

# Caribbean Voices for Equality

Human Rights First is concerned about long-standing laws in the Caribbean that criminalize homosexuality or otherwise infringe on basic human rights, but we are also inspired by the brave leaders who are standing up for equality and dignity for all people. We believe more such voices will emerge and that they will ultimately lead to change throughout the region.

"No-one deserves the inhumane treatment that many LGBT persons suffer. They are often in fear, not only for their physical safety, but for their lives and that is no way to live."

-Kim Simplis-Barrow, First Lady, BELIZE

"There must be tolerance at a minimum and we must uphold the principle that the general rights for which we fought [are] rights for all people... [and] cannot be derogated from because of someone's sexual orientation."

-Frederick Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, BAHAMAS

"It is an injustice to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation."

-Dr. Max Puig, Former Minister of Labor, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"Discuss the issue, stop the discrimination, stop the stigmatization and let us therefore discuss this matter in an open, mature and frank way."

-Denzil Douglas, Former Prime Minister, SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

"All persons irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity are entitled to enjoy in Antigua and Barbuda the protections provided for by our constitution and by international human rights law."

-Lionel "Max" Hurst, Chief of Staff, Office of the Prime Minister, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

"What Government cannot do is to shirk its duty to ensure that all citizens, without exception, enjoy the full protection of the law."

-Dean Barrow, Prime Minister, BELIZE

"Saint Lucia does not condone [the attack on three gay tourists] perpetrated by individuals whose views do not reflect sentiments of the majority of law-abiding citizens."

-Allen M. Chastanet, Former Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation [Currently Prime Minister], ST. LUCIA

"All Jamaicans must embrace the principle of basic human rights of all persons....This principle requires tolerance towards minority groups, and non-violence in our dealings with those who manifest a lifestyle that differs from the majority of us."

-Mark Golding, Former Minister of Justice, JAMAICA

"We realize there's not only violence against women but also violence against men and then also those persons who are transgender are also subjected to serious violence. Regardless of our personal views towards [transgender persons], it's about respect for a person's life."

-Esther Byer-Suckoo, Minister of Labour, BARBADOS



"The stigmatisation of homosexuality in Trinidad and Tobago is a matter which must be addressed on the grounds of human rights and dignity to which every individual is entitled under international law."

-Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Former Prime Minister, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

"The State does not discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation, and every Guyanese is entitled to their right to freedom of expression, employment, housing, medical care, as provided in the Constitution, laws and policies of Guyana."

-Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, GUYANA

"We waste our time condemning and attacking people because they differ from us... We need to understand that we can't all believe in the same thing, but we can work for the common good of the development of mankind."

-Dr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister, GRENADA

"I am prepared to respect the rights of any adult to indulge in any practice which is not harmful to others."

-David Granger, President, GUYANA