

International Pride Month

Celebrating 51 years of the movement!

In recent years I have found myself standing before various crowds of people around the world to make the case for Human Rights for LGBTI people. As a human rights activist, I have spoken at length about the need for reform.

Yes, legal reform regarding the treatment of the LGBTI community is at the top of the list, but just as important is the reform of hearts and minds in our country.

It has been 51 years since the first stone was thrown at police in New York, Manhattan at the Stonewall Inn riots. That stone set in motion a wave of public resistance to the discrimination faced by LGBTI people globally and today, that wave is still in motion.

Our existence, as the LGBTI community has already been paid for and yet the journey has not concluded yet.

We have a constitution that assures us the rights and freedoms to:

1. The right to protection of privacy of the home
2. The right to protection from inhuman or degrading treatment
3. The right to equality before the law and equal protection of the law
4. The right to freedom of expression
5. The right to freedom of assembly and association.

We would like to believe that as a citizen of this country we are equal before the law, but we are forced to believe otherwise.

We are currently in court, fighting for our rights to freedom of assembly and association.

It cannot be justice to have Eswatini Sexual & Gender Minorities denied registration on the basis that its members are LGBTI persons, and its mandate is to promote the protection of human rights for LGBTI people.

Many will ask, why should there be a special event/occasion for LGBTI people to display pride in who they are when everyone else doesn't.

The riots of 1969 did not start out of a need to boast, it started out of a demand to live free from persecution and harassment for being who we are.

Instead of wondering why everyone doesn't march for this reason, it should make us think why, in 2020, are we still asking to be treated fairly and equally as valid members of society. The work remains to be done.

The work cannot bear fruits if we are not all committed to the project of social justice for everyone. The work depends on the commitment of each and every one of us because we rely on humanity to carry us through.

We are counting on the humanity of everyone to see this work through, for when we look at each other, regardless of the multiple social positions we occupy, we should see ourselves.

The work of inspiring a deeper humanity in all of us is only the beginning of social cohesion. As we work towards Eswatini Pride Month in September, may we not only look at a display of fun, but a testament to the power humanity. Let us all work towards a display of community and reconnection between people who have been separated by fear.

Until Eswatini Pride Month, in September may we embark on a new humanity that cannot be moved.

