Statement of Not Dead Yet USA on the 1st Anniversary of the Sagamihara Murders

One year ago, 19 disabled people were brutally stabbed to death by a young man who justified his murderous attack by saying disabled people "live like animals, not humans" and that "it's better that disabled disappear."

As we mourn, it would be wrong to dismiss this young murderer as uniquely "disturbed" or even “a monster." Rather, his actions were simply the most extreme expression of the dehumanization, hatred and revulsion of disabled people still embedded in countless countries and cultures across the world.

Disabled people are still often forced into crowded and unsanitary living conditions, barred from participation in society, and even killed. The killing of disabled people most often occurs quietly - in institutions, in families and in smaller hate crimes. And then, when these horrible things happen, society blames disabled people - us - for what society has done to us. Unless society changes, more blatant and brutal acts of disability hate, such as the one that ended in the 19 deaths a year ago, are guaranteed to happen again.

Today is a day to mourn. Tomorrow - and every day - is the time to organize our disability rights and independent living movement. Organize and advocate for a world that respects the disability community for all our diversity and beauty. Organize and advocate for our right to live, go to school and work in our communities. Organize and advocate for our right to enjoy our lives and freedom like everyone else.

Across the world, let's work together for a time when we can gather, not to mourn our murdered dead, but to celebrate our achievement of equality and justice for all disabled people.

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