

# MEDIA ALERT



National Advocacy  
for Local LGBTQH Communities

October 16, 2015

## **NCAVP mourns the death of Zella Ziona, a transgender woman of color killed in Gaithersburg, Maryland; the 22<sup>nd</sup> reported homicide of a transgender/gender nonconforming person NCAVP has responded to in 2015**

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs ([NCAVP](#)) has learned of the homicide of Zella Ziona, a transgender woman of color killed in Gaithersburg, Maryland on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. [According to local media](#), much of which has been misgendering and misnaming the victim, Zella Ziona was shot to death, possibly following an altercation, in what police are describing as a non-random attack. NCAVP has reached out to [Casa Ruby](#) in Washington DC to support the local communities affected by these homicides.

"The murder of Zella Ziona is a terrible tragedy," said Ruby Corado of Casa Ruby in Washington DC. "Our transgender sisters continue to be taken from us far too often and at too young an age. She was only 21 years old. We demand that the community say her name and stop this violence."

**This is the 22<sup>nd</sup> reported homicide\* of a transgender or gender non-conforming person – 19 of whom were people of color – that NCAVP has responded to in 2015.**

"In 2015 we have witnessed the highest homicide rate of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the U.S. ever recorded by NCAVP, and we mourn this tragic, senseless loss of life," said Chai Jindasurat, Co-Director of Community Organizing and Public Advocacy at the New York City Anti-Violence Project. "This is a state of emergency for our communities, and we cannot continue to witness this violence without every one of us committing to taking action to end it."

### **The transgender and gender non-conforming people we have lost to violence in 2015 include:**

- [Papi Edwards](#), a black transgender woman, was shot to death at the Fern Valley Motel in Louisville, Kentucky on January 9<sup>th</sup>. An alleged suspect, Henry Richard Gleaves, has been arrested and charged with her murder.
- [Lamia Beard](#), a black transgender woman, was found shot to death on January 17<sup>th</sup> in Norfolk, Virginia.
- [Ty Underwood](#), a black transgender woman, was found shot to death early Monday morning on January 26<sup>th</sup> in Tyler, Texas, after a woman called 911 to say a car had hit a telephone pole and that her children had heard gunshots. Her loved ones are speaking out, saying that they believe this was a hate crime.
- [Yazmin Vash Payne](#), a black transgender woman, was discovered fatally stabbed to death on January 31<sup>st</sup> at the scene of a house fire in the Van Nuys district of Los Angeles. Payne's boyfriend, Ezekiel Dear, has been arrested and booked for suspicion of murder in connection with her death.
- [Taja Gabrielle de Jesus](#), a latin@ transgender woman, was discovered stabbed to death on a stairwell in San Francisco's Bayview District on February 1<sup>st</sup>.
- [Penny Proud](#), a black transgender woman, was found fatally shot on February 10<sup>th</sup> at the cross section of Ursulines Avenue and North Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana.

- [Kristina Gomez Reinwald](#), a latin@ transgender woman, was found unresponsive in her home in Miami, Florida on February 15, 2015 and her death is being investigated as a homicide.
- [London Chanel](#), A black transgender woman stabbed to death in Philadelphia on May 8th, she was stabbed by her roommate's boyfriend in North Philadelphia.
- [Mercedes Williamson](#), transgender woman, was found stabbed to death and buried in a wooded field in George County, Mississippi on May 30th. Josh Brandon Vallum, who reportedly told his father about committing the homicide, has been arrested.
- [India Clarke](#), a black transgender woman, was found beaten to death on July 21st in a park area of the University Area Community Center in Tampa, Florida.
- [K.C. Haggard](#), a transgender woman was stabbed to death in the street by an individual in a car in front of multiple witnesses in Fresno, California on July 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- [Amber Monroe](#), a black transgender woman, who was shot to death in Detroit, Michigan on August 8<sup>th</sup>.
- [Ms. Shade Schuler](#), a black transgender woman killed in Dallas, Texas on July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- [Ashton O'Hara](#), a black transgender/gender-nonconforming person whose body was found July 14<sup>th</sup> in Detroit, Michigan.
- [Kandis Capri](#), a Black transgender woman who was found shot to death in Phoenix, Arizona on August 11th.
- [Elisha Walker](#), 20, a Black transgender woman who was found in a shallow grave in August outside Smithfield, North Carolina. She had not been seen by family or friends since October 2014 and her vehicle was found a month later. Detectives have charged Angel Arias with her murder and for larceny.
- [Tamara Dominguez](#), a latin@ transgender woman in Kansas City, Missouri was run over multiple times in a side street, and her body was found on August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- [Jasmine Collins](#), a Black transgender woman was killed in Kansas City, Missouri on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Her death came to light late due to media outlets and law enforcement agencies misgendering and misnaming of the victims.
- [Keyshia Blige](#), a Black transgender woman, Blige was shot and killed while driving with a passenger in Aurora, on March 7<sup>th</sup>. Police believe it was not a random attack. Her death also came to light late due to media outlets and law enforcement agencies misgendering and misnaming of the victims.
- [Jessie Hernandez](#)\*, a gender non-conforming Latin@, age 17, was killed by police in Denver, Colorado on January 26 under suspicious circumstances.
- [Kiesha Jenkins](#), a 22-year-old Black transgender woman was physically attacked and then shot to death on October 6<sup>th</sup> by a group of 5 or 6 men in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

\*There are two other homicides of transgender or gender non-conforming individuals in 2015 in which a clear motive has not been established or a bias-motive is not apparent, **an individual with the last name Golec** and **Maya Hall**. NCAVP will continue to monitor these incidents and provide updates as they become available.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' (NCAVP) most recent report, [Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2014](#), documented 20 anti-LGBTQ homicides in 2014. **Of those 20 homicides, a majority (55%) of victims were transgender women, and half (50%) were transgender women of color.**

NCAVP is a resource for anyone who experiences violence. For more information, or to locate an anti-violence program in your area, please contact us at [info@ncavp.org](mailto:info@ncavp.org) or [visit us online](#). Join NCAVP in our efforts to prevent and respond to LGBTQ and HIV-affected violence. To learn more about our national advocacy and receive technical assistance or support, contact us at [info@ncavp.org](mailto:info@ncavp.org).

**If you are a member of the media, please contact:**

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*NCAVP works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of*

*local member programs and affiliate organizations who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the [New York City Anti-Violence Project](#).*

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