

# URGENT ACTION

## LGBTI AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST UNDER ARREST

Russian activist and artist, Yulia Tsvetkova, is facing prosecution and harassment for defending women's and LGBTI rights. She has been under house arrest since 22 November, under absurd charges of "production and dissemination of pornography" for her drawings of the female body. She is facing up to six years in prison if convicted. Yulia Tsvetkova is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Boris Viktorovich Kononenko**  
**Prosecutor of Komsomolsk-on-Amur**  
Krasnogvardeiskaya street, 34  
Komsomolsk-on-Amur 681013  
Russian Federation  
Email: kms@phk.hbr.ru

Dear Prosecutor,

I am writing to express my indignation about the arrest and prosecution of **Yulia Tsvetkova**, an artist and activist from Komsomolsk-on-Amur. She is facing criminal and administrative proceedings that have been initiated on absurd grounds.

On 20 November Yulia Tsvetkova was arbitrarily detained, questioned by police, and her flat was searched. She has been under house arrest since 22 November, while there is an ongoing "investigation" against her under charges of "production and dissemination of pornography", a crime which carries a penalty of up to six years in prison. The grounds for the criminal proceedings against her are her drawings of the female body.

Yulia Tsvetkova is facing relentless harassment: on several occasions the investigator denied her requests to visit her dentist, and on 5 February she was subjected to a psychiatric examination. She has also been targeted under the Code of Administrative Offences. On 11 December, she was issued with an extortionate fine of 50,000 rubles (US\$ 780) for so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors" on account of being the administrator of two LGBTI-themed online communities. These proceedings arise under the homophobic legislation which expressly discriminates against LGBTI people and violates their right to freedom of expression. These proceedings are absurd and unfounded, even under Russian law, as both online communities in question were marked "18+", as required by Russian law, and as such were not targeted at minors. Further administrative proceedings have been instigated against Yulia Tsvetkova for the same "offence".

The only true reason Yulia Tsvetkova is facing prosecution is her activism, through which she seeks to promote and defend women's rights and the rights of LGBTI people and exercising her right to freedom of expression. She is a prisoner of conscience and should be immediately and unconditionally released.

**I urge you to take all necessary steps to end Yulia Tsvetkova's prosecution, under both criminal and administrative charges, and to ensure her immediate and unconditional release.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Yulia Tsvetkova, an artist and stage director from Komsomolsk-on-Amur (Russian Far East), was detained on 20 November 2019 and put under house arrest two days later after being charged with “production and dissemination of pornographic materials” (Point B, Part 3, Article 242 of the Russian Criminal Code). The basis for these absurd charges were her drawings of the female body, including body-positive pictures of female reproductive organs, which she posted on social media as part of her women empowerment campaign. On the day of her detention, searches were carried out in Yulia Tsvetkova’s apartment and in the children’s educational club where she worked previously. The police seized her electronic devices, documents, and brochures on gender issues. Yulia Tsvetkova recalled that during the search the police officers stated that she was a “lesbian, sex trainer and propagandist leader”.

Earlier, on 11 December 2019, she was found guilty of “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors”, an administrative offense under Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses and fined 50,000 rubles (US\$ 780) for being the administrator of two LGBTI-themed online communities on the popular Russian social media, VKontakte. Both online communities were marked “18+”, as required by Russian law, making the fine imposed on her unfounded even under the homophobic Russian “gay propaganda” legislation (this “offence” only arises if the “propaganda” material is targeted at persons under 18).

On 17 January, Yulia Tsvetkova informed the media that new proceedings had been opened against her, under the same Article of the Code of Administrative Offences, this time for posting on social media her drawing “Family is where love is. Support LGBT+ families” depicting two same-sex couples with children. She had published the drawing in support of a same-sex couple who had had to flee Russia with their adopted children because the authorities had threatened to take their children away from them.

Yulia Tsvetkova has been the target of an overtly homophobic campaign since March 2019, when she had to leave her work with youth amateur theatre company Merak after the police had launched an investigation into an alleged “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors” on account of her anti-bullying and anti-discrimination play “Blue and Pink”. Also, the theatrical group she had founded in 2018 was forced to cease its activities.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian, English.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 26 March 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Yulia Tsvetkova (she/her)