



PRESS RELEASE

LGBTI+ Pride Day—Message from UNAIDS Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean

“Every June, we celebrate LGBTI+ Pride month and the historic Stonewall uprising that took place 53 years ago on 28 June. Across Latin America and the Caribbean, the LGBTI+ community comes together in solidarity to celebrate this journey full of obstacles and important achievements.

At the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), we stand in solidarity with the LGBTI+ community at this moment of commemoration. We also recognize their efforts, commitment and resilience in fighting for their rights and respect.

Today we honour all those who are fighting for a world where lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people can live free from violence and discrimination.

Over the past decades, we have come a long way and earned the respect of many. But we still have a long way to go.

Consensual same-sex relationships are still criminalised in almost 70 countries. Nearly half of the countries reporting to UNAIDS have no legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, nor against discrimination based on gender identity.

UNAIDS is calling for intensified protection for LGBTI+ people. More than four decades after the first case of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) continues to disproportionately affect members of the LGBTI+ community, including gay and bisexual men, transgender people, as well as vulnerable people of African descent and other vulnerable communities.

HIV-related stigma, harassment, bullying and discrimination continue to perpetuate a pandemic that has long been marked by intersecting inequalities: racism, poverty, lack of education and employment, and many other structural disparities in our societies.

For decades, we have lost the lives of millions of LGBTI+ people to AIDS. Many were unable to access health services, realize their rights and live a life of dignity.

Of the estimated 100 000 new HIV infections by 2020 in Latin America, 92% were among key populations and their sexual partners. In the Caribbean, they account for 68%. These figures indicate that HIV programmes are not closing the remaining gaps among the most vulnerable populations.

We cannot allow HIV prevalence among transgender people to remain at the shocking mark of over 23% in Latin America and almost 28% in the Caribbean. We cannot allow transgender women to remain 34 times more at risk of contracting HIV in their lifetime than other adults.

It is our moral obligation to stop discrimination once and for all and affirm the rights of the LGBTI+ community.

This 28 June, let us join forces to celebrate LGBTI+ Pride and continue to fight for equitable access to health. It is crucial to invest in health services free from stigma and discrimination and to create protective legislation, including laws that recognise the gender identity of trans people.

I call on Latin American and Caribbean countries to end inequalities, repeal discriminatory laws, and prevent and respond to violence.

Only together can we guarantee a life of dignity for all people.

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).