

INTOLERANCE WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY: HATE SPEECH & HATE CRIMES IN UKRAINE

Conference

Wednesday, December 12, 2018, Kyiv

Hate crime is becoming an increasingly pressing issue for Ukrainian society. Since the beginning of 2018 the number of attacks on representatives of the LGBT community and ethnic groups has increased in Ukraine. Violence done includes a series of pogroms upon Roma camps and the murder of a 24-year-old Roma man – as well as the systematic disruption of human rights events and peaceful assemblies for gathering on gender and LGBT topics.

In addition we invite your attention to the indulgent permissive attitude of some representatives of some authorities to outright hate speech – evidenced by these representatives' frankly homophobic and discriminatory public statements – jeopardizing people and communities who are potential objects of xenophobia.

At the same time some positive changes in law-enforcement have manifested: the *March for Equality* on the 17th of June 2018 was safe. Police submitted notice of suspicion of committing a crime to the coordinator of nationalist organization "C14" after their attack on the Roma camp in Kyiv. Nonetheless, the general situation regarding impunity for hate crimes remains urgent and demands an increase in awareness and adherence to standards of human rights protection. Indeed, permissiveness of active intolerance exacerbates existing problems and contributes to new crimes – while fueling the atmosphere of fear and aggression in Ukraine that in general is challenging the democratic future of the state. So, it is most important that the Ukrainian government adheres to the centralized policy of combating hate crimes and reforming existing legislation and practice to be in line with non-discrimination standards.

The conference "**Intolerance without Responsibility: Hate Speech & Hate Crimes in Ukraine**" is devoted to the development of propositions and suggestions for the authorities – fully anticipating their issuing better future political messages to society on how to regulate the hate crime situation on the legislative level and in practice, the mandatory inclusion of the topic in the national educational process, and raising awareness and informing the broader Ukrainian society.

Although all these policy approaches are currently being questioned by some politicians and some part of populations in the leading democratic countries, we Ukrainian civil society activists and human rights defenders are sure that Ukraine has a bright future comprised of a society that respects every citizen!

We say No to intolerance! YES to tolerance! This attitude is the guarantee of all citizens enjoying social progress under the power of our common state, when the state achieves compliance.

Participants to this conference are from vulnerable groups suffering from hate crimes in Ukraine, civil society activists and human rights defenders, mass-media journalists, representatives of Ukrainian authorities and friends and supporters of Ukraine from Europe and North America.

* December 10, 2018 – International Human Rights Day, 70th Anniversary Celebration for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



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9:30 – 10:00	Registration & welcome coffee
	Opening & Key-note remarks Tetiana Pechonchyk (moderator), head of the Human Rights Information Center Judith Gough , British Ambassador to Ukraine Eduard Hoeks , Ambassador of the Netherlands to Ukraine Svitlana Zalishchuk , Member of Parliament of Ukraine Pamela Tremont , Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy Hate crimes & incidents in Ukraine (presentation of comprehensive report) Andrii Kravchuk , Nash Mir Center
10:00 – 12:00	Panel discussion: Policy on counteracting hate crimes: What are necessary changes? Maksym Butkevych (moderator), “No Borders Project” Vyacheslav Likhachev , the National Minority Rights Monitoring Group of the Congress of National Communities of Ukraine Serhiy Ponomaryov , International Renaissance Foundation, Roma Program Manager Konstantin Tarasenko , the National Coordinator on Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes, the National Police of Ukraine Oksana Guz , Lawyer, Senior Partner in the PROVE Lawyer Association Olena Sapozhnikova , lawyer of Strategic litigation center of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union
12:00 – 12:30	Coffee break
12:30 – 14:00	Between freedom of speech and hate speech – how to define boundaries? Alyona Lunyova , the Human Rights Information Center Panel discussion on counteracting hate speech Yelyzaveta Sokurenko (moderator), the Human Rights Information Center Matthew Schaaf , Freedom House – Ukraine Maksym Dvorovy , lawyer of Center for Democracy and Rule of Law Anastasiya Stanko , journalist of Hromadske TV
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch

Working languages: Ukrainian, English (simultaneous translation).

The event is organized by LGBT Human Rights Nash Mir Center and The Human Rights Information Center with the support of the Human Rights Fund of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the British Embassy in Kyiv.

LGBT Human Rights Nash Mir Center

<https://gay.org.ua/en/>

For 20 years Nash Mir has been engaged in monitoring LGBT rights, providing legal assistance to victims of discrimination and hate crimes based on homo- and transphobia, advocating for equality for the LGBTI community on legislative and political levels, raising awareness about relevant issues, and more.

The Human Rights Information Center

<https://humanrights.org.ua/en>

HRIC is a civil society organization that has been involved in information, education, monitoring and advocacy activities in the field of human rights for over five years.

Additional information

Hate crimes and incidents in Ukraine

<https://gay.org.ua/publications/hatecrime2018-e.pdf>

The purpose of this publication is, relatively briefly and in simple language, to show the current situation with hate crimes and incidents in Ukraine regarding various vulnerable groups. We want to use this report to draw attention to the problem, show its versatility, use it to advocate the necessary changes in the legislation and public policy, as well as for the general education of professionals and the public in this sphere.

LGBT situation in Ukraine in 2018 (January – August)

https://gay.org.ua/publications/Situation_of_LGBT_in_Ukraine_Jan-Aug_2018_ENG.pdf

2018 has demonstrated a notable increase in activity and visibility of the Ukrainian LGBT community and some improvement in the attitude of Ukrainian society and the state towards it. At the same time, the Ukrainian authorities have not been ready to fulfil their commitments under the Action Plan on Human Rights on the adoption of important fundamental changes in legislation; however, they have not refused ultimately to implement changes and have actually taken certain decisions to protect the interests of LGBT people.

The police provided effective protection of LGBT events throughout the country in the cases where their conducting was agreed upon in advance; however, the practice of investigating hate crimes based on homo/transphobia remained extremely inefficient and unsatisfactory.

Ukrainian churches continued to actively support homophobic discrimination initiatives of other organisations and activists, but, except for the UOC (MP), they refrained from hate speech and their own incitements to discrimination. "The protection of the traditional family" became the main slogan of the current anti-LGBT campaigns in Ukraine.