



United States Mission to the OSCE

LGBT Rights in the Russian Federation

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 4, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States is deeply concerned that on June 30 President Putin signed a law that bans "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations." The United States has previously raised our concern regarding laws that criminalize "gay propaganda" among minors. These laws restrict freedoms of expression and assembly for LGBT individuals, and indeed for all Russians. We disagree with the idea that anyone needs protection from LGBT information or individuals.

The United States places great importance on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people. LGBT persons have the same human rights and inherent human dignity as all others. As President Obama has said, "The struggle to end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons is a global challenge, and one that is central to the United States' commitment to promoting human rights."

The United States notes that on June 29 in St. Petersburg, supporters of LGBT rights attempted to hold a rally at the city's Field of Mars Park but were disrupted by opponents of LGBT rights who pelted the marchers with stones, eggs, and small smoke canisters. When organizers refused to heed police instructions to end the event, 53 supporters were arrested. Thirty-five LGBT rights supporters were subsequently charged with violating public protest rules and/or public disobedience. A handful of LGBT opponents were arrested as well.

Earlier in June, two St. Petersburg based LGBT organizations ("Coming Out" and the "Side by Side" Film Festival) were brought to trial and subsequently found guilty of failing to register as foreign agents under Russia's "foreign agents" law. Anna Anisimova, the acting head of "Coming Out," was also found to have violated the "foreign agents" law.

We call on the Russian Federation to meet its obligations to respect and protect human rights, including those of LGBT individuals, and fundamental freedoms under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to fulfill its numerous OSCE commitments on assembly, association, and expression.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.