

# URGENT ACTION

## DISCRIMINATORY BILL PASSED IN RUSSIA

**On 11 June, the lower house of Russia's parliament almost unanimously passed in its second and third readings a bill severely limiting freedom of expression, assembly and association for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. After a largely formal hearing in the upper house, the bill will be sent for presidential approval.**

The legislators say the aim of the bill is to “protect children from information promoting the rejection of traditional family values”. The bill introduces amendments to several laws banning “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors”. Before its second reading the legislators significantly changed and extended the scope of the bill.

The bill defines the term “propaganda” as “spreading information aimed at forming non-traditional sexual orientation, attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relationships, distorted perception of social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships or imposing information about non-traditional sexual relationships which would inspire interest in such relationships.”

Such “propaganda” among minors will be punished by fines of up to 5,000 roubles (US\$150) for individuals, up to 10 times that for officials, and up to 1,000,000 roubles (US\$30,000) as well as a possible three-month suspension of activities for organizations. Individuals and officials would incur even heftier fines if they were involved in “propaganda” through mass media and the internet. The ban will also apply to foreign citizens, who, in addition to incurring fines of up to US\$1,500, can be detained for up to 15 days and deported from Russia.

### **Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:**

- Urging the authorities not to pass Draft Federal Law no. 44554-6;
- Calling on them to protect freedom of expression and assembly, freedom from discrimination and equality before the law, in accordance with European and international human rights law

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 JULY 2013 TO:**

#### President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Putin  
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103132 Moscow  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 495 910 21 34

**Salutation: Dear President Putin**

#### Chairwoman of the Council of Federation

Valentina Matvienko  
Council of Federation  
Ul.B.Dmitrovka, 26  
103426 Moscow,  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7495 629 6743,  
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Email: post\_sf@gov.ru

**Salutation: Dear Chairwoman**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 348/12. Further information:  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR46/054/2012/en>

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The first hearing of the bill in the lower house of the Russian Parliament, the Duma, was scheduled for 19 December 2012, but took place on 25 January 2013.

The bill will severely affect the activities of LGBTI people and organizations, and might lead to further discrimination and escalation of hate crimes against the LGBT community. The bill represents an attack on the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly and is a breach of the country's international obligations to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people from discrimination.

Before the vote, some 24 Russian LGBTI activists conducted a "kissing protest" outside the Parliament. According to local media, at least 20 were detained by police after being assaulted by homophobic counter-protestors.

Similar laws have been approved in regions including Ryazan, Arkhangelsk, Kostroma, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Magadan, Samara, Bashkortostan and Krasnodar. Some of these laws also prohibit "propaganda of paedophilia among minors", thus linking the sexual abuse of children with consensual, private sexual activity between adults.

The discriminatory section of Ryazan Region Law on Administrative Offences, concerning "public actions aimed at the propaganda of homosexuality", led to a submission to the UN Human Rights Committee by Irina Fedotova, an openly lesbian woman and activist in the LGBTI movement in the Russian Federation. She put up posters that read "Homosexuality is normal" and "I am proud of my homosexuality" near a school in Ryazan. Following a police intervention, a court fined her 1,500 roubles (US\$48) for "public actions aimed at the propaganda of homosexuality".

In October 2012 the UN Human Rights Committee found that Russia had violated Irina Fedotova's right to freedom of expression and her right to non-discrimination under Article 19(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) read in conjunction with Article 26. The Committee recalled that the prohibition of discrimination under Article 26 of the ICCPR comprises also discrimination based on sexual orientation, and concluded that the Ryazan Regional Law was discriminatory as the prohibition applied only to propaganda regarding homosexuality and not heterosexuality as well or sexuality in general.

Name: n/a

Gender m/f: n/a

Further information on UA: 348/12 Index: EUR 46/020/2013 Issue Date: 19 June 2013