

PRIDE

2018 TOOLKIT





CONTENTS

- Letter of Introduction3
- Trans Asylum Seeker Background4
- Free Alejandra: Trans Rights Activist Seeking Safety.....5
- Action Petition.....6
- Pride Organizing Tips.....7

Dear Amnesty Activist,

It's been a rough year for LGBTQI human rights around the globe: gay and bisexual men are being kidnapped in Russia and Chechnya, Northern Ireland refused same-sex marriage, and the Trump administration continues to pick away at LGBTQI human rights here at home.

But each year, Amnesty activists and the LGBTQI community rise up to the challenge, and this year's Pride will be no different! We will continue in the rich history of the LGBTQI movement celebrating during Pride month and taking action. Join us on the streets to defend LGBTQI rights!

This Pride, we're focused on taking action to **defend transgender asylum seekers**. LGBTQI people are at risk of violence and discrimination throughout the asylum process and need our help. Transgender asylum seekers are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

TAKE ACTION: Alejandra is a transgender woman from El Salvador. After fighting for the rights of trans people in El Salvador for over a decade, she was forced to flee to escape repeated attacks and extortion by a criminal gang, as well as abuses by the Salvadoran military, because of her transgender identity. Alejandra applied for asylum in the United States in November 2017, but is currently being held in detention at an ICE correctional center in New Mexico, despite the fact that she is not a flight risk and that the detention of asylum seekers must only be used as a last resort. **Call on ICE to demand Alejandra's release** as she awaits her asylum ruling. NO asylum seeker should be held in detention, particularly LGBT asylum seekers, many of whom have fled unspeakable violence and persecution. ICE must release on parole all asylum seekers.

We will not stand for these injustices! Grab your Amnesty banner and this toolkit, get out to the streets, and take action on behalf of your LGBTQI community!

In solidarity,

The AIUSA LGBT Human Rights Coordination Group

Contact the LGBT Human Rights Co-group at LGBT@aiusa.org for more information and to take action on LGBT rights

TRANS ASYLUM SEEKERS BACKGROUND

In countries all over the world, including the United States, transgender individuals continue to be discriminated on the basis of their gender identities. Transgender individuals are subject to physical and verbal harassment and abuse, sexual violence, stigma, social exclusion, and death.

Violence against LGBTI individuals in the Northern Triangle

The Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA), which includes Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, remains one of the most dangerous regions in the world. Violence plaguing the NTCA has led many, including many LGBTI individuals, to flee, seeking asylum elsewhere.

As Amnesty's 2017 [No Safe Space](#) report details, LGBTI people are particularly at risk of violence, and authorities fail to protect them. Transgender women in particular experienced death threats from gang members; sexual violence and exploitation; and human trafficking. They were subject to gender profiling, unwarranted searches, and arbitrary detention by police. The fear of reporting violence to authorities is compounded by the fear of violence and retaliation against trans women, as well as the lack of credibility of the justice system.

Violence against transgender asylum seekers in detention

The risk to transgender individuals in asylum is heightened in detention centers. Transgender detainees are subject to physical, verbal and sexual violence; threats and intimidation; and misgendering. In addition, transgender individuals might be not be housed in gender-appropriate cells, or subject to solitary cells against their will.

Seeking asylum is a human right

Seeking asylum is a human right. The asylum procedure should be fair and effective, giving people access to the [UN Refugee Agency](#) (UNHCR) upon their need or request. Migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers' rights are protected by international law, regardless of how and why they arrive in a country. They have the same rights as all other human beings, plus special protections including:

- The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (Article 14), which states that everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution in other countries.
- The 1951 [UN Refugee Convention](#), which protects people from being returned to countries where they risk being persecuted.
- The [1990 Migrant Workers Convention](#), which protects migrants and their families.

Transgender and all asylum seekers must be protected at all costs against non-refoulement (deporting someone to the country of origin where they face threats of violence and persecution). What's more, while seeking asylum, detention must only be a last resort: those seeking protection should not be held in jail.

FREE ALEJANDRA: TRANS RIGHTS ACTIVIST SEEKING SAFETY

As an older trans woman, and as a fighter for LGBT rights, [...] I am a fighter all the way until the last day that I am on this earth.
—Alejandra

FREE ALEJANDRA, TRANS RIGHT ACTIVIST SEEKING SAFETY

Alejandra fought for trans rights for more than a decade in El Salvador. She was forced to flee after repeated attacks and extortion by a criminal gang, as well as abuses by the Salvadoran military. Alejandra was sexually assaulted by both the gang and military personnel because of her transgender identity.

But instead of offering her safety and a chance to rebuild her life, the U.S. government is detaining her in a private prison with inadequate and unresponsive health care.



We make requests for medical examinations, and they don't respond or give us an examination for 15 days. —Alejandra

Alejandra is now stuck at the Cibola detention center in New Mexico, waiting for an immigration judge's decision on her asylum claim. She should be free — not behind bars.

I applied for parole, with all the documentation requested, but the request was denied at the beginning of April. [...] I was not told the reason they denied my parole, just that it was denied. None of us have been given parole. —Alejandra

Join us in demanding that ICE release her on parole — so she can reunite with her niece, who is living in the U.S. and has already won her asylum claim.

[If released on parole:] *First I want to go run and hug my niece. We would like to live together.* —Alejandra

Alejandra's situation is not unique; there are many more trans people seeking asylum in the United States stuck waiting for months in detention centers where they are at risk of ill-treatment because of their gender identity, medical needs, or the trauma they have endured. It is cruel and unnecessary for U.S. immigration authorities to detain people fleeing to the U.S. in search of safety from persecution and violence, including women like Alejandra.

Tell ICE to release Alejandra, along with other transgender asylum seekers detained at Cibola!

ICE: Free Alejandra and other trans asylum seekers

Alejandra (A# 216-269-450) is a 43-year-old transgender woman from El Salvador who requested asylum at the U.S.–Mexico border in November 2017. Since arriving at the U.S. border, she has been in immigration detention, and is currently being held by ICE at the privately operated Cibola County Correctional Center in New Mexico. Alejandra is eager to be released so she can be reunited with her niece in the U.S., who already won her asylum claim. Both Alejandra and her niece experienced inadequate medical care at the Cibola detention facility.

We urge ICE’s Acting El Paso Field Office Director, Diane Witte, to:

- Immediately grant humanitarian parole to Alejandra while she awaits the decision on her asylum claim, including on any appeal.
- Improve the health care provided at ICE’s privately operated Cibola detention facility.
- Grant humanitarian parole to all asylum seekers whenever possible, especially when they are LGBTI or have acute medical needs.

Detention of asylum seekers should only be a last resort after all other options have been exhausted. There is no reason that people like Alejandra should be denied their freedom simply for seeking safety in the United States.

Name	City, State	Signature	Email (to learn more)

PRIDE PARADE ORGANIZING TIPS

HERE ARE JUST A FEW TIPS FOR ORGANIZING YOUR OWN EVENT OR PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTION IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY:

- **Make Some Noise:** If you are marching, lead the crowd in chants. Bring noise-makers, whistles and things to beat to create a little noise.
- **Visibility is Key:** Don't forget your Amnesty banner! Make some signs and march and/or setup a table with stickers, handbills, actions and other background information.
- **Grow the Movement:** The more people who become members of Amnesty International USA, the more capacity we have to educate our communities and make a change on critical human rights issue that matter. If you are tabling, ask your Regional Office for a stack of membership cards and other materials to hand out. If you're part of an Amnesty group—bring a sign-up sheet with information on when your group meets to give out to interested people.
- **Get Help Getting Started:** contact fieldorganizingteam@aiusa.org to speak to a Field Organizer who can help you put together a successful action or event.
- **Be Prepared:** Wear sunscreen, bring water and wear comfortable shoes.
- **Keep it Short and Simple:** If you are collecting signatures on petitions you will need to get your pitch down to a short conversation. Often, working the crowd before a march is the best time to get people interested!
- **Walk Around to Increase Your Impact:** take your clipboard & petitions & walk around the festival to ask for signatures— don't assume people will come to you!



