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## Pride: A Celebration and a Protest

For Pride Month, Yemisi blogs about why she celebrates Pride but how it also acts as a protest to highlight how not all members of her LGBT+ family have the same rights and freedoms across the world.

When I march at Pride, I think of all the hate I get just for being an outspoken black, bisexual woman. I think of the many voiceless LGBT+ individuals, and I stand tall, head high, and celebrate all that I am, hoping that one day we will all be truly free from such hate, prejudice, and deadly bigotry.

When I march at Pride:

1. **I celebrate** that I now live in a country where I am not criminalised, face imprisonment, or fear being executed for my sexual orientation or gender identity. **I protest** because I want this for everyone. In 34 out of 59 Commonwealth countries, same-sex relationships are still criminalised through sodomy laws, a legacy from the British colonial era.
2. **I celebrate** that I can join a Pride march and partake in Pride celebrations without fear of being harassed, tackled, tear-gassed, or shot by police officers. **I protest** because I want this for everyone.
3. **I celebrate** that I live in a society with an Equality Act that recognises sexual and gender identity as valid and protected. **I protest** because I want this for everyone.
4. **I celebrate** that I can expect not to be discriminated against for my sexual orientation at work, when looking for housing, or accessing healthcare. If I am discriminated against, I have the right to seek redress in the justice system and expect a fair outcome. **I protest** because I want this for everyone.

5. **I celebrate** to honour the hard-earned victories our heroes fought for. **I protest** because these rights are systematically being eroded, especially Trans rights, and I don't want this for anyone, especially my Trans siblings.

While we celebrate the rights we've won, we protest for the rights of everyone, regardless of geographical location, religion, or class. In celebrating Pride, we celebrate our victories, our diversity, our same-sex love, queer relationships, and identities, while also remembering and empowering our LGBT+ families who do not have such privileges. We celebrate the tenacity of our persecuted LGBT+ families. We can't be truly free until we are all free.

We will continue to celebrate because we can. Don't ask us why, just join us, be happy for us and fight for our rights. LGBT+ rights are human rights.

Also, we celebrate because we are fabulous like that, and we know how to throw colourful and magnificent street parties! Happy Pride Month!