



WE CALL ON THE MIA TO RESPOND ADEQUATELY TO THREATS FROM VIOLENT GROUPS

Coalition for Equality responds to threats made by leaders of violent groups in the media. According to Sandro Bregadze, the leader of the Georgian March, his movement plans to disrupt the first night of the LGBTI film "And Then We Danced" and block cinemas. [1] Guram Palavandishvili, chairman of the Society for the Protection of Children's Rights, has announced that audiences will not be allowed into the cinemas of Tbilisi and Batumi and they will occupy the halls themselves. [2] Physical violence against people of different opinions and destroy their property is a method used by Georgian Marsh and other violent groups in the past. [3] Consequently, those who intend to attend the movie's premiere on November 8 will face a real danger because of their threats.

It is alarming that the authorities, in response to threats from violent groups, do not make tolerant statements about diversity. Their political rhetoric and messages to

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unprotected groups are largely ambiguous and conflict with the notions of human rights and equality. The government does not counter the threats coming from such groups not only at the level of rhetoric but also by not responding to the facts it encourages their violent actions.

The negative role of both opposing groups in the Georgian Orthodox Church should be mentioned separately. For years, for the sake of gaining and strengthening of power they have been instrumentalizing the LGBT community and creating an image of the enemy. The statement made by the head of the press service of the Patriarchate, Andria Jagmaidze, can be considered as a support for the actions expected by the violent groups. Jagmaidze showing the film "And Then We Danced" at Georgian cinemas as an attempt to undermine Georgian values. [4]

Given the hostility of the above groups to the LGBT community, the Coalition for Equality calls for:

Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- to undertake appropriate preparatory work by November 8, 2019, to prevent a real threat of violence;
- mobilize a sufficient number of police forces in the vicinity of the respective cinema to prevent violence or other property damage, which is really given the threat and past activities of violent groups.

To the Georgian authorities:

- Make unequivocal statements in support of tolerance, as well as warn potential offenders about impending responsibility. [5]

The statement is signed by the member organizations of Coalition for Equality:

- Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSFG)
- Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)
- Article 42 of the Constitution
- Union Safari
- Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)
- Women's Initiatives Supportive Group (WISG)
- Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)

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- Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)
- Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)
- Human Rights Center (HRC)

[1]

https://publika.ge/mokhdeba-kinoteatrebis-blokireba-qartuli-marshi-filmis-chvenebis-chashlas-gegnavs/?fbclid=IwAR1RCftviMdVC4jGSFGFzT6bNW6fAKkXSN2WaV2cC0kt_KT6grOuAPtii7k

[2]

http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/158707-sheidzleba-darbazi-davikavot-and-then-we-danced-is-chvenebis-chashlit-falavandishvilic?fbclid=IwAR0zO5iog0VN15NUaS3EJUmhiuoFnBc6zBh3dA8hS_pzIN4BEFfd-iO6WQ8

[3] <https://news.ge/2018/03/19/qartuli-marsis-wevrebma-rustavi2-is-senobastan-juralistbs-sityvieri-da-fizikuri-seuracxyofa-miayenes/>

[4] <https://netgazeti.ge/news/403182/?fbclid=IwAR1o8IIF-dtTPqVtRnJaF4xCtdQgjEwXN0Tz2t2ntoMWSrDo-s0LUzhG3mo>

[5] Paragraph 99 of Judgment of European Court of Human Rights of the case on Identity and Others v. Georgia <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-154400>.