

## Christmas Day Sponsored Walk for LGBT Asylum Seekers

Saturday 14 December, 2013

While most people are enjoying unwrapping their Christmas presents and thinking about what dinner delights the afternoon will bring, two equality advocates will be putting on their comfy shoes and walking from Birmingham City Centre to Dudley Town Centre in a 10 mile sponsored walk to raise money for the Persian LGBT Advisory service.

The Persian LGBT Advisory service is a not for profit organisation operating in Birmingham which provides support, representation and practical assistance to Persian speaking asylum seekers. The organisation works with Persian speaking asylum seekers coming to the UK fleeing violence, discrimination and brutal treatment at the hands of their peers or Government simply for being themselves.

While it is hoped that the Christmas day walk will raise money for the organisation, the trustees aim to highlight the plight of LGBT people who are hanged, tortured, stoned to death or disappeared in their home country for daring to be themselves.

The founder of the organisation Mazyar(Maani)Shirali, once himself an Iranian asylum seeker, and supporter Mahgol Mossavie who came to the UK from Iran following persecution for being LGBT; will be meeting in Birmingham City Centre at 5 am and will walk carrying the Rainbow flag. Founder Maani Shirali said 'It is important we all come together to highlight how people are being tortured and killed for being true to themselves and for wanting to live their life. We ask anyone in the area who wishes to join us on our walk to get in touch and we would of course welcome any donations to help us continue our work. Donations can be made online via <http://bit.ly/persianlgbt>'

Rob McDowall, Chairperson of the LGBT Network said 'The work carried out by the Persian LGBT Advisory Service is fantastic and I only wish they had more capacity and operated in more areas to support more LGBT asylum seekers who are fleeing abhorrent treatment at the hands of their own Governments. I would urge anyone willing to help to contact the group via [www.persianlgbt.org.uk](http://www.persianlgbt.org.uk)'.

**You can find out more information about the Persian LGBT Advisory Service at [www.persianlgbt.org.uk](http://www.persianlgbt.org.uk) and can make a donation online at <http://bit.ly/persianlgbt>**

Media queries should be directed to Maani on 0844 772 1985 (telephone) or email [mshirali@persianlgbt.org.uk](mailto:mshirali@persianlgbt.org.uk)

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