



**საია-ს განცხადება
ჰომოფობიის,
ტრანსფობიის და
ბიფობიის წინააღმდეგ
ბრძოლის საერთაშორისო
დღესთან დაკავშირებით**

GYLA's statement on the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

May 17th is the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, which is officially recognized by the European Parliament and many countries around the world.

LGBTQ community is one of the most excluded groups in Georgia. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, their social and legal status became even worse, although Georgia has improved its legal protection mechanisms in recent years. Namely, in 2014, the Georgian parliament passed the Law on the “Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination”, but the need for legislative regulation on a number of issues is still relevant.

A particular challenge is the implementation of current legislation in practice. In particular, the effective investigation of hate speech and hate-motivated crimes, as

well as bringing the perpetrators to justice, still remains problematic. Also, the problems in the field of health care and registration of civil acts remain beyond attention.

The issue of realizing the freedom of assembly of the LGBTQ community was one of the main challenges in 2019 as well. In particular, in 2019, the Pride March was organized by "Tbilisi Pride". The Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a statement after a meeting with Tbilisi Pride organizers on May 31st stating that "... it is impossible to conduct an event on the planned places and format, taking into account the security risks of those involved in the process ...", the state by this move, has, in fact, refused to fulfill its positive obligation.

Discrimination against Queer people on the labor market is not new to the Georgian reality. LGBTQ people are often victims of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. Consequently, some of them have to hide their orientation and identity in the workplace in order to avoid discrimination. Some of them are even forced to choose to work as sex workers and thus earn money. The situation created by the pandemic has had a profound effect on their livelihoods and well-being, which has once again exposed the vulnerability and exclusion of the community.

Measures planned by the state in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic have shown that the needs of LGBTQ people have not been met or have been met fragmentally, putting Queer people in a difficult, financially unstable situation. Due to the fact that some of them are self-employed, LGBTQ people have not been included in the compensation plan for people affected by the pandemic. Consequently, persons left without income were at risk of losing their place of residence. In addition, there are no services and programs tailored to LGBTQ people in the country that provide better protection and rehabilitation for victims of discrimination, which became even more apparent in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Lack of access to appropriate services provided by the state during a pandemic poses particular problems for LGBTQ individuals in need of treatment for chronic diseases and/ or routine medical care. The situation is even worse when public transport is banned in the country, and Queer people are less likely to be able to afford other types of transport for movement.

In April 2020, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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responded to the situation of LGBTQ people during the pandemic. The LGBTQ people are regularly subjected to discrimination, according to the Office of the Commissioner. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they can be particularly vulnerable. Therefore, the UN calls on states to recognize that the situation of LGBTQ people is particularly critical during the current crisis, and it is necessary that steps taken under the management of a pandemic take into account the needs of LGBTQ people.

Accordingly, GYLA calls on the Georgian government:

- Step up efforts to combat discrimination against LGBTQ individuals;
- To provide development of services necessary for LGBTQ people, including to eliminate the problems caused by the pandemic;
- Provide a Relief Package for LGBTQ people in the plan developed to compensate victims of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Provide temporary housing for LGBTQ people who have lost their homes during a pandemic.