

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	344
Land:	Rusland
Kilde:	ILGA
Titel:	Annual Review 2014 – Russia
Udgivet:	13. maj 2014
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	3. september 2014



Russia



Intense concerted efforts to limit the human rights of LGBTI people reached an all-time high. The executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government; religious leaders; TV, radio, print and online media; federal, regional and local politicians; and various civil society actors including parent groups or violent nationalists united in restricting the rights of LGBTI people and their supporters (particularly their right to freedom of assembly, expression and association), and framing LGBTI individuals as outcasts. The adoption of a federal 'anti-propaganda' law contributed to further polarise a country already hostile to its civil society (e.g. most human rights organisations or political opponents to the regime in place), and led to an increase in violence – including inhumane and degrading treatment – against LGBTI individuals and the supporters of their rights. These developments attracted rare levels of international condemnation. This took place in the context of a widespread crackdown on human rights and the rule of law by the State, notably with the harsh implementation of the 'foreign agents' law voted in 2012. Altogether, these developments have led to a climate of impunity, in which human rights violations against LGBTI individuals go unpunished.

Bias-motivated speech

- Politicians at the highest levels opposed LGBTI people's human rights to 'traditional values', 'the family' and loyalty to Russian nation and culture throughout the year. In September, President Vladimir Putin said: "This model [same-sex partnerships] is aggressively trying to be imposed all over the world and I am convinced this is a direct path to degradation and [...] a profound demographic and moral crisis." Foreign Ministry Special Representative for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law Konstantin Dolgov made similar remarks in September; so did Ombudsman for Children's Rights Pavel Astakhov and Constitutional Court Chairman Valery Zorkin in November; State Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman Alexeyev Pushkov in December (for whom the West is "openly imposing a new type of behaviour to other countries and societies"); and numerous law-makers at federal and state levels. Several media outlets echoed these views; for instance, the Moscow Times Opinion Editor denounced "an insidious Western conspiracy to propagandise homosexuality and corrupt Russia's fundamental moral and spiritual values". However, President Vladimir Putin also issued conciliatory statements ("We must not create xenophobia in the society on any basis towards anyone, including people of non-traditional sexual orientation", in November), clearly at odds with the government's actions, laws and policies.
- In September, St Petersburg local MP Vitaly Milonov (author of the local 'anti-propaganda' law) arrived with several nationalist activists to disturb the Queer Culture Festival's opening ceremony. The local MP shouted homophobic and nationalist slurs at volunteers and attendees, calling them "animals". Two activists submitted an administrative complaint to the General Prosecutor's Office for discrimination and insults. The General Prosecutor's Office replied that the aggressor enjoyed parliamentary immunity.
- In November, a local St Petersburg newspaper interviewed local MP Vitaly Milonov following a homophobic attack targetting the office of an LGBT

organisation. He declared that LGBT people were "sick and perverted", while homosexuality was "as disgusting and detestable as murder". He stated that "if a foreign agent openly insult[ed] [his] family, as a true Russian person [he would] kick them". Activists asked in vain that Mr Milonov be prosecuted for homophobic hate speech.

Bias-motivated violence

Violence at Pride or related events

- In January, activists planning a demonstration in Voronezh against the draft federal 'anti-propaganda' law received death threats, and asked for police protection. The ten activists who went to demonstrate were met by a large crowd of counter-protesters, some masked. They attacked and injured several activists; police at the scene didn't intervene. Authorities launched an investigation, but only one perpetrator was sentenced to two months of community service for 'hooliganism'. Organisers lodged a complaint against the police for failing to protect them, but in October the Voronezh Central District Court rejected their case.
- In June, between 200 and 300 nationalist counter-demonstrators beat up and threw stones and smoke bombs at 50-60 St Petersburg Pride participants. Even though the municipality had authorised the event, large numbers of riot police failed to prevent the violence. The police said a young person in the distance had seen a rainbow flag, explaining that constituted "homosexual propaganda". Most participants were then arrested and charged on flimsy grounds. All activists were later found not guilty by district courts. Seven of them had to be hospitalised by ambulance, including four who were violently beaten up by ten aggressors under journalists' cameras. Despite LGBT NGO Coming Out providing legal defence, no investigation had been launched by the end of the year.
- In June, July and August, LGBTI activists holding one-person pickets in St Petersburg were attacked but no investigations were launched.

- In November, a St Petersburg court handed down a suspended one-year sentence to an Orthodox activist who had sprayed mace at an LGBTI activist during a May rally. He was convicted of 'hooliganism', but the judge didn't consider there was a bias motive.

Homophobic murders

- The murderers of Vladislav Tornovoi, a 23-year-old man beaten to death in the Caucasian city of Volgograd in May, said they killed the victim because he was gay. According to NGO LGBT Assistance, attackers said the victim's 'provoking behaviour' (investigators explained the man had told his murderers he was gay as they drank together) had wounded their 'patriotism'. According to investigators, the two men knocked him to the ground, trampled him breaking multiple ribs, sodomised him with a beer bottle, and killed him by dumping a 20-kilogram stone onto his head eight times. The police arrested the two men, and confirmed the killing was directly caused by the victim's sexual orientation. But despite this rare admission, prosecutors didn't invoke a bias motive.
- In June, another gay man was slain in the eastern peninsula of Kamchatka. Three men stabbed and trampled the victim to death. The men were arrested, and investigators acknowledged the homophobic nature of the crime.

Violence at private events or locations

- In November, attackers launched teargas canisters into Moscow gay club Central Station in the presence of about 500 revellers. Another night in the same month, two armed men came to the club and fired two bullets at the closed door after bouncers refused letting them in. The attack may have been linked to a dispute about the ownership of the premises. No investigation had started by the end of the year.
- The same month, two masked men with stun guns and baseball bats attacked a closed, unpublicised event for LGBTI people in the St

Petersburg office of an HIV/AIDS NGO. Two participants were injured, including one severely. The police responded to organisers' calls but left again, saying that they hadn't seen any evidence of a crime. An investigation was launched on the basis of 'hooliganism', omitting any bias motive.

Employment

- A new online group, Parents of Russia, claimed 1,500 activists searched for LGBTI teachers, or heterosexual teachers supportive of LGBTI people's rights. The group launched a campaign in December, financially rewarding any information leading to such teachers and promising to work towards their dismissal. At least three confirmed cases were linked to the group: Olga B., a schoolteacher in Magnitogorsk, was forced to resign and subjected to an investigation because information she had posted on being lesbian or bisexual herself was reportedly seen by a minor; she reported being unable to find a new job. Alex Y., a Khabarovsk teacher, had previously been active in LGBTI organisations but witnessed increasing hostility after the 'anti-propaganda' law passed. He was attacked while leaving work in August, and was sacked under pressure from the Ministry of Education. He was fired from another teaching position, and also reported being unable to find another job. Ekaterina B., who identifies as heterosexual and supports LGBTI organisations, was denounced to the St Petersburg Education Committee for "promoting homosexuality among minors". After investigating the case, the school administration cleared her of suspicions.
- Two journalists came out and subsequently lost their job. In February, TV anchor Anton Krasovsky came out on live television; he later said his corporate accounts, e-mail account, and personal page on Kontr TV's website had been deleted within 24 hours, and he was asked to leave. Online footage of his coming-out was also deleted. In August, a manager at Rossiya Kultura Channel came out on Facebook; his employer refused to extend his contract days later.

Equality and non-discrimination

- In 2013, Russia was reviewed during the UN Universal Periodic Review process and rejected all recommendations related to the repeal of 'anti-propaganda' laws, and to preventing arbitrary limitations to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. However, Russia accepted preventing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and agreed it would take "measures to ensure the effective exercise of the rights to peaceful association and assembly of the LGBT community".

Family

- The government gradually moved to restrict all adoptions of Russian children in countries allowing same-sex couples to adopt. Konstantin Dolgov, Human Rights Envoy at the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry, warned in February that adoptions would be restricted if British parliamentarians legalised equal marriage (they did in July). He also demanded that a Russian baby adopted in 2007 by a US lesbian couple be returned. The same month, MP Yekaterina Lakhova suggested that if France adopted marriage equality (it did in May), the bilateral agreement on adoptions should be revised. In March, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced his services were setting up a database of all Russian children adopted by foreign couples, and President Vladimir Putin instructed his government to prepare amendments to prohibit foreign same-sex couples from adopting Russian children. Sweden reported in October that Russian authorities had halted all adoptions because the country allowed same-sex couples to adopt; the Spanish government also said 128 Spanish families (omitting whether they were same-sex or different-sex couples) with near-completed adoptions saw their files "scrapped by the Russians".
- In September, the State Duma's Family, Women and Children Committee Chair Alexey Zhuravliov registered a bill that would allow local authorities to strip same-sex couples of parenting rights over their children. He withdrew the bill a month later, but pledged he would put a new version forward.

Foreign policy

- Russia continued promoting the concept of 'traditional values' at the UN Human Rights Council (see **United Nations**).

Freedom of assembly

- In April, LGBTI NGO Coming Out sent the Russian Ombudsman and St Petersburg Regional Ombudsman an analysis of about 30 applications to hold LGBT-related public events between 2008 and 2013. Only two of them were ever approved, and the rest were dismissed for a number of improbable or illogical reasons: other events allegedly already planned at similar times and locations; logistical grounds, such as high pedestrian traffic or snow removal at the location; or procedural grounds (referring to a "person responsible for the picket" instead of the "organiser" in the application). St Petersburg authorities have proposed remote and deserted alternative locations (e.g. a suburb two hours away, reachable via three buses); examined activists' requests for long periods, making the organisation of the events impossible; argued the events were "provocative", or amounted to the "propaganda of sodomy, lesbianism, bisexuality and transgenerence to minors". Most refusals were challenged in court in vain, and the St Petersburg City Court ruled twice that LGBT-related pickets couldn't take place in the city centre because they would harm children's moral and spiritual development.
- Despite a hostile climate, the Side by Side LGBT Film Festival took place in Moscow in April and St Petersburg in November. The latter edition was repeatedly disrupted by five anonymous fake bomb threats.
- In May, Council of Europe Secretary-General Thorbjørn Jagland reminded Russian authorities of their obligation to ensure that "LGBT people can express their views and [hold] demonstrations".
- 150 supporters of LGBTI people's rights gathered in St Petersburg in May to commemorate victims of homophobic crimes. Several non-LGBTI NGOs joined in solidarity. The same number of opponents was kept at bay by police fencing, shouting insults and hurling objects

with St Petersburg MP Vitaly Milonov, sponsor of the local 'anti-propaganda' law, among them. Police later evacuated participants in buses and no one was injured.

- In October, the St Petersburg municipality authorised a demonstration on Coming Out Day, but failed to provide adequate police protection or set up protective fencing. Cossack, Orthodox and nationalist counter-protesters gathered at the site before the event, and violently attacked 20 participants. Police detained 67 people, demonstrators and counter-protesters alike. 15 activists were charged on flimsy grounds ("disorderly conduct"), and by the end of the year only one had been found guilty in court, and sentenced to an administrative fine.

Effects of the 'anti-propaganda' law

- The federal 'anti-propaganda' law was cited in administrative decisions outlawing at least 70 demonstrations which Moscow Pride organisers sought to organise between October and December. Moscow authorities justified some of the bans by the fact that the 'anti-propaganda' law could have been breached, had minors been present. District courts upheld these decisions. Individual protests were also punished under the same law: two activists holding a sign "Gay propaganda doesn't exist. People don't become gay, people are born gay" outside a children's library in Arkhangelsk were found guilty of 'propaganda', and fined RUB 4,000 (EUR 90) each in December.
- The leaders of NGO Russian-German Exchange were summoned to the General Prosecutor's Office in St Petersburg following complaints from parents of teenagers who had taken part in a human rights project.
- The project managers argued their activities were legal, and later received a warning notice to respect the 'anti-propaganda' law.

Breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- The UN Human Rights Committee, tasked with monitoring the application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which

Russia is a party, issued its views on a case brought against Russia in 2009. In its *Communication no. 1873/2009* issued in October, the Committee found that Russia had breached its obligations under article 21 of the ICCPR on the right to peaceful assembly. The applicant, activist Nikolai Alekseev, had requested to organise a picket in favour of LGBTI people's rights in Moscow in 2008. Authorities refused, citing a potential "negative reaction in society", and arguing that it could lead to "group violations of public order which can be dangerous to its participants". The Committee found Russia's arguments insufficient, since it had the obligation "to protect the author in the exercise of his rights under the Covenant, and not to assist in suppressing them." The Committee concluded that the restriction "was not necessary in a democratic society in the interest of public safety", and violated article 21 of the ICCPR. The Committee gave Russia 6 months to conform to its views.

Freedom of association

- Human Rights Watch reported that in March, the federal government launched a campaign under the 'foreign agents' law voted in 2012 to inspect "thousands" of NGOs suspected of acting for foreign political interests. General human rights organisations and youth, environmental and pro-democracy organisations were targeted. Those later convicted included Coming Out and the Side by Side Film Festival, two LGBTI NGOs based in St Petersburg. Coming Out was accused of engaging in political activities (because it had criticised the 'anti-propaganda' law, and said it was in favour of love and acceptance) while receiving foreign funding. At the trial in June, over 30 nationalist and Orthodox activists blocked the association's lawyer and supporters from entering the courtroom. The judge allowed the lawyer and one supporter in, ruled that the organisation had breached the 'foreign agents' law, and fined it RUB 500,000 (EUR 11,060) and its director RUB 300,000 (EUR 6,630). Both the organisation and its director appealed, and the

appeals court later invalidated both cases on procedural grounds. For its part, the Side by Side LGBT Film Festival was accused of taking part in political activities while receiving foreign funding, even though the activities in question took place in 2011 – well before the ‘foreign agents’ law. The organisation was initially fined RUB 500,000 (EUR 11,060), later reduced by the appeals court to RUB 400,000 (EUR 8,850), and finally annulled for procedural vice. The director of Side by Side was also fined RUB 300,000 (EUR 6,630), before seeing her condemnation annulled on the same grounds. In November, the prosecutor opened a new civil case against Coming Out, arguing its failure to register as ‘foreign agent’ harmed “an undetermined group of people”.

Freedom of expression

Regional ‘anti-propaganda’ law in Kaliningrad

- In January, Kaliningrad became the tenth region to adopt a law against the ‘propaganda of homosexuality’. The law foresees fines between RUB 3,000 (EUR 70) for individuals and RUB 1m for organisations (EUR 22,170), and differs from similar laws in that it outlaws the ‘propaganda of homosexuality’ among adults too.

Adoption of a federal ‘anti-propaganda’ law

- In June, the Federal Parliament (the Duma) adopted a nationwide ‘anti-propaganda’ law, which makes it an offense to promote or produce ‘propaganda’ for ‘non-traditional sexual relations’ – a euphemism referring to the relationships of LGBT persons – , and the idea that they are normal or equal to heterosexual relationships. The federal law *On the introduction of amendments to article 5 of the Federal law "On the protection of children from information harmful to their health and development" and diverse legislative acts of the Russian Federation aimed at protecting children from information which propagandises the rejection of traditional family values (#135-FZ)* foresees fines of up to RUB 5,000 (EUR 110) for individuals, RUB 50,000 (EUR 1,100) for public officials, and RUB 1m (EUR 22,180) for

organisations or businesses, which may also be forced to cease operations for up to three months. Foreigners may be fined up to RUB 100,000 (EUR 2,220), detained for up to 15 days, and deported. Russian citizens who ‘promote non-traditional relations’ online or in the media may be fined the same amount. The Duma adopted the proposal with near-unanimous support at first reading in January (388 for, 1 against, 1 abstention), and unanimous support at second and final reading in June (436 for, none against, 1 abstention). President Vladimir Putin signed the bill into law in June. Similar laws already existed in ten Russian regions (Ryazan since 2006; Arkhangelsk since 2011; Kostroma, St Petersburg, Magadan, Krasnodar, Samara, Novosibirsk and Bashkortostan since 2012; and Kaliningrad since January).

International condemnation of the federal ‘anti-propaganda’ law

- **NATIONAL LEADERS** Heads of States, government leaders and ministers (including from Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States) condemned the law, sometimes sternly. Ireland recommended to its gay, lesbian and bisexual nationals to exercise caution when travelling to Russia.
- **UN** In February, UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression, on human rights defenders, on cultural rights and on the right to health issued a joint statement expressing concerns about the bill in their respective fields.
- **SISTER CITIES** Several of St Petersburg and Moscow’s sister cities threatened to – and some did – suspend their official twinning, including Melbourne in Australia; Milan, Venice and Turin in Italy; Reykjavik in Iceland; and Los Angeles in the United States. St Petersburg Governor Georgy Poltavchenko cancelled a planned visit to Uruguay and Argentina after local groups planned protests in solidarity with LGBTI people in Russia.
- **COUNCIL OF EUROPE** Several bodies of the Council of Europe condemned the federal law. In June,

Secretary-General Thorbjørn Jagland publicly called on the Duma to reject the proposal (he had previously written to the Speaker in private).

- In September, the Committee of Ministers adopted a decision criticising Russia for failing to implement European Court of Human Rights case-law, and asking Russia to explain how it will implement the 2010 ruling in *Alekseyev v. Russia* (applications nos. 4916/07, 25924/08 and 14599/09), which told Russia to allow and protect Pride events. The Committee of Ministers expressed worries that the 'anti-propaganda' law would run contrary to that judgment, and asked Russia to explain how it wouldn't.

- In January, Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) General Rapporteur on the rights of LGBT people Håkon Haugli MP condemned the bill as "an attempt to curtail fundamental freedoms, on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity". PACE standing co-rapporteur for Russia Andreas Gross also condemned the bill in February; and during an October hearing, the Assembly asked Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin what evidence they had relied on to conclude the 'anti-propaganda' law was necessary. The Speaker gave an evasive answer, explaining that there were gay clubs in Russia and therefore there was no discrimination.

- The Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) published a landmark and highly critical analysis of the law in June (see **Council of Europe**).

- **EUROPEAN UNION** EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton said in January that she was concerned the bill would "reinforce discrimination against LGBTI people as well as all those who support them", and called on Russia to respect international human rights law; she repeated the same concerns after the law was adopted in June. In December, Vice-President of the European Commission Viviane Reding tweeted that she would "certainly not go to Sochi [for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games] as long as minorities are treated the way they are under the current Russian legislation". In a June resolution, the European

Parliament said it was "deeply concerned at the negative consequences of the adoption of a federal law on 'homosexual propaganda', which could increase discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals". The European Parliament debated the issue again in October.

- **OTHERS** Countless global, European and Russian NGOs including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights also condemned the law on numerous occasions. (Activists organised highly visible protests during Vladimir Putin's visit to the Netherlands in April; see Netherlands.) Several world-renown actors, businesspeople and other celebrities also condemned the law.

Reactions related to the Winter Olympic Games

- NGOs and politicians worldwide expressed concerns about the law in relation with the February 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. Several petitions reached the International Olympic Committee (IOC), asking it to either review the location of the Games, or ask Russia to review its laws in light of Olympic principles. The IOC said they would "oppose in the strongest terms any move that would jeopardise" the principle "that sport is a human right and should be available to all regardless of [...] sexual orientation", but NGOs criticised the statement as weak and too general. In July, the IOC said it had "received assurances from the highest level of government in Russia that the legislation will not affect those attending or taking part in the Games". A Russian minister responded that if LGBTI athletes went "onto the street and start[ed] propagandising [sic] [their sexual orientation], then of course [they] will be held accountable". In August, the Duma's Culture, Sport and Youth Committee Deputy Chairman Igor Ananskikh stated that the government had decided "not to raise this issue during the Olympics", and to avoid applying the law to visitors and athletes. IOC President Thomas Bach met Russian LGBTI activists in Paris in November,

when they pressed him to look into the law's compatibility with Olympic principles.

Impact of the federal 'anti-propaganda' law on media

- In July, four Dutch activists undertaking a filming project for the Russia-Netherlands Year of Culture were suspected of 'conducting propaganda' in Murmansk, arrested, and interrogated for nine hours. Although original charges were dropped, authorities argued they should have applied for a political visa instead of a cultural one. They were fined for violating visa regulations, sent home, and barred from re-entering Russia for three years. In September, the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media issued a warning to TV channel EvroKino for broadcasting a French musical, *Les Chansons d'Amour*, which it said contained "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relation among minors", even though the film had been broadcast with an '18+' sign. In November, Swedish furniture company IKEA withdrew an article featuring two women in the Russian edition of their customer magazine, fearing it could have been illegal.
- In November, the Federal Media Monitoring Service issued an 'expert concept note' containing guidance on the implementation of the federal 'anti-propaganda' law. The note sets out criteria and examples for identifying instances of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations", which covers to a great extent neutral or positive mentions of LGBTI issues.

Impact of the federal 'anti-propaganda' law on foreign artists' concerts

- In September, tour organisers for US pop star Selena Gomez cancelled two Russian tour dates as the singer was denied a visa. Organisers explained that Russian authorities had tightened visa rules for musicians after Madonna and Lady Gaga made comments supporting LGBTI people's rights during concerts in 2012 and 2013.

- In December, a St Petersburg court fined the promoters of a 2012 Lady Gaga concert RUB 20,000 (EUR 440), because the statements she made that night in favour of LGBTI people's rights were 'propaganda'. The promoters have appealed the decision.

- At a concert in Moscow in December, Elton John extensively expressed his disapproval of the law between two songs.

New case before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

- The ECHR formally opened the case Bayev v. Russia (application no. 67667/09, joined by applications 44092/12 and 56717/12) by communicating questions to applicants and the Russian government in November. The case was lodged in 2009 after the main applicant, Nikolay Bayev, was fined RUB 1,500 (EUR 30) under the local Ryazan 'anti-propaganda' law for holding the signs "Homosexuality is normal" and "I am proud of my homosexuality" outside a school. He lost all appeals, and complained to the ECHR that this breached his rights to freedom of expression (article 10) and non-discrimination (article 14) guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Coming Out also submitted a case to the ECHR, complaining that St Petersburg authorities banned a picket because it could lead to "misperceptions about the social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships" among minors. The case is expected to be examined in coming years.

Ryazan region complies with United Nations decision

- The activist group GayRussia.eu/Moscow Pride, headed by Nikolay Alekseyev, reported that Ryazan's regional court cancelled earlier court verdicts finding Irina Fedotova guilty under the local 'anti-propaganda' law. (Ms Fedotova complained to the UN Human Rights Committee, who found in 2012 that the local law breached the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.) The court reportedly cancelled previous rulings to comply with the Committee's

opinion, even though the law remained in place. Activists indicated they would sue the region for moral damages.

Arkhangelsk region annuls local 'anti-propaganda' law

- In October, Arkhangelsk authorities annulled the local 'anti-propaganda' law to avoid conflict with the new federal version. Activists stressed it was usual to repeal regional laws when new federal legislation makes them redundant, and no more than a technicality.

St Petersburg local 'anti-propaganda' law declared constitutional

- The Constitutional Court responded to a case brought by activist Nikolay Alekseyev, who had argued the local 'anti-propaganda' law in St Petersburg breached the Constitution's equality guarantee. In December, the court ruled that the law respected the Constitution, since the latter protects childhood and "the family", which the 'anti-propaganda' laws seek to protect.

Human rights defenders

- In September, LGBTI NGO leaders met US President Barack Obama as part of his G20 visit in St Petersburg. Because such meetings are rare, it was interpreted as clear support of the United States for the NGOs.

Police and law enforcement

- Two Federal Duma MPs who led legislative work on the 'anti-propaganda' law, Yelena Mizulina and Yelena Batalina, complained to a prosecutor that LGBTI activist Nikolay Alekseyev had tweeted rude comments against them. In August, the prosecutor ordered an investigation which led to a warranted search of Alekseyev's apartment by the police, when officers ostensibly upturned the flat but took nothing. No further action was taken as part of this investigation.

Public opinion

- In March, polling institute Levada Center published survey results showing 70% of respondents had a

negative opinion of 'homosexuals' ('need psychological treatment': 27%; 'must be forced into treatment': 22%; 'must be isolated from society': 16%; 'should be liquidated': 5%), and 23% believing they should be 'left alone'.

- In a global survey published by Pew Research in June, Russia was the least accepting of European countries surveyed, with 74% disagreeing that "society should accept homosexuality", and only 16% agreeing.

- In November, 68% of respondents to a survey by the Levada Center approved of the federal 'anti-propaganda' law (including 43% 'definitely' approving), and 7% were against it.

Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

- The online activities of far-right groups calling themselves 'Occupy Paedophilia' (targeting adults) and 'Occupy Gerontophilia' (targeting teenagers) have increased significantly and gained exposure throughout the year. They published upwards of 400 videos online featuring acts of violence, humiliation and beatings against men identifying as gay, bisexual or possibly trans. (No videos of female victims have emerged.) Operating in at least 22 regions and having exported their activities to Ukraine and Kazakhstan, the violent vigilante groups posed as members of dating websites for gay and bisexual men, setting up meetings with their future victims to entrap them. Videos show victims under duress giving their name and address; making statements of sympathy to the far right or showing far-right signs; being interrogated and insulted; stripped partially naked; beaten up; strangled; having their hair cut or forcefully shaved; having their body or head forcefully painted on (with rainbows, or Stars of David); being urinated on; and/or forced to drink their own urine. Similar events were reported, although not to the same extent, against members of ethnic and migrant minorities. In October, 'Occupy Paedophilia' leader Maxim Martsinkevich was

charged with incitement to racial hatred. He fled Russia to avoid prosecution, but his group's activities appeared to continue. In December, 'Occupy Gerontophilia' leader Philip Razinsky was placed under house arrest and charged with incitement to hatred with violence or threat of violence against ethnic minorities; he pledged he would stop his group's activities.