advancing an American Foreign Policy
Inclusive of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

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I speak on behalf of the Council for Global Equality, which is a U.S. based coalition that promotes tolerance and non-discrimination for LGBTI persons globally. The Council is particularly concerned with high levels of hate violence targeting LGBTI citizens around the world. But as a coalition of 30 groups, we also recognize that we are stronger when we work together with other minority groups to promote a wholistic response to hate violence. This is particularly true for racial and religious minorities who are targeted by the same forces of intolerance and hatred as we are. I have personally experienced this violence as a gay man on the streets of my own capital in Washington, DC.

In this respect, I would like to commend ODIHR's new guide to building broad coalitions across racial, ethnic, religious and LGBTI communities to ensure a more comprehensive and more effective response to hate violence. This coalition-building work is important and often neglected.

In my own country, the United States, coalition activism was driven by a powerful collective response to the brutal murders of two men, Matthew Shepard, a gay young man who was brutally murdered 20 years ago this October, and James Byrd, Jr., an African-American man who was also brutally murdered by white supremacists 20 years ago this June. In response to those horrific killings, diverse communities came together to demand new laws and new commitments from the U.S. government to respond to hate violence in its many forms. Today, that coalition of religious groups, LGBTI groups and racial justice groups still works together to help enforce those laws and policies. This is just one of many powerful case studies in the new ODIHR guide.

I would like to encourage the wide dissemination of this guide, entitled "Coalition Building for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination." There are lessons in it for all of us – governments and civil society alike – as we try to build more effective coalitions across our various communities to respond to the scourge of hate violence in all of its ugly manifestations. We are all stronger, and safer, when we stand together for tolerance and non-discrimination for all.