

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Contact:**

Cindi Creager, CreagerCole Communications  
(646) 279-4559, [cindi@creagercole.com](mailto:cindi@creagercole.com)

### **International Fashion Model Hanne Gaby Odiele Reveals She is Intersex; Announces Partnership with interACT Advocates for Intersex Youth to Raise Awareness About the Importance of Human Rights Protections for Intersex People Worldwide**

*New York, New York*— In an effort to be true to herself and spotlight an often invisible human rights issue, internationally acclaimed fashion model Hanne Gaby Odiele has announced that she is intersex and will advocate for intersex bodily autonomy alongside the non-profit organization, interACT Advocates for Intersex Youth.

The 29-year old Odiele is from Belgium. She is widely known for her street style and has successfully walked the runways of New York, Paris and Milan since she was discovered in 2005. Represented by Women Model Management in New York City, Odiele has modeled for premier brands including Chanel, Dior, Alexander Wang, and many more. After years of keeping her intersex status undisclosed, Odiele has chosen to reveal who she is to empower herself, give voice to other intersex people, and help end the human rights violations thousands of intersex people like her have endured.

“I have reached a point in my life where I feel ready to share this important part of who I am,” Odiele said. “It is time for intersex people to come out of the shadows, claim our status, let go of shame, and speak out against the unnecessary and harmful surgeries many of us were subjected to as children. Intersex children born today are still at risk for these human rights violations. I will use my voice and platform to help end such abuses.”

Intersex people are born with internal or external sex anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of “female” or “male.” Physical variations can include chromosomes, internal organs and/or genitals. Nearly two-percent of the population is born with intersex traits, similar to the number of people born with red hair. Despite how common it is to be intersex, laws, policies and medical best practices still fail to protect intersex people from unneeded and irreversible surgeries that are often both physically and

psychologically detrimental. The surgical interventions are often driven by the fear of non-binary bodies, rather than medical necessity.

The organization interACT Advocates for Intersex Youth aims to stop harmful medically unnecessary treatment and other human rights violations on children born with intersex traits and raise awareness about their experiences. InterACT Executive Director Kimberly Zieselman, who is also intersex, is pleased to welcome Hanne Gaby Odiele as a partner in her group's efforts to amplify the voices of the intersex community and work towards positive change.

"We congratulate Hanne for her courage in sharing her intersex status with the world," said Zieselman. "We are extremely grateful to have her join interACT's efforts in strongly advocating for the protection of intersex children from harmful medical treatment and surgery. Hanne is a beloved fashion model who has achieved global success in her industry. She also happens to be intersex and understands firsthand the harm caused by unnecessary medical intervention routinely done to 'fix' intersex children. Using her passion, her voice and her notoriety, she will undoubtedly further the cause of protecting intersex youth, and help put an end to the human rights violations far too many have suffered."

More and more influential global entities are issuing declarations in support of intersex rights, including the United Nations High Commission on Human rights, the World Health Organization, and a U.S. medical association, GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality.

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