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FOUNDATION  
OF  
HOPE

**Rainbow Foundation of Hope**

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**Speaking Notes to the Standing Committee  
on  
Citizenship & Immigration**

**Testimony by Eka Nasution**

Good Afternoon Honourable Members of Parliament. Thank you immensely for the opportunity to allow Chad and me to attend this special hearing on the **Rainbow Refugee Assistance Program (RRAP)**.

My name is Eka. My husband and I married discretely in Canada, without having any friends or family present. It broke my heart at the time, but having him next to me at the Nepean Point in Ottawa with our Officiant, I told myself that this is perfect. Because this is our life. We had no party afterwards. Just the two of us.

We went back to Indonesia. Only our best friends know about our marriage. However, at one point in time, things changed.

The Government of Indonesia issued a new Criminal Code in article 292, stating that LGBT is considered a Crime against Morality in Indonesia. The article mentioned that adults who conduct obscene actions (defined as sexual intercourse) with others of the same sex, will be put in prison for 5 years.

To enforce the above persecution, the Islamic Defenders Front (*Front Pembela Islam* – FPI), who took the basis of his act on the Fatwa of Indonesian Ulema Council, proclaimed LGBT practices to be Adultery. To implement their actions, FPI and police worked in cooperation to legally ban the Education Seminar on LGBT in Jakarta, on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. They came into the meeting room savagely, tore down all banners, wrecked all chairs, and hit several participants who were transgender. However, the government has succeeded in concealing this act of persecution from the international community.

My husband and I we were victims of cyber-bullying on Twitter in Indonesia with a hastag #dieyoufaggot for 3 months. Our photos are everywhere and they wrote down on Twitter that we should both rot in hell. We can't report this to the police or things will turn the other way around. We fled from our own apartment in Jakarta because there was a police raid hunting down LGBTQ residents.

Un jour, lorsque j'ai donné des cours à l'Institut Français d'Indonésie, on a discuté qu'est-ce qu'on aime et n'aime pas dans la vie? Une de mes élèves m'a dit qu'elle n'aime absolument pas les homosexuels. Je me suis étonné de ce fait et cela m'a perplexé. En tant qu'un professeur vacataire à ce-moment-là, je me suis retenu de ne pas me mettre au rage ni de la contredire. Au contraire, j'ai écouté la raison pour laquelle elle haït les

homosexuels? Après l'avoir écoutée, je me suis dit qu'on refuse l'existence de moi-même. Je n'ai pas pu me défendre. J'ai craint des conséquences.

Enfin, mon mari et moi avons décidé de quitter l'Indonésie. La seule raison était que nous voulons avoir une famille de nous-même. Dans le but de nous sauver la vie, nous avons essayé d'acquérir les informations données sur le site web d'IRCC. Je voudrais vous avouer que les informations y sont compliquées. Grâce à une organisation canadienne de la communauté LGBTQ, dénommée Rainbow Railroad, elle nous a guidé par rapport aux procédures de demandeurs d'asile et nous a aidé à acheter le billet d'avion pour arriver à Vancouver. Elle nous a même liés à un avocat sur Vancouver.

De ce fait, j'aimerais exprimer mes remerciements au gouvernement canadien pour ses soutiens auprès des organisations de LGBT au sein de ce territoire lequel j'appelle chez moi. Je souhaiterais donc que le gouvernement puisse continuer ses soutiens au "RRAP" dans les années à venir. Veuillez agréer, Mesdames, Messieurs, mes salutations distinguées.

## Testimony by Chad Wilkinson

Merci Eka d'avoir partagé ton expérience. Notre organisation est devenue vraiment internationale à cause de ceux qui ont vécu dans la souffrance à cause de ces injustices contre la communauté LGBT.

Mesdames et Messieurs, we are not here today to belabour the important positions of the organizations we support. Foundation of Hope trusts our briefing provides ample evidence for recommending the continuation of the **RRAP**. We are here to offer perspective. I'm a former private sponsor and co-founder of the **Foundation of Hope**, but today I am here as a human being and a Canadian citizen.

Our organization has worked over three years through the generosity of the LGBT community and our allies. On June 11<sup>th</sup> of last year the second annual STRUT event in Vancouver raised another \$45,000 through grassroots efforts. *Less than 12 hours later*, 50 humans lost their lives in Orlando in the worst mass shooting in U.S. history, according to President Obama. It happened on the soils of a nation that prides itself as an epicenter of the free world, yet two days later the House of Commons voted against a motion to recognize such atrocities on the basis of *ethnicity, religion, and sexuality* as a form of genocide.

This government's protection of transgender human rights and commitment by the Prime Minister to fight homophobia are milestones, but it seems Canada still has a ways to go. His late father sat in this very House and famously declared, "There's no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation." Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's historic bill decriminalized homosexuality, attaining royal assent on June 27, 1969. *Less than 12 hours later* four New York policemen raided the Stonewall Inn where violence erupted leading to the modern LGBT rights movement.

Less than a year since Orlando and nearly fifty years since the Stonewall riots, gay men are being hurled off buildings in Iraq and Syria while lesbian women are raped and killed across the African continent. A transwoman in Brazil was recently dragged into the street and brutally murdered while onlookers filmed and posted it on Facebook.

Countless LGBT humans remain in refugee camps hiding their identities. Can you imagine what life must be like for those that can't readily become so invisible? I'm talking about transgender men and women, and inherently effeminate men whose mannerisms we casually dismiss as being "camp". Detainment and murder of millions occurred in WWII concentration camps on the basis of *ethnicity, religion, and sexuality*. Considering the motion voted down last June, does this parliament not equate terms like "ethnic cleansing" or "Holocaust" with genocide?

As I speak, over 100 gay and bisexual men have allegedly been detained in concentration camps in Chechnya. The government denounces the allegations as baseless; apparently Chechnya does not have homosexuals. "If it did, their relatives would have sent them to where they could never return", through an all too common practice of honour killing.

This is a moral issue. It *must* rise above partisan camps amid the worst humanitarian crisis in our history. To sit in a political camp and ignore injustices beyond our borders is a choice. It sits in stark contrast to working across party lines to do what's morally right as a nation so revered in its respect for human rights.

*I guess the question really is: in which camp will the current government choose to sit?*

Private sponsorship takes donors, volunteers, and government resources. Applications to IRCC are challenging, especially in regions around Chechnya where processing times can exceed 4 years. [If the Government of Canada is serious about LGBT private sponsorship or LGBT rights in general, the RRAP is essential to this work.](#)

Merci à tous pour nous donner l'opportunité de vous exprimer nos sentiments.