

URGENT ACTION

2012 BELGRADE PRIDE MARCH BANNED

On 3 October, the Serbian Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Ivica Dačić, banned the 2012 Pride march on the basis of unspecified security threats. This ban has denied the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

In his justification for the ban of the 2012 Pride march, Serbian Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Ivica Dačić cited a heightened level of threats, including alleged paramilitary threats. He denied that he had given in to right-wing organizations, and claimed that the ban would protect the peace and public order and the rights of all citizens.

In the past few days, the Minister has come under pressure from a large number of right-wing groups, politicians and the head of the Serbian Orthodox church, to ban the Pride march. He also banned all other demonstrations from taking place on 6 October.

This ban has violated the right to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly of LGBT activists and individuals in Serbia. There are also fears that the ban, in the context of threats from homophobic groups, will have the long-term effect of undermining the rights of LGBT people in Serbia and the provisions of the 2009 Anti-Discrimination Law. However, LGBT activists have responded positively, saying that the Pride will go on, "within four walls".

Please write immediately in Serbian or your own language:

- Informing the authorities that you are extremely concerned at the banning of the 2012 Belgrade Pride march on 6 October 2012;
- Telling authorities that yet again, the rights of LGBT individuals and activists to freedom of expression and assembly have been denied by the government, in violation of Serbia's international obligations, and asking them to make adequate preparations to ensure that the Pride march goes ahead next year;
- Informing them that by law the Ministry of Interior should have taken the necessary measures, well in advance of the Pride, to ensure that the event took place in 2012, without obstruction or hindrance and ensuring adequate protection from violence;
- Demanding that the authorities conduct prompt, impartial and effective investigations into any and all security threats cited by the Minister of Interior, to make the results of such investigations public, and to ensure that anyone reasonably suspected of threatening to attack the Pride organizers or participants, or any other members of the LGBT population, are brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 NOVEMBER 2012 TO:

Prime Minister and Minister of Interior

Ivica Dačić

Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 2

11 000 Belgrade, Serbia

Email: kabinetpremijera@gov.rs

Fax: + 381 11 3617586

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
of Defence

Aleksandar Vučić

Birčaninova 5

11000 Beograd, Serbia

Fax: +381 11 3006062

Email: info@mod.gov.rs

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime
Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 294/12. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR70/019/2012/en>.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International notes that while Article 5 (1) of the Law on the Public Assembly of Citizens states that: "Maintaining order in the public assembly is the responsibility of the organizer", Article 5(2) states, "Activities to ensure protection of safety of person and property of participants of the public assembly and other citizens, maintaining public order and peace, safety of traffic and other activities related to securing the public assembly, are to be conducted by the Ministry of Interior."

Serbian authorities banned the Belgrade Pride march in 2011 on account of reported security threats, and on the basis of the violence of the counter-demonstrations against the 2010 Pride march. The Serbian authorities provided adequate protection to Pride participants in 2010, with the deployment of 5,000 police officers facing more than 6,000 counter-demonstrators.

From first-hand experience of participation in Belgrade Pride 2010, Amnesty International is well aware of the problems faced at that time by the Ministry of Interior in addressing the security challenges posed by the threats from and actions of right wing groups. However, the organization notes that of those arrested in 2010, few of those allegedly responsible for the violence or for issuing threats to the organizers and supporters of the Pride have been brought to justice. Even fewer investigations and prosecutions took place following the banning of the 2011 Pride, on the grounds of reported security threats.

Amnesty International considers that the Serbian government cannot reduce respect for freedom of assembly of LGBT groups and individuals solely to a security issue. By banning the Pride march, the Serbian government would again fail to fulfill its international obligation to guarantee the right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly to LGBT groups and individuals, without discrimination.

Name: Organizers of the Belgrade Pride
Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 294/12 Index: EUR 70/020/2012 Issue Date: 4 October 2012