

I am calling in today to share a part of my story, as I am still not safe and in fear for my life. I am also talking today to honor those who got killed for being different in the hope of preventing such things in the future.

In my society, being gay means death and when ISIS kills gays most people are happy because they think we are evil, and ISIS get a good credit for that.

We are hated, and our suffering and death brings joy to people.

I had my share, way before ISIS took control. It started on 2013. I was outed as a gay to a few people, and as a result I went through verbal and physical abuse. Once I was attacked by three people, they beat me, they threw me to the ground and they shaved my head. They told me that this was just a lesson, that I wouldn't be killed then and there out of respect for my father. Luckily for me he is a well-known religious man. This was not the only incident I went through though! Another time I was kicked half unconscious and was barely able to walk.

For the past few years it's been really, really hard. There were militiamen or security men who - if they found out someone was gay - would arrest him, rape him, torture him. There were lots of murders supervised by the Iraqi Army. Videos came out of people being burned alive or stoned and you can see soldiers in them. I have seen a video where some gay men had ropes put around their necks and they were dragged around the streets and people were throwing stones at them and when they were half-dead they were set on fire. Some people had their rectums glued up and were then left to die in the desert.

The difference now is that ISIS has only one horrible method of killing people - throwing them off buildings and, if they don't die, stoning them. I know that if ISIS had captured me, that would have been my fate.

While I was in university, ISIS took control of my city in Iraq. I had already been targeted by one of my classmates, and then he decided to join ISIS. Once they were in charge, he called me and warned me to repent. I hung up the phone. A short time later, ISIS fighters showed up to my house and announced my homosexuality to my family. They told them that they wanted to carry out God's punishment against me.

My own family turned against me when ISIS was after me, again just for being gay and atheist. I had to leave, or else I would have been killed.

I could never ask for the police protection, nor my family's protection. I can never complain, simply because I am gay, that means I am a criminal.

My journey wasn't easy, I was lonely, and it was really difficult to leave my city. I had to go through many routes looking for safety until I made it here. And I'm still not that safe.

If I'd stayed, ISIS would have come for me and killed me the way they've killed others. If ISIS didn't get me, members of my family would have done it.

Although this has been happening in Iraq for awhile now, what's changed is that the media are focusing on what ISIS is doing, because it's ISIS. And ISIS films everything and releases the video and says: "We killed these people for being gay and this is their punishment according to our Holy Book."

ISIS are also professional when it comes to tracking gay people. They hunt them down one by one. When they capture people, they go through the person's phone and contacts and Facebook friends. They are trying to track down every gay man. And it's like dominoes. If one goes, the others will be taken down too.

That's what happened to my friend. I never knew how he was outed, but I know how he got killed. I know that the world lost a great man for one crime: being born different.

And this is not over yet, in the Islamic State, gays are being tracked and killed all the time. And people who were able to flee, like myself, are living in constant fear and waiting for the unknown.

Even here, I received a message telling me that my place of residence is known and that I will get the punishment that I deserve. Yes, that was from my relatives.

In sum, our families disowned us, our government doesn't protect us, and ISIS is tracking everyone down, mostly to gain support from our society.

Our society encourages ISIS when they release videotaped murders of the LGBT, disgusting pictures that are not easy to see.

ISIS is the worst, but they are not the only one in the field who commits these crimes. Some laws protect the killers of gays, under the name of "honor crime."

Most of the world will turn a blind eye to what is happening. The rest will feel sad, maybe angry. They will get to their safe homes, they will continue living their lives while we get killed in some places, and suffer silently in others, waiting for the unknown, paused our lives, living in bad conditions, and maybe we are waiting for nothing.

I agreed to participate because I hope the international community will hear our cry and start caring for our lives, to find a solution for people in countries with anti-gay laws.

Personally, I would like to deliver a message to the Iraqi police: respect the LGBT when you arrest them, especially respect transgender people. I am not asking for marriage equality, just respect for our lives and for dignity.

I hope that the international community will soon come up with a solution for those who fled their countries and are stuck somewhere else. We are not living, just passing time, wasting valuable days of our youth.

I think we've suffered enough, and we've been through a lot fleeing militias and extremists, escaping death, to now be stuck with bureaucracy. We deserve easier and faster resettlements so we can start living with respect.