More Than 1100 Reported Trans Murders

press release, protection from violence and hate, trans murder monitoring

12 March 2013

Constant rise in murder rates: Transgender Europe's Trans Murder Monitoring project reveals more than 1,100 reported murders of trans people in the last five years.

The Trans Murder Monitoring (TMM) project started in April 2009 and systematically monitors, collects and analyses reports of homicides of trans people worldwide. Updates of the results are published two to three times a year on the website of the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide project in the form of tables, namelists, and maps.

The March 2013 update reveals a total of 1,123 reported killings of trans people in 57 countries worldwide from January 1st 2008 to December 31st 2012. The update shows a significant/constant increase in reported killings of trans people over the last five years. In 2008, 148 cases were reported, in 2009 217 cases, in 2010 229 cases, in 2011 262 cases, and in 2012 267 cases. It is important to note that these cases are those that could be found through Internet research and through cooperation with trans organizations and activists. In most countries, data on murdered trans people are not systematically produced and it is impossible to estimate the numbers of unreported cases.

The increase suggests that on the one hand TGEU's TVT research team has improved its monitoring methods, and received information from activists from many parts of the world. On the other it suggests that an increase in the visibility of trans people and of trans issues in public discourse may have led to a better reporting of cases. Clearly the shocking amount of violence against trans people still poses a major problem and threat to trans people in many countries. The alarming figures demonstrate once more that there is an urgent need to react to the violence against trans people and to seek mechanisms to protect trans people. Some international trans activists even started to introduce the term 'transcide' to reflect the continuously elevated level of deadly violence against trans people on a global scale.

Cases have been reported from all major World Regions (Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Europe, North America, and Oceania), evoking an evermore gruesome picture, especially given the very partial knowledge we are able to gain in many places. You can find more detailed information in our map showing the 1,123 reported murders of trans people.

Throughout all six world regions, the highest absolute numbers have been found in countries with strong trans movements and trans or LGBT organizations that do a professional monitoring: Brazil (452), Mexico (106), and Colombia (65) in Central and South America, the USA (69) in North America, Turkey (30) in Europe, and The Philippines (28) in Asia.

The close connection between the existence of strong trans movements and professional monitoring on the one hand, and highest absolute numbers of reports, on the other hand, point to a worrisome question: the question of unreported cases. Beside the need for mechanisms to protect trans people, this connection also shows the need for strong trans communities and organizations, which are capable of professional monitoring and reporting of violence against trans people. Furthermore this connection results in the fact, that the figures show only the tip of the iceberg of homicides of trans people on a worldwide scale.

Most reported cases were from Central and South America, which amount to 864 reports in 22 countries and account for 77 % of the globally reported murders of trans people since January 2008. In this region, there has been the strongest increase in reports (2008: 94, 2009: 165, 2010: 181, 2011: 206, and 2012: 218). In Brazil, the country with most reported killings (452 in total), there has been a steady increase (2008: 57, 2009: 68, 2010: 99, 2011: 103, 2012: 125). In Mexico, 106 cases have been reported in total, showing an even stronger increase each year (2008: 4, 2009: 9, 2010: 14, 2011: 33, 2012: 46). In Colombia, 65 killings have been reported in total since 2008 (2008: 13, 2009: 13, 2010: 15, 2011: 18, 2012: 6).

Killings of trans people in the region have also been reported from Argentina (19), Bolivia (9), Chile (4), Costa Rica (4), Cuba (2), Dominican Republic (14), Ecuador (11), Guatemala (36), Honduras (41), El Salvador (7), Jamaica (1), Nicaragua (4), Panama (2), Paraguay (5), Peru (11), Puerto Rico (9), and Uruguay (8), and Venezuela (54). Reports from some countries with smaller population sizes are also extremely worrying. While Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia have the highest absolute numbers, the relative numbers show even more worrisome results for some countries with smaller population sizes. Honduras, for instance, has a rate of 5.12 reported trans killings per million inhabitants, for Guatemala the rate is 2.83, and for Puerto Rico the rate is 2.43, while for Brazil the rate is 2.35, for Colombia the rate is 1.41, and for Mexico the rate is 0.94.

Thus, seen in relative numbers the situation in Honduras, Guatemala and Puerto Rico is even more severe than the one in Brazil, Mexico, or Colombia.

The new result update moreover reveals that in the last five years:
105 killings of trans people have been reported in Asia (2008: 17, 2009: 17, 2010: 29, 2011: 25, 2012: 17), in 15 countries (Afghanistan: 1, Azerbaijan: 2, Bangladesh: 1, Cambodia: 1, China: 6, India: 24, Indonesia: 7, Iran: 1, Iraq: 3, Malaysia: 6, Pakistan: 19, Philippines: 28, Republic of Korea: 1, Singapore: 1, and Thailand: 4);

71 killings of trans people have been reported in Europe (2008: 13, 2009: 20, 2010: 10, 2011: 14, 2012: 14), in 11 countries (Albania: 1, France: 2, Germany: 2, Italy: 20, Poland: 1, Portugal: 1, Russia: 2, Serbia: 1, Spain: 6, Turkey: 30, and UK: 5);

71 killings of trans people have been reported in North America (2008: 19, 2009: 13, 2010: 9, 2011: 16, 2012: 14), in 2 countries (Canada: 2, USA: 69);

8 killings of trans people have been reported in Africa (2008: 2, 2009: 1, 2010: 0, 2011: 1, 2012: 4), in 4 countries (Algeria: 1, Mauritius: 1, Uganda: 1, South Africa: 5);

4 killings of trans people have been reported in Oceania (2008: 3, 2009: 1, 2010: 0, 2011: 0, 2012: 0), in 4 countries (Australia: 1, Fiji: 1, New Caledonia: 1, and New Zealand: 1).

Attached to this press release you can find a map, which demonstrates the absolute figures of reports found worldwide since January 2008.

While the documentation of killings of trans people is indispensable for demonstrating the shocking extent of human rights violations committed against trans people on a global scale, there is also a need for in-depth research of various other aspects related to the human rights situation of trans people. Therefore, Transgender Europe developed the Trans Murder Monitoring project into the Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide research project (TvT). TvT is a comparative, ongoing qualitative-quantitative research project, which provides an overview of the human rights situation of trans people in different parts of the world and develops useful data and advocacy tools for international institutions, human rights organisations, the trans movement and the general public. In November 2012 Transgender Europe published the TvT research report ‘TRANSRESPECT VERSUS TRANSPHOBIA WORLDWIDE – A Comparative Review of the Human-rights Situation of Gender-variant/Trans People‘, which discusses and contextualises the key findings of the TvT project.

If you have further questions or if you want to support the research project, please contact Transgender Europe's Senior Researcher Dr Carsten Balzer at research@transrespect-transphobia.org.