

URGENT ACTION

BELGRADE PRIDE MUST GO AHEAD

Amnesty International is concerned that the rights of LGBT people to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly may not be respected by the Serbian government.

The organisers of Belgrade Pride have announced their intention to organise the Pride for September. They have asked the Serbian Ministry of Interior and other relevant ministries for their cooperation in ensuring that the event takes place. The Minister of Interior, Ivica Dačić, has publicly expressed concerns about the security risks associated with the Pride, and has requested the support of the Serbian Government including the President and Belgrade's Mayor and Assembly.

This is the fourth time that Pride has been planned in Belgrade. In 2010, police protected participants against violent counter-demonstrators and more than 100 people, mostly police, were injured. The damage to the property in the City was estimated to more than €1 million. In 2009, the Pride march had also been scheduled for September but did not take place after the authorities refused to provide security at the last moment following threats from far-right groups.

Amnesty International welcomed the actions taken by the Ministry of Interior and by the Belgrade police in particular, in guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups and individuals during Belgrade Pride in 2010. Amnesty International calls on the authorities to ensure the same guarantees are put in place during this year's pride.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Ask the authorities to ensure that the Belgrade Pride takes place and that the rights to freedom of expression and assembly of LGBT rights activists are fully respected, including through the provision of police protection for the participants and organisers;
- Ask them to publicly support the Pride, and condemn publicly all attacks on, or threats to, the organizers of, or participants in the Pride;
- Demand that they conduct prompt, impartial and effective investigations into all attacks or threats against the Pride organisers or participants, or any other members of the LGBT population; and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

Minister of Interior
Ivica Dacic
Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 2
11 000
Belgrade
Serbia
Email: info@mup.gov.rs
Fax: +381 11 3613321
Salutation: Dear Minister,

President of the Republic of Serbia
Boris Tadic
Andricev Venac 1
11 000
Belgrade
Serbia
Email: kontakt.predsednik@predsednik.rs
Fax: +381 11 3620676
Salutation: Dear Mr. President,

Please send solidarity cards to:
Civil Rights Defenders
Kneza Milosa 83
11 000
Belgrade
Serbia
Email: international@parada.rs
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister,

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

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Through first-hand experience as Amnesty International participated in the Belgrade Pride, the organization is well aware of the tremendous problems faced in 2010 by the authorities, and in particular the Ministry of Interior in 2010 in addressing the extreme security challenges posed by the threats from and actions of right wing groups, which – even with the deployment of 5,000 police - turned what should have been a celebratory event into some of the worst violence seen in Belgrade in recent years. Few of those responsible for the violence or for issuing threats to the organizers and supporters of the Pride have been brought to justice.

Belgrade's Mayor already refused to support the Pride saying that the event is a risk for "property, members of gay population, the police and citizens of Belgrade".

The Mayor of Jagodina, a city in central Serbia, whose party is part of the coalition government, has repeatedly called members of gay population ill, stated that homosexuality is contrary to Serbian religious and family values and asked for the Pride not to take place. In addition, members of right-wing extremist groups have called for the Pride to be banned and announced that they will take action to prevent Pride from taking place.

Name: Organisers of Belgrade Pride

Gender m/f: Both

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