

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Latvia: Amnesty International shows solidarity with Riga Pride 2007

This year, Amnesty International will participate actively in the Riga Pride march on 3 June 2007 with a delegation of between 50-100 persons from at least eleven different countries who will exercise their right to peaceful assembly at the march. Amnesty International is taking this action as a demonstration of solidarity with the Latvian lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons.

Amnesty International is concerned about the threats to the human rights of LGBT persons in Latvia who will be participating in the 2007 Riga Pride march. Amnesty International calls on the Latvian authorities to ensure that the parade goes ahead with adequate police protection for the participants who may be subjected to physical and verbal assaults from counter-demonstrators threatening their freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and their right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Gay Pride events were organized in Riga in 2005 and 2006. In both these years the Pride marches were banned owing to what the authorities referred to as "security threats". The 2005 Gay Pride march was eventually allowed to go ahead after an intervention by Riga Administrative Court, while the 2006 march was banned altogether. The 2005 march, as well as alternative events in 2006, was interrupted by violent protests. In both 2005 and 2006, the authorities clearly did not provide adequate police protection considering the threat to the LGBT rights' activists, a fact acknowledged by the authorities in both 2005 and 2006. On 12 April 2007, a Regional Administrative Court ruled that the decision of the Riga City Council to ban the Pride march in 2006 was not legal.

Amnesty International urges the Latvian prime minister to take active steps, in public speeches or through other means, to encourage organizations who have openly stated that they will stage counter-demonstrations to the Riga Pride march to respect the right of Latvian LGBT people to peaceful assembly and to refrain from engaging in physical and verbal attacks against LGBT persons.

For further information on Amnesty International's participation in this year's Riga Pride, see:
<http://web.amnesty.org/pages/lva-030507-background-eng>

For further information on LGBT issues in Latvia, see:
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR010202006>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR010192006>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR520032006>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR520022006>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR520012006>
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGEUR520012005>

