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## **GRANS AND GAYS CONFRONTING HIV: HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS HONOUR ACTIVISTS ON WORLD AIDS DAY**

**TORONTO, November 27, 2013** — On December 1<sup>st</sup>, World AIDS Day, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network and Human Rights Watch will honour two recipients of the 2013 Awards for Action on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights — **Alternatives-Cameroun** (international recipient) and the **Grandmothers Advocacy Network** (Canadian recipient). The ceremony, to take place in downtown Toronto, will mark the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that the Legal Network and Human Rights Watch have presented awards to recognize excellence and commitment to work that defends and advances human rights in the fight against HIV.

“Alternatives-Cameroun is on the frontlines of the global fight for human rights for people living with HIV and challenging homophobia,” said Joseph Amon, Director of the Health and Human Rights Division at Human Rights Watch. “This brave group refuses to be silenced by adversity and remains an essential resource for so many LGBT people in a country that remains profoundly hostile and dangerous for them.”

Yves Yomb, Executive Director of Alternatives-Cameroun, will be in Toronto to accept the award, before heading on to meetings with Canadian government representatives in Ottawa and community groups in Montréal. “When your daily lives are spent in a state of fear and uncertainty, it is critical to know that you have the support of the global community,” he said. “This award sends hope to all LGBT Cameroonians and a warning to our government that intolerance will not be tolerated.”

The Canadian recipient, the Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN), is composed of volunteer grandmothers and “grand-others” who work in solidarity with the grandmothers of Africa and the children in their care orphaned by AIDS. “This group of knowledgeable, dedicated and passionate individuals was a huge part of the campaign to reform Canada’s Access to Medicines Regime,” said Richard Elliott, Executive Director of the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network.

GRAN has also been mobilizing to support the life-saving work of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Just after World AIDS Day, donor countries are meeting in Washington, D.C. for a critical conference on how to replenish and strengthen the Global Fund. Canada has been a strong supporter in the past, but unlike other countries, has yet to make any commitments to continue and increase its support.

“By advocating for the Global Fund, GRAN members bring their trademark tenacity and passion to the international cause of preventing needless death and suffering from HIV,” said Elliott.

“We feel privileged to do our work as part of dynamic coalitions, alongside organizations like the Legal Network,” said Marilyn Coolen, co-chair of GRAN. “To be honoured in this way is encouragement to keep fighting harder and keep chanting louder!”

For more information, visit [www.aidslaw.ca/awards](http://www.aidslaw.ca/awards).

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