

LGBT EDUCATION

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LOCAL NEWS: RUSSIA

Russian situation in schools and for LGBT youth deteriorates

The Russian situation of LGBT teenagers and of LGBT teachers has further been threatened in recent months. In December, a lesbian teacher was fired after accusations of so-called immoral action by a homophobic activist. In January, the founder of the LGBT youth website Children 404 was convicted of propaganda for non-traditional relations.



School 565

So-called immoral behavior

On Dec. 8, 2014, the director of School 565 in St. Petersburg fired the music teacher "because she belongs to the LGBT group". He based the dismissal on information about her private life. This information was given by Timur "Isayev"

Bulatov, an anti-gay activist who claims to have gotten 29 LGBT school teachers fired. He wrote a letter of complaint to the school saying, "It's a crime to allow such teachers as around children. Communication with such teachers won't teach children good behavior, it won't give them a well-rounded view of the world, and it won't give them the ability to respect the family and Russian tradition." Isayev also showed the school photos of the teacher with her partner from her profile on a Russian social networking site. He

provided the school with other "evidence" of her orientation, including the fact that she had "liked" Russian singer Zemfira. According to the Russian news site Meduza, Zemfira is believed to be a lesbian.

The Moscow Times reported that lawyers from the Russian LGBT advocacy group "Way Out", filed a lawsuit the teachers behalf. They demanded that the teacher be reinstated and compensated for wages lost during her forced absence from the school. They also supported her claim by numerous teaching certificates and rewards she received.



Timur Bulatov

So-called propaganda

On January 23, journalist **Elena Klimova**, the founder of the online LGBT youth support group Children 404 (<http://deti-404.com/>) was convicted of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors." In 2013, Vitaly Milonov (the main author of the anti-LGBT law in St. Petersburg that became the basis for the national legislation) filed an official complaint against Children 404. However, that case was dismissed in February 2014. Despite this, Roskomnadzor (Russia's state agency for media oversight) opened a new case against Klimova in November. Roskomnadzor charged that Children 404 could cause children to think that to be gay means to be a person who is brave, strong, confident, persistent, who has a sense of dignity and self-respect. Obviously the media institute meant that LGBT children are cowards, weak, insecure, lacks and without dignity but did not want to appear to be so abusive of children. Last month, Judge Lyudmila Pedan refused to postpone the January 23 hearing, even though Klimova's lawyer could not attend the hearing for medical reasons. The magistrate's decision violated the Russian Constitution, which guarantees the basic right to "qualified legal assistance." The judge declared Elena Klimova guilty of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors," and fined her 50,000 rubles (approximately \$750 US). Klimova plans to appeal the sentence.

Campaign against dissenters labelled as foreign agents

The conviction of Children 404 and the hunt for LGBT teachers are part of the accelerating campaign by bot the government and fascist gangs against independent voices in Russia, in including nongovernmental organizations, journalists, social media, and teachers that do not fit the ultra/orthodox view. In 2012 the Duma adopted a law requiring NGOs that accept funding from abroad to register as "foreign agents". In January the Duma approved the first reading of new legislation banning "undesirable foreign organizations" altogether.

Sergei Nikitin, who is Amnesty International's Moscow Office Director, commented: "This law is another sobering sign of how the **Russian authorities are quickly closing in on fundamental freedoms** and the work

of independent civil society groups in the country. Sadly, these freedoms can no longer be taken for granted in Russia.”

Sources: <https://www.facebook.com/getshore/posts/803273563043745>,
<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2015/01/30/is-my-sexual-orientation-immoral> ,
<http://blog.amnestyusa.org/europe/russia-defending-lgbt-rights-is-not-propaganda/>

GLOBAL NEWS: FAMILIES

IFED announces 4th rainbow family day

The Network of International Family Equality Day (IFED) announced that on May 3, LGBTQ family organizations from around the world will celebrate the fourth International Family Equality Day.

Rainbow families

All over the world, more and more children grow up in families where one or both of their parents are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer (LGBTQ). Yet, these “rainbow families” face very different situations. In some countries rainbow families enjoy equal rights and social recognition. In

others, for instance some Eastern European, Latin American and most African and Asian countries as well as Russia, children and parents face direct discrimination and have to live under the threat of violence.

Kids in rainbow families are doing perfectly well

The theme this year will be “THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT”. The choice of the theme is meant to raise awareness among politicians and the general public about the need for equal treatment and recognition for all families. Society changes continuously, and new kinds of families have appeared beside more traditional ones. Among these are LGBT families. Despite the fact that 40 years of scientific research has demonstrated in an incontrovertible way that the children of these families grow up just as well as the sons and daughters of parents of different sexes, distrust and prejudice towards them is still strong.





IFED in 2014, Germany

IFED in 2014

In 2014, the IFED was celebrated in 22 countries and 48 cities worldwide. In the IFED annual report an overview of activities are presented. Also the work done by the international IFED Committee is highlighted.

<http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/index.php/annual-report/annual-report-2014>

The IFED Committee is composed of representatives from the various LGBTQ family organizations (Family Equality Council, LGBTQ Parenting Network, Coalition des familles homoparentales, NELFA, Keshetfamilies and Rainbow Families Japan). Communication takes place via a mailing list (listserv) and quarterly video conferences, during which cooperation and joint projects are discussed. A website serves as a common platform. It introduces the involved organizations as well as ongoing and completed projects in connection with IFED and provides opportunities for networking.

Sources:

IFED Website: <http://www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org/>

IFED Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalFamilyEqualityDay?ref=hl>

IFED Facebook Creative Network: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/500398236747224/>

IFED International Mailing List: E-Mail queries to info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org

Community organizations who wish to participate please contact the IFED Network by email:

info@internationalfamilyequalityday.org.

Ghana students attempt to lynch gay students

According to Gay Star News, on 6 February students at an all-boys high school in Danu tried to lynch two fellow students for having sex with each other. The police were called to stop the riot and shot one first-year student. The two victims of the riot were arrested.



"Instant justice"

The media report the students of St Paul's Senior High School discovered the two students having sex, but do not relate how this happened. The students turned on the two boys to "deliver instant justice". Teachers tried to intervene, but were then turned on by the raging students as well. "The school is ready to penalize us when we wear unsubscribed attires, but fail to apply the rules when other colleagues sodomize,' students told

the media. They stormed the teacher's bungalow, smashed car windscreens, destroyed school property, barricaded the roads in the school compound and burned truck tires.

Victims arrested

When the police arrived, the students also turned on them. They threw stones. The police fired warning shots to disperse the mob. One of the bullets hit a student in the head. According to Joy News, the school has been closed down temporarily, "to prevent any unsavory repercussion". At the same time, the two victims of the mob were arrested by the police. Media report they are assisting with the investigation. But it may also be they will be prosecuted. Ghana punishes "unnatural carnal knowledge" with up to three years in jail.



Sources: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-7th/two-spaco-homosexuals-arrested-police-investigate-death-of-student.php>
<http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/ghana-school-tries-lynch-two-gay-students090215>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/ST-PAULS-SECONDARY-SCHOOL-DENU/96780870990>

Twelve year old Peruvian boy commits suicide due to homophobia

On 8 February, a 12 year old Peruvian boy from Iquitos committed suicide after an argument with his stepfather. The stepfather had shaved his hair as punishment for being gay, so he would "learn to feel like a man." The boy had also suffered strong harassment from his classmates at school. He hanged himself. He left a suicide note in which he expressed his hatred towards his mother's partner.



The child was discovered by the mother when he was still alive. He was taken to hospital in Iquitos, but he died a few hours later. The news was broadcast on television which showed images of the child being moved to the hospital by his mother. The mother suffered an anxiety attack. Peruvian TV also showed the arrest of the stepfather.

Shangay.com notes gay this suicide is not an isolated case in Peru. In July 2013, a gay boy of 15 hanged himself after being insulted and assaulted by members of his family. In May 2013, a 20 year old also hanged himself after his father threw him out of the house when he learned he was gay. The most serious case happened last year when a gay 22 year old suffered serious burns after his father sprayed with gasoline and set fire to him.

UK Labour Party promises plan against homophobic bullying

Shadow education secretary Tristram Hunt said homophobia in schools was part of the legacy of Section 28 and should be eradicated by training all teachers. On behalf of the Labour Party, he promised to do this when Labour wins the next elections.



The plan

The "shadow" education secretary launched the plan at a school in Ilford, East London. He argued for a "zero tolerance" of homophobic language and bullying in England's schools. The plan follows a taskforce set up by Tristan Hunt to consult and make recommendations on new measures to tackle

[Tristram Hunt promising anti homophobic bullying plan if Labour wins elections](#)

homophobic bullying in schools and beyond. At the core of the plan is that all new teachers must be trained to tackle homophobic bullying.

In addition, Hunt will pledge to provide support for those teachers already in the system to receive training to tackle homophobic bullying as well as promote mental health services for young people living with the consequences of homophobic bullying. Age-appropriate sex and relationship education would be made compulsory in all schools.

Media distortions

The Telegraph added that the Labour Party want children to be kicked out of school if they call each other "gay" in the playground, but whether this is part of the Labour plan is not confirmed. The Daily Mail has created havoc by writing that the plan will force schools to give "sex lessons" for 5-year-olds.

Not just teacher training needed

The national education union NUT supports the plan. But the union also criticizes the sole focus on teacher training. "Supporting LGBT pupils and staff through training and whole school awareness raising involves ensuring that the attitudes which generate homophobia and transphobia are eliminated across all areas of school life. Training on this issue needs to go beyond just teachers, however, to include all school staff both within and outside the classroom."

Response of the conservative government

The current Education Secretary and Equalities Minister Nicky Morgan said the government had already made tackling homophobic bullying a priority in the coalition agreement.

"Since then we've invested in projects to train more teachers on tackling homophobia in the classroom and set out clear guidance on the importance of tackling all types of bullying, including homophobic bullying," she said.

Nicky Morgan: "There is no room for complacency"



Nicky Morgan: we're already doing it

Morgan is pleased that teachers are now reporting lower rates of homophobic bullying compared to five years ago and greater confidence in tackling this bullying.

"Of course there is no room for complacency which is why we recently announced a £2m fund to support projects to combat this bullying in our schools and take us step closer towards our goal of eradicating this bullying from our classrooms."

Sources: <http://www.bbc.com/news/education-31116413>; <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/general-election-2015-labour-plans-eradicate-homophobic-bullying-schools-1486382>; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/labour/11387644/Tristram-Hunt-Ban-gay-insult-from-schools.html>; <https://www.politicshome.com/document/press-release/nut-comment-re-tristram-hunts-plans-eradicate-lgbt-bullying-schools>

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Colophon

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