



# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

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Geneva, Switzerland, July 2009 -- This week the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) releases the electronic version of *Practitioners' Guide No. 4: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and International Human Rights Law*.

Around the world, people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are singled out for abuse. In states with laws that criminalize same-sex sexual conduct, LGBT people are arrested, detained, tortured, and, in some cases, executed. Even in states with no official penal sanctions, LGBT people are the target of violent hate crimes, harassment, and ostracism. They live in fear of losing their jobs, their housing, and their families, all because of how they live and whom they love.

For the past five years, ICJ has worked on promoting the applicability of human rights law to violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Together with the International Service for Human Rights, ICJ facilitated the development of the Yogyakarta Principles. This document, drafted by a distinguished group of human rights experts, articulates the human rights principles that apply to sexual orientation and gender identity, and identifies the legal sources of States' obligations to protect, promote and fulfil rights.

Drawing on the Yogyakarta Principles, the ICJ wrote the *Practitioners' Guide* to provide judges, lawyers, and activists a detailed understanding of the legal foundations for the protection of people victimized on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The *Practitioners' Guide* offers a comprehensive review of the principles of non-discrimination, equality, and privacy. It then analyzes the scope and nature of the legal prohibition against some of the most severe violations – torture, deprivation of liberty, extrajudicial and arbitrary executions, and denial of the rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Through the *Practitioners' Guide*, the ICJ hopes to increase awareness of human rights principles that protect people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as to encourage legal advocacy.

The ICJ is a non-governmental organisation devoted to promoting the understanding and observance of the rule of law and the legal protection of human rights throughout the world. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and has many national sections and affiliated organisations. It enjoys consultative status with ECOSOC, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the African Union. The ICJ's Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Project seeks to develop the application of human rights standards to violations that are based on people's sexual orientation and gender identity.

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The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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