

URGENT ACTION

QUEER ARTIST AT RISK OF GOING TO PRISON

Bruno Almada Comas, a young queer artist, is being accused of “acts of exhibitionism” based on a performance denouncing violence and discrimination faced by LGBTI people in Paraguay. The preliminary hearing is scheduled for 19 December. If he is found guilty he could face one year in prison.

On 17 May, **Bruno Almada Comas**, a young artist, performed his act “Broken Vein” (“Vena Rota”) at the “Besatón Festival” (“Kissing Festival”)- which is organized by SOMOSGAY, a human rights organization for LGBTI rights- carried out at a Public Square in Asunción. The festival aims to raise visibility of LGBTI individuals and celebrate diversity in Paraguay. His performance aimed to denounce the violence and discrimination against LGBTI people. Members of the group “We are Many Many More” (“Somos muchos muchos más”) who oppose the right to same-sex marriage and parenting, filed a complaint against him for “acts of exhibitionism”, “sexual abuse of minors” and “homosexual acts on minors”, alleging that he performed sexual acts in front of children. On 23 November, the General Attorney’s Office accused Bruno Almada Comas of “acts of exhibitionism”. The preliminary hearing of the trial is scheduled for 19 December.

If Bruno Almada Comas is found guilty, he could face one year in prison and be ordered to receive psychiatric treatment. According to Bruno Almada Comas, the General Attorney’s Office is proposing to conditionally suspend the criminal procedure if he accepts the charges and signs a registry every two months for two to five years. This measure would impose a grave restriction to his right to liberty given that compliance would impede travel outside the country.

During his performance, Bruno Almada Comas wore black underwear, used a plastic heart containing a red liquid (representing blood) and performed dance movements. In the background there were audio recordings playing scenarios of discrimination against LGBTI people, sexual violence against children and attacks to comprehensive sexual education plans. At the end of his act, Bruno Almada Comas took a flask with glitter out from the lower part of his underwear and located it near his genitals to spread it on his body and on the stage to represent hope despite the violence and discrimination previously represented. This action in particular was described in the complaint as an explicit sexual act.

Amnesty International considers the General Attorney’s Office to be misusing the justice system to censor Bruno Almada Comas’ artistic work.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language to the General Attorney’s Office:

- Urging them to withdraw the charges against Bruno Almada Comas;
- Urging them not to misuse the justice system to harass and discriminate against LGBTI people or to suppress the right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 JANUARY 2019 TO:

General Attorney
Sandra Raquel Quiñónez Astigarraga
Chile esq. Avda. Ygatimi, Asunción - Paraguay
Telephone: (59521) 415-5000
comunicaciones@ministeriopublico.gov.py
Twitter: @SandraQuinonezA
@fiscalia_prensa
Salutation: Dear General Attorney

And copies to:

SOMOSGAY
Simón Casal, Executive Director
Independencia Nacional 1032 casi
Manduvirá Postal Code: 1250, Paraguay
+595986173200
Fax: (595 21) 495 802
Email: hola@somosgay.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In October 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science passed a resolution banning public education materials on what the ministry calls “gender theory and/or ideology”, which in practice restricted materials related to gender equality, reproductive rights, sexuality and non-discrimination. Therefore, Amnesty International has called on Paraguay to take immediate steps to adopt and implement anti-discrimination legislation, in line with international human rights standards and commitments made during the previous review, and that includes provisions to guarantee non-discrimination and the prevention and punishment of discrimination on all grounds, including sexual orientation or gender identity. For more information

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/3034/2015/en/>.

According to Paraguayan Coordination of Human Rights CODEHUPY (Coordinadora de Derechos Humanos del Paraguay) in 2017 the organization registered cases of police violence against LGBTI people; discrimination on the grounds of gender identity of a student; the killing of trans woman Andrea González, whose killer was granted house arrest and then escaped; smear campaigns; and hate speech against LGBTI people. In 2018, SOMOSGAY has identified the continuity of such ways of violence.

Two years ago, municipalities in Paraguay began to adopt “pro-life and pro-family” resolutions. The adoption of this position implies that municipalities favour families composed of a man and a woman, and therefore discriminate against same-sex families. In addition, the adoption of these resolutions has resulted in restrictions on demonstrations in favour of the LGBTI community or that celebrate diversity. According to CODEHUPY, around ten cities in Paraguay have adopted these types of resolutions.

Name: Bruno Almada Comas

Gender m/f: male

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