

Stop the judicial harassment of LGBT organizations

"The only way for LGBT people to resist the oppression, isolation and marginalization in social life due to their sexual orientation and gender identity is through solidarity and coming together."

Black Pink Triangle spokesperson, speaking on the day of the first hearing in February 2010

Another year, another LGBT rights association in Turkey is taken to court, this time the Black Pink Triangle Association based in İzmir. The civil proceedings brought by the İzmir public prosecutor to close the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) association, Black Pink Triangle, came after the governor of İzmir complained that the aims of the association violated "Turkish moral values and family structure".

This is the latest in a series of legal actions taken against LGBT organizations in Turkey. A local court in Istanbul ruled to close LambdaIstanbul in May 2008. The decision was finally overturned at the Supreme Court of Appeals in November that year, a ruling that was confirmed in April 2009 in a local court in Istanbul. Cases were brought, unsuccessfully, against LGBT associations KAOS-GL in 2005 and Pembe Hayat (Pink Life) in 2006.

As in previous cases, Amnesty International opposes the closure case against Black Pink Triangle, which forms part of a pattern of judicial harassment targeting LGBT associations. The closure of Black Pink Triangle on such grounds would violate the right of all persons to freedom of association and expression and non-discrimination and runs contrary to Turkey's obligations under international human rights law and the European Convention on Human Rights.

So far, AI has issued two public statements and written to the Minister of Interior in Turkey regarding the case. An AI observer was present at the first hearing for the closure case, which took place on 9 February 2010. It was postponed to 20 April in order for letters sent from abroad, to be translated into Turkish, instead of simply dismissing it as a baseless and discriminatory case.

What you can do:

Please write in your own words to the Minister of Interior Beşir Atalay, Governor of İzmir Mr. Mustafa Cahit Kır aç and prosecutor Mr. Sami D undar:

- reminding them of their duty to ensure the respect and protection of the rights of all persons to freedom of association, without discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity;
- urging them to ensure that notions of public order, public morality, public health and public security are not employed to restrict any exercise of the rights to peaceful association solely on the basis that the association affirms diverse sexual orientations or gender identities;

In your letter to Minister of Interior, also add a request to;

- support a comprehensive non-discrimination law which includes specific protections against unequal treatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity in all areas of life;
- remind provincial governorships and their association directorates of their obligation to respect and protect the rights of all persons to freedom of association, without discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and to take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Target**Minister of Interior**

Mr. Beşir Atalay

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Salutation: Dear Minister

Governor of İzmir

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Salutation: Dear Governor

Prosecutor

Mr. Sami D undar

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Salutation: Dear Prosecutor