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## **Turkey: Police violence threatens Pride marches in Taksim Square**

Following weeks of violently suppressed public protests, the Turkish government's declaration that public assemblies in Istanbul's central Taksim Square will not be tolerated will put Pride marches at risk over the next two Sundays, Amnesty International warned today.

The organization believes that not allowing peaceful gatherings in one of Istanbul's most iconic squares is a serious assault on the right to freedom of assembly, and the Turkish authorities must backpedal from this threatened restriction.

"Turkey's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community have struggled for years to gain acceptance and respect for their Pride events, which have gone ahead successfully without police intervention in recent years. To have this derailed now would be a serious step backwards for freedom of assembly in Turkey," said Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Programme Director John Dalhuisen.

Turkish LGBTI activists had organized the Pride events for the next two Sundays – 23 and 30 June.

The Pride marches follow several weeks during which police repeatedly used excessive force against peaceful protesters in the square.