# Integrated Safety and Security Mechanism for Indonesian Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (LBQ) Women and Transgender Men Activists

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**Abstract**

Defending the rights of LBTQ communities in Indonesia is a challenging and oftentimes daunting task, especially for those activists identifying themselves as lesbian, bisexual or queer (LBQ) women or transgender men. There are no laws that recognize and protect LBQ women and transgender men activists at work, and moreover they are not entitled to the fulfillment and enjoyment of rights as other Indonesians. LBQ women and transgender men activists face greater risks due to the inherent discrimination against those identifying as women as well as the lack of recognition of their activism. Results are most often discriminatory acts and violence directed towards LBQ women and transgender men activists, which are considered as society's 'solution' to help LBQ women and transgender men activists back to living a 'normal' life based on tradition, social norms, and religious interpretation of morality. Research was conducted through personal conversations with fellow activists and observations of their daily work lives in women and LBTQ communities in Banda Aceh, Surakarta and Jakarta. The researcher encountered numerous situations of varying levels of risk, which all required different responses through security and protection mechanisms. LBQ women and transgender men activists in Indonesia tend to face security and protection issues caused by exposure to trauma, enormous workloads, and limited appreciation which oftentimes leads to high levels of chronic stress. Despite this, there are small support systems only in their personal lives, in society (including fellow activists, and LBTQ communities/organizations they are affiliated with or working for), and on state level. The analysis shows that integrated security and protection mechanisms are urgently needed to guarantee that LBQ women and transgender men activists are able to enjoy their lives without sacrificing their emotional and physical wellbeing.

**Key words:** LBTQ communities, Indonesia, LBQ women and transgender men activists, security and protection mechanisms

## Introduction

Indonesia's Constitution guarantees the promotion, protection and fulfillment of rights of their citizens regardless their identities, background and status. However, most of Indonesian LBQ women and transgender men are not entitled to enjoy many of their citizenship rights due to their identities as lesbian, bisexual women, queer or transgender men. This is further challenged through their type and scope of work as promoters and protectors of LBTQ rights because their presence is considered against social norms, traditional culture, religious values and national ideology. As a result, LBQ women and transgender men activists often fall victims to acts of violence and discrimination - both personally and collectively - while at work. This has put these activists at greater risk.

Unfortunately, security and protection mechanisms implemented and developed for LBQ women and transgender men activists are limited to certain aspects and processes: Most mechanisms in organizations focus on recovery and restoration. Additionally, discussions on risk prevention were mostly limited to physical security including self-defense, workplace and digital safety. Lastly, there is a need to understand that LBQ women and transgender men activist are not only working for LBTQ communities, but are also fighting for their own rights. Thus, it is necessary to have integrated securities, such as employment, social wellbeing, development, etc.

The study conducted was based on participatory action research which seeks to change social and personal dynamics of the situation so that the research process enhances the lives of participants. The researcher interviewed key persons in LBTQ communities in Aceh, Jakarta and Surakarta for about 10 days. In addition, observations of LBQ women and transgender men activists' work in these communities were conducted. The researcher also interviewed activists from women's movements, women organizations and the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) that previously engaged with LBTQ communities.[1] Moreover, research was conducted on journals, books, and other documents with keywords such as 'women human rights defenders', 'LBT activist', 'Indonesia LBTQ movement', also 'security and protection mechanism'.

State ignorance towards any attempts aimed at converting LBQ women and transgender men activists into becoming 'decent' heterosexual women resulted continuously and repeatedly in violations of their rights as Indonesian citizens. The study also found that risky situations not only emerged from the state and society but also from intimate circles including family members, relatives, friends, and even organizations the LBQ women and transgender men were affiliated with. Research also discovered that two factors correlated with LBQ women and transgender men activists to understand the importance of support systems, including securities and protection mechanism: (1) major events in human rights enforcements, and (2) the meaning of terms used to describe their activism.

This paper begins with a brief discussion of research methodologies, followed by a general discussion on integrated securities and protection mechanisms. Then an elaboration of this study's discoveries will cover risks faced by activists for LBTQ communities, and securities and protection mechanisms on personal, societal, and state levels. This paper's conclusion argues that integrated securities and protection mechanisms are urgently needed, and should be internalized within all life aspect of LBQ women and transgender men – both personally and professionally.

**Research Methodologies**

Using participatory action research seeks to change the social and personal dynamics of the research situation, and is a collaborative approach that seeks to build positive working relationships and productive communicative styles. Thus, this research used semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the activists' individual and collective understanding and views. Therefore, the qualitative interviewing aimed at generating situated knowledge based on people's experiences, understandings and interpretations of social reality which consequently implies the interaction between the researcher and the research subjects. Primary data was gathered through individual interviews, observations, and the researcher's personal experience while working with women and LBTQ communities/organizations in Indonesia. Individual interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, and all interviews were recorded. The structure of the interviews was developed using Integrated Securities: The Manual by Jane Barry, and were modified to meet the characteristics of this research's areas and participants. The researcher stayed for about a week in the research areas and met the participants in person. Most of the personal individual interviews were conducted directly however two participants were interviewed over the phone. The interviews took around 1.5-3 hours. This variation in interview duration was due to each participant's individual responses towards the questions. Meanwhile, secondary data was collected from journals, books, and other literature documenting LGBTIQ and/or LBTQ communities and movements, human rights enforcement, (women) human rights defenders and activists.

Participants in this research were key persons from the LGBTIQ movement in Indonesia. In particular, this study focused on research participants born as female and identifying as women (lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual), transgender men, and queer. All these persons play a significant role in the advancement of LTQ rights, and some also hold important positions in LBT organizations. Also, this research acknowledged the interplays between defending LBTQ rights, women movements and human rights enforcement in Indonesia. Therefore, the researcher also selected participants working in women and human rights organizations that are doing collaborative work with LBQ women and transgender men, or are addressing the rights of LBQ women and transfemale to male in the organizational and/or advocacy work. Moreover, considering Indonesia's regulations on human rights enforcement and the country's recognition of national human rights mechanisms, the researcher also gathered data from the national human rights institution and ministries responsible for human rights matters, particularly for those of women human rights defenders.

**Integrated securities and protection mechanisms**

In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Although critics said that the Declaration did not provide special rights, it put attention towards sexual- and gender-based violence and discrimination. Two decades later, the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998. It recognizes and protects human rights defenders from risks at work. Moreover, it urges state and other duty bearers to act with responsibility to protect, to fulfil and promote the rights of human rights defenders (UN General Assembly, 1999). Ever since the Declaration was adopted, many regional human rights mechanisms - both intergovernmental and non-governmental - were developed, and established securities and protection guidelines and mechanism for human rights defenders. However, this did not decrease the risks and threats facing human rights defenders (Human Rights Council, 2009), despite the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders as international guideline to protect and promote the rights of individuals who defend the human rights. This could be partially due to the fact that the Declaration failed to capture the complexity of risks and threats for certain groups of human rights defenders and certain human rights enforcements - both mostly related to women. For many years and in many countries worldwide, women are considered second-class citizens, leading to limitations towards the full enjoyment of their rights, particularly in the public and political space. This is especially challenging for women human rights defenders as they operate in public and political areas, thus they face a variety of challenges.

The Declaration of Human Rights Defenders brought attention to the importance of how securities and protection mechanisms accommodate the challenges and risks within the workspace of women human rights defenders. In further discussion of the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders, Jane Barry and Vaida Nainar (2008) conducted a number of interviews with activists around the world to discuss the culture of the women's movement. Their research uncovered a disturbing trend about the sustainability of working as a women human rights defenders with women activist satisfied and happy in their roles as daughters, partners, wives, mothers, and friends (Barry 2007). Meanwhile, sooner or later, the stress of working as women human rights defenders will get absorbed into the hearts, minds, bodies and the movement as whole. Thus, risky situation towards women human rights defenders still stay there. Without comprehensive securities and protection mechanisms, women rights defenders not only face limited access to address their rights as human being but also risk health issues such as mental breakdowns, strokes, heart diseases, cancer, and even the risk of suicide. Therefore, the significant risk situation that challenges women human rights defenders needs to be addressed properly so that they are able to fully address rights as human beings and individuals who are part of society (Barry 2007).

Based on their discussion, Barry and Nainar (2008) they introduce the term 'integrated security': *For us, security must be integrated, which means employment, social wellbeing, development and national sovereignty in terms of natural resources. Security is not only for the individual, but also for the community* (Barry and Nainar, 2008, p. 88). Integrated security focuses on acknowledging self-care and personal wellbeing within the works of women human rights defender by creating space to share challenges, worries, emotions and thoughts while defending human rights, specifically women's rights. Moreover, this concept – especially its emphasis on self-care and personal wellbeing – has resonated deeply with defenders around the world. Organizations that conduct security training draw attention to the importance of interventions in three interconnected domains: physical security, digital security and self-care. Some defenders and practitioners argue that self-care is both a necessary act of physical and psychological protection as well as a political strategy for sustaining and furthering the work of defenders (Barry and Nainar, 2008). This securities mechanism has raised the issue of women human rights defenders not only working for others but also fighting for their own rights. In applying the mechanism, women human rights defenders are able to explore and re-connect with their own body, soul, and mind which helps identify certain issues and challenges to prevent threats. Moreover, it also created a support system for women human rights defenders to enjoy life without sacrificing livelihoods, health and happiness (Barry 2011, p.9).

**The term 'WHRD' or LBTQ Activists: A self-identification**

The term 'women human rights defenders' (WHRDs) was firstly used by Hina Jilani, Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders, in her report in 2002. She mentioned that WHRDs had to carry a heavy burden for their work to protect and promote human rights. Moreover, WHRDs often suffered violations of their most fundamental rights, including the right to life, to mental and physical integrity, to liberty and security of person, to freedom of expression and association, and to privacy and family life (Commission on Human Rights, 2002).

In 2007, Asian Pacific Forum Women, Law, and Development (APWLD) published a guidebook on WHRDs called *"Claiming Rights, Claiming Justice*". According to this, WHRDs are defined as women who (1) work as human rights defenders and are targeted for 'who they are'; and (2) are active in the defense of women's rights and are thus targeted for 'what they do'. APWLD also mentioned that LGBT activists who overcome significant challenges because of their sexual orientation, gender identities and expression were considered as WHRDs. Moreover, LGBT rights in most countries are not considered as human rights (APWLD, 2007). This explains how the term WHRDs represents the diversity of research participants, identities, and their scope of work. However, this term might not be popular

among the communities, which is why the researcher used the term 'activist' for discussions with LBQ women and transgender men activists. At the beginning of this study, the researcher used the term 'Women Human Rights Defenders' to emphasise risks they faced doing activist work. These risks were related to their scope of human rights issues as well as their own identities as (1) a person born with female-bodied characteristics and/or identifies as woman (including lesbian, bisexual, queer); or (2) transgender men. Also, oftentimes human rights defenders not falling into any of the above criteria were regarded as *feminine*, especially when their work was related to gender equality, women and sexual rights. Moreover, the term was chosen to draw attention of government officials towards Indonesia's National Human Rights Institution to have legal recognition and protection of WHRD activists.

During interviews with LBQ women and transgender men activists, the researcher found interesting facts on how these participants identified themselves as individuals working for LBTQ rights in Indonesia. First, most of these activists were not familiar with the term 'women human rights defenders': In their understanding, WHRDs refers to women who work for human rights, specifically related to gender equality issues and women's rights. Secondly, they did not know the term 'activists', and were neither interested in identifying as activists despite their work as LBTQ rights activists. Moreover, most of the respondents talked about 'unofficial standards' - a term constructed amongst individuals who actively engage in the movement Quoting two key person working for LBTQ communities for almost ten years:

> *"I found myself more comfortable to just seen as human being rather than being identify as activist."*
> *(RK, Surakarta)*

> *"There are two reason why I refuse to identify myself as activist. First, activists are mostly seen as focusing on the individual (personality and charisma) and not on the substance. I would like people to recognize my work, not myself. Secondly, I would like to have some time and distance to reflect what I have been doing so far, or just having time for myself. In contrast, there is a common impression about activists as persons who always work."*
> *(YD, Jakarta)*

However, one transgender man who was interviewed preferred to be called 'LGBTIQ/ LBTQ activist' rather than being labelled a 'women human rights defender'. This was related to the above-mentioned common perception that WHRDs are persons identifying as women. Hence, this specific interviewee refused to use this because he identified as transgender man. However, in order to highlight situations that directly targeted his sexual and gender identity, and to emphasis the vulnerability of human right issues, he agreed to be categorized as WHRDs:

*"I'm not familiar with the term 'women human rights defenders' but I do not see myself as women human rights defender since I do not identify as women. However, if it does mean that I also work for women's rights including lesbian and bisexual women – then, I am in. If it's also to point towards challenges I face in overcoming SOGIE-based violence and discrimination – then, I'm also in. But I prefer to call myself LGBTQ or LBTQ activist." (R, Aceh)*

A chairperson working for a women's organization for more than a decade, and has also been working closely with LBT communities for several years, said:

*"I am not so sure to call myself an activist since we do not deal or work with victims that have suffered from direct, extreme life threatening situations. I work on small aspect of women's life, such as the provision of access to health care in the case of venereal diseases, or access to psychological assistance or legal aid for victims of domestic violence. If you see Marsinah, she spoke on behalf of large groups of people. Meanwhile, I only help few people." (RP, Surakarta)*

Another interesting fact was that the interviews with the Commissioner of Komnas Perempuan. (National Commission on Violence Against Women; or KP) showed that the term 'WHRD' was not used among women movements, including women's organization despite the fact that KP responded to Hina Jilani's reports. Moreover, in 2007, KP launched a book called '*WHRDs: Fighting in Pressure*' based on their study in previous years. In the book, KP defined WHRDs as women who work and come from grassroots communities, who speak out and advocate for the rights of their communities, and who are an integral part of the efforts to uphold human rights (Komnas Perempuan, 2007). Secondly, despite KP's definition of WHRDs, it was still challenging to determine who those WHRDs were, and who weren't. Indriyati Suparno, Komnas Perempuan Commissioner, mentioned obscurity in defining WHRDs including in her institution:

*"In the Commissioner's plenary meeting, we agreed on defining women human rights defenders. However, we haven't discussed it internally – does everyone who works here also categorize as women human rights defenders? We also need to have feedback from our organizational partners including service providers and LBT communities — does the definition suit or not?"*

Third, 'unofficial standards' to help identify WHRDs resulted in some individual activists as be unaware of the risks they are facing because of who they are and what their work is concerned with. Budi

Wahyuni, Commissioner and Vice Chairperson of Komnas Perempuan, mentioned in her interview that the organization gave a WHRD award to women human rights activists, who had passed away:

> "*It's not easy to define women human rights defenders. Komnas Perempuan does have their definition on WHRDs and we recognize their work. Komnas Perempuan also gives awards to WHRDs. To guarantee that the award does not fall into the wrong hands, we only give awards to those who already passed away. We acknowledge the person's work on women's rights during her lifetime."*

These interesting facts regarding the use of and personal identification with terms has influenced the researcher's own perspective regarding labels used to describe LBQ women and transgender men communities and activists. Moreover, further discussion with these people created understanding on key points that affect awareness levels of and knowledge on risk situations while doing activist work to defend LBTQ rights.

The next passage will draw attention to a recent situation of Indonesian LBQ women and transgender men activist with regards to LBTQ rights work, both personally and collectively.

**Fighting for personal and collective LBTQ rights in Indonesia**

This chapter presents two major discussions, i.e. (1) risk situations for LBQ women and transgender men activist; and (2) recent developed and implemented securities and protection mechanisms to respond to risk situation. Each discussion offers perspectives from the state as well as personal and organizational level.

*Risk situation*

Risk situations for Indonesian LBQ women and transgender men activists are based on their identities as lesbian, bisexual women, queer or transgender men, and also their work as persons defending the rights of LBTQ communities. Although Indonesia is the third-largest democracy in the world, most of the country's existing policies, regulations and rules are based on societal values of cultural and traditional norms. Mostly, these values refer to religious perspectives that strongly uphold hetero-normative and binary perspectives. As a result, this has created 'unofficial standards' that define individual Indonesian citizens. The question arises whether LBQ women and transgender men activists fit into the common definition of 'Indonesian citizen' in the Indonesian society. The answer is no.

Identifying, or being identified, as lesbian, bisexual woman, queer or transgender man in Indonesia defies common standards about femininity and the role of female-born women. Also, it challenges the definition of 'good women' within the society. The assumption that LBTQ is a diseases which needs to be cured has become a basic justification for the society, including family member, to conduct acts such as 'healing treatments' for LBTQ individuals to become a 'normal' woman: feminine, married to a man, pregnant/giving birth, and staying at home. Therefore, some LBQ women and transgender men prefer not to 'come out' family members, friends, neighbors and others.

Working for LBTQ rights in Indonesia is often associated with opposing Indonesia's culture and religious values. Both the state itself as well as the Indonesian society understand LBTQ rights as being limited to the rights of same-sex marriage, which is false. LBTQ rights are human rights, and being Indonesian citizens, LBTQ people should enjoy all citizenship rights. This emphasises the duty of the state to promote, protect, and fulfill LBTQ people's economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. Despite Indonesia's Constitution on human rights enforcement, the implementation with regards to minority groups is questionable. This also includes the LBTQ community. *Pancasila*, Indonesia's national ideology, is one barrier towards realizing LBTQ rights, particularly under the principle of *Ke-Tuhanan Yang Maha Esa* ('Believe in the one and only God'). This has firstly resulted in LBQ women and transgender men activists are confronted with layers of discrimination, which is also related to the fact that they were born with female-bodied characteristics, making them less visible and recognized amongst women and LGBT movements. This has caused their challenges being hardly raised and discussed, making them more vulnerable to discriminatory acts as compared to gay, bisexual men, and transgender women. Secondly, people and organizations working for LBTQ rights in Indonesia have limited support and access to fully address rights. Thirdly, violence and discrimination against persons and organizations fighting for LBTQ rights also target those who are not even a part of the LBTQ community. However, all the described acts of violence against LBQ women and transgender men activists share one commonality: They are all justified as 'healing treatments', 'part of democratization', or the 'protection to Indonesian ideology'.

Furthermore, the location of where LBQ women and transgender men activists live and work contributes to risk situations. This research studied three areas based on their characteristics in addressing LBTQ rights both personally and collectively. These locations are Banda Aceh, DKI Jakarta and Surakarta.[2,3,4] Comparing these three areas, LBQ women and transgender men activists based in

[2] Banda Aceh is the capital city of Aceh Province. Aceh used to be one of the conflicted areas in Indonesia besides Papua, Poso and Maluku. Later, Aceh was considered the best example in Asia for conflict transformation. Just like Yogyakarta, Aceh Province was granted special status from the Central Government, allowing them to have greater autonomy and

Aceh Province are generally at the highest risk compare to Surakarta and DKI Jakarta due to Aceh's Sharia Law implementation, which regulates and criminalizes same-sex relationship, LGBTIQ rights promotion and protection Meanwhile, risk situations for LBQ women and transgender men activists in DKI Jakarta mostly related to national media coverage and promotion. LBQ women and transgender men activists based in Surakarta had limited access to resources and immediate response since most supporting organizations are located in Semarang or Yogyakarta.

On personal level, risk situations derive from interactions between LBQ women and transgender men activists with their partners or spouses, family, other relatives, and friends. All respondents said they had to overcome challenges with their families, resulting in most of them prefering not to 'come out' regarding their sexual orientation or gender identities. Moreover, they decided not to share information about their activism with families and friends. One participant said:

> *"My parents didn't know that I am working for LBTQ communities, or identified as one of them. They only knew that I am working in a women organization that also sometimes interacts with LBTQ communities. Once they said that LBTQ is not right and they will go to hell. I said, 'Well that's their business and not ours to deal with!' I cannot imagine what happens if they know about myself and my work. However, my sister knows that I date women and work for LBTQ rights."* (RK, Surakarta)

> *"I always mentioned that I often travel outside Aceh for work. I said to them that I work as sales promoter, which requires me to travel a lot. Some people asked for a job like mine so they can travel a lot. I never told them I traveled for training related to our work. I really want to say that I am working for LGBT communities. I really want to scream out loud: 'I am an LGBT activist!'"* (An, Aceh)

> *"I did not share my work with my friends who are not LBTQ. I also did not come out to my family about my sexual orientation, although they acknowledge that I am staying with my friend who is in reality my partner. My family only knows that I work with a women organization here while studying."* (F, Aceh)

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control over resource revenues. Also, this status permitted the formation of provincial political parties contesting in local elections. However, Aceh is the 3rd-highest ranking province in terms of discriminatory by-laws (Komnas Perempuan, 2017). Moreover, in 2017 Banda Aceh was the 2nd-highest ranking city in the 'Intolerant City Index' (Setara Institute, 2017).

[3] Jakarta is the capital city of Indonesia. Political, social, and other perspectives of DKI Jakarta influence policies and laws on local levels. Latest research in 2017 by the Setara Institute ranked DKI Jakarta #1 in the 'Intolerant City Index' (Setara Institute, 2017).

[4] Surakarta is one of the cities in Central Java located on a strategic path that connects Semarang to Yogyakarta, and Yogyakarta to Surabaya. During attacks on LGBTQ communities in 2016, Surakarta became a safe space for those who felt threaten and victimized by violation and discriminatory acts, particularly community member from greater areas of Central Java and Yogyakarta. Surakarta is also home to leading LBTQ community-based organizations, which were established in 2009. As a result, Surakarta ranked only #10 in the 'Intolerant City Index' in Indonesia (Setara Institute, 2017).

One person whose family acknowledged her sexual orientation and gender identity had a different response with regards to her work as LBTQ rights defender, in particular during and after attacks on LGBT communities in 2016:

> *"My family knows about my sexual orientation and my work to defend LBTQ communities. From January to March 2016, my family felt restless due to the society's negative response towards LGBT. I did not expect that kind of response from my family. They were worried about me and the work I do. They even discussed these issues during family meetings and everyone became concerned about me becoming a front-liner to defend LBTQ rights. My oldest brother got sick because he felt responsible to my safety as a father-figure."* (A, 48 years, chair of LBT organization, Jakarta)

In society, risk situations emerge from interactions with neighbors, religious-based communities, educational institutions, social groups, or other social and human rights movements. During the interview, respondents shared their toughest experiences in dealing with society, in particular after the crackdown on LBTQs in 2016. One person who had been worked for LBTQ communities for almost her entire life said:

> *"In 2015 when I moved and settled in the office, I felt the people in the neighborhood did not pay much attention. But from January to March 2016, I became more suspicious and wary of the people around me. During that time, LGBT became a discussion in many places, including mass media mass and online. At that time, when a neighbor saw me, I felt insecure. I became suspicious: What they were thinking about me? Did they notice my physical appearance? For almost a year, I questioned my work because I saw it as failure, especially when communities that I taught about SOGIE were posting negative comments about LBT communities online."* (A, 2018)

Surprisingly, risk situation also emerged from LBTQ organization for which respondents were working. This was mostly related to organizational sustainability. Most of the LBQ women and transgender men activists that were interviewed worked for organization that still depended on donors to financially support them, including salaries, capacity-building activities, urgent funding, health insurances, and travel support. However, as financial support was not always available, these organizations often lacked the ability to provide their staff with stability. Finding donors to support the cause of LBTQ communities and organizations is often challenging, as two respondents said:

> *"My organization got financial support until end of 2015 but I still received my honorarium until 2016 or 2017 from our organizational savings. When the crackdown happened, there were restrictions from the state in*

*terms of donors providing assistance for LGBT programs. We couldn't get any funding. So, until November 2017, I did not receive any financial support while still working with LBTQ communities. I survived by doing graphic design work, which was not related to LBTQ activism."* (RK, Surakarta)

*"The organization had limited funds to support staff salaries. Since we have five staff in total, we divided three person salaries so that each staff can get paid."* (R, Aceh)

Furthermore, risk situations at state level emerge due to a lack of specific regulations that protect persons working for human rights enforcements, including LBTQ rights. Moreover, the lack of clarity in defining and describing (women) human rights defenders is a key issue. A discussion with the National Commission on Violence against Women shed light on the challenge to define those who fall into different categories of (women) human rights defenders. The National Commission pointed out the importance of having clear definitions in order to minimize future backlash from groups that are working for human rights enforcement but oppose basic principles of human rights. Two commissioners that were interviewed mentioned that Komnas Perempuan Commissioner's plenary meeting had agreed on a definition on women human rights defenders, however further and detailed discussions within internal institutions and partner organizations were necessary. Furthermore, Komnas HAM decide not to revise Law No 39/1999 on Human Rights, but despite added articles that discuss the promotion and protection of (women) human rights defenders.

### *Existing securities and protection mechanisms*

In her first report as Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani addressed the significant risk of certain groups defending issues of sexuality, particularly sexual orientation and reproductive rights. Jilani pointed out that these groups were more vulnerable to social prejudice, stigmatization and marginalization by the state and other duties bearers. Jilani also addressed the importance to develop protection mechanisms towards these groups (Commission on Human Rights, 2001). The report became the fundamental basis on the discussion about the development of specific security and protection mechanisms for women human rights defenders, including LBQ women and transgender men activists. Indeed, it is necessary to have integrated securities, which means employment, social wellbeing, development and national sovereignty in terms of natural resources (Barry and Nainar, 2008).

Therefore, conversations with LBQ women and transgender men activists in Banda Aceh, DKI Jakarta and Surakarta emphasised existing mechanisms related to self-care and well-being that had been developed/implemented. Being aware of and having self-security means is a basic mechanism to reduce

risks for LBQ women and transgender men activists who identify as lesbian, bisexual women, or transgender men, related to Sharia Law in Aceh. Other interviewees however mostly mentioned mechanisms on personal levels after the crackdown in 2016:

> *"As Sharia police acknowledge that I am part of LGBT communities, I always choose different routes so that Sharia police doesn't identify or recognize me every time I return home after working in other areas or outside Aceh. Moreover, if I know of LBT communities being caught by WH; I will coordinate with other members of the organization – mostly those who are wearing hijab – to go to the WH office instead of me."* (R, Aceh)

> *"I really don't like wearing hijab and clothing in accordance with the rules in Qanun Jinayat. But I realize that it can be one of the things that ensure my safety in Aceh. So, when I sell in the shop, I use hijab and covered clothes."* (Ad, Aceh)

> *"Previously I did not care about my physical appearance – I cut my hair short which sometimes makes people call me 'Mas' or 'Bapak', which are terms that usually refer to a man. After the crackdown, I felt insecure. I started to grow my hair so that my neighbors would not pay attention to my physical appearance, which they link to LBT communities. Moreover, nowadays I prefer to focus on becoming a lawyer so that I can defend LBTQ rights without stating my sexual identities as lesbian."* (A, 2018)

Additionally, the researcher's own personal experience as activist added knowledge that most of the securities and protection mechanisms on the organization level only focused on recovery and restoration processes. On other hand, discussions on risk-prevention were mostly limited to physical securities, including office securities and self-defense, and digital securities to protect digital data in devices such as computers and mobile phones. Meanwhile, securities and protection mechanisms that related to self-care and personal well-being within organizations such as salaries, leaves, holidays, health insurance, work counseling (to respond to stress due to personal and/or work matters), capacity buildings, safety protocols while doing fieldwork, support groups etc have been partially developed/implemented in those organizations with financial stability or good networking on provincial and national levels, and with donors.

> *"I am involved in two organizations. Both have a different mechanism to support my work: One is more established in terms of salaries, leaves, holidays, health insurance, access to capacity building, and work-counseling. The other just started in 2017 and only has a mechanism of honorarium and access to capacity building, including training regarding self-care."* (YD, 2018)

Furthermore, on the state level, the researcher identified several securities and protection mechanisms that were developed and implemented to support the work of LBQ women and transgender men activists. Unfortunately, these mechanisms could only be accessed by those who had already established a connection with several organizations or institutions implementing and develop the mechanisms. However, most of those mechanisms did not focus on self-care and personal well-being.

The following securities and protection mechanisms might help LBQ women and transgender men activists to overcome risk situations:
(1) Desk in Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM) that specializes in human rights defenders and offers protection for those who were identified and listed;
(2) Komnas Perempuan developed a Complaints and Referrals Unit (UPR) to increase the ease for women victims of violence to access service. The UPR provides referrals to victims of violence, acting as *amicus curiae*, and also a mechanism for Komnas Perempuan to monitor cases of violence against women that are reported through the UPR.

**Conclusion**

Indonesia may have a legit Constitution which guarantees human rights, and understands that those rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless their nationality, place of residence, sex, ethnic origin, skin color, religion, language, or else. However, the country's implementation of human rights principles is articulated based on culture, religious norms and values, resulting in limited access for certain individuals and groups, including LBQ women and transgender men activists. Thus, LBQ women and transgender men activists are vulnerable to violence and discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identities, and their work as and for LBTQ members. Social prejudice and judgments on LBQ women and transgender men communities as being sinners, abnormal, sexually deviant, and able to infect others have resulted in risk situations on state, personal, and societal levels. Acts of violence are justified as 'healing treatments' to help LBQ women and transgender men become 'good and normal' women who are feminine, married, give birth, and take care of their children and husband. Moreover, organizations that LBQ women and transgender men activists work for surprisingly contribute to these risk situations: Limited support systems, including integrated securities and protection mechanisms, create major issues for LBQ women and transgender men activists.

Unfortunately, awareness and knowledge of the importance of securities and protection mechanisms affects LBQ women and transgender men activists' personal identification as persons working at high risk. Some LBQ women and transgender men who work for LBTQ rights did not acknowledge the

'unofficial standard' to define activists, which is counterproductive to the empowerment of fellow activist and creates ignorance or unawareness of potential risk situations. Furthermore, securities and protection mechanisms are considered important to be implemented or developed after an important event, for example the Qanun Jinayat implementation in 2014 and the crackdown on LGBT communities in 2016.

LBTQ movements are shrinking as well as the number of organizations that primary benefitted LBQ women and transgender men communities in the promotion of their rights. In addition, the number of activists has also significantly decreased. All these trends are direct results of limited resource to help prevent high levels of chronic stress, exposure to trauma, and enormous workloads whilst working for LBTQ rights - all while living as stigmatized, discriminated, marginalized and vulnerable lesbian, bisexual woman, queer or transgender man. Therefore, securities and protection mechanisms should not only be *reactive* in their approach (immediately responding to emergency situations) but also be more *proactive* in terms of risk prevention. The discussion of securities and protection mechanisms should also include self-care and personal well-being on both personal and organizational levels so that LBQ women and transgender men activists can enjoy their rights as Indonesian citizens.

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