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New York Queer Asian & Pacific Islander Groups and the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission Stand With Hong Kong LGBT Activists; Host “Shower-in” To Oppose Hong Kong Government’s State-Sanctioned “Ex-Gay Conversion Therapy”

NEW YORK, NY -- On August 7th, 2011, several organizations including the Gay Asian & Pacific Men of New York (GAPIMNY), Queer, Asian, Visible, Empowered (Q-WAVE, a queer women and trans API group), and the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) will hold a protest in front of the Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office in New York City against the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department’s recent “ex-gay conversion therapy” workshop led by Hong Kwai-Wah, an ex-gay “specialist.” Hong is the leader of a Christian counseling group called New Creation Association with deep ties to Exodus Ministries and its overseas branch Exodus International, both of which have long championed ex-gay conversion therapy, a practice widely discredited by major medical and mental health organizations.

Hong and his associates have asserted that homosexuality can be “treated” with prayer, abstinence and cold showers, and have advised social workers to refer youth dealing with same-sex attraction to Christian therapists who perform ex-gay conversion therapy.

In response, Hong Kong-based LGBT rights group Rainbow Action protested the seminar on June 17th, 2011, sparking international outrage at the Hong Kong government’s brazen endorsement of the inaccurate and damaging therapy practices. They and other groups like Tongzhi Community Joint Meeting (TCJM) are continuing to protest government-sponsored hate against their community.

GAPIMNY, Q-WAVE and IGLHRC stand in solidarity with Hong Kong-based LGBT activists as they fight to defend their rights and oppose attempts to pathologize their lives. Both groups recognize that these conversion therapy practices were not developed in China, but rather have been imported from the United States and Europe where they were created using faulty psychology and fueled by anti-gay bigotry.

Dennis Chin, GAPIMNY spokesperson said:

"We are greatly disturbed by the increasing exportation of right-wing bigotry to overseas communities. Exodus Ministries and the "ex-gay movement" are not just content with fanning the flames of homophobic violence here in the United States but also want their beliefs adopted by the Hong Kong government."

Grace Poore, Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific Islands at IGLHRC adds:

"US right wing groups have groomed highly placed politicians and government officials in Hong Kong to promote homophobia in the name of culture and religion. Ironically, Hong Kong has a very small Christian population and an even smaller segment of conservative Christians. This wave of religious homophobia funded by US right wing Christian groups has traveled to other non-Christian countries in Asia like Singapore and South Korea, with harmful consequences for LGBT communities in those countries as well."

GAPIMNY, Q-WAVE and IGLHRC call on the Hong Kong government to honor the demands of the LGBT Community in Hong Kong, particularly those of Rainbow Action and Tongzhi Community Joint Meeting (TCJM) with whom GAPIMNY and QWAVE have been in contact. Those demands include:

- For the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department to cease sponsorship of ex-gay conversion therapy workshops
- For the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department to issue a public apology for legitimizing ex-gay conversion therapy.
- For the Hong Kong Psychiatric College and the Hong Kong Psychological Society to make statements condemning ex-gay conversion therapy
- For the Hong Kong government to establish policies that eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Lastly, GAPIMNY, Q-WAVE and IGLHRC call on our communities to recognize and fight against the continual export of anti-gay propaganda from the United States to other countries. As we fight for our communities here, we must also recognize that our struggles are borderless. Queerness is to be celebrated in all of our communities, at home and abroad; it is not to be cured nor condemned.

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