

MEDIA RELEASE



Serving the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender,
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For Immediate Release:

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New York City's LGBT Community and Elected Officials Condemn the Murder of Camila Guzman, a Transgender Woman

New York, August 4 – The New York City lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community stands in solidarity with the family and friends of Camila Guzman, a transgender woman found brutally murdered in her apartment on Monday, August 1. The community also calls for the media to report this story accurately and responsibly.

"We are saddened and troubled by the death of another member of our community," said Michael Silverman, Executive Director of the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund. "This horrible murder further underscores the violence transgender people, and particularly transgender women of color, face in their daily lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with Camila Guzman's family and friends."

"Camila's friends and the transgender community overall are not happy with her portrayal in the news. As transgender people we feel alone and like we're invisible targets for violence," said Ruby Teresa Chavez, friend of Camila Guzman. "We deserve respect and increased advocacy to increase opportunities for us."

According to the 2010 Report on Hate Violence released by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, transgender women are disproportionately impacted by murder, accounting for 44 percent of gay and transgender murder victims in 2009. The report also showed that transgender people of color are less likely to receive needed medical attention when attacked.

"Camila Guzman's murder and the series of violent attacks against transgender women of color in Washington, D.C., highlight the disproportionate impact of severe anti-LGBT violence on transgender people of color," said Ejeris Dixon, Deputy Director in Charge of Community Organizing and Public Advocacy, with the New York Anti-Violence Project. "These murders are a wake-up call for all organizations that work to end hate violence. We must work collaboratively to create specific strategies to prevent violence against transgender people of color and to ensure that survivors receive the support they need."

City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito added:

“I am truly saddened by the brutal murder of Camila Guzman, a transgender woman who was a constituent. It is important that we denounce any act of violence against the transgender community and send the message that such violence will not be tolerated in El Barrio/East Harlem or anywhere in this city. Additionally, it is also important that the media report this story accurately and responsibly and not resort to characterizations and language that are disrespectful and insensitive to Camila’s gender identity.”

The New York LGBT community, which includes GLAAD, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Audre Lorde Project, Sylvia Rivera Law Project, Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund and the New York City Anti-Violence Project, also urges the media fairly and accurately tell the story of Camila Guzman to reflect her life as a sister, friend and member of the New York LGBT community.

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