

## Let each name...

By Sass Rogando Sasot. Speech during the 2011 Amsterdam Transgender Day of Remembrance (Transgender Gedenkdag 2011) on 19 November 2011, 16.00-19.00, Homomonument.

As we recite the names of all those who we have lost to the violent hearts and hands of our fellow human beings, may we remember that these names don't just represent another statistic in the growing number of people who lost the grace of their lives to the indignity of transphobia. These names represent lives, real lives of people who lived, walked, cried, smiled, and loved among us. These names represent lives that deserved to be treated with nothing less than dignity.

These names don't just mean that we are losing people to transphobia in different regions of the world, in different countries of different cultures, and in different communities. More than a loss of lives, these names mean that countries, cultures, and communities are letting the darkness of transphobia reign over the light of compassion, care, and everyday kindness.

These names represent lives that matter and they should matter, for these names represent people who were somebody's children, partners, friends, siblings, students, teachers, workers, citizens! So as we recite these names, we are calling on all institutions – from the families to schools to religions to governments, from Amsterdam to Ankara, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe - we are calling on everyone, everywhere to reclaim compassion from hate, to reclaim care from apathy, and to reclaim everyday kindness from transphobia.

Some of you here might feel the sting of hopelessness as you recite these names. But friends, I invite you to let that sting of hopelessness be transformed into a platform for a desire for change that cannot be tamed!

Let each name be our light and guide. Let each name be the wings of our hope that shall carry us to the Promised Land of a world that is more inclusive, respectful, and kind.

Let each name fortify the strength of our faith. Our faith that when we are united by the clarity of our voices and the urgency of our desire for change, we will prevail!

Let each name be a pressing reminder that we should use our lives to make a difference and live our lives as living testaments that one day the fierceness of our determination can triumph over the force of oppression.

Let each name be a monument of courage! Let this courage stir a restless defiance in our hearts – a restless defiance that would urge us to stand up for justice and dignity for everyone, everywhere! Let this restless defiance keep on awakening our enormous strength to face our fears about this world. And let's keep on awakening this enormous strength so we can keep on touching the hearts and spirits of those who are afraid to understand and accept difference; so we can keep on expanding the field of social inclusion and acceptance; so we can keep on inspiring the minds and hearts that matter to craft social policies that are designed to facilitate the fulfilment of happiness!

And most importantly, let each name remind us to never ever forget that we have the right to be here and that we have the responsibility to express, claim, and reclaim, and to fight for this right every time, everywhere, for everyone! *Thank you!*