



InterPride, GLISA and ILGA - Joint Statement Condemning Russia

For Immediate Release: Friday, August 9th, 2013. (Vancouver, BC)

On behalf of InterPride (International Association of Pride Organizers), GLISA (Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association) and ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), we strongly condemn the recent broad clampdown in Russia through a variety of laws, which not only affects LGBT organizations disproportionately through specific anti-gay laws, but inevitably extends to other groups and in the end, affects the whole of civil society.

We add our voice to the already overwhelming messages at the Kremlin's abhorrent, homophobic, anti-human rights legislation, especially in light of the upcoming Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia, scheduled for February, 2014. We are concerned for the safety and well being of our fellow LGBTIs in Russia and the terror they now face from these barbaric laws recently passed. We are equally concerned for LGBTI people who plan to participate in the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

We are pleased to see the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) statement in relation to the rights of LGBTI people during the games and its assurance that it will work to ensure the safety of LGBTI athletes, spectators, media, and officials attending the Sochi Winter Games. However, we are dismayed at the lack of specificity from the IOC on exactly how they intend to ensure the safety of LGBTI people affiliated with the games while in Russia. The IOC has no way to protect them from federal law which outlaws homosexuality.

Although we are completely appalled by President Putin's attitude, we understand that neither a reversal of this legislation, nor a boycott, nor pulling the games from Russia is either possible nor in the control of the IOC. We suggest that the International Olympic Committee take swift and appropriate action to ensure the safety of all athletes and visitors to these games with these initiatives.

1. We call on the IOC to work with countries defending LGBTI rights to create a safe environment for athletes and participants in Sochi by establishing a Rainbow or Pride House either by renting a venue or opening a temporary consulate where there is diplomatic immunity;
2. We encourage the IOC to facilitate participating LGBTI athletes and allies to wear a rainbow pin or carry a rainbow flag during the march of athletes at the opening and closing ceremonies;
3. We ask the IOC chair to condemn the anti-gay laws in Russia during his opening ceremony remarks.

We applaud the bravery of openly gay New Zealand speed skater Blake Skjellerup for refusing to hide who he is in Russia and in the rest of the world. We hope that his example gives other athletes the courage to declare themselves LGBTI or supporters. Visibility and a refusal to submit to intimidation is the path to full legal and social equality.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and successful 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

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Daniel Vaudrin	Co-Presidents, GLISA
Gloria Careaga and Azusa Yamashita	Co-Secretaries Generals, ILGA

InterPride - The International Association of LGBTI Pride Organizers mission is to increase the capacity of our network around the world to raise awareness of cultural, social and legal inequality, and to effect positive change through education, collaboration, advocacy and outreach. See more at www.interpride.org

GLISA - The Gay and Lesbian International Sport Association is a democratically governed, international association of LGBT sport and human rights organisations from around the world - See more at: www.glisa.org

ILGA - The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association is a world-wide network of more than 1,000 national and local organizations and groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for LGBTI people - See more at: www.ilga.org

For further comment, please email media@interpride.org