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CANADA MUST INCREASE EFFORTS TO PROTECT LGBTI PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

More than 120 organizations release detailed action plan to Canadian political parties

TORONTO, September 24, 2015 — Today, more than 120 civil society organizations Canada-wide have endorsed an important Call to Action, penned by the Dignity Initiative (www.dignityinitiative.ca). These many and varied groups are urging the incoming Government of Canada, no matter the prevailing party, to take critical steps to defend and promote the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people around the world.

The Dignity Initiative is a national project led by more than 20 civil society organizations with the shared goal of advancing Canada's role in supporting human rights for LGBTI people worldwide. Today's Call to Action builds upon an open letter sent last year to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which set out a series of 10 recommended actions Canada should take to advance the human rights of LGBTI people globally. Since then, much work has been done to refine and enhance these ideas to form a workable plan for whoever will form the new Government of Canada.

The urgency of this call is clear: recent years have seen a wave of intensified homophobia, including new or worsened anti-LGBTI laws (and the resulting hatred and violence against LGBTI people), in numerous countries, including Uganda, Nigeria, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Jamaica, Gambia and Iraq, among others. The time for action is now; Canada needs to become more engaged and play a strategic, constructive role internationally, when and where it can, on these life-and-death issues.

The recommendations in this Call to Action have been developed with additional input from human rights activists across Canada and abroad, including Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The Call to Action has also been informed by extensive research into the foreign policy initiatives of other countries that are supportive of human rights for LGBTI people, and discussions with those familiar with Canada's current foreign policy activities on this front.

While the incoming government must be held accountable as a leader in defending the human rights of LGBTI people abroad, now is also the time to discuss the issues that affect LGBTI communities in Canada, especially during this federal election campaign. On Thursday, September 24 in Toronto, and on Friday, September 25 in Ottawa, two debates involving candidates from the major political parties will focus on LGBTI issues during the election. Visit the following links for the [Toronto](#) and [Ottawa](#) debates. (NB: To date, no Conservative Party representative has been confirmed for either debate.)

Read the full Call to Action for global LGBTI rights from the Dignity Initiative at <http://bit.ly/CallToActionDI>

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