

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL JOINT STATEMENT

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KYIVPRIDE2013

First LGBTI Pride March an important step forward for human rights in Ukraine

Amnesty International and the organizers of KyivPride 2013 welcome the cooperation and protection provided by the Ukrainian police during Saturday's first ever successful LGBTI Pride March in Ukraine. The Ministry of Internal Affairs' recognition and fulfillment of their obligation to protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly for LGBTI people is an important step in combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Ukraine.

However, both Amnesty International and the KyivPride organizers remain concerned that the Kyiv City Council chose to ban the Pride March from the city centre, forcing organizers to change to an alternative location at the last moment and curtailing participant's right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Amnesty International and the Kyiv Pride organizing committee urge the authorities not to impose such limitations on events where LGBTI people seek to peacefully express their views in future.

Police cooperation with the organizers and the protection provided was significantly better than last year, when the police failed to ensure adequate protection from potential violence by counter-demonstrators and advised Pride organizers to call off the March. Amnesty International and the KyivPride organizing committee hope that the Ministry of Internal Affairs will continue to guarantee the right to freedom of assembly for LGBTI people by maintaining the cooperation established this year.

Amnesty International and the Head of Security for KyivPride2013 were able to meet with representatives from the Kyiv Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs before the event and discuss security arrangements in detail. Concerns raised by Amnesty International were adequately addressed, and particular requests made by the Head of Security were fulfilled.

On the day of the Pride itself enough officers were present to secure the March route from counter-protesters numbering around five hundred. Despite this, a few counter-protesters were able to move within the police cordon, and police should investigate how this was allowed to happen. When these counter-protesters disrupted the march by pushing some participants and tearing down banners, they were arrested swiftly and without use of excessive force. Twenty-one counter-demonstrators were arrested and twelve of them were charged with minor hooliganism offences. A Kyiv court fined two of the twelve arrested 51 UAH (\$6.30 USD) and the remaining ten were released with a warning.