



# **RUSSIA**

# YEAR IN REVIEW REPORT



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN  
FOUNDATION

# OVERVIEW

---

It has been one year since Russia enacted harsh anti-LGBT laws banning “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” and blocking same-sex couples from adopting children.

Since last July there has been an uptick in violent attacks on LGBT people according to Human Rights Watch. LGBT Russians have been murdered, pelted with eggs, blinded in air gun attacks and gay clubs and venues are under constant threat. Police often turn a blind eye and even when prosecutions occur, the penalties can be light and prosecutors are reluctant to use hate crime statutes against perpetrators of anti-LGBT violence. Since the passage of the propaganda law, at least three people have been fined for expressing support for LGBT equality and dozens of others have been detained, investigated or threatened.

As the bill moved toward passage, anti-LGBT sentiment ramped up with it. Politicians routinely compare LGBT citizens to pedophiles and major state media figures have made outrageous comments about burning the hearts of gay people who die in car accidents because they are unfit to be transplanted. LGBT teachers, organizations and advocates have been placed under surveillance by both the state and vigilante gangs and many risk losing their jobs for speaking out about LGBT rights.

Perhaps most disturbing of all, the crackdown may not be over. Since the propaganda law was enacted, politicians and church leaders have proposed revoking parental rights from LGBT parents, recriminalizing same-sex relations and amending the Russian

Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman. A chilling climate of fear has descended on LGBT organizations in Russia as well. Authorities can name an organization a “foreign agent” at any time and the government pressures banks and landlords to refuse to serve LGBT groups.

The following report details the severe impact that last year’s anti-LGBT laws have had and continue to have on the Russian LGBT community and its allies.

# WHAT ANTI-LGBT LAWS HAVE PASSED IN RUSSIA?

Beginning in 2006, ten Russian regions passed laws banning “homosexual propaganda” to minors. In June 2013, a federal statute was passed making it illegal to spread “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” among minors. The law punishes fines of up to 5,000 rubles (\$150) for individuals who violate the law and even higher fines for public officials or media outlets. Foreigners found in violation can be deported, detained or fined. Six months after the law was enacted, Russia’s highest court ruled that it was constitutional.

Just days after signing the propaganda law, Putin signed another anti-LGBT bill banning adoption of Russian orphans by same-sex couples or by single people or unmarried couples in countries that permit same-sex marriage. The law officially went into effect during the Olympic games in February 2014. Not content with these laws, Duma member Alexsei Zhuravlyov introduced a bill in September 2013 to revoke LGBT parents’ rights to their own children. Although the bill was withdrawn for revision a month later, activists remain concerned that it could be reintroduced at any moment.

**2006 – 2013** | Kaliningrad, St. Petersburg, Ryazan, Arkhangelsk, Kostroma, Magadan, Samara, Bashkortostan, Krasnodar and Novosibirsk pass anti-propaganda laws.  
*Gay Star News, 1/25/13*

**February 13, 2014** | Russian authorities issue guidelines for the official enactment of the adoption law.  
*RIA Novosti, 2/13/14*

**June 11, 2013** | Russia’s parliament unanimously passes a federal law banning gay “propaganda.”  
*The Guardian, 6/11/13*

**June 29, 2013** Putin signs the “propaganda” ban into law.  
*Bloomberg, 6/30/13*

**July 3, 2013** | Putin signs legislation banning adoption by same-sex couples or unmarried people from countries that allow same-sex marriage.  
*Associated Press, 7/3/13*

**September 2013** | Duma member Alexsei Zhuravlyov introduces legislation that would allow authorities to take custody of children if one or both of their parents are gay.  
*New York Times, 9/5/13*

**October 2013** | Zhuravlyov’s bill was temporarily withdrawn for revisions.  
*RIA Novosti, 10/19/13*

**December 4, 2013** | The Russian Constitutional Court rules that the ban on “gay propaganda” is constitutional.  
*RIA Novosti, 12/4/13*

# A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED AND FINED FOR VIOLATING THE PROPAGANDA BAN

Since passage of the propaganda law, a growing number of individuals have been investigated and fined under the law. Even when charges are eventually dropped, the law has had a severe chilling effect on free and open expression in Russia. No violation is too small or silly to escape notice of the anti-LGBT crusaders, and targets for investigation have included children's books, a ninth grade girl and video games.

**December 2013** | The first fines are handed down for violating the propaganda law. Nikolai Alexeyev, the founder of the Moscow Gay Pride Movement, and his fellow activist Yaroslav Yevtushenko were each fined 4,000 rubles for picketing in front of a children's library in Arkhangelsk, holding banners that read: "Gay propaganda does not exist. People do not become gay, people are born gay."  
*Moscow Times, 12/4/13*

**December 2013** | Dmitri Isakov becomes the third person convicted of violating the propaganda ban. Isakov was punished for standing in the central square in Kazan with a sign reading "Being gay and loving gays is normal. Beating gays and killing gays is criminal."  
*New York Times, 12/19/13*

**December 2013** | A toy store is investigated for carrying a game that prosecutors say promotes homosexual behavior.  
*RIA Novosti, 12/13/13*

**February 2014** | Prosecutors in Ulianovsk investigate a children's book called "Families: Ours and Theirs" and force its removal from library shelves.  
*RIA Novosti, 2/6/14*

**February 2014** | Maria, a ninth grade student is investigated for violating the propaganda law by telling her classmates that she is a lesbian. She was reported to the authorities by an anti-LGBT activist who had never met her. After a media furor, the government-run commission for the protection of children's rights dropped the complaint against her, but she fears that it may be re-opened at any time.  
*Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, 2/3/14; Associated Press, 2/6/14*

**February 2014** | Yelena Klimova, the proprietor of a social media support group for LGBT teenagers is charged with violating the propaganda ban. Klimova was eventually acquitted of the charges and Children 404 is allowed to remain open.  
*Agence France Presse, 2/5/14; Gay Star News, 2/21/14*

**February 2014** | A Russian elementary school is accused of gay propaganda after children gave Valentine's Day cards to other students of the same gender.  
*Gay Star News, 2/14/14*

**May 2014** | Prosecutors opened an investigation into another children's book called "Our Family And Others" which contains positive references to same-sex couples.  
*Pink News, 5/23/14*

**May 2014** | A Sims video game is assigned an 18+ rating, prohibiting sales to children, because it allows the portrayal of same-sex families.  
*Ars Technica, 5/9/14*

# IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM REQUESTS ARE UP

The number of Russians seeking asylum in the United States jumped by 16 percent overall in 2013 and Immigration Equality reported a record number of asylum cases specifically opened by LGBT Russians fleeing persecution in their homeland. The exodus of

LGBT Russians was also reported by immigration groups in European countries and included prominent journalists, artists and professionals.

## **Georg Budny**

Gay Russian doctor Georg Budny announced he would seek asylum in the U.S. because he feared for his safety and “the fact that I will never be allowed to become a productive and successful member of society in my home country.”

*Washington Blade, 2/9/14*

## **Oleg Dussaev And Dmitriy Stepanov**

Well-known musicians and journalists Oleg Dussaev and Dmitriy Stepanov fled Moscow for New York after being beaten up, harassed and intimidated by anti-gay vigilantes.

*Hufngton Post, 1/11/14*

## **Masha Gessen**

Internationally renowned journalist Masha Gessen moved to New York with her partner and children to protect her family.

*Masha Gessen Column, The Guardian, 8/10/13*

## **Arkady Gyngazov**

The former manager of Moscow's biggest gay club announced that he would seek asylum in the United States after repeated violent attacks on his former workplace.

*Washington Blade, 1/9/14*

## **Viacheslav Revin**

LGBT activist Viacheslav Revin applied for political asylum in the U.S. after receiving threats of being beaten by police if he returned to Russia.

*Buzzfeed, 11/14/13*

# GAY CLUBS AND GROUPS IN RUSSIA HAVE BEEN VIOLENTLY ATTACKED AND TARGETED BY POLICE

Gay clubs, groups and parades have been ferociously targeted. These attacks come from dangerous gangs of anti-LGBT thugs and from the authorities, who deny permits for Pride parades and turn a blind eye to violent attacks on LGBT citizens.

**June 2013** | The same day that Putin signed the national propaganda ban, dozens of people were arrested at a St. Petersburg Pride rally for violating that city's ban on gay "propaganda."  
*Associated Press, 6/29/13*

**November 2013** | Unknown assailants in masks forced their way into the offices of an LGBT organization in St. Petersburg while an event was taking place and opened fire with air rifles. A young man was hospitalized with serious injuries after being shot in the eye. The likely perpetrators bragged about planning the attack to an American journalist but were never prosecuted.  
*RIA Novosti, 11/4/13; GQ, February 2014*

**November 2013** | The Side By Side LGBT film festival in Saint Petersburg was disrupted by multiple bomb threats.  
*Calvert Journal, 11/25/13*

**February 2014** | Days after the closing ceremonies of the Sochi Olympics, bomb threats disrupted the opening ceremonies of first-ever Russian Open Games.  
*ABC News, 2/26/14*

**March 2014** | LGBT rights campaigners at an International Women's Day rally in Moscow were pelted with eggs. Police demanded that the activists remove their rainbow flags from the rally and armed thugs attempted to burn down the group's placards.  
*Pink News, 3/9/14*

**March 2014** | After enduring months of violent attacks, Moscow's largest gay club shuts down. Beginning in November 2013, Central Station was repeatedly invaded by gunmen, attacked with poison gas and looted by thugs who stole the club's utility equipment. Police failed to identify the organizers of the attacks and refused to open a criminal investigation. The former manager of the club eventually fled to the United States to seek asylum.  
*ABC News, 3/27/14; Moscow Times, 12/15/13; LifeNews (Translated), 11/23/13; BuzzFeed, 11/17/13*

- In May 2014, Central Station announced that it would re-open in a new location.  
*Calvert Journal, 5/28/14*

**May 2014** | Hooligans attempted to disrupt "Rainbow Flashmobs" in 13 cities around Russia to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, but no major confrontations were reported. At least one participant in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia event in Murmansk was arrested and charged with "propaganda of homosexuality."  
*Buzzfeed, 5/17/14*

**May 2014** | For the ninth consecutive year, authorities in Moscow banned a Pride Parade. Moscow authorities also refused to allow a march in support of Eurovision winner, drag queen Conchita Wurst.  
*Moscow Times, 5/20/14; Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, 5/15/14*

- After an official Pride march was banned, two people were arrested for holding an unsanctioned Pride celebration in Moscow.  
*Associated Press, 5/31/14*

**May 2014** | The Kostroma region banned a Pride march, claiming the city's drainage system could not cope with large numbers of people on the streets. The authorities permitted an International Children's Day celebration to occur on the same day and denied requests from LGBT groups to find another location for the Pride event.  
*Gay Star News, 5/30/14*

# LGBT PEOPLE HAVE FACED HORRIFIC VIOLENCE

Individual LGBT Russians have also faced an increase in violent attacks in the last year. Human Rights Watch reported that after the passage of the anti-propaganda law in June 2013, LGBT Russians faced increased “homophobic rhetoric in state media” and a rise in violent attacks. Vigilante groups operate with near impunity on social media luring gay men into meetings and then attacking them on video, pro-LGBT rights protests are often targeted by egg-throwing mobs and at least two men

were killed for their sexual orientation in the summer of 2013 alone. Police often dismiss complaints about anti-LGBT violence or refuse to investigate. When such crimes are prosecuted, the perpetrators often receive light sentences. So intense is the violence and antipathy that non-LGBT Russians have been attacked merely for “looking gay” in the eyes of the thugs.

**January 2013** | Protesters demonstrating against the proposed propaganda law were pelted with rotten eggs and violently assaulted outside the Russian parliament building.  
*Reuters, 5/13/13*

**June 2013** | Shortly before Putin signed the national ban on LGBT propaganda, three men in Kamchatka murdered a 29-year-old man and set his body on fire in his car because he was gay. This was the second homophobic killing in less than a month. The perpetrators of this crime were eventually charged with murders, but prosecutors declined to press hate crime charges.  
*Reuters, 6/3/13; Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, 2/3/14*

**Summer 2013** | A man in the Novgorod region knifed a doctor in the back after he proposed that the two men have sex. The assailant was eventually convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to nine years in prison.  
*RIA Novosti, 2/26/14*

**August 2013** | A lone LGBT activist was assaulted by a group of former paratroopers in St. Petersburg for holding a rainbow banner that read “This is propagating tolerance.” Krill Kalugin was shoved to the ground while the men shouted “faggot” at him.  
*Salon, 8/2/13*

**August 2013** | A birthday party at a Moscow bar was violently attacked by thugs because the partygoers “looked gay.”  
*Moscow Times, 8/5/13*

**March 2014** | Police suspended an investigation into an attack on the La Sky LGBT Center in St. Petersburg that left one victim blind in one eye. The authorities also rejected the victims’ request to classify the attack as a hate crime, referring to it instead as “hooliganism.”  
*Queer Russia, 3/10/14*

**March 2014** | Thugs attacked a St. Patrick’s Day flashmob in Irkutsk because they mistakenly believed the kilt-wearing participants were gay.  
*Pink News, 3/24/14*

# TEACHERS HAVE BEEN FIRED AND HARASSED FOR EXPRESSING PRO-LGBT SENTIMENTS

Shortly after the passage of the anti-propaganda law, an online witch-hunt for LGBT teachers and their allies began. A group named "Parents of Russia" claims to have 1,500 activists online searching for pro-LGBT teachers and another group claiming connections to the

authorities has offered a \$150 reward for information about gay teachers. As a result, at least six teachers and college professors have been placed under investigation or fired from their jobs for their advocacy.

## **Olga Bakhayeva**

A bisexual history teacher, Olga Bakhayeva, was pressured into resigning from her job in the city of Magnitogorsk following a stream of hate mail and complaints.  
*Radio Free Europe, 11/11/13*

## **Yekaterina Bogach**

Yekatarina Bogach, an award-winning Spanish language instructor in St. Petersburg was placed under investigation after a group of local residents filed a complaint claiming that her participation in LGBT rights rallies as an ally with the Alliance of Heterosexuals for LGBT Equality made her unfit to teach children.  
*Radio Free Europe, 11/11/13*

## **Oleg Klunokov**

Professor Oleg Klunokov, who was also an LGBT advocate with Rakurs in Arkhangelsk, was asked for his resignation after state security officers raided his university offices for evidence of his meetings with elected officials and LGBT advocates on a trip to the U.S. in November 2013.  
*Washington Blade, 4/17/14*

## **Ilya Kolmanovsky**

Moscow biology teacher and journalist Ilya Kolmanovsky was fired from his job after taking part in a demonstration against the propaganda law. Kolmanovsky was able to regain his position after his firing sparked an outcry from fellow journalists.  
*Radio Free Europe, 11/11/13*

## **Tatiana Vinnichenko**

Northern Federal University professor and LGBT advocate Tatiana Vinnichenko reported that her university demanded that she stop her advocacy and said she expected to be fired after returning from leave.  
*Daily Beast, 6/9/14*

## **Aleksandr Yermoshkin**

A geography teacher and LGBT advocate in Khabarovsk, Aleksandr Yermoshkin, was asked to step down after being reported by a group called the Movement Against the Propaganda of Sexual Perversion.  
*Radio Free Europe, 11/11/13*



# MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE FACED PROSECUTION FOR VIOLATING THE GAY PROPAGANDA LAW

Media outlets have also been targeted for prosecution or intimidation and they face steep fines if found in violation of the propaganda law. A major Russian LGBT site, Gay.ru, has faced multiple complaints and fears being shut down

at any moment. At least one newspaper has already been fined merely for printing the phrase “homosexuality is normal,” and a journalist was fired on the spot for revealing that he was gay during a debate on the propaganda law.

**January 2014** | A newspaper in the Khabarovsk region was fined 50,000 rubles (\$1,400) for printing an article about a local teacher who was fired because of his sexual orientation. The paper was specifically cited for running a quote from the teacher stating “My very existence is effective proof that homosexuality is normal.” *Moscow Times*, 11/14/13; *RIA Novosti*, 1/30/14

**August 2013** | American journalist Jamie Kirchick was taken off the air during an interview with Russia Today for criticizing Putin’s anti-LGBT legislation. *Washington Free Beacon*, 8/21/13

**January 2013** | During a discussion of the proposed anti-propaganda law, TV host Anton Krasovskiy revealed that he was a gay man. He was fired from his position with the network the same night. *Salon*, 8/15/13

# LGBT PEOPLE LIVE IN FEAR AS THE KREMLIN TARGETS LGBT ACTIVISTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

LGBT organizations have a Kremlin target on their backs. Rather than going through an open judicial process, authorities can now declare an organization a “foreign agent” administratively, imperiling LGBT organizations’ ability to exist. The

government has reportedly also put pressure on banks and businesses not to work with LGBT organizations. As one activist puts it, “we are being boiled in a pot,” and conditions have only worsened in the last year.

**August 2013** | Police raided the home of outspoken activist Nikolai Alexeyev. Although he was not charged with violating the propaganda law, his apartment was searched as part of an investigation into criminal libel against the bill’s author, lawmaker Elena Mizulina. *Buzzfeed, 8/30/13*

**October 2013** | A transgender woman took her own life after being fired because her employers feared they were in violation of the anti-propaganda law. Dasha Stern had been employed by a municipality in central Russia and LGBT advocates called her “the first victim of Putin’s antigay law.” *The Advocate, 10/22/13*

**October 2013** | The Russian government bugged a private strategy meeting convened by Russian LGBT activists and international human rights organizations. The recordings of the meeting were broadcast on state television as part of a program exposing the “threat to Russia” from “homosexualists who attempt to infiltrate our country.” *Buzzfeed, 11/13/13*

**December 2013** | Chair of the Russian LGBT Network, Igor Kochetkov, canceled an appearance at a Washington, DC human rights summit because of threats to his organization. *Washington Blade, 12/4/13*

**February 2014** | Multiple venues withdrew from hosting the Russian Open Games at the last minute. Organizers reported that the venues canceled under pressured by the Putin administration to do so. *Buzzfeed, 2/26/14*

# ARTISTS AND MUSICIANS HAVE FACED PUNISHMENT FOR SUPPORTING LGBT RIGHTS

Intimidation and censorship of LGBT art and music are widespread. Police have attempted to shut down screenings of LGBT films and even children's plays. This intimidation is not limited to Russian

artists. Major American acts, including Lady Gaga and Madonna, have faced investigations of their visas after criticizing the anti-propaganda laws.

**August 2013** | Lady Gaga and Madonna faced a visa investigation after denouncing anti-propaganda laws from the stage during concerns in St. Petersburg in 2012. Lady Gaga's concert promoters were eventually fined for "harming children," under a separate law from the anti-propaganda law. *ABC News, 8/4/13; Buzzfeed, 11/15/13*

**September 2013** | Pop star Selena Gomez was forced to cancel two concerts in Russia because of the ongoing investigation into Lady Gaga and Madonna's comments opposing the anti-propaganda law. *Moscow Times, 9/20/13*

**December 2013** | Gay actor Ian McKellan was warned by the British government not to travel to Russia because of the anti-propaganda law. *Associated Press, 12/10/13*

**March 2014** | Anti-LGBT campaigners demanded that prosecutors launch an investigation of the award winning film "Blue is the Warmest Color" because of its depiction of a relationship between two high school girls. *Hollywood Reporter, 3/31/14*

**April 2014** | Police attempted to shut down the premiere of a documentary film about the experiences of LGBT youth in Moscow. Shortly after the film started 10 members of a vigilante group accompanied by police entered the movie theater with posters reading "Get sodomy out of Russia" and shouted homophobic slurs at the audience. *Gay Star News, 4/24/14*

**June 2014** | A children's puppet show was banned from Russia's biggest book festival over accusations that it "promotes homosexuality." "The Soul of a Pillow" was banned because it tells the story of a friendship between a male-named pillow and a boy in kindergarten. The First Deputy Minister of Culture Vladimir Aristarkhov ruled that the play "goes against the traditional moral values of Russian culture." *Moscow Times, 6/10/14*

# ANTI-LGBT RHETORIC FROM RUSSIAN POLITICIANS AND THE STATE OWNED MEDIA HAS INTENSIFIED

In recent months, anti-LGBT rhetoric from Russian politicians and the state-owned media has intensified, with President Putin himself comparing LGBT people to pedophiles, and an official Russian diplomatic report accusing the European Union of catering to “queers.”

**November 2013** | Russia’s children’s ombudsman Pavel Astakhov called for LGBT rights supporters to be “cursed for centuries as destroyers of the family and the human race.”  
*Interfax (translated), 11/19/13*

**December 2013** | Putin appointed Dmitri Kiselyov as head of a new state-run media conglomerate. Kiselyov had recently stated on national television that homosexuals killed in car accidents should have their “hearts buried in the ground or burned” as they are unfit for transplantation into another human body.  
*Time, 12/9/13*

**December 2013** | The star of Russia’s version of “Scrubs,” called for LGBT people to be burned alive in ovens as a “danger to my children.” Ivan Okhlobytsin ranted about “gay fascism” and demanded that “faggots” be stripped of their voting rights.  
*RIA Novosti, 12/13/13*

**January 2014** | President Vladimir Putin equated LGBT people to pedophiles saying that gay visitors were welcome at the Sochi Olympics but “just leave kids alone, please.”  
*Washington Post, 1/17/14*

- Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak echoed Putin’s sentiments saying that while every adult has a right to his own sexual orientation “please do not touch the kids.”  
*Washington Post, 2/5/14*

**January 2014** | The Russian foreign ministry’s human rights commissioner released a “Report on the Human Rights Situation In The European Union” which referred to LGBT people as “queers” and accused the EU of trying to impose an “alien” view of homosexuality onto Russian culture.  
*Reuters, 1/23/14*

**February 2014** | The Russian embassy to the United Kingdom issued a scathing attack on a British documentary detailing violent attacks against Russian LGBT people, claiming that it was “hate propaganda.”  
*The Telegraph, 2/11/14*

**June 2014** | Russian legislator Vitaly Milonov responded to reports that the British embassy in Moscow would perform same-sex weddings for British nationals by saying “The British consulates can do whatever they want. They can marry monkeys and register perverts for all I care.”  
*Moscow Times, 6/4/14*

# POLITICIANS DOWNPLAY THE IMPACT OF ANTI- LGBT LAWS IN RUSSIA

While ramping up their virulent anti-LGBT rhetoric, Russian politicians have at the same time downplayed the actual impact of the laws they have passed, claiming

that LGBT citizens are not discriminated against and that very few people have been affected by the new laws.

**June 2013** | Days before signing the anti-propaganda bill into law, Putin claimed that LGBT people “are full fledged members of our society and not being discriminated against in anyway.” He claimed the law was “not about imposing some sort of sanctions on homosexuality... It’s about protecting children from such information.”

*RIA Novosti, 6/25/13*

**January 2014** | President Vladimir Putin claimed in an American interview that LGBT people in Russia “cannot feel like second-rate humans in this country because they are not discriminated against in any way.”

*“This Week,” ABC, 1/19/14*

**January 2014** | Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev told CNN’s Christian Amanpour that he has “heard virtually nothing about this law being applied in practice. There is a lot of talk, but the law has not been applied anywhere.”

*“Amanpour,” CNN, 1/22/14*

- Medvedev added, “I haven’t heard of a single representative of Russia’s sexual minorities complaining, not even on the internet, about their rights being abused.”

*“Amanpour,” CNN, 1/22/14;*

*VIDEO*

# RUSSIAN ANTI-LGBT LAWS WERE IN FULL EFFECT DURING THE OLYMPICS AND OVER A DOZEN PROTESTERS WERE ARRESTED OVER THE COURSE OF THE GAMES

Despite Putin's assurances that the Olympic games would be "held in full compliance with the Olympic Charter, without any discrimination on any basis," LGBT activists and spectators faced the prospect of arrest at the games. Dissidents were barred from obtaining tickets to the games as spectators,

and over a dozen protesters across the country were arrested on the night of the opening ceremony. The propaganda law also had a chilling effect on the city of Sochi's gay scene and many LGBT people from Sochi fled the country before the games could even begin.

**November 2013** | Duma member Alexei Zhuravlev asked the state media regulator to investigate a coloring book depicting same-sex families that activists planned to distribute at the Olympics.

*Izvestia (translated), 11/20/13*

**December 8, 2013** | Russia's Interior Ministry, which controls the police force, confirmed that anyone who "harbors a nontraditional sexual orientation" would be subject to the anti-propaganda law during the Olympics and warned against anyone committing a "provocation" during the games.

*RIA Novosti, 12/8/13*

**January 18, 2014** | A gay Russian protestor was detained for unfurling a rainbow flag during the Olympic torch relay in his hometown of Voronezh.

*Associated Press, 1/18/14*

**February 4, 2014** | The honorary "Mayor" of the Olympic village, Svetlana Zhurova, appealed to Olympians and spectators not to use the games as a platform to protest the treatment of LGBT people in Russia.

*Reuters, 2/4/14*

**February 7, 2014** | Fourteen pro-LGBT protestors were arrested in St. Petersburg and Moscow the night of the Olympic opening ceremonies. One of the demonstrators reported that police assaulted him and spat on him. Other activists reported that they were questioned for hours and charged with organizing an unauthorized public assembly.

*Associated Press, 2/7/14; Washington Post, 2/16/14*

**February 17, 2014** | A transgender former member of the Italian parliament was detained twice for dressing in a rainbow colored outfit and proclaiming "It's OK to be gay" near Olympic venues.

*Associated Press, 2/17/14*

# RUSSIA'S ANTI-LGBT CRACKDOWN COULD GET EVEN WORSE

After Russia annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea in the spring of 2014, LGBT people living there feared the imposition of harsh anti-gay laws, and indeed, one of the first acts to happen under Russian rule was the cancellation of a Pride parade because of the anti-propaganda law.

As if the events of the past 12 months aren't bad enough, the situation could still get worse. More than three quarters of Russians feel that homosexuality

is unacceptable and support may be growing for even more anti-LGBT legislation. Activists have long feared that a bill to terminate parental rights of LGBT parents may be re-introduced now that the media attention of the Olympics has moved on. Other proposals from the legislature and the powerful Orthodox church include the creation of a national morality police and the recriminalization of same-sex relations.

## January 2014 | Ivan

Okhlobystin, the star of the Russian version of "Scrubs," penned an open letter to Vladimir Putin urging him to revive a Soviet-era law that criminalized homosexual relations.

*Moscow Times, 1/11/14*

## January 2014 | Vsevolod

Chaplin, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church's department for relations with society called for a nationwide referendum on criminalizing male homosexuality. A few days later, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, asked for a state-level ban on attempts to legalize same-sex marriage.

*Russia Today, 1/10/14; RT, 1/28/14*

## April 14, 2014 | Crimea

banned a planned Pride march after the Russian anti-propaganda law was put into effect following the territory's annexation.

*Gay Star News, 4/14/14*

## April 2014 | Duma member

Vitaly Milonov proposed the creation of a national morality police to fine people who violate "traditional values." Milonov also proposed banning gay clubs and social media pages to "rid the country of evil."

*Agence France Presse, 4/2/14; Gay Star News, 4/15/14*

## April 2014 | The Russian

Pensioners' Party began a signature drive to amend the Constitution to define marriage as "a voluntary union between a man and a woman."

*Russia Today, 4/2/14*

## April 2014 | Duma member

Roman Khudyakov proposed legislation to create a fingerprint database of all Russians and Foreign visitors with HIV. Lawmakers followed this proposal with a bill to ban all advertising for condoms.

*Russia Today, 4/16/14; Moscow Times, 5/14/14*



HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
CAMPAIGN  
FOUNDATION™

**Human Rights Campaign Foundation**

1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036-3212  
[www.hrc.org/foundation](http://www.hrc.org/foundation)