

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association-ILGA

(International non-profit association: aisbl)



Brussels, 6 June 2010

Subject: **International Grand Marshals 2010**

Toronto Pride Board of Directors
Genevieve D'Iorio and Margaret Ngai, co-chairs
14 Dundonald Street
Toronto, Ontario M4Y 1K2
Canada

Dear Members of the Board of Directors:

While we appreciate the honour of having been appointed International Grand Marshals 2010 for the Toronto Pride, it is with deepest regret that we renounce to this honour following your decision to ban the expression "Israeli Apartheid" and consequently QuAIA's participation to the pride.

We believe the ban to be a terrible mistake, in complete contradiction with the spirit of freedom and inclusiveness a pride should embody. Differences of opinion, particularly on non-LGBTI related matters, are to be expected and even welcomed among the participants to a pride march, if we want such march to be the genuine gathering of people from diverse walks of life and different sectors of society united in expressing demand for equality for LGBTI people all over the world.

As LGBTI activists we should be the first to know how unfair it is to be excluded from a public venue because the message we carry could be seen as "inappropriate" or "offensive" to someone. As a matter of fact pride parades have been considered "offensive" from their very inception from a – fortunately decreasing – portion of society. This is why freedom of expression should be one of the most sacred values at the core of our action.

We beg you to reconsider your decision and to restore the true spirit of pride

Best regards

Gloria Careaga

Renato Sabbadini

Co-Secretaries General

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ILGA is a network of over 600 groups from 111 countries fighting since 1978 for equal human rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex and transgender people.

The work of ILGA is supported by the Dutch organizations HIVOS and NOVIB, by the Dutch Government, by SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency), by BT (UK), by the ARCUS Foundation USA, and by ILGA supporters worldwide.