

47th session of the Human Rights Council
Item 6 - UPR Outcome of Georgia
Joint Statement by the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the European
Regional of the International Lesbian and Gay Association

Madam President,

This is a joint statement, delivered together with ILGA Europe and drafted in consultation with Women's Initiatives Supporting Group.

During the 3rd Cycle, Georgia received 23 recommendations related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics issues. While we welcome the fact that Georgia accepted 22 of these recommendations, we are deeply alarmed by the situation regarding human rights of LGBTI persons in Georgia.

The recommendations accepted by Georgia urged the government to protect and fulfill the human rights of LGBTI persons to freedom of assembly and expression and to combat violence, hate speech and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Nevertheless, during the past several days when the Pride in Tbilisi was due to take place, there have been reports of violence, damage of property and a general fear of the community members installed throughout the country¹.

This week around 50 journalists who were reflecting the counter manifestations of those opposed to the Pride were beaten by the homophobic groups. The police were present with regular equipment, not in riot gear, and did little to stop the violence. Several offices of the LGBT and ally groups were vandalized, again with no police involvement.

The aggressive behaviour and the impunity of such, fuelled by the proliferation of hateful messages from church leaders, the prime-minister and other political actors, install a sense of deep fear in community members who are afraid to go out of their houses at the moment. A number of civil society groups closed their offices in fear of violence and vandalism. The lack of police response promotes a climate of impunity for LGBTIphobic violence, leading perpetrators to feel encouraged and supported to attack the LGBTI community even more. Moreover, local organisations report that domestic violence has increased as well in the past days. This leaves no space for some community members to find safety, which is extremely concerning.

Together with several Georgian LGBTI community organisations, we urge the Government of Georgia to address these hate crimes in an adequate manner, conduct proper and thorough investigations, and hold those responsible to account. We call as well on the Georgian authorities to take necessary measures to ensure safety for the LGBTI community in general.

¹ The Guardian. Tbilisi Pride march cancelled after far-right attack on headquarters <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/05/georgia-lgbtq-activists-cancel-tbilisi-pride-march-after-violence> ; Council of Europe. The rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus denounces violence in Georgia during the Tbilisi Pride Week <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/8387/the-rapporteur-on-the-rights-of-lgbti-people-in-the-southern-caucasus-denounces-violence-in-georgia-during-the-tbilisi-pride-week>; OC Media. A state-sanctioned attack on Georgia's free press; https://oc-media.org/opinions/editorial-a-state-sanctioned-attack-on-georgias-free-press/?fbclid=IwAR2cv0BYFsn5nLV9rE_WOg351nBVTnCOLg33LHxsddM0x4RJzdvi3-EHF0k; OC Media. Homophobic mob celebrates on Tbilisi streets after Pride march cancelled <https://oc-media.org/homophobic-mob-celebrates-on-tbilisi-streets-after-pride-march-cancelled/>; Radio Tavisupleba. არ დაგიცვს თუ ვერ? - კიდევ რას ეკითხებოდნენ დაშავებულ ჟურნალისტებს გამოკითხვაზე? <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/31345550.html> Net Gazeti: 5 ივლისის ძალადობის ჯგუფურ ორგანიზებაზე მიუთითებს ყველაფერი, გამომიების გარდა <https://netgazeti.ge/news/552711/>

With this statement, we also call on Georgian authorities and leaders to swiftly respond to the recent instances of hate crime incidents with unambiguous public condemnation and prevent the proliferation of hate speech and incitement to violence and social divide.

Georgia should take immediate action to address LGBTI-phobic violence and the climate of fear that prevails within the LGBTI+ community, in order to prevent an escalation of violence and hate crimes, lack of trust in institutions within the LGBTI community, and to ensure that Georgia fulfils their international human rights obligations, in line with the 22 LGBTI recommendations accepted during this 3rd Cycle.

Thank you, Madam President.