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HRW – Human Rights Watch

In Turkey, Ankara Wakes Up to Court Lifting LGBTI Events Ban

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Ban Created a Climate of Fear and Stigmatized LGBTI Community

An Ankara court has finally ended a ban on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) events in Turkey (<https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/turkey>)’s capital.

The court ruled that the ban, in force since November 2017, was unlawful and restricted rights and freedoms in unconditional, vague, and disproportionate ways. The court emphasized that authorities have a duty to take security measures to protect peaceful assemblies and events – even if there are concerns that they may provoke a reaction – rather than simply ban the events.

The Ankara governor had introduced the ban under Turkey’s prolonged state of emergency that began in July 2016, following an attempted military coup. But while the state of emergency ended in July 2018 (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/20/turkey-normalizing-state-emergency>), the LGBTI ban remained. In fact, the court ruled that the ban was not justified under the state of emergency either.

While the court reached its verdict in February, it was only announced on April 19 to Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association (Kaos GL) (<https://kaosgl.org/sayfa.php?id=28102>), the group which appealed an earlier court decision refusing to annul the ban. “The state of emergency was actually continuing for us with the ban and now we’re able to breathe once again,” Kaos GL’s lawyer Kerem Dikmen told Human Rights Watch.

Such human rights victories in Turkey, especially for the LGBTI movement, are rare. “It is tragic to be thrilled that a human rights violation ended,” said Yıldız Tar of Kaos GL.

This important ruling was a long time coming and Ankara’s LGBTI movement faces challenges to repair the damage caused to it after 16 months of being outlawed. Human Rights Watch’s research (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/14/turkey-end-ankara-ban-lgbti-events>) documented how the ban created a climate of fear that hamstrung activism, and stigmatized LGBTI individuals in Turkey’s society.

The Middle East Technical University's LGBTI+ Solidarity have announced (<https://twitter.com/odtulgbti/status/1119229844422844417>) their 9th Pride March will go ahead on May 10 at the university campus. The march should take place without restrictions and should send a positive message to other LGBTI organizations in the city that it is now safe to resume public events.

Ankara's governor and other authorities should respect the court's verdict and protect LGBTI events if necessary, and demonstrate to the LGBTI community that their rights will be respected.

ecoi.net summary:

Ankara: Court lifts ban on LGBTI events



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[HRW – Human Rights Watch](#) (</en/source/11207.html>)

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