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Repression and targeted attacks on LGBTI persons and defenders in Türkiye

Report[1]
Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination
Rapporteur: Mr Sam RUSHWORTH, United Kingdom, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group

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1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision on a request for urgent debate, Reference 5011 of 28 September 2026. In accordance with Rule 50.4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, the report of a committee shall not contain an explanatory memorandum if the report is prepared under the urgent procedure

A. Draft resolution[2]

1. Since 12 September 2026, mass arrests, detentions, raids on homes and digital restrictions have been used in an immediate, co-ordinated and escalating campaign that has targeted lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons, individuals and associations working on the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons across 15 provinces in Türkiye. Protesters against these attacks have also been detained. The Parliamentary Assembly expresses its deep concern at this serious and continuing wave of repression and affirms its solidarity with LGBTI persons and defenders in Türkiye.

2. The Assembly is alarmed at the use of a narrative on the protection of the family, under an operation "My Family Is Safe", to attack LGBTI persons and the defenders of their rights. The Assembly is particularly concerned that these developments mark a shift towards an increasingly organised and institutionalised campaign against LGBTI persons, defenders and civil society organisations. It reaffirms that references to the protection of "traditional family values" cannot justify disproportionate restrictions of rights or any form of violence. Repression against LGBTI persons and human rights defenders is the opposite of family protection.

3. The Assembly regrets the prohibition of Pride marches in Türkiye for the past decade and reaffirms that the visibility of LGBTI persons and movements must be protected, as it is an affirmation of their identity and existence. Recalling its Resolution 2543 (2024) "Freedom of expression and assembly of LGBTI people in Europe", the Assembly reiterates that the banning of Pride marches and other peaceful LGBTI events is contrary to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, which provides that concerns for the maintenance of public order cannot justify banning peaceful public LGBTI events or imposing disproportionate restrictions on them.

4. Attacks on the rights of LGBTI persons often precede attacks against other groups and are a sign of weakening democracy. The Assembly deplores that the scapegoating of LGBTI persons is still frequent in political discourses and calls for an end to the instrumentalisation of their rights. The rights of LGBTI persons are human rights and the crackdown on activists threatens the rule of law in Türkiye. Recalling its Resolution 2417 (2022) "Combating rising hate against LGBTI people in Europe", the Assembly stresses moreover that the official justifications provided for such crackdowns are likely to give rise to and exacerbate erroneous and negative public perceptions of LGBTI persons.

5. The Assembly therefore expresses its deep concern at this sign of further backsliding of democracy in Türkiye. It considers that the present campaign against LGBTI persons and defenders must be viewed against this wider deterioration, while stressing that attacks against the rights of LGBTI persons are, in themselves, serious human rights violations, which can never be tolerated.

6. Türkiye, as a member State of the Council of Europe, has committed itself to upholding and promoting democratic values, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Recalling that the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, the "Convention") protects the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of Convention rights, including discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, the Assembly stresses that attacks against the rights of LGBTI persons are in contradiction with the commitments entered into by signatories of the Convention.

7. The Assembly regrets the decision by Türkiye to withdraw from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No.210, "Istanbul Convention"). This convention protects all victims of gender-based violence, including LGBTI persons. Recalling its Resolution 2649 (2026) "Promoting the Istanbul Convention and improving its implementation: building on lessons learnt", the Assembly encourages Türkiye to renew its ratification of the convention.

8. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Türkiye to:

8.1. abide by its international obligations and ensure the protection of human rights defenders, including defenders of the rights of LGBTI persons and the right to freedom of assembly;

8.2. immediately release all persons detained on the ground of their human rights work, their sexual orientation, gender identity or work or funding for the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons;

8.3. drop charges based on the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association;

8.4. end, without delay, the repression, intimidation, harassment and violence against LGBTI persons and defenders, and refrain from adopting anti-LGBTI legislation;

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2. Draft resolution adopted by the committee on 29 September 2026

8.5. ensure access to legal assistance to persons in detention, protect them from ill-treatment and provide guarantees for a fair trial;

8.6. lift the blocking of websites and social media accounts of human rights defenders, including defenders of the rights of LGBTI persons;

8.7. lift bans on Pride marches and other LGBTI events;

8.8. implement judgments of the European Court of Human Rights;

8.9. refrain from using spurious justifications for anti-LGBTI policies and actions of the authorities and put a stop to hateful rhetoric against LGBTI persons.

9. The Assembly calls on Council of Europe member and observer States of the Council of Europe and States whose parliament enjoys observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly to demonstrate their full support to LGBTI persons, condemn repression and targeted attacks on LGBTI persons and to raise the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons in international fora and in their diplomatic relations.

10. The Assembly welcomes the adoption of the first Council of Europe Strategy for Equal Rights for LGBTI people (2027-2032) and calls for its implementation.

11. The Assembly expresses its support to civil society organisations working on equality and non-discrimination, including on the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons, and calls on member States to support their activity and allocate resources for their work