



© LGBT Youth Organization "Deystvie"

CHANGING LAWS CHANGING MINDS

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIC AND
TRANSPHOBIC HATE CRIMES IN BULGARIA

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



“[IN BULGARIA,] WE ARE VERY GOOD AT ADOPTING LAWS THAT FIT WITH EU [EUROPEAN UNION] LEGISLATION, BUT NOT SO GOOD AT IMPLEMENTING THE LAW.”

Monika, Chair of Bilitis Resource Centre, a lesbian, bisexual and transgender women's organization, April 2012

Violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people is all too common in Bulgaria. Attacks are typically carried out by young men, sometimes belonging to far-right groups, who are often identified as “neo-Nazis”, “skins” or “skinheads”. To them, anyone perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender is a potential target.

Amnesty International has been told of dozens of recent cases where LGBT individuals were beaten, raped, and in one case, murdered. Most of these crimes have not been properly investigated and have gone unpunished. Too often, incidents were simply not reported because survivors of such attacks did not think they would be taken seriously.

Bulgaria does not have specific laws covering hate crimes carried out on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The absence of legislation makes it difficult to adequately investigate or prosecute these acts; but so too do pervasive attitudes of homophobia and transphobia among police, prosecutors, the media and the government.

Amnesty International documented delays in the investigation and prosecution of two such crimes, and found that police and prosecutors often treated survivors with indifference. In many cases, these delays were compounded by a lack of understanding of how to deal with hate crimes, and deep-seated prejudices against LGBT people.

Nevertheless, many brave individuals and organizations – even at the risk of facing

harassment and other threats – continue to fight for the rights to life, security of the person, and freedom from discrimination, for all people in Bulgaria, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Amnesty International thanks the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, and members of LGBT Youth Organization “Deystvie”, Sofia Pride, Bilitis Resource Centre and individual activists for their invaluable assistance with this research. Some names have been changed to protect the identity of the people who spoke to us.

HATE CRIMES ARE A FORM OF DISCRIMINATION

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe defines hate crimes as “criminal offences, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises, or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support or membership of a group.”

Violence perpetrated against victims on the grounds of their real or perceived ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or on any other prohibited ground, constitutes a form of discrimination.

Members of a far-right group before they attacked LGBT rights activists protesting against a discriminatory local law in Pazardzhik city, March 2011. One of the placards reads: “You are not welcome in Pazardzhik”.



© LGBT Youth Organization “Deystvie”

Не сте
желани
в
Пазарджик!



Днес
извратеняци
пред общината,
а утре... пред
училищата ?!



“HOW CAN A MOTHER FEEL? I LIVE NO MORE, DO YOU KNOW THAT I DO NOT LIVE NOW?”

Hristina Stoyanova, March 2012

LETHAL CONSEQUENCES – MIHAIL STOYANOV

Mihail Stoyanov, a 25-year-old medical student, left his house in the capital, Sofia, on the night of 30 September 2008. He never came back.

His mother, Hristina Stoyanova, went out of town shortly afterwards. She would only discover his disappearance on her return, five days later.

Hristina began searching for Mihail in the hospitals. He wasn't there. The next day, Mihail's brother tried the local police, who told him to go to the central police station.

When Hristina and Mihail's brother arrived, they were separated, and officers bombarded each with questions, like “Who were Mihail's friends?”, “Did he use drugs?”, delving deep into his early childhood. The police also searched the family home for drugs.

Only after questioning the pair did officers finally reveal that they had found Mihail's body in Borisova Garden, the largest park in Sofia. They neglected to tell Hristina exactly where, in that vast and sprawling space, they had found his body. She had to find that out for herself.

COVERED IN BRUISES

Hristina later read the forensics report. “Head to toe... he was covered in bruises, starting with a swelling on the head... his cheek was all black and blue,” she told

Amnesty International in March 2012. “Here they have trampled over his chest. His legs, everything was black and blue, his whole body. That's the way they found him. [H]e died – the report says his respiratory passages were pressed and there are bruises... here, on the neck. They broke his... windpipe.”

Two young men were arrested as suspects in 2010. According to media reports and Hristina herself, witnesses belonging to the same group of youths that were allegedly watching and cheering during the attack, told police that the group as a whole was “cleansing the park” of gays. They also allegedly admitted to police that they had beaten 10 other gay men as part of this “cleansing”. Hristina read this information in the investigation files, which she and her lawyer had access to.

The two suspects accused of having carried out the attack were charged with “homicide with hooligan motive”. They were detained and then placed under house arrest for two years. The Prosecutor did not issue an indictment during that period, and they were released in April 2012. The case is still pending. Hristina's lawyer told Amnesty International that there are no procedural reasons which could explain this delay.

Hristina took us to the spot in Borisova Garden where Mihail was murdered (pictured right). Looking at a picture of her son, she said, “Does he look gay to you? What about him says ‘gay’? I don't see a label on him saying that. Even if he was gay I don't care.”





PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The effect of hate crimes on victims goes far beyond the physical damage inflicted. The unprovoked and arbitrary nature of violence that targets people on the basis of their real or perceived identity creates fear, anxiety, stress and trauma not only in those attacked, but among their wider communities.

Many victims told us they couldn't understand why they had been targeted. Speaking of an incident in 2009 (see pp. 8-9), Stoyan Nikolov, a bisexual man, said the only reason he could think of for the attack on him and Laila Agrado was Laila's haircut. Sometimes victims are targeted for violence simply because they do not conform to traditional conceptions of gender roles and masculinity.

Often, survivors of hate crimes continue to suffer the psychological effects of the violence years afterwards, and many develop post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Even now, when I go home late at night, I turn around every couple of steps," says Kristina, who was attacked after Sofia Pride in 2011 (see below). "On my way home,

clockwise from bottom left: Memorial to Mihail Stoyanov, Borisova Garden, Sofia. Mihail was killed there in 2008. The park is notorious for homophobic attacks.

LGBT activists call for justice in the case of Mihail Stoyanov during a protest outside the Palace of Justice, Sofia, May 2012.

Hristina Stoyanova in Borisova Garden, holding a picture of her son, Mihail.

there is a street light with a sensor. This light scares me. If it is off, and nobody has passed through the place for the last minute, I don't know what to expect when the light turns on. I was not like this before [the attack]."

Marko continues to suffer from panic attacks after he and his boyfriend were attacked near the National Palace of Culture in Sofia in 2006. "For months after the attack, when walking along the street, or when on public transport, I had the constant feeling that someone was behind me and about to hit me," he said. "And when one night I was going to meet my boyfriend after work, and I walked along a low-lit boulevard, I had a panic attack."

“I WANT TO SEE THIS CASE RESOLVED. IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE MESSAGE WILL BE THAT THE AUTHORITIES CARE AND THEY CAN SOLVE THESE ISSUES.”

Ivelina, attacked after Sofia Pride, speaking in March 2012

ATTACK AFTER PRIDE MARCH, JUNE 2011, SOFIA

Ivelina, Kaloyan, Kristina, Mitko and Svetlio were on their way back from the Sofia Pride march in June 2011 when a group of young men attacked them from behind.

Before leaving the march, the Pride volunteers had deliberately changed out of the clothes they had been wearing so that they might appear less conspicuous to potential aggressors. In the end, it made no difference.

Mitko, Svetlio and Kaloyan were punched and kicked to the ground. Ivelina just caught a glimpse of the attack while Kristina ran and hid in a nearby building.

The morning of the attack, Mitko had received hate messages, like “die faggot”, on his Facebook page. He mentioned this when he reported the attack to the police.

Kaloyan felt that the police should recognize the assault as a hate crime. “The crime should be addressed as it was... not as petty crime or as hooliganism – it was obviously a hate crime. The feeling that it won’t be addressed as such is frustrating,” he said.

Kristina concurred. “I wanted the police to know that the attack was a homophobic attack,” she said. “One of us had a laptop in a backpack. During the attack, the laptop fell onto the ground, but the attackers didn’t take it. They didn’t take anything.” But when the five reported the incident, the police’s first

response was to ask them whether they had provoked it.

POLICE INVESTIGATION

In September 2011, the police showed the five Pride volunteers hundreds of photographs of football hooligans, and asked them whether they recognized any faces. They could not. Camera footage from an alcohol shop showed the volunteers walking, and 20 seconds later four young men running (presumably in pursuit). But the video was not clear enough to identify the four men.

The volunteers told us that other evidence might be found in CCTV footage from the many embassies they passed before the attack. However, the police have not requested this footage from the embassies, even though the Sofia Regional Prosecution Office told Amnesty International that there is no legal reason why they should not.

According to Mitko, the police admitted that the case was not a priority for them, saying, “Why would we care for this case when there are rape cases out there?”

“It’s very depressing,” he continued. “Anything can happen to you and there’s nothing you can do. I was very optimistic after finding 11 cameras [which would have recorded the attackers], and because the case was so public – it couldn’t have been easier to solve. It is very important for this case to be resolved even though the penalties are still not sufficient. We are the only people who will



© Amnesty International



©LGBT Youth Organization “Deystvie”



images: Sofia Pride, June 2011.

report crimes like this – because we are already in [the] public [eye]. There are dozens of people who get attacked for the same reasons, but don't report it."

"IMPROPER BEHAVIOUR"

When Amnesty International spoke to the Chief of the Sofia District 5 Police Station about this case, he said that the Pride organizers are also responsible for keeping participants safe. He added that out of the five participants attacked, only two were hurt. They were attacked, he claimed, because they were "dressed colourfully", speaking "loudly and freely", "exchanging jokes", and "acting intimately".

Asked whether such behaviour constitutes provocation under the Criminal Code, he became angry, and said that they were engaged in "improper behaviour" and "almost kissing and hugging." He then imitated, in an exaggeratedly camp manner, the way he thought they had walked immediately before the attack, while pretending to wave flags with his hands. He concluded by saying: "These five individuals have caused enough difficulties for police, and now they are causing difficulties for the municipality."

When asked why they have not requested video footage from the embassies, he said they have already undertaken "more than the usual" efforts to find the perpetrators in this case. He then said he no longer felt comfortable talking about the specifics of the case.

“PEOPLE LIKE YOU SHOULD BE THROWN FROM BALCONIES WHEN THEY’RE BORN.”

Laila, aged 26, recalling the words of a fellow student during her school days, March 2012. Laila attempted suicide because of the bullying, harassment and physical abuse she suffered due to her gender identity.

TRANSPHOBIC VIOLENCE

Transgender people in Bulgaria often face additional discrimination and human rights abuses, and are subject to violence more frequently than lesbian, gay and bisexual people. This is especially the case because very few transgender people are able to access the surgical and/or hormonal treatment they need to transition to their real gender identity. This makes them more visible as gender non-conforming and therefore more vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

“Many times I have been on a tram, where a group of boys start talking to each other about me and calling me names, and in some cases, they have pushed me off the tram,” said Mila, aged 47.

Discriminatory attitudes frequently prevent transgender people from finding a job, and many to turn to sex work to survive.

Victoria is a transgender Roma woman and sex worker. She is also HIV positive and currently homeless in Sofia. “In 2004, I was going back to my sister’s house, and picking flowers near her apartment at about 9pm,” she said. “A man came up and beat me very badly with knuckle dusters. I required 20 stitches. The hospital was required to call the police, but they didn’t. They just wanted to stitch me up as quickly as possible and get me out of there.”

Victoria also faces prejudice within her own Roma community. She said that her family and friends say things behind her back and

make fun of her. While Amnesty International delegates were interviewing her in a café, the proprietor tried to order her to leave by whistling at her, a stark reminder of the multiple discrimination she faces because of her identity.

Worryingly, survivors told Amnesty International of incidents in which police expressed hostility towards transgender people and in one case, had physically abused them. Police indifference to violence experienced by transgender people was reported to be common.

“Eight years ago, I was picked up by a client,” said Mila, a former sex worker. “He took me to an apartment in Mladost where there were five men waiting. They kept me in the apartment and raped and beat me over the course of two days. When I went to the police, they said I had ‘asked for it’ and did not investigate.”

above: Sofia Pride, June 2011.

below (clockwise from left): Stoyan Nikolov, Laila Agrado, Laila following the attack.



© Amnesty International

LAILA AGRADO AND STOYAN NIKOLOV, JUNE 2009

Laila, a transgender woman, survived a violent hate crime, along with her friend, Stoyan – a bisexual man. They had been walking through Borisova Garden, on their way to a concert, when they were attacked by a group of skinheads.

“They beat us both for about three or four minutes,” Stoyan told Amnesty International in March 2012. “The attackers retreated when a group of mothers with prams appeared and started screaming at them.”

A policeman on horseback heard the screaming and chased the attackers, but was unable to catch them. Another officer asked



© Amnesty International

Laila and Stoyan to describe the men, but the two were badly shaken up and unable to speak. Stoyan had sustained head injuries. Laila was so badly beaten that she had blacked out and has no memory of the assault.

The police did not offer them any medical help, nor did they call for an ambulance. Brutalized and traumatized, Stoyan and Laila went home.

“My parents said, ‘Maybe they had a reason to attack you. Maybe you provoked this. You also had fault in this. You are gay.’ This upset me very much,” said Stoyan.

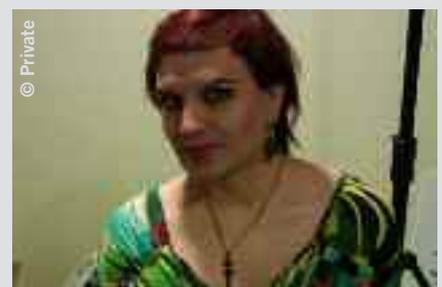
The full extent of Laila’s injuries only became clear when she got home. “I sat on the couch while my mother made dinner,” she said. “While she was in the kitchen, I had a seizure and passed out. It was lucky that my mum



© Private

knows CPR. I was rushed to hospital. I had serious head injuries.”

Although Stoyan had given his details to the police at the time, he was never contacted about the incident. In the end, Laila and Stoyan did not report the attack to the police because they believed, based on past experience and stories from other survivors of similar attacks, that the police would not investigate.



© Private



© Private

“THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE CAPITAL WHO HATE GAYS... THIS IS NOT A SECRET, NEITHER FOR US NOR FOR ANYBODY ELSE.”

Representative of Sofia Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior, April 2012

WIDESPREAD DISCRIMINATION

The failure of the police and judicial system to effectively address crimes against LGBT people is rooted in widespread discriminatory attitudes towards them.

Dogged by inexplicable delays or simple disinterest, the cases of Mihail Stoyanov, the five Pride volunteers, and Mila, illustrate how such attitudes affect the ability of police to impartially and efficiently investigate homophobic and transphobic hate crimes. These attitudes are not only common among the police, but also among prosecutors. In fact, they are socially pervasive.

Even hospitals are not immune. When Ivan and one of his friends sought treatment at Pirogov hospital after they had been beaten severely in a homophobic attack in March 2011, they were met with insults and ridicule.

“The two doctors assigned to us said, smiling and joking, and so we could hear, “Two gay pussies were beaten again,” recalled Ivan. “I thought, how can you be a doctor and talk like this?”

That perpetrators of these attacks are rarely brought to justice only serves to reinforce prejudice against LGBT people. But when asked why they are unwilling to introduce legal protections for survivors of these types of hate crimes, the common answer given by the authorities was that “everybody should be treated the same”. The implication is that introducing such legislation would confer special rights to

LGBT people, even though legislation already exists to provide protection for victims who are attacked because of other aspects of their identity.

Yet it is because of prejudice, because of pervasive social and institutional homophobia and transphobia, and because people are targeted for their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, that specific protection is needed. Adopting and implementing such legislation would send a clear signal to everyone that hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity will not be tolerated.

GAPS IN DOMESTIC LAW

Hate crimes and other discriminatory acts based on nationality, race, religion or political conviction are covered by Articles 162 to 164 of the Bulgarian Criminal Code.

In the rare cases where homophobic attacks are reported and prosecuted, suspects are often charged with “hooligan” motives under Article 131(12) of the Criminal Code; hate motives are not taken into account. Article 325 of the Criminal Code defines hooliganism as indecent acts, grossly violating the public order and expressing open disrespect for society.

Following an amendment to the Criminal Code in 2011, the crime of murder attracts a lengthier sentence if it results from “hooliganism, racist or xenophobic motives.” However, hate motives on the



© Amnesty International

© Amnesty International



“WHEN I SEE SOME SCARY GUYS, I HIDE THE ‘I LOVE BOYS’ PIN THAT I HAVE ON MY BAG.”

Vladimir, March 2012

above: Police at Sofia Pride, June 2011. Discriminatory attitudes towards LGBT people are all too common among police, prosecutors and government officials.
below: Vladimir’s “I love boys” pin, March 2012.

basis of sexual orientation or gender identity are not acknowledged.

The absence of hate crime legislation on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity has meant that homophobic or transphobic motives are rarely sought or uncovered. Nor do they play a role in the prosecution. Exposing the motives is critical if the police are to develop effective strategies to reduce and prevent these crimes.

INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and the right to be free from torture and other ill-treatment. These rights are guaranteed under international and regional treaties to which Bulgaria is a party, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. States must not only refrain from violating these rights, but also must act with due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate and redress abuses by private individuals. States must protect these rights for all, without discrimination.

The European Court of Human Rights has enumerated several obligations on states related to hate crimes. These obligations are most comprehensively addressed as they relate to racially motivated hate crimes, but must also be fulfilled without discrimination when applied to homophobic or transphobic hate crimes. States have the duty to take all necessary steps to unmask any alleged racist, homophobic or transphobic hate bias on which a crime may be perpetrated.

As a state party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Bulgaria has an obligation under Article 5 to eliminate prejudices and practices based on the idea that one sex is superior or inferior to the other and on gender stereotypes. Such attitudes can contribute to gender-based violence, that is, violence where victims are targeted because their gender identity, appearance or expression do not conform to stereotyped views of gender roles.

STEPS FORWARD

Bulgaria has taken some progressive strides with respect to human rights and sexual orientation. Same-sex conduct was decriminalized and the age of consent equalized in 2002. In 2004, the Protection Against Discrimination Act was introduced which banned discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and the latest draft of a new Criminal Code, which was made public for consultation in April 2012,

LGBT activists protesting against a discriminatory law in Pazardzhik city spraypaint “All human beings are born free and equal” on a poster, March 2011.

covers hate crimes based on sexual orientation.

Co-operation between the Sofia Pride organizers and the police has improved in recent years, and the police have protected Pride marchers effectively, albeit for a fee. In March 2012, police officers attended training sessions in Sofia on how to deal sensitively with hate crimes. And the Commission for the Protection Against Discrimination treats cases of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation on an equal footing with other grounds, such as race and religion.

CHANGING MINDS

Delays and disinterest stemming from entrenched prejudices have meant that LGBT people have been harassed, beaten and otherwise abused with impunity. To meet its international and European human rights obligations, Bulgaria must ensure that the new Criminal Code places sexual orientation and gender identity on an equal footing with other protected grounds in relation to hate crimes. The authorities have taken the first step in including sexual orientation in the first



“THERE IS A GENERAL UNDER-REPORTING OF CRIMES – PEOPLE DON’T BELIEVE THEIR PROBLEMS WILL BE SOLVED, FEARING CONSECUTIVE HUMILIATION BY POLICE, OR THAT PERPETRATORS MIGHT FIND THEM.”

Aksinia Gencheva, LGBT rights activist, April 2012



ACTIVISTS ATTACKED DURING PROTEST IN PAZARDZHİK, MARCH 2010

On 20 March 2010, a group of seven LGBT rights activists assembled in Pazardzhik city, on the first ever LGBT protest outside Sofia.

Organized by LGBT Youth Organization “Deystvie”, the protest criticized a law which prohibited the “public demonstration and expression of sexual and other orientation in public places” in the city.

The police had given permission for the protest because it was a demonstration against the law and not, in itself, an “expression of sexual orientation”. Officers escorted the group into the central square, but when they got there, between 100 and 150 counter-protesters began taunting them. Marko, one of the demonstrators, said that

they were yelling things like, “you will die here” and “the gays should go to Uganda”.

Fifteen minutes into the protest, the counter-protesters broke through the police line and attacked Marko and his fellow protesters. “I was hit in the head with a fist and was pushed to the ground,” he said. “I was concussed for a while afterwards. There were also a number of skinhead ‘performers’ who said they were ‘sweeping the dirt out of Pazardzhik’.”

The police eventually drove the protesters back to Sofia, to ensure that they made it back safely. Eight of the counter-protesters were arrested and charged with “hooliganism”. Some were fined, others were jailed for between two

and five days; a few of those jailed were also fined, although the amounts were not substantial (a maximum of approximately 200 euros).

“This was just enough for them to be able to go back to their towns or groups and be considered heroes,” said Marko, “but with no significant punitive effect.”

On 11 May 2010, two months after the protest, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination ruled that the local law directly discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation. The Commission instructed the city council to repeal it, and in July 2011, the Supreme Administrative Court upheld its decision.

“MY 75-YEAR-OLD RUSSIAN GRANDMOTHER, WHEN SHE FIRST FOUND OUT I WAS GAY, TOLD ME I WAS ‘SICK’. BUT LAST YEAR, SHE KNITTED ME A RAINBOW FLAG FOR SOFIA PRIDE. MY OTHER GRANDMOTHER, WHO LIVES IN PLOVDIV, HAD ONLY MET MY BOYFRIEND ONCE, WHEN I TOOK HIM TO HAVE DINNER AT HER HOUSE. THE NEXT TIME I VISITED HER, SHE SAID, ‘DON’T YOU HAVE A *GADJE* [LOVER]? IT WAS THAT KID YOU BROUGHT HERE LAST WEEK WASN’T IT? YOU COULD HAVE BROUGHT SOMEONE TALLER.’”

Svetlio, attacked after Sofia Pride 2011, speaking in April 2012

draft of the new Criminal Code, but they must go further and recognize gender identity as well.

But laws are not enough. The Ombudsman, Konstantin Penchev, who is a strong champion of the human rights of LGBT people, has said that even if there are changes in the law, these will need to be backed up by practical changes in the way police and prosecutors operate. Even though hate crimes on the basis of ethnicity, nationality and religion have been prohibited by law since April 2011, it is only recently that police and prosecutors have started applying these provisions in practice, he said.

To ensure that changes to the law are effectively applied, the police, prosecutors and the judiciary need to undergo robust training. But to combat widespread prejudice against LGBT people, the authorities need to tackle it at its roots. They need to raise awareness and understanding of these issues in schools, so that children grow up understanding and appreciating difference. As Hristina Stoyanova put it: “What is really needed is

above: Sofia Pride, June 2011. The placard reads: “Come out into the light”.

below: Over 80 people took part in the first ever “bicycle march” against homophobia in Sofia, May 2011.

for children in schools to be taught about difference and that difference is okay – that it does not matter whether someone is gay or not gay.”

© LGBT Youth Organization “Deystvie”



© Dimitar Dechkov Dimitrov



left: Sofia Pride, June 2011.

front cover: Activists, holding signs reading "Homophobia kills", call for justice in the case of Mihail Stoyanov during a protest outside the Palace of Justice, Sofia, May 2012 (see p.4).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the Council of Ministers:

- Ensure that sexual orientation and gender identity are explicitly included in the new Criminal Code as grounds for prosecution of hate crimes.
- Amend the Protection Against Discrimination Act 2004 to include gender identity as a ground of discrimination.
- Ensure that hate crimes against people who are, or are perceived to be, LGBT, are fully investigated and that suspects are brought to justice.
- Introduce ongoing training for all levels of police, prosecutors, magistrates, judges and court officials on homophobia, transphobia, human rights obligations in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, and on efficient and impartial

investigation and prosecution of violent attacks against LGBT individuals.

- Work with LGBT and human rights organizations to encourage people to report hate crimes and ensure that the victims have access to redress, including access to justice, rehabilitation and compensation.
- Create and implement a public awareness campaign about the unacceptability of violence towards LGBT people.
- Collect data on hate crimes against LGBT individuals, including on the number of cases reported, investigated and prosecuted.

To the Prosecution authorities:

- Ensure that all hate crimes, including those noted in this report, are fully and effectively investigated.

To the Sofia police:

- Pro-actively, impartially and efficiently investigate reports of hate crimes on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and ensure protection in vulnerable areas, such as Borisova Garden.
- Create a data collection system for reported hate crimes, which takes account of the specific discriminatory motive of the reported crime.

To the Ministry of Education:

- Introduce into the school curriculum awareness about homophobia and difference, sexual orientation and gender identity.

To the Ministry of Health:

- Implement training for health professionals and administrators about appropriate ways of treating and interacting with LGBT patients who may be suffering trauma as a result of hate crimes based on their identity.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members and activists in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.

Index: EUR 15/001/2012
English

June 2012

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
Peter Benenson House
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW
United Kingdom

amnesty.org