

URGENT ACTION

ESCALATION IN ANTI-LGBTI ATTACKS IN MACEDONIA

A series of homophobic attacks in Macedonia in June and July has led to grave concerns for the safety of LGBTI people and organizations. In June, during Pride Week in the capital Skopje, the LGBTI centre was attacked by around 30 people and on 5 July, unidentified suspects attempted to set fire to the centre.

Over the past few years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and their property in Macedonia has been subjected to repeated homophobic attacks, including in June and July 2013.

On 22 June, during Skopje's Pride week, a crowd of more than 30 people attacked the LGBTI Support Centre, where 40 LGBTI activists were watching a film screening. The crowd shouted homophobic slogans, threatened the activists at the Centre, and threw stones, bottles, and bricks at the building. Subsequently, one of the organizers of the event, from the NGO LGBT United Macedonia received several death threats on Facebook. On 25 June, a crowd assembled outside the house of Petar Stojkovikj, an openly gay actor and activist, throwing stones and hurling homophobic abuse and threats; the actor and his partner were inside the house. On 5 July, an attempted arson attack on the LGBTI Support Centre took place. Police reportedly found evidence that tiles had been removed from the roof, and petrol poured on the roof beams, which were then set alight.

These latest incidents are amongst many repeated verbal attacks in the media, by government officials and by non-state actors against the LGBTI community. They underscore the urgent need for protection in law against any forms of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Macedonia's Anti-Discrimination Law fails to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. Despite local and international criticism, including by the EU and UN treaty bodies, the government has refused to amend the law. Local NGOs have started to draft a law on hate crimes against the LGBTI population. The government should follow up on this initiative and take appropriate measures to tackle homophobic and transphobic hate crimes.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urge the Minister of Interior to end the climate of impunity for homophobic attacks by acknowledging and condemning publicly these crimes, and ensure that impartial, thorough and prompt investigations are conducted into the June and July attacks, and into all previous attacks on the lives or property of LGBT people or organizations, with those found responsible brought to justice;
- Urge the Prime Minister and other ministers to introduce amendments to the anti-discrimination legislation to include sexual orientation and gender identity as specific grounds for discrimination;
- Urge all ministers without delay and in consultation with LGBTI organizations, to introduce legislation prohibiting hate crime, specifically including hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as ethnicity, race, gender and other grounds for discrimination recognized in international standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 AUGUST 2013 TO:

Minister of Interior

Gordana Jankulovska
Dimce Mircev BB
1000 Skopje, Macedonia
Fax: + 389 23 112 468
Email: kontakt@moi.gov.mk
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prime Minister

Nikola Gruevski
Blvd. Ilinden No.2
1000 Skopje, Macedonia
Fax: + 389 23 115 285
**Salutation: Dear President of the
Government of Macedonia**

And copies to:

Minister of Justice
Blerim Bexheti
Dimitrie Cupovski 9
1000 Skopje, Macedonia
Fax: +389 23 226 975
Email: umatevska@mjustice.gov.mk

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Previous attacks include:

- The stoning on 24 October 2012, by masked perpetrators, of the office of the newly established Support Centre for the LGBTI Community in Skopje. In March 2013, the building was again stoned during demonstrations;
- An attack on two LGBTI activists preparing for the "Tolerance Day" March on 17 November 2012;
- A physical attack on activists from the NGO LGBT United in Bitola on 20 April 2013, followed by further threats on social media;
- Opposition in October 2012 by the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs – who is responsible for ensuring protection from discrimination – to equal marriage for LGBTI people, during a UNICEF conference, broadcast on national television, and on his Facebook page;
- President Gruevski's public criticism, in October 2012, of calls for marriage equality, linking it to falling birth rates;
- The naming of journalists suspected to be gay – placing both their lives and careers at risk – in the daily newspaper Večer on 1 February 2013, with the headline: "Are there any homosexuals among journalists?"

Name: LGBTI people and organizations

Gender m/f: Both

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