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## **Ukraine: First-ever Kyiv pride cancelled in face of ultra-right threat**

The Ukrainian authorities should take action to protect the rights of LGBT people and ensure they are able to exercise their human rights without fear of attacks, Amnesty International said today after the first ever pride parade had to be cancelled on Sunday.

Police advised pride organizers to abandon the march just 30 minutes before it was due to start. They claimed 500 ultra-right football hooligans were en route to the rally point with the intention of preventing the march from going ahead.

Two activists were beaten up and tear gassed by a dozen youths in central Kyiv after those already gathered for the march were evacuated with police escort.

“It has been clear from the start that the Kyiv police department did not want this march to go ahead. Their reluctance to commit to the event and to put adequate security measures in place to protect demonstrators left organizers fearing for their safety,” said Max Tucker, Ukraine campaigner at Amnesty International.

A senior Kyiv police official had previously told pride organizers that he was not prepared to put his officers in harm’s way for the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community.

“The Kyiv authorities and police must work harder to ensure next year pride participants can feel confident they will be protected,” said Max Tucker.

The organization also expressed its deep concern about support expressed on Wednesday by a parliamentary committee for a bill restricting the distribution of and access to information “promoting homosexuality”.

The bill would amend several laws including the law on protection of public morals, the law on print media, the law on television and radio broadcasting, the law on publishing and the Criminal Code.

The provisions, if adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament, would directly discriminate against Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual individuals in the exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

“Passing this bill would fly in the face of Ukraine’s international obligations to protect the right to freedom of expression and prohibit discrimination.”

Amnesty International calls on the Ukrainian parliament to reject the bill and to ensure that Ukraine protects, respects and fulfils the rights of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual individuals without any discrimination.