

## **Stonewalled – still demanding respect. Police abuses against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the USA.**

### **Chicago – Host of this year's International Gay Games – Needs to Address Ongoing Problems of Police Abuse and Misconduct against LGBT People.**

From 15 to 22 July, Chicago will play host to the world and welcome thousands of LGBT athletes, spectators and cultural participants to the city for the 7<sup>th</sup> Gay Games Sports and Cultural Festival. Chicago prides and promotes itself as a city of humanity and cultural diversity, and has taken important steps in recognizing and protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Chicago was among the first US cities to amend its city human rights ordinance to bar discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation - and later was among the first to add gender identity.

Despite such progress, Amnesty International's research shows that police abuse and misconduct against LGBT people remains a serious and widespread problem in the city:

- ★ LGBT people in Chicago are at risk of gender-based violence, sometimes amounting to torture or other ill-treatment, taking the form of sexual, physical and verbal abuse in routine encounters with law enforcement officials and during arrest, searches, and detention.
- ★ Police response to crimes against LGBT people is often inadequate and sometimes hostile. Because of this, LGBT often fear reporting crime. In cases of domestic violence involving same-sex partners, AI has documented reports of officers not taking such incidents seriously, threatening to arrest both parties, or relying on racial and gender stereotypes when identifying the abuser.
- ★ There also continues to be profiling and discriminatory enforcement of certain laws and ordinances against LGBT people. Young, homeless ethnic or racial minority LGBT people are at particular risk of police abuse.

AI's findings strongly indicate that even for serious abuses, officers are seldom held accountable, creating a climate of impunity.

#### **TAKE ACTION: Write to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley**

Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language. In all your letters, please include the following key messages:

- LGBT people in the USA continue to suffer serious police abuses, in some cases amounting to torture or other ill-treatment.
- Within the LGBT community, transgender people, members of ethnic or racial minorities, young people and immigrants bear the brunt of police abuse. The climate of prejudice which LGBT people face in the USA means that many of these abuses continue to go unpunished.
- Despite some positive initiatives by law enforcement agencies and the justice system, much more needs to be done to protect LGBT people from police abuse and misconduct.
- Selection as host to this year's International Gay Games is a testament to the steps Chicago has taken to advance and protect the basic human rights of LGBT people. However, this overall progress is undermined by continuing problems with police abuse and misconduct.
- As the highest elected official in the city of Chicago, please do all within your power to ensure that the Chicago Police Department respects the human rights of all city residents including Chicago's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents.

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- Take steps to ensure that all cases of alleged police abuse are investigated and that perpetrators of such abuses are brought to justice. This should include:
  - (a) improving the ability of internal and external oversight bodies to respond and investigate complaints from LGBT individuals by building expertise on LGBT issues through comprehensive training;
  - (b) strengthening the ability of the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) to investigate complaints, for example, giving it subpoena power to access records or the authority to order witness to appear; and
  - (c) enhancing transparency of review process by directing the OPS to hold public hearings and to make public their policy recommendations.
- Ensure that the Chicago Police Department and other city departments and agencies review the recommendations made in Amnesty International's report and make all necessary changes in policies and practices.

### **APPEALS TO:**

#### **Mayor Richard M. Daley**

Office of the Mayor  
City Hall  
121 N. LaSalle, Room 507  
Chicago, IL 60602  
USA

F: ++ 1 312 744-8045

Salutation: Dear Mayor Daley

### **COPIES TO:** AIUSA OUTfront Program.

Please tell us if you take part in this action or send a copy of your letter to the Mayor. We can use this international show of support and solidarity in our events at the Gay Games.

Amnesty International USA – OUTfront  
5 Penn Plaza  
New York, NY 10001  
USA

Email: [outfront@aiusa.org](mailto:outfront@aiusa.org)

For more information see Amnesty International's report:  
*Stonewalled – still demanding respect. Police abuses against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the USA* (AI Index: AMR 51/001/2006).

<http://www.amnesty.org> and <http://www.amnestyusa.org/outfront>

On Saturday 15 July AIUSA will be hosting a Human Rights Conference  
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/outfront/gaygames.html>