

1. MONITORING OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE BASED ON SOGI IN RUSSIA IN 2015: GENERAL INFORMATION

In 2015 the Russian LGBT Network has documented 284 reported cases of violence and discrimination against LGBT people in Russia. These cases included those that were recorded by monitoring teams in nine Russian cities as well as the results of the processing of reportings to the legal aid service of the Russian LGBT Network and reports of violations via the website of the Russian LGBT Network.

Physical violence – 52 cases

One of the largest problems with monitoring violations based on SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) is that often survivors of these violations are not open about their identity, resulting in an unwillingness to resort to law enforcement authorities. The lack of reports of instances of violence are directly connected to the fear of outing (forced disclosure of SOGI) at the victim's place of work or within their family. Due to this fear, as well as the fear of humiliation by the police, survivors are often convinced that it is impossible to render justice.

Abuses by law enforcement officials – 21 cases

Monitoring shows that the fears faced by survivors of violence and discrimination are not at all baseless. In 2015, 21 abuses by law enforcement agencies were recorded. Those abuses include refusals to accept reports, psychological violence against the victims, humiliation, and illegal detention.

L. (22 years old, homosexual man) was attacked by a homophobic group of people who organized fake meetings with gay men to assault them and rob them. At the place of the planned meeting several young men were waiting for L. They began to publicly humiliate L., hit him on the head, took away his phone, and attempted to plant a drug package on him. When he reached home, L. and a friend called the police to report the incident. They were invited to come to the police office near the site of the attack.

Upon arrival at the office, L. began to describe what had happened to the police. The police did not want to know the circumstances of the attack and instead asked if he had “normal” orientation and why he acquainted with the boys. The officers further humiliated L. and accused him of being under the influence of an illegal substance. One of the officers openly refused to work with L. The survivor was told to wait.

Half an hour later L. and his friend were invited to another room where three officers were waiting. L. started to explain the situation again. During his explanation he was constantly interrupted, accused of drug use, and asked provocative personal questions. One of the policemen was dismissive of L.’s story and said that he didn’t know what to write in the report. Later a policeman of a higher status came in and pointed out that it was necessary to write a report and L. began to tell his story yet again. During the explanations, other policemen asked questions: “What are you, a fag? Cock? Pedophile? Come on, tell us what happened.” The victim quickly became distraught and was brought to tears. They then began to question L.’s friend about whether or not he was gay and if they were in an intimate relationship. The friend asked the superior officer to stop the bullying. After being harassed once more by the officers, extra staff were asked to leave the room and so that they didn’t interfere with interrogation and L. was asked to go to another room.

There were two policemen (including the one that refused to work with L. at first) in the room that L. was asked to move to. L. began to tell the story once again, but he was interrupted with more questions and abuse: “Tell as it is, that you’re a fag, a pedophile.” The victim replied that the accusations were baseless. Policemen began to ask L. questions about his sexuality, including whether he was bi or not, whether he liked to “suck”, whether he was “fucked”, and whether he was passive or active. They also offered to check if the survivor was a “virgin.” In response to all of this, L. replied: “My orientation doesn’t matter, so all these questions make no sense.” Next, the staff threatened that if the victim included all of the details of the attack in his report such as the threat of weapons, the attackers’ accusations, and loss of the phone, this case would attract the media, and then the entire country would know that L. was an alleged pedophile. As a result, the staff distorted L.’s report: removing the weapons threat, the attempted planting of drugs, and various other threats from the report as well as reporting that the missing phone had simply fallen

out of the victim's hands. The report still included that L. was a "pedophile."

The police did not confirm the acceptance of the report.

The victim in this scenario suffered from a common type of crime against LGBT people and faced the typical response of law enforcement officers and agencies: abuse, humiliation, and active unwillingness to investigate the crime. Perhaps the police were moved not only by homophobia, but also by the usual unwillingness to do their job. In the case of LGBT people the reluctance is easier to implement, exerting psychological pressure and blackmailing victims with outing.

Violations of labor law – 22 cases

Violations of labor law include instances of illegal dismissals, refusal to hire a potential employee, and harassment at the workplace due to SOGI. Layoffs or changing a decision to hire in these cases took place after the individual came out or was outed to employers, which confirms their homophobic motive. Examples of such cases are listed below, the first of which occurred in Omsk.

P.A. was interviewed for the post of teacher in the Foreign Languages center "ABC CLUB" on August 21, 2015. During the interview E.V. asked P.A. about her work-related experience and education. Then E.V. asked whether P.A. knew a certain woman – S. When told that S. was P.A.'s best friend, E.V. started asking specific questions about their relationship: "And how close are you with your girlfriend? Very close?" P.A. replied that S. was her best friend and nothing more. E.V. noticed that P.A. had an "aggressive" profile in "VKontakte" social network: including a number of photos of P.A. embracing S. As a result, P.A. was rejected as a potential employee.

It is important to clarify that in December 2014 S. was interviewed as well, at that exact language center and E.V. rejected her for the job by saying: "You are suitable for the post according to all characteristics, however we can't allow you to work with us because of you being a lesbian." S. expressed a desire to get a written refusal explaining the reasons, but she was not given one.

Another case took place in a factory in Samara, and had lasted a long time. In this case, the factory management imposed disciplinary action on a transgender woman, which was followed by dismissal.

During socialization of A.V. Anokhina in the desired field, especially after

her name and surname change and replacement of male to female in the documents, her boss had repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the transition, encouraged transphobic attitudes among Anokhina's colleagues, and expressed general intolerance of her identity. The administration tried to prevent Anokhina from using the women's bathroom and allowed expressions of transphobia in the workplace both face-to-face and behind the victim's back. Later, on April 28, 2015 the administration of the factory issued an order to deprive Anokhina a monthly bonus at a rate of 50% (10 thousand rubles) based on the memo of A.V. Schegolkova, the Chief of an equipment bureau. The victim was falsely accused of violation of labor discipline. This was followed by repeated illegal disciplinary action and ultimately by the dismissal based on the alleged repeated violations of the rules of the internal labor regulations of the factory.

In 2015, many cases of harassment against LGBT teachers due to outing by homophobic activists, especially Timur Isayev (Bulatov), were documented. Unfortunately, the majority of teachers who become the victims of such harassment tend to write letters of resignation themselves to escape from the hostile work environment. However, initiative LGBT group "Vyhod" (St. Petersburg) is investigating the case of a music teacher who refused to resign, was fired, and litigated the dismissal in court. The case has already been lost in two courts [11]. The case of one teacher from Moscow who "voluntarily" resigned is documented below as part of the monitoring program:

In August, the principal of a school summoned a teacher (O.) and showed her the dossier that had been sent by Timur Isayev with information from various social networks confirming O.'s homosexuality. The director said that while she was not interested in O.'s orientation because it was O.'s personal matter, if kids' parents happened to find out everyone would be in trouble. At the suggestion of the principal, O. wrote a letter of resignation voluntarily.

After the dismissal, O. started receiving threats from Timur Isayev that if she were to accept a job in another school, he would get her fired from that position as well. O. enjoys working as a teacher and wants to get back to work but is afraid of harassment.

At school none of the teachers or students knew about O.'s orientation. O.'s girlfriend, who's also a teacher, received threats from Timur Isayev too, but she had already resigned and it wasn't connected with Isayev.

Discrimination and violence against transgender people – 20 cases

In this group the following cases are documented:

- physical violence (6 cases);
- violation of labor rights (6 cases);
- restricted access to goods and services due to transphobia (6 cases);
- unjustified refusal to change documents (2 cases)

Timely change of a gender marker in the documents of transgender people is very important and consequences of a refusal of such change can be quite detrimental. In all recorded cases, a sex marker in the survivors' passports did not match their gender identity and gender expression. Thus, any provision of documents, whether for a long-distance train ticket or the purchasing of a SIM card, is connected with the outing of transgender identity. This situation creates a constant psychological discomfort due to the fear of outing and makes transgender people vulnerable to transphobia from those whom they have to submit documents. Frequently transgender people avoid any long-distance travel, including international travel, because they are often refused tickets because of their passports or are subjected to humiliation. A striking example of such a situation is a case recorded by Samara LGBT organization "Avers" where a transgender woman was repeatedly kicked off of long-distance trains, publicly insulted by conductors, and humiliated by police's public inspections.

In L.'s passport the sex category was marked as male, but L. identified as a woman. She was open about her transgender identity to conductor while boarding and explained the situation, which, according to L., can sometimes eliminate problems. The conductor, a middle-aged woman, L. assured that "everything was fine."

Once the train had already departed, the conductor called other conductors of adjacent carriages over and began discussing L. with them publicly using unflattering and offensive language, saying things such as: "What's that? Where is a woman, where is a man? I can't understand anything."

The conductor then called the police. Two men in uniform responded and stood in the compartment doors, not allowing them to close. They spoke in raised voices to the victim, insulting her personally and the LGBT community

as a whole. The head of the policemen took away L.'s passport and waved it open, until she grabbed the paper, explaining that it was forbidden to withdraw any person's passport, except for the cases described by law. After that L. was threatened to be removed from the train because of the "insecurity of being here as an indeterminate one, and from Chechnya." L. said: "No one knows who you are, who suddenly pose a threat to other passengers, you may be terrorists from the North Caucasus." According to the victim, transgender people very often face manifestations of transphobia in the trains as well as in other situations where a passport must be shown officially.

The Russian Federation still hasn't adopted the procedure of changing the documents of transgender people - it is a serious gap in the Russian legislation. It entails abuse by the registry offices and courts, prevents socialization, and aggravates the vulnerability of transgender people.

Violation of the right to freedom of assembly – 26 cases

Types of documented cases: unreasonable refusals to harmonize public LGBT actions, public actions breakings by law enforcement officials, and illegal detention of participants and pressure on the organizers. One of such cases is described below. It's necessary to note that The Catherine Park is a Hyde Park, the area for free citizens' expressions, and therefore any actions do not require an approval from the authorities.

In May 2015 during the Rainbow flash mob in the Catherine Park (Moscow) 17 people were detained. The event gathered about a hundred participants with no symbols, even without rainbow ribbons. One of the activists heard that the police had been ordered to arrest everyone. About 40 people were led to the underground by an organizer, and about 40 people dispersed and ran away. The other 17 people (and even the courier who delivered balloons) were taken to the police station. For the duration of their detention, the police did not disclose the reason behind it. One girl was told: "For drinking coffee." Basically they detained those who were holding balloons. People spent three hours in the department, they were told "it wasn't a detention, but a prophylactic talk." Flash mob participants met people in plainclothes, who didn't introduce themselves and asked the detainees to write explanatory notes. Detainees asked them to introduce themselves and didn't write any explanatory notes. After three hours of wrangling with the unknown people in plainclothes, detainees went toward the exit, but people in plainclothes ordered them to stay without using force. There

were three minors among the detainees, who were taken from the department by parents. The company, the supplier of the balloons, demanded 5000 rubles from the organizers for the courier being in trouble.

Violation of the right to freedom of expression - the scale is unclear

The ban of “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations among minors” is preventively working on the violation of this right, which made it difficult to measure the scale. It’s impossible to record the number of media resources or creative people that are engaged in self-censorship and do not cover the topic of LGBT for the fear of persecution. Cases of sanctioned persecution of art and information projects show that these fears are not groundless. An example of police pressure that led to the breakup of the exhibition about LGBT teenagers in Moscow is written below.

Opening of a “Be yourself” exhibition about LGBT teenagers was planned on June 11, 2015. The exhibition was held at Red Square Gallery.

The day before it opened on June 10, law enforcement officers came to a tenant of the gallery with an interrogation, starting the conversation with the words: “Where is the exhibition about the homosexuals and pedophiles?” The tenant didn’t know anything about the exhibition and, being afraid, said that there would be no opening. He reported this to the organizers, and in the morning of the opening day, they officially announced that the show is canceled because of police’s pressure. Nevertheless, on the same day, center staff for Extremism Prevention and the FSB (according to the tenant) came to the gallery again and set up block posts, took the security branch chief of the gallery to the police station for questioning. Also, a few days before the planned opening of the exhibition, the police came to the apartment of the organizer’s mother, looking for a young woman, who allegedly made a scandal in the café (that she actually didn’t do).

Family violence, violation of parental rights – 9 cases

The section includes physical violence, restriction of freedom of movement, and turning LGBT teenagers and young adults (under 20 years old) out of house by parents. Of course, there are many more cases like these. A project “Children-404” alone, that works on this topic, recorded thousands of stories. The special vulnerability of young people should be noted. LGBT

teenagers are dependent on parents and guardians, so when guardians neglect their needs they are helpless, and specialists (teachers and psychologists), as a result of the law on “propaganda” ban, are limited in providing assistance to adolescents (evidence of this is the case of Lena Klimova and “Children-404” as well as the harassment of LGBT teachers).

Also LGBT people often have conflicts with other family members regarding child custody. Often such conflicts don't reach courts, but at the moment the Russian LGBT Network has dealt with three cases of restriction of parental rights by the court on the basis of SOGI. One of these cases occurred in Astrakhan. Referring to the amendments to the Family Code regarding adoption and guardianship, a woman was deprived of custody of the child on the grounds that she is in a same-sex partnership in Germany. In two other cases, the ex-wives of transgender women went to court in order to restrict their contact with children. One of these cases, that occurred in Moscow, is written below.

Alice is a transgender woman. After gender reassignment she had lived with her former wife for six years. Several years ago, the couple went to Uruguay. Alice broke up with her first wife there and met another woman, a native of Uruguay. In the summer of 2014 the former wife of Alice took their child away to Russia without asking her. In Russia, the ex-wife was trying to set Alice's parents up against her, went to court for the purpose of setting the amount of child support that was significantly higher than the income of Alice. Gagarin court of Moscow annulled the marriage on October 21, 2014.

Alice and her wife arrived in Russia in April, 2015. In May, 2015 Alice went to court, because her ex-wife did not allow her to communicate with their child. The ex-wife, in turn, appealed to the court to formally limit the communication of Alice with the child, referring to the law on propaganda and the fact that Alice can harmfully affect their son.

On August 3, 2015 The Court of First Instance ruled in favor of Alice - not to restrict her parental rights. The ex-wife sent a Statement of Defence that contained the following arguments: “So, actually being in a same-sex marriage, considering non-traditional sexual relations as socially equivalent and disseminating this information on the Internet in open access, having provocative registration of de facto same-sex marriage in the country, where same-sex marriages are forbidden, the plaintiff requires communication with the minor child, including part-time living with her and her wife, the resumption of

“influence” on the child, which will inevitably lead to the formation of non-traditional sexual attitudes, sense of attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relations, imposing information on non-traditional sexual relations and arouse interest to such relations...”

As materials which would be used to confirm the need to limit Alice’s parental rights, the plaintiff also provided Facebook correspondence, confirming that Alice participated in the March of Diversity in Uruguay (their son wasn’t there and knew nothing about Alice attending the march), and photos from the second marriage of Alice (which their son also didn’t attend). In December 2015 the court of the second instance (Moscow City Court) made a decision to limit Alice’s parental rights based on her transgender identity.

The following pages summarize results of the monitoring of violence and discrimination, conducted by five regional groups in nine cities of Russia. It’s interesting that in different regions documented cases of various subjects dominate. It’s connected with the specifics of the region and the fact that the various regional monitoring groups most actively use different search channels to seek out cases. It should be understood that the collected cases of violence and discrimination against LGBT people by the Russian LGBT Network of 2015 are just the tip of the iceberg. The scale of violations of the rights of LGBT people in Russia is far larger in scale, however, these reports give us the opportunity to identify typical cases and risk areas.

2. MONITORING OF DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE BASED ON SOGI IN RUSSIA IN 2015: REGIONAL REVIEW

2.1. Arkhangelsk region and Republic of Komi

Situation overview

Arkhangelsk region is a region in the northwest of Russia, the largest constituent territory in the European part of Russia. The area of the Arkhangelsk region is comparable with areas of the largest European countries - France and Spain. The region's population is 1,174 million people, a third lives in Arkhangelsk, an administrative center.

Republic of Komi is one of the north-western regions of Russia and the last north-eastern region in Europe. The area is comparable to countries such as Sweden or Iraq. The region's population is 865, 000 people, one-third lives in Syktyvkar, an administrative center.

Compared to previous years, in 2015 the LGBT topic was hardly touched on by regional mass media. There were no significant events related to the political or economic situation that would have shown discrimination of LGBT people or other groups on the basis of SOGI. The references of LGBT people in regional mass media were primarily focused on cultural topics - when Orthodox teachers demanded to cancel a performance of the Finnish Theatre [9]; topic of "fight against pedophilia" - when members of the "Rubezh Severa" nationalist organization were arrested [8] in the Republic of Komi; topics of presenting information about public events related to LGBT people to the mayor's office in Arkhangelsk.

Description of the LGBT community

LGBT association in the Republic of Komi is mainly held by means of social networks, cultural and recreational activities, and (rarely) by public events and activities aimed at the consolidation of the community. As before, there is an internal migration of LGBT people (from the sparsely populated

municipalities to major cities of the region, as well as from the Arkhangelsk region to large federal centers), as well as external migration (abroad). The reasons include economic trouble and increased aggressiveness of local people against minorities.

There is still a high proportion of HIV among LGBT people in the region. Within Russia in 2015 the epidemic situation of HIV infection worsened, and in the Republic of Komi the incidence of HIV infection has increased by more than 30% [22]. There are no specialized HIV service organizations that work with the LGBT community. The problem of community of transgender and transsexuals being hidden still remains in the region. There was only one representative of T-community in the monitoring. Also, there is no initiative groups for representatives of T-community. A similar picture is typical for other private groups within the LGBT: LGBT elders, disabled LGBT, and LGBT teens.

The community's level of openness in general is low in the Republic of Komi. The level of community's visibility varies in the region. As a whole for the majority of people the LGBT community is invisible, ostracized, and publicly reprimanded; problems associated with SOGI are unreported.

LGBT community of the Arkhangelsk region is concentrated in large cities (Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk, Novodvinsk) and doesn't represent an integrated socio-cultural community, because it is deeply divided on the basis of gender, education, social status, and property income. The level of openness of the community can be evaluated as very high.

Description of the LGBT movement

Since 2012, a regional office of the Russian LGBT Network has been working in the Republic of Komi. The branch carries out a monitoring of abuses of human rights and discrimination based on SOGI, awareness campaigns, as well as activities for community cohesion.

Only a small number of community members participate in LGBT movement of the region. The movement is not trusted, and many people don't understand its purpose and condemn the actions or events related to LGBT people. The community is still not ready to claim their rights in public, and doesn't seek openness. Mostly it is also connected with political situation in the country and widespread glorification of the so-called "traditional values."

Description of anti-LGBT movements

Among the groups and movements of Komi, whose activities target the opposite goals of the LGBT movement, the following can be distinguished: nationalist organization “Rubezh Severa”, Syktyvkar and Vorkuta diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) in the face of various representatives of other social organizations, as well as individual “ex-rights defenders”, publicly speaking for inciting social, national, religious, and other hatred.

Activities of “Rubezh Severa”, has been inextricably linked to the confrontation of the “gay threat” for several years. Members of the nationalist organization organized “pedophile huntings” (as well as “Okkupaypedofilyay” and “Restrukt” associations), repeatedly attacked the LGBT actions, and participated in threatening public representatives that support LGBT.

In April 2015, Alex Kolegov, the leader of “Rubezh Severa”, along with other members of the organization were arrested on suspicion of assaults, beatings, blackmail, threats, and humiliation of people who nationalists accused of pedophilia. Kolegov, as the organizer of the action directed against LGBT people, attracted to attacks on not only members of the “Rubezh Severa” (adults), but also teenagers. Accomplices found victims on the Internet, offered to meet them, and came to meetings, tied men up, beat them up, mocked them, “suppressing the will to resist, and threatened with death.” Members of the movement filmed everything that was happening and posted it on the “Rubezh Severa” website.

In December 2015, the Syktyvkar city court sentenced Alexei Kolegova, the leader of “Rubezh Severa”, to four years in prison under articles “Torture by an organized group”, “Threat of death”, “Involving minors in the commission of crimes as a part of a criminal group”, “Crimes motivated by hatred or enmity towards a particular social group” and “Vandalism committed by a group of people.” Other people involved in the case were found guilty as well: Dmitry Ilchukov Alexander Osipov and Denis Polyakov. They were sentenced, respectively, to three years and six months, three years and three months, and three years and one month of imprisonment to be served in a general regime colony, Aleksey Bart was sentenced to four years (special regime colony). Denis Korobeynikov was sentenced to three years and three months with probation for two years and was released in the courtroom. All accomplices,

depending on the role and nature of the committed acts, were also convicted of torture by an organized group against people of certain social groups, death threats, beatings by hooligan motives, and vandalism.

Several civil claims by victims for compensation for moral damages were satisfied. In court Kolegov himself asked the media to write that his associates used to catch “not homosexuals but pedophiles.” It should be noted that for numerous incidents of physical abuse and robbery of members of the “Rubezh Severa” group were sentenced to a minimum time in the region of three to four years, because the “immoral behavior of the victims” served as a mitigating circumstance. [6]

Representatives of Syktyvkar and Vorkuta diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), have repeatedly spoken on the topic of LGBT. Vladislav Plastinin’s statements, a former head of the Information and Publishing Department of Syktyvkar and Vorkuta diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (MP) have been put in the monitoring due to homophobic insults. Since January 2016 Vladislav Plastinin has been leading “Rubezh Severa” instead of Alexey Kolegov.

Ruslan Iskandarov, a representative of the Cossacks and Editor of information website of Syktyvkar and Vorkuta diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church (MP), also publicly spoke against LGBT people with insults, calling gay people to be excluded from the church.

In general, leadership of the diocese does not comment on the topic of LGBT, nor does it comment on the homophobic statements of their representatives. Tacit approval of nationalist youth action from authoritative individuals among society and the connivance of law enforcement agencies that begin to act years after first signs of crimes against LGBT people, undoubtedly, affect the ubiquity of violence against LGBT people.

The contribution to dissemination of populist statements about the spread of “gay threat” is made by single public figures, for example, by Aleksandr Shchigolev, a former lawyer and human rights activist. In particular, Shchigolev is actively trying to impose the inadmissibility of gay marriage as the agenda, calling all LGBT people and their supporters a fifth column and betrayers [13]. Homophobic rhetoric of this kind has been repeatedly subjected in monitoring.

There are no specially organized associations or initiative groups whose

goal is combating the LGBT community and LGBT movement in the Arkhangelsk region, however, according to media reports, in October 2015, for short period of time there was a public page “Pedophile Arkhangelsk” in a social network “VKontakte” where the owner “announced a hunt” on gay people as well [4]. It’s important to note that by the time this message had coincided with a number of attacks on homosexual men in Arkhangelsk.

Moreover, the Russian Orthodox Church is traditionally characterized with homophobic rhetoric. Thus, in July 2015, Archpriest Evgeny Sokolov, head of the Missionary Department of the Arkhangelsk diocese, commented on the legalization of gay marriage all over the US, claiming, among other things, that “It’s necessary to treat sodomites as seriously mentally sick people. We isolate sick people with typhoid or cholera from the society, send them to the clinic and force them to be treated. People with sodomite inclinations should be isolated from public life. They should be perceived by society as sick people, it’s necessary to encourage them to seek treatment” [34]. Similarly, on the same issue the abbot Theodosius (Nesterov), head of the diocesan Department for Church and Society said: “Homosexuality is fatal to the human soul. No representative of the vicious community is healthy, no matter what anyone says about it” [3].

Co-chairman of Arkhangelsk regional parents’ committee (association that supports strengthening of the “traditional” heterosexual family) Tatyana Richter stated that “the activities of organizations for the protection of the sodomites’ rights has agitational, recruiting character” and said that “aid rehabilitation courses for people with disorientation, which is based on the sobriety of working towards the elimination of child injuries and psychological defenses” developed in Arkhangelsk [2].

Position of authority

In 2015, due to the high-profile anti-corruption scandals in Republic of Komi, machinery of public administration has been almost entirely replaced. At the moment, none of the designated representatives of authorities of the region have spoken on the subject of LGBT publicly. However, the legislative branch, represented by the Council of State of the Republic of Komi (and certain factions of political parties, such as the Communist Party of Russia) continues to support legislative initiatives of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, especially a bill № 916716-6 “On Amendments to the Code of

Administrative Offences of RF (in the part of establishing responsibility for the public expression of non-traditional sexual relations).”

In April 2015, regional LGBT activists addressed a letter to Nadezhda Nikolayevna Bykovskaya, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Republic of Komi. The Commissioner replied to the letter, stating that there were no certain cases of discrimination and human rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The letter also stated that the Commissioner, while considering cases of discrimination or violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens who identify themselves as LGBT community, is guided by Law “On the Human Rights Commissioner in the Republic of Komi.” Gender, sexual orientation, and other features cannot influence the Commissioner’s decisions on human rights while considering resources.

Commenting on the draft law of the Arkhangelsk region, which regulates missionary activities in the region, Lyubov Anisimov, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Arkhangelsk region. noted that the resonance over the draft law is similar to the situation of the discussion of the regional law on a ban of homosexual propaganda among minors: “The objections that come to us from nontraditional confessions speak for themselves. A few years ago, when discussing a law banning gay propaganda, Consul General of the Netherlands visited the Arkhangelsk region. He insisted on a meeting with the Human Rights Commissioner. I was surprised. The whole of our hour and a half meeting concerned only the bill and why we were working so badly with the protection of the citizens’ rights of the corresponding category. There is approximately the same activity over the draft law on missionary today.” [7]

The authorities still continue to refuse to discuss many civil rights, including the rights of LGBT people. General civil public actions don’t lead to discussion and don’t receive full responses from authorities.

LGBT support from the civil society

Political structures of the Republic of Komi and Arkhangelsk region are distanced from the issues related to LGBT people. Civil society of Komi in the face of many human rights organizations openly supports LGBT activists. Activists receive legal, information, and financial support of regional and interregional organizations.

Conclusions

LGBT community is heterogeneous, it lacks the unity and cohesion needed to achieve common goals. LGBT movement is still concentrated in the major administrative center. Community representatives typically stay hidden, choosing not to disclose their LGBT status, don't want to participate in the movement activities, small initiative groups, are afraid of violence from nationalist organizations, random people, relatives, law enforcement agencies, social workers, teachers, and even doctors. Regional government has distanced itself from the actions and statements about the existence of the LGBT community long time ago.

In this regard, those monitoring the human rights violations and discrimination based on SOGI noted the reluctance of many individuals who have been subjected to physical and psychological violence to speak openly about this, go to the police, or contact service organizations for advice. It's still common to "tolerate humiliation" in the region, while the fight for the right not to be discriminated in society is perceived as an act of aggression in relation to "traditional values" and moral "norm."

General information about violations

The following data is a result of a systematic collection of information about human rights violations and discrimination based on SOGI in Arkhangelsk region and the Republic of Komi. The monitoring data are collected from open sources, the media, from victims or witnesses of incidents. A high level of internal homophobia/transphobia and stigmatization of members of the LGBT community makes it impossible to complete monitoring of all cases of violence and rights violations. One should understand that most crimes against LGBT people are left out of the monitoring.

As the information distribution channels for monitoring and collecting information about cases of discrimination are used:

- social networks such as "VKontakte" (information in thematic groups, private messages to participants of previous monitoring, keyword search);
- online dating gay site Hornet; distribution of flyers of LGBT network with contacts and information about the monitoring at the theme parties in clubs;

- information about the monitoring at public LGBT actions;
- websites of friendly human rights organizations and publications in the friendly media;
- other publications in mass media, that often become a source of discrimination and dissemination of xenophobia;
- volunteers' personal contacts with acquaintances: as noted, it's the most effective way to get information about hatred crimes.

During the monitoring period in 2015, nine people were involved as volunteers to participate. Eight meetings with potential volunteers and victims of discrimination were held. Potential volunteers spoke about the questionnaire for recording cases of discrimination, they were familiarized with the list of the incidents types of monitoring methodology. All volunteers received encouragement and gratitude at the end of the monitoring.

Prevalence of cases of human rights violations and discrimination based on SOGI

During the monitoring, 22 cases of human rights violations and discrimination based on SOGI were documented in Arkhangelsk region and 34 cases in the Republic of Komi. Sorting cases of monitoring by type of violations, we can see the following picture.

Table 1. Types of violations

Type of discrimination	Number, Arkhangelsk region	Number, Republic of Komi
Insults	2	5
Illegal use of personal information	-	10
Threats	1	1
Discrimination in labor relations	2	-

Blackmail	2	1
Beating / attack	5	1
Harassment	-	1
Violation of the right to freedom of assembly	11	1
Violation of the right to a fair trial	-	1
Extremism	-	13

Extremism is the most common kind of discrimination against LGBT people in the Republic of Komi. Extremism is understood as actions aimed at inciting hatred or enmity, as well as humiliation of human dignity or group of people on the grounds of SOGI, committed publicly, including using the media or the Internet during demonstrations or marches, public events addressed to a large number of people, an indefinite number of strangers. Such actions can be performed both in the presence of third parties directly, and based on the information reaching third parties later. This category includes not only actions of individuals or groups of people degrading LGBT people during public events of the LGBT community, but also insults and threats committed publicly, including the in media and on the Internet, relating to LGBT as a social group.

Most cases concern activities of extremist nationalist groups who “prey on pedophiles.” In these cases, homosexual victims experience not only attacks, but threats, insults, torture, and other acts of degradation such as publications on the Internet of audio, photo, video, personal correspondence of the victims, and even personal information in order to drag out humiliation and (in some cases) blackmail.

Compared to previous years, when such monitoring was carried out in the region, the number of cases of extremism has increased a lot.

There were documented just a few insults (compared to the other cas-

es). It is explained by the fact that a large number of LGBT people, and not only them, faces verbal psychological abuse. Victims of abuse do not always identify themselves as victims of violence, also they can justify the acts committed against them because of internalized homophobia and transphobia.

It's worth noting that only 20 episodes are known in the Republic of Komi that are related to the activities of criminal homophobic groups, hiding behind "the fight against pedophilia." All cases were accompanied with outing, publication of materials and videos, based on which these actions of members of the "Rubezh Severa" can be qualified as a violation of the privacy of correspondence and private life by a group of extremists. These cases indicate a potential danger for any LGBT person who gets acquainted on the Internet.

Encroachments on life, violence and other degrading treatment

The Republic of Komi

In 2015, degrading materials containing insults, slander, and violent scenes were repeatedly published on the website of news agency "Rubezh Severa." Some of them are mentioned below:

- Publication of January 5, 2015 [24], which contains photos and videos taken in Syktyvkar on the "hunt for pedophiles." Scenes of humiliation and violence against victims were captured in the video;
- Publication of January 14, 2015 [25] with photos and personal correspondence of the victim;
- Publication of January 31, 2015 "Hunters for pedophiles" present: Video "Pervert NN" (hereinafter full names of victims are hidden): video taken in Syktyvkar contains scenes of humiliation and violence against victim;
- Publication of February 3, 2015 [23], which contains photos and videos with insults and slander;
- Publication of February 10, 2015 [26] with photos from "hunting for pedophiles", personal correspondence, and personal data of the victim;
- Publication of February 11, 2015 [39], illustrated by a photograph of the victim where degrading actions were also captured;
- Publication of February 13, 2015 [41] with photos and personal correspondence of the victim;

- Publication of February 28, 2015 [27] a video that was shot in Syktyvkar of “hunting for pedophiles.” Clip contains scenes of humiliation and violence against the victim;
- Publication of March 5, 2015 “Video from the “Hunters for pedophiles: the NN was about to get acquainted with a child, and got ..”: videos and photos, capturing “hunting for a pedophile”, containing scenes of humiliation and violence. Personal correspondence of the victim with a “bait” was also published.

Inaction and arbitrary of law enforcement agencies, violation of the right to a fair trial

The Republic of Komi

On July 12, 2015 in Syktyvkar S. and F., a couple, with their friend Z. went to a themed club to relax and have a drink. After a party the couple with the friend and another six girls stayed near the club to continue communicating. Suddenly the six girls attacked S., F., and Z., cruelly beat them up (victims received bruises, cuts, abrasions, bruises, and broken ribs).

After being beaten up, the girls called the police and filed a report indicating names of the attackers and other details. It’s noteworthy that Z. at the time was undergoing an internship in the police. Attackers were summoned for questioning. They happened to be acquainted with an investigator in the department. In private conversation, the investigator threatened Z. that if they didn’t take away the report, then the internship would be over and there would be other troubles. The girls withdrew the report.

Invasion of privacy

Arkhangelsk region

On October 23, 2015 a woman, A. sought out a consultation for legal advice, who now lives in the village of Kholmogory, in the Arkhangelsk region. A. is a guardian of a minor granddaughter. For a long time, she was in a relationship with a woman B., which, according to A., had already been a reason for the call to the guardianship authorities for a conversation connected with the guardian’s homosexuality. After a break up, B. didn’t get the opportunity to see the granddaughter and sent letters with information about A.’s sexual

orientation to relatives of her current girlfriend. Also B. threatened A. with contacting the guardianship authorities in relation to sexual orientation of A.

The Republic of Komi

In the fall of 2015, R. was subjected to public outing by her classroom teacher. She noticed that R. and her friends often sit close enough to each other, hugging and kissing on the cheek when meeting one another. In the first place the teacher decided to call the girl's parents and told them that their daughter was a "lesbian" and "had developed wrong inclinations." Parents didn't react to the teacher's statement. At school the classroom teacher continues to treat such behavior of students with obvious disapproval.

Violations of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of associations

Arkhangelsk region

Violation of freedom of assembly is the most common kind of discrimination against LGBT people documented in 2015 in the Arkhangelsk region.

The position of Arkhangelsk authorities in relation to any public events connected with LGBT hasn't changed since the time of the adoption of amendments to the law on administrative offenses, establishing responsibility for so-called "propaganda of homosexuality." In fact, provisions of the federal law on public events, prohibiting citizens to organize uncoordinated rallies, marches, demonstrations, and pickets, are used by municipal authorities to counter peaceful gatherings in the city. At the same time, city officials ignore provisions of federal law that do not give public authority the possibility to refuse to harmonize the venue for public events without providing an alternative site for expression and don't consider the purpose of the event as a reason for such refusal. These provisions are confirmed by legal position of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation (see, e.g., Determination of April 2, 2009 № 484-O-P). Judicial authority still benefits from an arbitrary and extremely wide interpretation of para. 4 part 2 of Article 5 of the Federal Law of 29.12.2010 № 436-FZ "On protection of children from information harmful to their health and development" defined as a propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations at any public event concerning LGBT people, which directly contradicts legal views of the Supreme Court (Determination of Au-

gust 15, 2012 on a case № 1-APG12-11) and the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation (Decree of September 23, 2014 № 24-P/2014).

On February 11, 2015 a notice of organizing a picketing on February 25, 2015 from 13:00 to 14:00 at a distance of 20 meters from the entrance to the town hall of Arkhangelsk with the number of participants of 20 people was addressed to the mayor's office in Arkhangelsk. The aim consisted of a wide public dissemination of the findings and conclusions of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, containing in the in the case on the constitutionality of Part 1 of Art. 6.21 of the Administrative Code of the Russian Federation due to citizen's' complaint (N.A. Alekseev, Y.N. Yevtushenko and D.A. Isakov) № 24-P of 23.09.2014, public reading and citation of this judgment [18]. On February 13, 2015 due to a notification of the deputy mayor, head of the machinery, V.S. Garmashov, was asked to change the venue of public events to the park on Leningradsky Avenue between the streets Galushina and Kooperativnaya [15]. The complainant accepted the offer, but on February 24, 2015 the organizer of the public event received a notification from the deputy mayor of Social Affairs, I.V. Orlova, that picketing was illegal due to "the inability to identify the author of the telegram sent to the mayor's office with an adoption of the proposal to change the venue for the meeting, as well as violation of terms of informing about the acceptance of the offer of the authority" [17].

On March 31, 2015 there was filed a notice of organizing seven public events connected with LGBT people, including picketing, calling for international condemnation of the inhuman executions of homosexuals committed by ISIS (an organization banned in Russia), and a rally against discrimination of Arkhangelsk's mayor, Pavlenko, on the basis of SOGI in April 2015 in Arkhangelsk to appeal to the City Hall of Arkhangelsk. On April 2, 2015 due to notifications of deputy mayor for social affairs, Orlova I.V., harmonization of all announced public events was rejected with reference to para. 4 part 2 Art. 5 of the Federal Law of 29.12.2010 № 436-FZ "On protection of children from information harmful to their health and development" in the part of prohibition of dissemination of information among children, promoting unconventional sexual relationships. Actions of Arkhangelsk were disputed in court.

On May 15, 2015 Arkhangelsk Oktyabrsky district court found the actions of the City Hall legal. The court noted: "While making the decision, the court stated that "the principle of respect for human rights must be respected

by the applicants as well in case of expression in the name of the Russian community of gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgender people at rallies, gay parades, and propaganda of their way of life to the public, including children, so the city administration of Arkhangelsk rightly pointed out that the organization of such activities in the central part of the city, where intensive pedestrian traffic takes place, including people with minor children, poses a threat of violation of legally protected rights and interests of children, paired with formation of distorted perceptions of social recognized models of family relations, relevant to a standard in the Russian society (and shared by all traditional religious confessions) moral values, and ideas about marriage, family, motherhood, fatherhood, childhood, that received formal and legal consolidation in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.” The court also said that “during the consideration of the case, the Court wasn’t provided with acceptable evidence that the purpose of announced public events was precisely neutral dissemination of scientific information on homosexual relations, without attracting attention, particularly to homosexuality among minors, creating an attractive image of unconventional sexual orientation.” [35]

Thus, according to the results of the consideration of statements the Court concluded that “the contested decisions are rightly motivated by the need to ensure public interests and protection of morality, including minors.”

The claimant appealed to the Arkhangelsk regional court, which, on September 3, 2015 upheld the decision of the first instance court unchanged, and the filed appeal was unsatisfied.

On July 21, 2015 a notice about organizing gay parade in Arkhangelsk on August 2, 2015 in support of tolerance and respect for the rights and freedoms of people of homosexual orientation and gender minorities in Russia was filed to the city hall of Arkhangelsk [14]. To the organizer of the public event it was reported that the parade would break the law “On protection of children from information harmful to their health and development” [16]. Thus, the city authorities had failed to harmonize the public event, which the organizers later challenged in court, that eventually sided with the city hall, adjudging all of its solutions legal.

In December 2015, the municipal government of Arkhangelsk again denied LGBT activists to the harmonize two public events:

- winter Arkhangelsk gay parade processions in support of tolerance and respect for the rights and freedoms of homosexual people and gender

minorities in Russia with a number of participants up to 100 people;

- rally calling for the adoption of amendments to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation, with the aim of prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity SOGI in labor relations imitating an example of a similar law adopted in Ukraine in November 2015. The rally was to be held at a distance of 20 meters from the entrance to the city hall of the city of Arkhangelsk with the number of participants up to 20 people [36].

Notices of deputy head of a municipality “Arkhangelsk City”, a head of the machinery, S.M. Kovalev, reported the denial of the harmonization of the claimed public events with reference to para. 4 part 2 art. 5 of the Federal Law “On protection of children from information harmful to their health and development” in the part of prohibition of dissemination of information among children, promoting unconventional sexual relationships. Actions of the city hall of Arkhangelsk were challenged in court.

On December 10, 2015 Oktyabrsky district court of Arkhangelsk found actions of the city government legal (case № 2a-10728/2015). The motivational part of the decision contained conclusions similar to the decision of the Oktyabrsky district court of Arkhangelsk on May 15, 2015 in the case № 2-4483/2015. This decision is currently being appealed in the regional court of Arkhangelsk.

- Thus, the practice of applying the provisions of the Federal Law “On protection of children from information harmful to their health and development” in the Arkhangelsk region in 2015, as before, shows that the propaganda ban of “non-traditional sexual relations among minors” aims to not the protection of children, but to the creation of quasi-legal base to counteract any public discussion related to the issue of discrimination based on SOGI. It is confirmed:
- ignoring by public authorities and local government of the Arkhangelsk region, as well as district and regional courts, of the position of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and the European Court of Human Rights;
- violation of freedom of assembly, city hall of Arkhangelsk, evading responsibilities as a public authority to provide the possibility of any peaceful public events in the city and allowing direct violation of Russian law on the organization and conduct of public events.

Republic of Komi

On June 25, 2015 W. and three of her friends (all minors) came to a picket in the center of Syktyvkar, at Stephan Square. The occasion was the day of the rainbow flag. Participants stood near administration building of the head of Republic of Komi, holding a homemade poster on the equality of love. After a while, the police detained all the participants of the picket, and took them to the police station. During the talk in the department, the police questioned the girls about their personal life, trying to scare them with the legislation banning “propaganda of homosexuality”, insisted that they would inform parents and school. “They said that we were little stupid kids and something about God...”, “tried to find out about our personal life.” Participants of the picket didn’t appeal to anyone for assistance about the illegal detention. The police didn’t inform the parents. It’s unknown whether the police reported about the picket in their school.

Discrimination in labor relations

Arkhangelsk region

In May 2015, strangers (presumably representatives of law enforcement agencies) addressed to the employer, a girl (lesbian), living in Arkhangelsk. These people presented a dossier that explicitly indicated her homosexuality to the girl’s boss. They demanded from the employer to fire the girl, but they were refused. On September 16, 2015 a young woman who worked as a teacher of the elementary grades in school with in-depth study of English in St. Petersburg, was summoned to the principal, where, in the presence of principal’s assistants, she was shown a report allegedly written by one of students’ mothers. The report, among other things, contained false allegations that the girl made unflattering comments about students in a public place. The report informed of the teacher’s homosexuality and her participation in a project of St. Petersburg club for lesbians “Infinity.” The complainant threatened to appeal to the Department of Education. The victim was offered to resign, which she did, and then went back to Novodvinsk.

Extremism and hate speech

Republic of Komi

Materials containing extremism and hate speech were repeatedly published on a website of “Rubezh Severa” news agency in 2015. Let us mention some of them:

- Publications of January 17, 2015 [29], of January 20, 2015 [21] and of January 21, 2015 [42] are illustrated with photos of the “hunt for pedophiles” and contain insulting remarks against a social group on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication of February 5, 2015 [28] is illustrated with a screenshot of a webpage from a social network and contains insulting remarks against a social group on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication of February 11, 2015 [38] contains insulting remarks against a social group on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication of March 14, 2015 [37]. As an illustration, a collage of photos is used for a negative image, including human rights defenders and LGBT people;
- Publications of March 28, 2015 [30] and of March 29, 2015 [20] contain expressions, relating to members of the LGBT community, to incite hatred and humiliation on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication of April 1, 2015 [40] is illustrated with insulting images;
- Publication of April 8, 2015 is a call to come to a hearing of a case of attack on the Protestant meeting. [33] A collage of photos is used as an illustration, including LGBT actions of social networks. The publication was aimed at inciting hatred and humiliation on the basis of religion and SOGI;
- Publication of July 19, 2015 [10], containing insulting remarks against a group of people on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication from July 22, 2015 [1] is illustrated with a picture of an inscription aimed at inciting hatred and humiliation on the basis of SOGI;
- Publication of July 24, 2015 is an excerpt from a book by Alexei Kolegov “Notes of prisoner of conscience.” [19] In the excerpt the author speaks about the LGBT community, specifically equates homosexuals with pedophiles.

All mentioned actions were aimed at inciting hatred, hostility, and humiliation on the basis of SOGI against LGBT people as a social group and were committed publicly using mass media.

Homophobia and transphobia in everyday life: physical violence

Physical abuse includes beating, assault, rape, torture, often accompanied by psychological abuse, threats, and insults.

Arkhangelsk region

In February 2015, a young homosexual man and his roommate, a transgender woman, were beaten by their neighbors for reasons related to SOGI.

On September 12, 2015 a man N. (33 years old), who lives in Arkhangelsk, met young man on the Internet and arranged a meeting. There was group of young people waiting for N. at the street who showed him his correspondence. The man was beaten (as a result, the victim's jaw was broken in two places and two teeth were knocked out). Another man, 29 years old, (an acquaintance of the victim) entered into correspondence with the alleged leader of the attackers and got a threat to life and health. Another attack committed by these people in Arkhangelsk is known, against a man, 30 years old, as well as the attempted attack on a man, 27 years old.

In November 2015, a community "Arhangelsk_Okkupay-pedofilyay" was created on a social network "VKontakte", where the same month screenshots of correspondence with two above-mentioned victims (33 and 27 years old) were posted, as well as links to their pages on the social network. The correspondence contains no information that the victims were to commit sexual acts with people under 16 years old. One can assume that the only motive for the crimes was the homosexual orientation of the victims.

Republic of Komi

On October 2, 2015 N. was riding on a bus. A man sitting next to her saw a rainbow ribbon on her backpack and took another seat. Then, when the man was about to leave, he stood up and spat in the face of the victim. Trying not to attract attention, N. stood up, intending to leave on the next stop. N. noticed that the man in front of her turned out to be drunk: he began falling at

her, loudly saying: “There is a fag”, taking N. for a gay man. The man hit N. in the back. A woman stood up for the victim, saying: “It’s a girl”, after that the man got off the bus and ran away. Since then, the victim fears for her safety, she stopped wearing the ribbon, because she’s afraid that the story would repeat.

Homophobia and transphobia in everyday life: psychological abuse

Primarily psychological abuse includes insults, homophobic language, threats, harassment, and blackmail.

Arkhangelsk region

On October 25, 2015 a 29-year-old man N., living in Severodvinsk, asked for legal advice. A stranger wrote to him in “VKontakte” social network that he would disseminate information about N.’s homosexuality, if he didn’t put 5,000 rubles in a QIWI-wallet account by 5 pm. The next day N. sent a message about the crime (blackmail) to a local police department. At the moment, according to N., a criminal case is being investigated and the alleged perpetrator is hiding from the police.

In November 2015, a young man who lives in Arkhangelsk, while hospitalization was subjected to homophobic abuse by members of the ambulance and medical facility personnel.

Republic of Komi

In February 2015, the employee of a logistics company in Syktyvkar, where L. was a manager, spoke to the victim’s face: “I hate you, I would destroy all of you”, insulted her and threatened her. L. apprehended it as a real threat because she guessed that the employee became aware of her sexual orientation. Previously, the employee told L. that his father was a homosexual, adding that “those should be destroyed.” The offender continues to work as a seller in the same firm. The victim did not address anywhere.

In the spring of 2015 (a victim couldn’t remember the exact date) in the small town of Verhnyaya Maksakovka (Syktyvkar), Q. met several young men, one of whom was acquainted with Q. According to this acquaintance, the boys were members of the “Rubezh Severa.” Q. didn’t explain how they

became aware of the victim's orientation; perhaps they acted based on a tip from a mutual friend. The boys began to insult Q., threaten him, and, according to Q., "to instruct him on the right path." On June 10, 2015 on the website "7x7" at personal blogs section Alexander Shchigolev left some offensive homophobic comments about LGBT activist, Vyacheslav Slusarev. Alexander Shchigolev, who has previously been noted in monitoring of discrimination, is notable for homophobic behavior and hatred towards LGBT people.

On June 17, 2015 a young man wrote to the regional office of the LGBT network in Komi and introduced himself as G. He lives in the village of Usogorsk, Udorsky area. "Hello, my name is G., I'm 17 years old. And recently I was approached by people from "Rubezh Severa." They catch pedophiles and homosexuals... and they told me: "I'm from "Rubezh Severa." Do you still want to meet me with your photos? Live, be happy, and don't get caught by us, kid" a quote from online chat mamba. I am now very scared to go out. I'm afraid. I have been crying for three hours. Can you please tell me what to do???" This case was qualified as harassment.

On September 5, 2015 in a blog section of the "BNKomi" news agency website Vladislav Plastinin published a post "Let's take the sick person to a funny farm?" [32]. A victim, Ivan Noritsyn, an LGBT public representative, is going to report to the police on the fact of abuse and threats.

On December 4-6, 2015 on the website "7x7" Alexander Shchigolev insultingly remarked about an LGBT activist, Vyacheslav Slusarev, in comments section to some articles. In particular, Shchigolev humiliated the victim's sexual orientation, mental abilities, and personal life in the comments. Later, all the comments were deleted either by the author himself, or by an administrator. On December 10, 2015 on the website "7x7" in the personal blogs section Vladislav Plastinin published an insulting post about an activist, Ivan Noritsyn [31]. The publication contains offensive language, upon which Noritsyn is going to report to the police.

2.2. Tomsk and Omsk regions

Situation overview in the region

According to Russia's state statistics, in the beginning of 2015, more than 1.9 million people lived in the Omsk region, more than 800 thousand people lived in the regional center, and the number of LGBT people in the area (assuming about 3-5%) is estimated to be about 76 thousand. About 1 million people lived in the Tomsk region, while there were more than 700 thousand people in the regional center. From the same calculation the number of representatives of the LGBT community would be about 40 thousand.

Considering the specifics of each region, it should be noted that despite common geographical location (both are located in the south of Western Siberia), they differ significantly in people's attitude toward the LGBT community. In general, in both regions, the societal attitude is negatively set against LGBT people, but in Omsk (it's closer to the south and the border with Kazakhstan) people are more aggressive to any perception of otherness. Fairly strong negative attitude is also connected with other factors.

A characteristic feature of the LGBT community of Omsk region is the organization of local events focused on individual groups. Public actions are not common.

The quality of information people have access to also affects awareness of the LGBT population in the region. The reliability and the methods of delivery for such information affect attitudes towards LGBT individuals. The more stereotyped information is, the higher the risk of aggressive attitudes towards LGBT people.

There are many students in Tomsk and the vast majority of the population is the youth. Therefore, it can be assumed that its citizens are more loyal.

The adoption of federal law on the "prohibition of propaganda" certainly has a negative impact on all regions. In fact, it allows individuals and law enforcement to pursue and insult LGBT people and cause them physical and moral damage with impunity. The law has had three major impacts on the community:

1. cases of discrimination against LGBT have become more frequent;
2. the LGBT community has become more closed and less active, particularly in remote regions.

3. difficulties with the direct provision of assistance to minors have been experienced.

It should be noted that, despite the overall decline in LGBT activities, it has not stopped entirely. Certain activists, including members of the LGBT community and supportive heterosexuals, are ready to defend their rights and the rights of others.

Remote areas from the capital can be attributed to this indirect discrimination factor. Its influence is associated with the opinion of the existence of the LGBT community exclusively in the capital, the attitude being that: "LGBT - it is somewhere out there, not here."

There are two anti-gay groups in Omsk: "Svoimi silamy" ("By own strength") and "Okkupay-pedofilyay." Actions of both groups are connected with a fight against pedophilia through stigmatization and equating homosexuals with pedophiles. The group "Okkupay-pedofilyay" has long existed in the regions, but was generally not very active on the Internet. Despite this, there were cases reported including representatives of the group in the monitoring of the reporting period. Separate groups of three or four people periodically appear who find victims online and meet with them for the purpose of blackmail or robbery.

The activity of the LGBT community in these regions is mainly limited to their territories regional offices (Omsk and Tomsk). Omsk regional office is more active in terms of activities for the LGBT community. It is related to a permanent location on the basis of the "Pulsar" project and to more stringent environmental conditions. Negative sentiments in the community result in reciprocal LGBT community action - namely, its consolidation. More than 50% of employees of "Pulsar" project identify as an LGBT target group and some of them are also the activists of the regional LGBT movement. In Tomsk the activity is lower which can be linked to different interests of representatives of the community and greater access to resources. LaSky project exists independently, simultaneously working with the regional office, and is aimed at prevention of HIV infection and sexually transmitted infections among men who have sex with men. Part of the project staff is involved in the region's LGBT movement.

There are also Federation branches of LGBT Sports of Russia in the region, that conduct sports activities. In Omsk, the project "Laverna" is being

developed with specific focus the T-community. Individuals conduct their own thematic meetings, parties, rainbow weekends and other similar events.

Club life in cities goes it's own way. There are no permanent premises in Omsk and themed parties are often held in rented clubs. In Tomsk, there are two clubs with permanent premises. Despite this difference, in both cities the administration of clubs doesn't avoid making, places informative materials for a period of parties, and actively cooperates with outreach workers.

Cases of discrimination and violence in 2015

The situation of the LGBT community and crimes committed against them, as described below, only partly reflect the state of the regions. Due to circumstances related to human factors (unwillingness to report crimes, fear of publicity, belittling the significance of problems, etc.), it was not possible to cover all cases of hate crimes against The LGBT community.

36 cases of discrimination that contain 138 different types of violations were recorded during the reporting period. Most of them are connected with the use of hate speech. This is due to the strongly negative societal attitude towards LGBT people and internalized homophobia among the community. The use of hate speech against members of their own group aggravates homophobia in society.

The most frequent cases are hate speech and insults, present in 28 cases out of 36 (77,8% of cases). In general, this reflects the negative attitudes towards the LGBT community.

Threats are identified in 18 cases out of 36 (50%). Threats are most often associated with other homophobic actions, such as insults or physical violence. While physical violence is not usually followed by threats, threats were used simultaneously with physical violence and/or insults. This implies that while a threat is a violation in itself, its use alone often leads to more serious crimes against LGBT community. Threats are often empty words, but they are psychologically damaging and used to humiliate and intimidate.

Physical violence is identified in 11 cases out of 36 (30,6%). Most of the cases were detected in Omsk, including street attacks on individuals and groups (of two people and more). One of the examples is a situation when a young man left his house in the evening to buy cigarettes and was beaten at neighboring porch by a crowd of men, similar to nationalists. Physical vi-

olence against members of the LGBT community in Omsk is connected with operating separate homophobic groups in the region.

Five particular cases of physical violence were recorded in Tomsk. One of them happened to an activist with rainbow bike. In the evening in the city center on the site of the gathering of bikers a young man was kicked multiple times in the feet. The conflict arose as a result of skirmishes between the activist and bikers. In other cases, community representatives didn't provoke aggression and didn't interact with offenders, physical violence arose from society's inadequate perception of LGBT people and the stigmatization of their behavior or from greed.

Harassment and bullying make up 36.1% of the incidents. As in the case of threats, they were used in conjunction with other types of violations. If threats were one-off, victims were exposed to harassment/bullying continuously. This situation leads to severe psychological oppression and subsequently may affect the health of the victim(s). For this reason, in such cases the victims were offered psychological support.

The following offenses were also noted:

- property damage;
- discrimination in the labor sphere;
- violation of parental rights;
- violation of the right to freedom of expression;
- violation of the right to freedom of assembly;
- violation of the right to adequate medical care;
- unlawful detention / arrest;
- denial of access to goods and services;
- threatening behavior;
- other types of offenses.

Property damage was recorded in seven cases. It was connected with robbery or theft, and, in most cases was combined with physical violence.

Discrimination in the field of labor law was found in one case and it wasn't connected with any of other types of violations.

Violation of parental rights noted in Tomsk. All the cases are linked to

one man, his ex-wife and their child. The ex-wife, after having learned that the victim was gay, forbade him to see his child and insulted and harassed her ex-husband.

Violation of the rights to express opinions affected public actions. Violations are related to a refusal of local authorities to provide a venue for street actions and the unlawful detention and arrest of their members. The latter type is described in two cases, one of which is connected with conducting a single picket. One case of discrimination in violation of the rights to freedom of assembly is connected with a public event. An activist filed a notice of street action dedicated to the Day of Silence to the administration of Omsk. After reviewing this notice, the applicant was contacted by the police and they offered him to come in for a talk. Police representatives came to a public organization, where the victim was a volunteer. They also contacted the victim's parents in an attempt to make an appointment to clarify why he had decided to carry out such an action. The applicant refused to meet. Later, on March 27, an official response arrived with a refusal to organize the event from the city administration.

One case involves a violation of the right to receive adequate medical care. The victim appealed to a private clinic, "Euromed," in connection with toe pain after a sports event. The traumatologist rudely specified the biological gender of the client. Then, he continued to harass the victim, saying: "Girls cannot play football, they better stay at home and cook. Otherwise they become to look like homosexuals." During the examination, the traumatologist repeatedly made homophobic comments towards the victim. The client ultimately needed surgery for the injury, but the doctor refused to use an anesthetic injection, arguing that because the client looked like a man, she would be able to endure the pain like a man. After the surgery and bandaging the doctor repeatedly insisted that the cause of fractures was "homosexuality."

Hate speeches were considered within the context of discriminatory actions for the entire LGBT community. Four identified cases in Omsk may indicate that the majority of society adheres to an aggressive and negative position against LGBT people in general and not necessarily it's individual members.

There were elements and other types of offenses in 16 cases, leading to further negative consequences for the victims. These include theft and/or robbery, extremism, sexual coercion, harassment, slander, spreading of neg-

ative stereotypes, calls to violence, heterosexist remarks, statements about the inferiority of LGBT as a group, claims denigrating LGBT, and blackmail.

During the reporting period there were no reported killings, sexual violence, discrimination in the field of housing rights, violations of the rights to freedom of association, or refusals to change a name and/or documents for transgender people.

Conclusions

During the reporting period 36 cases of discrimination and violence against LGBT community were documented, including 138 types of highlighted incidents. Such number of incidents in relation to the cases is connected with the fact that one case can include up to 15 types of violations. The maximum number of types corresponding to one recorded case in the reporting period is seven, the minimum is one.

As a basis we took the main type of offense, which was used as the most serious form of discrimination. In most cases the main type of offense has been burdened with additional, sometimes leading to more serious consequences for the victim.

The specifics and geographical position of the regions determine the attitude of its inhabitants to all discriminated groups, and government policy related to the LGBT community aggravates the difficult situation for LGBT people in the country.

2.3. Tyumen region and Perm region

Situation overview in the regions

Perm region

Population of the Perm region is 2,637 million people (2015, Russia's state statistics); the estimated number of LGBT people in the region is about 131,8 thousand people. Mostly they tend to migrate to big cities and the regional center, as there is more chance of finding support, work and social acceptance.

Infrastructure for the LGBT community in the Perm region is recreational and concentrated in big cities, mainly in Perm, which is mostly a closed community but is represented mainly by a small number of gay clubs. In Perm there are three clubs which often host some themed parties. The LGBT community online is represented by several groups: as a rule, these are closed groups in social networks, created with the purpose of contact, acquaintance, and communication.

There are two HIV-service organizations working in the Perm region: Perm Regional Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS and Infectious Diseases and the project of non-commercial partnership “Anti-drug program”, “Provision of non-medical services to people living with HIV/AIDS in Perm and the Perm region.” According to the Perm Regional Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS, in 2015 there are 21,197 people living with HIV/AIDS in the Perm region. Today none of the HIV service organizations work separately with LGBT as a risk group, a direction that requires development.

Tyumen region

The population of the Tyumen region is 3,581 million people, urban population is 79.93% (2015, Russia’s state statistics). It can be assumed that there are between 107 to 179 thousand LGBT people in the region. It is important to note the administrative and territorial features of the area: settlements are quite distant from each other and there are few big cities (Tyumen – 697 thousand, Surgut – 340,8 thousand, Nizhnevartovsk - 268.5 thousand, and the remaining cities - 125 thousand or less). Such specificity is one of the conditions that complicates coordination in the region and integration of LGBT people in the community that supports the invisibility of the social group in the public space. The main locations of leisure activities for the LGBT community is within the gay night club scene. In 2015 these clubs were closed for six months, and then returned to work when a new institution was build. In general, the LGBT community in Tyumen and the Tyumen region is closed and does not want to attract attention, choosing to remain anonymous when possible.

There is a HIV service organization “Center for Prevention and Control of AIDS” in Tyumen that is ready to cooperate with LGBT activists. According to the monitoring of Rospotrebnadzor (Russian Federal Service for Surveillance

on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing), 43,379 people living with HIV and AIDS are recorded in the Tyumen region.

LGBT movement in the region

Perm region

LGBT action in the region is represented by the following initiatives: The Perm branch of the Russian LGBT Network and the initiative group “Rainbow World.” There is a community center in the city that provides psychological and legal assistance to LGBT people, as well as their relatives and friends. LGBT people can also visit outreach activities in the center: seminars, lectures, and discussions on current topics. Activities of the community center are aimed at improving legal and psychological safety of LGBT people and their families and consultations are held by appointment. Assistance is provided to adult citizens, mostly living in Perm, while inhabitants of the region are almost deprived of the opportunity to receive assistance or to find support. LGBT minors are especially vulnerable due to the difficulty to find support because LGBT organizations are afraid to help them.

Tyumen region

The region has the Tyumen regional branch of the Russian LGBT Network and the NGO “Raduzhniy Dom” (“Rainbow House”) that are not officially registered. On the social network “VKontakte” there are 657 people in the “Rainbow House” community. The main activities of the organization and the regional office are aimed at creating a safe environment for members of the community through maintenance of work of a community center, education on legal literacy, mental health, and well-being. Also, there are services of legal and psychological assistance. They were actively working with transgender people throughout the year of 2015.

Anti-LGBT movement

Perm region

There are groups in social networks that publish threats, insults and hate speeches against LGBT people. So called “society cleaners” have unfortu-

nately began to appear more often recently. They mistreat LGBT individuals, using their vulnerability against them. They lure and blackmail men, extort money, physically attack them, and threatened with outing them to their family or place of work. Several cases were reported in Berezniki, Perm region.

Tyumen region

Tyumen public organization “Parent-teachers’ association” designate as an objective “the defense of traditional family values” and “the protection of children from unwanted information.” The organization acts openly against “Rainbow House.”

In 2013, after carrying into effect of the law on the “propaganda of homosexuality,” the topic of the LGBT community is not brought up in Tyumen mass media. By LGBT-friendly journalists, who worked on leading information portals, it was reported that the news office banned any coverage of issues related to LGBT subjects. This lack of acknowledgement increases LGBT invisibility, as well as the lack of recognition of their problems and needs.

Also the members of the “Okkupay-pedophilyay” movement previously worked in Tyumen. In late 2014 we received information that in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug there are groups of the same orientation. Cases with similar scenarios are presented below.

Position of authorities

Perm region

The negative position of authorities regarding to the work of LGBT organizations in the region goes mostly unnoticed, but at the same time the LGBT initiatives are under a lot of pressure. On the one hand, the initiative group “Rainbow World” and the Perm branch of the Russian LGBT Network coordinated the conduct of the rainbow flash mob with the city administration on 17 of May in 2015. On the other hand, prosecutors and police came twice in September to check if the community center violates “propaganda of homosexuality” law.

Tyumen region

Tyumen administration prohibits any public events related to LGBT theme and refuses to agree to picketing events, referring to the inaccurate information in the text of the statements. These refusals are illegal.

Educational and labor field (Bullying, hate speech, violation of labor law) - 13 cases

During the monitoring, discrimination cases were documented in the educational and labor fields. As a rule, these are related to abuse and harassment by the members of the working or educational groups including hate speech against LGBT people. Also in this category we have included the violation of labor rights, such as dismissal or denial of employment because of SOGI.

Two cases are documented where people with higher status (such as a manager or a teacher) express a negative and contemptuous attitude towards LGBT people. It is important to note that such statements from authority figures can legitimize and encourage discrimination of LGBT for other people who take up lower position in the social hierarchy.

In one of these situations, the co-workers of a transgender woman found her profile on the social network and discovered her transgender status. Due to this, she is excluded from meetings, people avoid talking to her entirely or are rude, they joke behind her back, and refuse to sit with her in the dining room. She feels extremely uncomfortable and fears for her safety.

In the field of education and labor, harassment is the most common by the educational/working group. There are five recorded cases documented. Situations of bullying arose after the educational/working group (and neighbors in the dorm) became aware of a person belonging to the LGBT community. As a result, victims were excluded from overall group interactions, insulted, and ridiculed. In some cases, victims were threatened with physical violence. In one of the cases, the active bullying from the employees and superiors concluded in the victim being asked to resign, saying that a more competent worker was found for his position. The dismissal was accompanied by inappropriate insults. Instead of being given his salary, the employee and his parents were threatened and the victim did not receive his money.

There are two other cases in which threats from strangers were docu-

mented. In one of them, an anti-LGBT blogger waylaid a transgender woman outside of her office, insisting that she talk to him and threatening her with outing at work. The victim took stranger's visiting card out of fear of the possible consequences of outing. In another case, a transgender man, a teacher at the university, became a victim. He had developed a close relationship with an adult student and when the student's father learned about their relationship, he threatened both the victim as well as his daughter with physical violence should their communication continue. The student's father called victim a lesbian and accused him of molestation. The victim was scared and wrote a report to the police, but he quickly took it back. Later, the student's father came to the university at which the victim worked to complain about the teacher to the administration and insist on his dismissal. Shortly before the end of the fixed-term contract the university administration told the victim that they had found another specialist for his position, although there had been no complaints on how the victim did his job previous to the situation. The rector threatened to fire him if the incident were to get publicity in the mass media. Currently the victim is unemployed.

Another case was documented that is related to the refusal to work. In this case, a transgender woman wanted to get a job in a chain store. The administrator remembered that they had already met a year ago, when the woman attempted to get hired at another store of the same network, where she was offered to complete an internship. The woman had to submit the needed documents, but her documents did not match her physical appearance, leading the administrator to question and insult her gender identity. This time the administrator said that her candidacy was not appropriate for the same reasons.

13 cases were documented in the category: hate speech - 2, harassment/bullying - 5, threats - 3, violations of labor laws - 3. Additionally, it should be noted that the most vulnerable group are transgender people (7 cases out of 13).

Internet and mass media - 10 cases

Discriminatory practices in the field of information are also quite common. In this category we listed cases related to personal messages on the media networks, hate speech, defamation, and attempts to discredit the activities of LGBT organizations.

In one case, the victim received a message on a social network from an unknown user with insults based on sexual orientation.

In the other two cases, hate speeches on social networks were documented. The reason for the sharply negative comments about the LGBT community was the announcement of a film in one of the youth centers (a homosexual relationship was featured in the film) and an incorrect article about pansexuality at the city information website. In the first case, a youth center was blamed for the so-called “propaganda of homosexuality.”

Events related to LGBT topics, published in open sources, often results in a sharply negative public reaction and angry messages full of insults against LGBT people are published on the web sites. This kind of “informing” is used to put pressure on the organizers of the event and those who assist them, in particular in the provision of space. The day before the Rainbow flash mob on 17th of May, Perm branch of the Communist party published calls to “take measures to stop sodomy” on their public page; therefore Perm administration asked activists not to carry out the planned activities. Nevertheless, activities took place and passed without any incident.

By means of social networking sites, negative information about the scientific research conference on genders and personal insults directed at the college’s teacher and gender researcher were spread. University administration, on the basis of which the conference was held, strengthened security for the duration of the conference, but decided to abstain from activities on this topic in future.

“Bok o bok” (“side by side”) festival’s film screening was also accompanied by informational pressure on the space owner. The event took place peacefully in the planned location, but the organizers worried that such pressure could lead to a denial of cooperation in the future.

Opening of the community center for LGBT people in Perm also lead to hate speeches in the mass media and social networks. It was mentioned in mass media that the center’s activity is illegal and also that the center would “recruit new members, despite the ban.” Unwanted interest in the organization’s work increased because of this.

An anti-LGBT activist from Perm regularly writes negative articles on his LiveJournal blog, where he often outs local celebrities, accusing them of pedophilia and drug use. After each published post he also writes formal

complaints about the people he accuses to the prosecutor's office. It is known that this activist filed a complaint against the community center for LGBT people, accusing it of seducing minors as well as discrediting the honor and dignity of its employees and staff.

The information about the police and the prosecutor's inspection of the community center also contributed to the spread of hate speeches against the LGBT community. In one of the most popular city communities in the social network "VK" there were homophobic statements and incitements to violence from the members of the community and its administration.

11 registered cases in total include: personal messages - 1, hate speeches - 9, defamation - 3.

Organized attacks, manipulations and Internet threats (websites and dating communities) - 3 cases

Such attacks are in a separate category in order to emphasize the importance of the problem: such offence schemes are quite common and in most cases the violators do not face any consequences.

In all cases the attacker went through a dating site or dating community in social network to gain access to victims. In one of the cases the victim was taken during a meeting in a deserted place and beaten. The victim suffered multiple bruises, a concussion, contusion of the soft tissues of the face, and a broken nose. He also had his money and phone stolen. After the attack the victim went to a trauma center as well as to the police. A criminal case under article of "hooliganism" was initiated, although hate motive didn't appear in the case.

In another case the attackers held the victim in the car against his will, threatening him with outing and imprisonment for "pedophilia." The attackers showed the victim a passport of a person who was born in 1997, covering the name and picture as evidence of the alleged pedophilia. They forced the victim to fill their car with gas for 1,000 rubles and to withdraw money from an ATM (7,000 rubles) and give it to them before releasing the victim. Identities of some of the attackers were established through social network. Despite the recommendation of a lawyer, the victim refused to appeal to law enforcement authorities for fear of outing and its possible social consequences (insults, humiliation by the police).

In another case, the victim arranged to meet with a 17 year old but instead he met two men who wore camouflage suits, masks, and carried weapons. They threatened the victim with imprisonment for pedophilia and physical violence. During the attack, the victim fell to the ground and dropped his cell phone which was taken by the attackers. They planted drugs on the victim, blaming him for drug-trafficking. The victim was kicked in the face and then the attackers gave him five seconds to get up and run away, during which he finally was able to escape the scene of attack. Later, the victim went to the police, where he encountered more discrimination.

The latter case in this category differs from the others. The victim was offered to provide sex for money on a dating website, to which he agreed. After the initial meeting he began to receive threats of outing and physical violence against him, as well as blackmail attempts. After consultation with a lawyer, the victim decided not to go to law enforcement agencies.

The anonymity of online resources and discriminatory laws allow criminals to get away with their behavior: victims don't go to law enforcement agencies for the fear of possible consequences.

In total, four cases were documented in this category that include threats of physical violence and disclosure of the victim's sexual orientation; property of victims were taken by attackers in three cases, physical violence was used in two cases.

Actions against the community center - 4 cases

This category of offenses includes cases where individuals purposefully put obstacles in the way of or interfered with the effective work of the community center for LGBT people.

One such case was registered in Tyumen: five aggressive anti-LGBT people attended a seminar on the history of feminism. They interfered with the event, laughed at hosts' speeches, interrupted them, and tried to provoke a conflict. During the discussion, two of them rudely accused those in charge of the seminar of being "pro-Western ideas" and stated that members of the LGBT community and feminists "undermine the Russian culture and the development of Russia."

In mid-October an employee of a local law enforcement agency came to a community center volunteer's workplace (in one of the educational in-

stitutions), asking questions about how she was related to the project for LGBT rights and threatening her with dismissal. After the meeting, she was so frightened that she refused to attend any future events or to continue to work with the LGBT organization.

After a series of accidents, the work of the community center for LGBT people in Perm stopped. An anti-LGBT activist, mentioned earlier, appealed to the General prosecutor's office a statement that community center "is the LGBT community" and accused them of involving minors in their work. In the explanation to the statement he gave fictitious information that offends the dignity of employees and collaborators of the project. This statement led to the prosecutor's check. Cooperation with the authorities during the inspection is described below.

Discrimination by public authorities - 5 cases

This category is a separate category of cases related to the interaction with the authorities, including the city administration, the registrar's office, prosecutors, and the police.

Tyumen Administration regularly rejects applications for public events. In September of 2015 a notice of picketing was filed and made out in accordance with all known legal requirements. Despite this, Tyumen administration expressed doubts that the organizers would be able to ensure public order because measures that would ensure order were not described in the notification. This denial was illegal, since ensuring order during an event of this size is the duty of the law enforcement agencies, not those putting on the event.

There is one documented case of a transgender person's appeal to the Tyumen registrar to change their sex and name on their passport. The application was accompanied by copies of the conclusion of the psychiatric commission that showed F.64.0 diagnosis "Transsexualism" and the conclusion of the endocrinologist, evidencing the hormonal sex change from female to male. The applicant's claims were denied due to the fact that the form of document on gender reassignment issued by the medical institution was not included. (As it is known, a standard form certificate does not exist.) Refusal was successfully appealed in court and the data was modified in the applicant's demand. The lack of a transparent civilian sex change procedure

is a major gap in Russian legislation: registrar offices refuse to change documents without a court order or a medical document confirming sex reassignment surgery, which is also illegal. The Legal Assistance for Transgender People Project gathered a large database of such cases.

In September, prosecutor's assistant and two police officers entered the building of Perm community center, accompanied by an electrician under the pretext of repairs. In the building was a community center's activist and officers asked her questions about what organization was located there, not allowing her to work or to move freely around the building for a few hours. The officers threatened her with arrest and inspected belongings and documents in the office without any legitimate reason. The activist asked about the reasons for the visit and legitimacy of discovery of documents. Officers said that they came at the request of the citizen who filed the application (As explained above). One of the officers rewrote titles of all books that were in the office but didn't let activist to read them, mocking her and making a scene. Three hours later, prosecutors and police left the building.

A few days later, 14 people raided the community center office, some of them wearing police uniforms. Supposedly, they were able to gain access to the building and the office inside using a universal intercom key. There were four visitors and one activist in the building. People were put against the wall; police took their means of communication and any means by which people may have recorded their behavior including video cameras. After that, a prosecutor's assistant and a deputy prosecutor started questioning people, ordered them to show documents, forcing people to write explanations of what they were doing there, and refusing to explain the subject of the inspection. At the same time police officers, who accompanied prosecutors, began to inspect documents in the room, scatter them, harass the representatives, insult the LGBT community, and ignore comments from other people. Without any official permission or the filing of proper documents, prosecutors used threats to confiscate personal computers of activists and one of the visitors and inspect files on them. They also illegally confiscated all books out of the room. Two hours later, law enforcement officers left. Before leaving, they told the activists that they were going to visit the community center until its last day of work. As a result, the initiative group had to leave the building and temporarily suspend the activities of the project.

The organization itself as well as an activist personally appealed to the

prosecutor's office asking about the legitimacy of the actions in both visits, and were answered that: violations or abuse of authority were not found in the actions of prosecutors and police.

Street threats and attacks - 2 cases

Both offenses took place on the street. In both cases, the attackers assumed the sexuality of victims by their appearance.

In the first case, a young man with a slightly unconventional appearance (dreadlocks, tattoos) was returning home. This appearance drew the attention of two men on the street. They began to make negative comments about the victim's appearance and shouting insults. At first the victim ignored the shouts, but later, frightened, ran towards his house. Strangers caught up with him and threatened him with physical and sexual violence. At the same time a police patrol happened to be passing by. Police asked if everything was okay and the victim said it wasn't. While police spoke to the attackers, the victim ran to his house. At the entrance he noticed that attackers ran after him but he managed to run inside and close the door. The victim was emotionally impacted from the fear and stress of the attack and he asked for psychological assistance.

In the second case, two friends were returning from a party when they were attacked. One of them was hit hard in the head while the other got off with a few bruises. The attackers shouted obscene curses and threats toward the victims. The victims then called the police. The police officers explained that the victims were passing by a gay club without knowing it, and the attackers thought victims were a gay couple. One victim wrote a statement to the police, since the injury caused harm to his health. The second asked for psychological help.

Violations due to coming out - 4 cases

Situations related to coming out often lead to difficulties for members of the LGBT community. Four cases related to the consequences of disclosure of SOGI were recorded during the monitoring. Three of them are related to family relationships.

1. Parents forbade their daughter to communicate with friends and put her under house arrest due to disclosure of her bisexual orientation. Parents

became more aggressive in communication with their daughter and her sister stopped talking to her completely. Later, the house arrest was lifted, but parents still refused to discuss the subject and withdrew from their daughter.

2. A grandmother asked her granddaughter about her personal life to which the girl honestly answered that she was a lesbian. The grandmother reacted extremely negatively. She told her granddaughter that it is a perversion to be gay and that lesbians should be burned at the stake. The grandma demonstratively threw away an LGBT information brochure. They don't talk now because the girl feels pressure and hostility from the grandmother.
3. In this case the victim dated a girl from the university. She also had a relationship with a man at the same time. When the guy found out about the girl, he began to chase the victim and beat her, as well as asking a friend to call her and threaten her. The victim left the university because she could not avoid threats and harassment. After this incident, coming out to relatives as lesbian was an attempt for her to find support. However, after coming out to her family, her grandmother stopped talking to her and now the victim is only supported by her mother.
4. D. came out to a friend from university as transgender. Later on, people from the university found out about D. being transgender and one of the students wrote her message with threats of physical violence. D. happened to be out of town at the time of the threats, but when she came home, she avoided visiting the university entirely out of fear.

In one case, a woman was subjected to taunts and rudeness from her gynecologist after the disclosure of her sexual orientation. As a result, she left the office without passing examination or obtaining medical advice even though she had prepaid those services in full.

In another case, a transgender woman was denied boarding on a train, as the conductor suspected her for falsifying documents due to her appearance. The victim had to wait several hours at the police station until her father arrived and confirmed her identity. She had to return the tickets with retention of the cost and buy them again for a different date.

In both of the above cases, the victims experienced psychological distress and suffered financial losses due to the refusal of service.

Conclusions

During the monitoring in the Tyumen region and in Perm, there were 44 cases of violence and discrimination based on SOGI registered in 2015.

The most common offenses take place in the educational and labor sphere (insults, bullying and labor law violations). This indicates that representatives of the LGBT community are still in small social groups, often facing rejection and aggression that either makes it difficult to study and work or makes it impossible to do so.

It is also noted that Internet resources are often used for organizing attacks and for the dissemination of hate speeches against LGBT people. Manipulative and malicious schemes are arranged in such way that the victims will not seek help for fear of stigmatization and other serious consequences.

People act openly against LGBT people and groups in these regions. Anti-LGBT activists use the law of “propaganda of homosexuality” as their weapon and as justification for violence. Local authorities support this activity and often organize inspections, violating the rules of its conduct.

Individual cases with consequences of coming out, threats, attacks, and denial of service may be considered as indicators of the general level of rejection of LGBT people by the larger population.

In general, the situation in the regions is adverse: hate speeches are widespread, physical violence against LGBT people often takes place, and local authorities hinder the work of LGBT organizations, making it difficult to provide psychological support and legal assistance to those who need it in a timely manner.

2.4. Krasnodar Krai and Astrakhan region

Overview

According to the statistics of 2015, there are 1,021 million inhabitants in the Astrakhan region and 5,404 million inhabitants in Krasnodar Krai. Students without registration and adults who came from less economically developed regions in search of work are not taken into account. Based on the ratio of the LGBT community to the mass of the population at 3%, we can

assume that there are about 30.5 thousand LGBT people in the Astrakhan Region and about 162 thousand in the Krasnodar Krai.

LGBT people are trying to move from rural regions to city centers, as even by hiding their “unusual” SOGI from other people, they are still at risk: compactness of living in small towns makes their communication and relationships extremely public.

There are two groups in Astrakhan that support the LGBT community: Astrakhan regional branch of the Russian LGBT Network, that is also known as “Mi” (“We”) and the “Garmonia” (“Harmony”) club (both are not working temporarily), also there is the “220V” gay club. There are specialized communities in the social network “VKontakte” and Bluesystem site. There are no so-called “pleshki” in town, but rarely LGBT people can be found at the old “pleshka” near a monument to Kirov.

Protection of LGBT rights in Krasnodar Krai is engaged in the Russian LGBT Network and “Revers” (“Reverse”) group. There are three major gay bars and several small snack bars. There are much more thematic groups on the Internet, but people prefer to use fake profiles, being afraid of publicity. The reasons are disapproval, condemnation, and disgust for the LGBT community from relatives, colleagues, friends, and classmates. Aggression towards LGBT people has increased since the release of the so-called “anti-gay” law. The law made LGBT community visible, but turned it into a target for individual and group attacks, aggression, and provocations.

The majority of the society of the region does not have adequate information about SOGI or the problems of the LGBT community, which indicates a low legal and political culture of the population. The LGBT community gradually migrates to the large towns and mega-cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg). Earlier, the Astrakhan branch of the Russian LGBT Network collaborated with the local AIDS center, which was ready to provide the premises and carry out preventive conversations about HIV and AIDS, but the collaboration ceased due to poor awareness of doctors on the subject of LGBT people and practices (they were talking about “unnatural” sexual relationships between people of the same sex). There is a group in Krasnodar Krai which tests people for HIV and spreads information on prevention of HIV.

It is important to note the reasons that prevented the collection of materials on human rights violations and discrimination against the LGBT

community in the region. Firstly – closeness of the LGBT community in the region, which was reflected in the fear of asking for help and SOGI revelation. LGBT people are afraid of stigmatization as well as physical violence against them and their families. Secondly – lack of understanding of the importance of collecting such information and bringing it to the public and local authorities by LGBT community. Thirdly – lack of cooperation from the local authorities, which are simultaneously monitored human rights violations on ethnic, racial, and religious grounds. For example, in Krasnodar Krai any report to the police about the attack on LGBT people, even teenagers, entails resistance from authorities (proved by monitoring volunteers). Reports on the activities of aggressive groups who commit violence against LGBT (“Okkupay-pedofilyay” and some other unnamed groups) are accepted, but nothing else happens.

Status of the LGBT movement in the regions

In 2011 in Astrakhan the first initiative group “Mi” (“We”) appeared, with the purpose of uniting the LGBT community as well as expanding the cultural knowledge about LGBT identities to the general public. At the same time, it was decided to establish a branch of the Russian LGBT Network in the region. Everyone who was at the forefront of the “We” group became the first LGBT activists of the region. This branch searched the volunteers and activists in region. Later, some activists of “Mi” formed the new club called “Garmonia” (“Harmony”) to unite the LGBT community and to provide psychological assistance. During its existence the club has conducted more than 50 different meetings - from watching movies and playing games to psychological trainings and consultations with a sexologist. The main beneficiaries were the representatives of LGBT under 30 years old. Currently there are not any activities in the region. This is partly due to the lack of interest of the LGBT community in uniting. It is fragmented and is combined only by interests. Also, the LGBT community in the region is not interested in protection of their own rights and HIV / AIDS prevention.

There were some volunteer groups in Krasnodar Krai until Russian LGBT Network didn't establish its branch. “Revers” (“Reverse”) group appeared in 2015 as well.

Attitude to the LGBT community in the regions

Astrakhan region has no groups or other organizations that counteract the LGBT community. However, there are individuals who insult LGBT people and damage their property or health because of personal beliefs. Some of them are united in groups for violence and robbery using fake profiles on the Internet. A group called “Okkupay-pedofilyay” acted in Krasnodar Krai for some time. It consisted of adults and teenagers. The group published materials with attacks on homosexuals, beating and humiliation online. Also they were recruiting teenagers of different sexes to use as a “bait.” Additionally, there were groups of homophobic citizens who initiated group attacks on LGBT people. Several times members of these groups (adults and teenagers) banished recreational LGBT meetings in city parks (without boasting orientation or using symbols).

There is a negative attitude towards the LGBT community in the mass media. Mass media’s rhetoric aims to make fun of the LGBT community; it persistently emphasizes that homosexuality is a western value and that everything related to it is done with the money from the West. In Krasnodar Krai, the newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and some religious media published material in which they recommended Cossacks “pay attention” to the LGBT community and their activities, to “clean up” the city and the whole region. This can be considered as hate speech and incitement to violence.

Astrakhan “Cossack troops” movement has become more active in recent years. Its activists and supporters, backed by some radicals from local authorities, are working with young people (90% of them are minors). The goal of “Cossack troops” is to educate children in an aggressive patriotism spirit and instill in them the Orthodox faith (although about 30% of inhabitants are Muslims), as well as to educate children in the spirit of “traditional values.” For this reason horse-mounted patrols appeared in the city, which has the right to use the whip. At the same time in connection with the LGBT sports event “Chernomor’ye” (“Black Sea”) the administration of Krasnodar Krai promised local human rights committee “Prezumpstia” (“Presumption”) to “quiet prohibit” the event without the hype in the press, in order to avoid scandals on the eve of the administration election. Chairman of “Prezumpstia” Albert Gayamyanyan openly said to the press: “Me and my colleagues are outraged by the fact that there are such events in the region. It would be in-

teresting to look at the reaction of the Cossacks, representatives of national communities and human rights defenders.”

Local authorities’ position

In the Astrakhan Region and Krasnodar Krai there was no single case of the imposition of administrative fine or other penalty for violation of the so-called “antigay” law. However, local politicians openly condemn LGBT community [5]. Commissioner for Human Rights of Astrakhan region has never responded to the offer of activists to hold a round table, refused cooperation and recognition of the LGBT community as a vulnerable group.

Civil society

Astrakhan branch of the Russian LGBT Network cooperates with “Mothers Committee”, Astrakhan regional union of trade unions (once led by the head of the Astrakhan Regional Russian LGBT Network branch) and “For Human Rights” association (stopped working in 2015). However, most organizations in the region refuse to interact, explaining it by the fact that their members and funders do not appreciate working with an organization that is dedicated to LGBT.

Astrakhan Metropolitan Church, Metropolitan Jonah, and other servants of the Russian Orthodox Church in Astrakhan act against LGBT.

Human rights activists of Krasnodar Krai (the party “Yabloko”, “Environmental Watch on North Caucasus”, individual human rights defenders) generally do not show homophobia and agree to arrange meetings.

Human rights violations and discrimination on the basis of SOGI: general information

In the reporting period in Astrakhan region and Krasnodar Krai 27 and 24 cases were documented, respectively. Many of the violations of the rights on the basis of SOGI are associated with insults and hate speeches, physical violence, threats, and harassment. The general household homophobia level is high (this includes things like insults, threats, and violence by relatives, parents, and/or guardians). This shows a high degree of aggression against the LGBT community and their individual representatives. Heterosexuals

who are mistakenly considered to be LGBT by their appearance are also are threatened.

In one case, several types of violations were documented: for example, the victim received anonymous threats, has been beaten, his report was not accepted by the police. A case with three types of violations is described below.

Table 2. Types of violations

Type of discrimination	Number, Astrakhan region	Number, Krasnodar Krai
Hate speeches	20	6
Threats	19	12
Physical violence	6	8
Sexual violence	11	3
Harassment/bullying	1	1
Threats	6	3
Property damage	1	1
Discrimination in housing law	2	-
Discrimination in labor law	1	4
Violation of the right to freedom of expression	3	3
Blackmail	1	-
Compulsory hospitalization and refusal of military service	2	-
Murder	1	-

Table 3. Scope of activities of victims

Occupation	Number of people, Astrakhan region	Number of people, Krasnodar Krai
Pupils and students	12	15
LGBT activists	6	5
Employees, including	8	8
• medical area	1	1
• educational area	2	1

It can be concluded that the most affected groups among the LGBT community are students and LGBT activists. This correlates with the data of quantitative research of the Russian LGBT Network: young people face discrimination and violence more frequently.

Table 4. The place of violation

Place of violation	Number, Astrakhan region	Number, Krasnodar Krai
Apartment	8	2
Street	11	7
Public transport	1	1
Gay club	1	-
Shop	1	-
Internet	1	3
Government institution	4	2

Most violations occur on the street, usually not far from victim's home or a gay club (9 out of 11 "street" cases in Astrakhan region), as well as in the apartment of the victim or their relatives (in both regions) or near it. In public institutions the officials themselves violated victims' rights.

Talking about openness of the victims (in Astrakhan region), more than 50% of the victims kept their affiliation to the LGBT community a secret. This phenomenon reflects the fear of rejection by society, friends, family, and colleagues, and also shows that, despite the widespread homophobic thesis, secrecy does not protect against violence and discrimination. 18.5% identified themselves as open to all, the other 18.5% - open only to friends.

Secrecy is caused by the fact that society cannot adequately perceive the LGBT community. Moreover, the "antigay law" made a huge impact on LGBT quality of life. According to reports, the first year after its adoption, the amount of crimes against LGBT vastly increased, whereas previously such crimes were rare and often engendered by personal dislike.

Signs of growing homophobia: the restriction of information on LGBT and hate speech

There are messages from representatives of LGBT that groups like "Okkupay-pedofilyay" are gaining popularity in the region.

In some cases, victims are exposed to continuous harassment from unknown people who make them feel constant danger.

On September 17, 2014 N. (24 years old, gay) was returning home where he lived with his boyfriend and noticed that the word "faggots" had been spray-painted on the door of the apartment. Earlier, N. saw strangers urinate on his door. N.'s boyfriend explained that he called the police as soon as he saw people spray-painting on their door. The police took a report from N.'s boyfriend, examined the crime scene and left. Subsequently, neither the victim (apartment owner) nor his boyfriend were disturbed by bullies. Also, they were not invited to the police or to the court. The investigation at the report was discontinued and the offenders were not found. About two weeks after writing the report to the police, N. was smoking on the balcony and saw four men passing by on the street. The eldest of them noticed N. and shouted "faggot" at him before the group walked away.

On September 20, 2015 Maria (22 years old, openly gay) was crossing

the road on a green traffic light. All of a sudden, she was hit by a car. The car looked like a jeep; right after the accident it disappeared in an unknown direction. Maria was taken to the hospital with several injuries. As Mary said, before the accident, she and her girlfriend received anonymous threats related to their sexual orientation and activism. This case is under investigation now.

On March 9, 2015 Rick (18 years old) was insulted on the street near his home on the basis of SOGI since he was dressed in women's clothes. The victim asked for a psychologist's help. Rick explains that he lives in a small town in the Astrakhan region, and because of this "tomfoolery" he will have to move, otherwise people won't let him have a "normal life."

From about the beginning of 2014 Sergey Alexeevich Barov (26 years old, openly gay) is constantly facing homophobic aggression from unknown persons on the street. Police refuse to accept his reports, as Sergei cannot provide evidence. However, to the present day he is periodically exposed to harassment, insults, and threats in his neighborhood. The reason is his open homosexuality. For example, in late December, Sergei was returning home late at night when he encountered young people who began to throw stones at him. In January, Sergei Barov was visiting his underage friend, A. Bedalov, when an unknown citizen came into the apartment. He wore civilian clothes; he neither introduced himself nor showed any documents. Stranger began to threaten Sergey and took A. Bedalov somewhere in his own car. Sergey called universal emergency telephone number 112, which redirected to the helpline, and then to the police hotline. Later, Sergey received a call from Bedalov's phone. An unknown man was on the line who insulted Sergey on the basis of SOGI and threatened him with physical violence. Sergei filed a report to the police. This case is under investigation now. Subsequently, it turned out that the caller was local police officer.

There are also cases of intersectional discrimination. On April 30, 2014 Vagiz (33 years old, gay) was in the gay club with his friends, when a drunken stranger insulted him on the basis of SOGI and on ethnic grounds. In response Vagiz insulted the stranger back, which caused a fight. A drunken man's friend assisted in beating Vagiz. They kept beating the victim until he hit his head on a stage. That day there was no security in the club that the victim was in. When the rapid reaction group arrived, the offenders escaped. Vagiz was taken away by ambulance. His friends wrote a report to the police. This case is under investigation now, although Vagiz says that homophobic

and ethnic motives are not taken into account in the investigation. Also, the bartender Natalia was harmed by the offenders, she got multiple bruises and a dislocated arm when she tried to separate the fighting guests. Since this incident occurred in the gay club, all visitors were under the threat of physical violence (about 15-20 people). There is no doubt that this crime is an act of aggression toward all the LGBT community.

Another case of intersectional discrimination is concerns a man with a disability. On March 17, 2014 Ruslan (24 years old, gay, with hearing loss) was exposed to physical violence by other disabled people near the building of the Astrakhan branch of the Russian Society of the Deaf. Later, the victim received psychological support, but refused to take legal advice. In an interview, Ruslan said that he encountered homophobia- and not for the first time (the victim communicates via mobile phone by typing a text and says a few words). He said that there are many representatives of the LGBT community among deaf people and there is a real struggle between LGBT identified and homophobic deaf people. According to Ruslan's words, his friends also experienced physical violence because of their SOGI. Leaders of the Astrakhan branch of the Russian Society of the Deaf do not help them. Being a part of the LGBT community and the deaf community at the same time makes people particularly vulnerable to discrimination and violence, because they are at risk even in those institutions that are designed to support them.

Also during 2015 in Astrakhan military commissariat on the Sverdlov street there were two compulsory referrals to examination in a psychiatric hospital on the basis of sexual orientation. In both cases, two young people said they were gay and they were sent to a psychiatric clinic for examination, where they had been subjected to various tests for a period of two weeks. Later, psychiatric commission declared both young men unfit for military service. Commission staff said that homosexuality is an illness, hence the army won't accept them, however, this was not specified in the accompanying document. These actions of commission can be considered as a violation of rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation (ignorance of the exclusion of homosexuality from the list of diseases or unwillingness to accept its exclusion). This case shows the high level of homophobia among authorities, as well as unwillingness to comply with Russian and international law.

The following two cases highlight the lack of willingness of enforcement authorities to carry out their direct responsibilities to protect citizens and em-

phasize the social vulnerability of LGBT people.

Eugene (19 years old) was insulted by stranger's homophobic speech on the street. The police patrol was passing by, but instead of paying attention on insults, police said they had the right to arrest Eugene for 48 hours since he had no passport. The police did not pay attention to the offender.

Anton (21 years old, FtM-transgender) walked with his boyfriend, when two unknown men started following them. Anton saw it, and the pair hid in the station underpass, as it was close to Anton's house. Leaving the underpass, they turned to the police (a patrol was passing by) and told they were followed by strangers, but the police did not react. They managed to escape from the pursuers but at the entrance of Anton's home they heard homophobic insults and threats of physical violence addressed to them.

On March 12, 2015 Daniil (21 years old) was in a gay club. At five in the morning he left the club and headed home. He was followed by the car, but Daniil did not pay attention. Some time later, the car drove up to him, and three guys came out of there. At first they insulted Daniil on the basis of SOGI, and then began to push. When the victim fell down, one of the offenders kicked him in the stomach, the second pressed Daniil's head to the pavement with his leg. Offenders kept mocking the victim; after some time they sat in the car and drove away. Daniil went home. His whole body was bruised and injured. In the morning he went to the nearest police station and told everything that happened, but the police laughed and said they will not help, as there were no witnesses of attack.

During 2015 three cases of physical abuse and robbery were documented in Astrakhan. All the offences were committed with the help of online dating sites using "bait." Young people are getting acquainted on the dating sites and then meet men who take material values from victims. In some cases, victims were beaten, in others – only threatened.

On May 23, 2015 Semyon (19 years old, gay) met a guy on a dating site and set up a meeting in the park. There they sat and talked, held hands and kissed. All of a sudden, three or four men jumped from an ambush, attacked Semyon (although his friend was not touched), stole his mobile phone and wallet. Semyon heard offensive words in his address. Later he wrote a report to the police. According to Semyon's words, it happened during the daytime, but there were no witnesses in that part of the park. The case was closed.

On May 6, 2015 N (26 years old, openly gay) met a guy under the nickname “Andrei” on a gay dating site. “Andrei’s” age was listed as 18 on the site. N. arrived to the meeting (St. Petersburg, Malaya Kashtanovaya Alleya street, 9, building 1), N. talked with “Andrei”, also they had sexual intercourse. After that, three strong men, who introduced themselves as pedophile hunters, attacked N. They threatened N. with calling police and reporters of local TV channel, physical violence (which was not brought to life), harassed and abused him, examined his belongings, afterwards offenders released the victim. This attack was filmed by the offenders.

On April 18, 2015, Oleg (25 years old) arranged a meeting with the guy under the nickname “Artem” on a dating site, (later on, it turned out that his name was Arthur). Oleg came to the meeting and spent time with Arthur, but then for about half an hour he was threatened by four strangers who claimed they were pedophile hunters. They demanded 20,000 rubles so that “Artem” wouldn’t report to the police. Oleg didn’t have desired amount of money. Then, according to victim’s words, “hunters” wrote down Oleg’s cell phone number and immediately checked whether it’s correct. Later, the victim got rid of the cell phone number. He did not report to the police because he was afraid of imprisonment “for pedophilia.”

Anna Ledovskaya (19 years old, openly gay, LGBT activist) led the national ensemble of oriental dance under the contract with the Ministry of Culture of Astrakhan region for several months. Parents of children who were engaged in the national ensemble, learned about her sexual orientation. Some of them began to complain and threaten with taking away the children, because parents didn’t want their children to be taught by a lesbian, while others took Anna’s orientation easily. Despite this, she was dismissed from her job upon written request of disgruntled parents in November 2015. The national ensemble broke the contract unilaterally without compensation payments. The victim didn’t appeal to the court.

During 2015 the monitoring team documented one case of sexual assault and one murder in Astrakhan.

On May 3, 2015, Anatoly (19 years old) told us that one of his friends (which, according to Anatoly’s words, knew about his sexual orientation) came to him with unknown guy. Anatoly explained that his friend often came to him alone or with girls or friends. When Anatoly turned away from the guests, he felt a kick in his head and then lost consciousness. He woke up

being naked and bound. Anatoly was sexually assaulted. A “friend” of Anatoly stole his mobile phone and a laptop. The victim didn’t report to police because of fear. He has not yet asked for psychological help.

On September 27, 2015 Maxim (32 years old, gay) was found hanged in a forest belt in Ikryaninsky District of the Astrakhan region. According to one version, a man committed suicide because parents did not accept his sexual orientation, conflicts in the family arose on this basis; according to another version, he got “hung” by the people with whom he set up a meeting: the so-called “pedophile and homosexual hunters.” A criminal case is filed. Friends of the deceased claimed that the witnesses from the LGBT community have seen Maxim the day he died near the “Art Gallery” bus stop where he sat in a white car with two unknown men.

Violence and discrimination against LGBT people by family members and close friends

Homophobia and violence from family and close friends is rarely documented or reaches law enforcement; at the same time, the violence of those who are always there, continuously puts the victim in a situation of constant danger.

On April 1, 2014 Ekaterina (20 years old, gay) confessed her sexual orientation to parents and heard homophobic insults in response. The father and mother kicked their daughter out. Ekaterina temporarily lived with relatives and friends. There were no witnesses of the incident. The victim did not report to the police: her father works in the prosecutor’s office.

On April 30, 2014 Alexander (19 years old, gay), came out to his parents, which they responded to extremely negatively and with verbal abuse. After this conversation, the father and mother of a son gathered his belongings and threw him out of the house. The police explained him that reporting on parents makes no sense, since he is registered in his grandmother’s apartment. The victim was actually registered at the grandmother’s apartment in Liman district of the Astrakhan region, so he had to move there. All his belongings, including clothing and electronics, were at the parents’ apartment and they refused to return items purchased by the son’s own money.

Artem (20 years old, gay) from the age of 16 was regularly subjected to beatings and homophobic insults from the common-law spouse of his moth-

er. Artem's mother abuses alcohol and is completely under the influence of her domestic partner. Now Artem is forced to live apart from them.

On August 2, 2015 Sergei Barov with his friend Artem were in the apartment of their mutual friends. In the morning a drunken roommate of their friend (paratrooper) forced Sergei to leave, then grabbed sleeping Artem and threw him with all his strength into the closet.

Later, the roommate hit Sergei in the stomach and ribs. There were no injuries, so Sergei did not apply for medical and legal assistance. Artem, at the request of his friends, did not report to the police and refused medical aid.

It should be noted: the victim refused to report because he was acquainted with the offender. It's typical for such cases. Frequently they don't reach the general public for the same reason: because of victim's' unwillingness to make it public.

Based on the collected data, it can be concluded that LGBT people in the region are exposed to violence from both friends and relatives, strangers, neighbors, passers-by, and organized criminal groups. It's important to note that even secretly gay people may suffer from violence, and that law enforcement agencies do not always take necessary measures to protect citizens due to prejudice.

2.5. Samara Region

Situation overview in the region

Monitoring in the region is carried out by public Samara LGBT movement "Avers" (organized in December 11, 2011; a member of ILGA Europe from July 15, 2014; a collective member of the Russian LGBT Network from September 2014). "Avers" is the main LGBT association in the Volga region.

Region allied organizations include AIDS service center "Proekt April" ("Project April") (Togliatti), the allies are a number of lawyers, doctors, psychologists, administrators of friendly public pages in social networks.

There are no actively operating organized homophobic groups in Samara at the moment. However, the local branch of NLT ("National Liberation Movement") in the reporting period more than once admitted homophobic

comments in public places. Actively acting homophobic groups “Restrukt”, “Okkupay-pedofilyay” are located in Rostov-on-Don, Chelyabinsk, and Kazan. It should be remembered that one of the consequences of hate crimes is fear, which extends far beyond the crime scene. The whole country still remembers a brutal murder of Vlad Tornovoy in Volgograd (2013). The media also discussed the brutal intrafamilial murder of 2012 (a father, a former employee of the Federal Penitentiary Service of the Saratov region, killed his son after learning that he was gay); in the reporting period, a double murder on the grounds of homophobia was reported in Kazan on February 26, 2015.

Hate crime and “crime-messages” together with a significant number of smaller violations of LGBT rights form the atmosphere of the region. The amount of “public homophobes” according to the monitoring data is big, level of household homophobia in society, in general, is quite high. It suffices to recall the number of aggressive comments due to the publication of father Amphian’s homosexuality in the media (in the world - Artem Vechelkovsky) and his emigration in August 2015 as a refugee to the UK. Activity of Konstantin Golava, environmental and LGBT activist from Togliatti, supporter of the movement for an alternative civilian service, was also accompanied by homophobic bullying. After numerous violations of his rights that resulted in imputation of extremist prosecution of a convinced pacifist under part 2 art. 282 of the Criminal Code, he applied for political asylum in Sweden, where he is now.

Such manifestations are indirectly affected by traditional field for institutional, overbearing homophobia. Within a few years of lawyers support of “Aversa” cases of homophobic attacks, the police refused to bring up criminal cases in most cases, and in a few cases the investigation avoids using hate motive in relation to the social group of LGBT as a qualifying attribute and additional aggravating circumstance.

The Samara region is also characterized by an administrative rejection of active citizenship of individuals and human rights associations. Examples are the inclusion of foreign agents into the list of NGOs in 2015 and closure of the Interregional Public Foundation for Civil Society Development “Golos-Povolzh’e” (“Voice-Volga”) (Association “Voice-Volga” has been monitoring elections in the region since 2004) and the Samara gender center.

Great hopes are pinned on the interaction with the institution of commissioners of human rights. Representatives of “Avers” had repeatedly appealed to the CHR in the Samara region, Irina Skupova, before the expiry of her term

in 2014. Establishing dialogue with the newly assigned to the position of CHR Olga Galtsova has yet to be done.

Statistics and types of violations

According to the monitoring results recorded in 2015, 27 cases of discrimination and violence against people residing/staying in the Samara region, 25 of which occurred in the region. Our informants also reported other cases of discrimination and violence against them, committed in the Volga region and other regions of Russia, as well as Online. This confirms high level of vulnerability of LGBT people in the Volga region as a special case of high-risk LGBT openness across the country.

As a result of documented cases of discrimination and violence 42 people were affected, not only LGBT people are among them, but also their family members, citizens, publicly supporting the idea of tolerance, as well as those included in the LGBT community due to “external signs.” LGBT couples were affected in five cases; undefined group of people, the LGBT community, that publicly expressed hate speech, stands out as a “collective victim” in ten cases.

Hate crimes cause significant damage not only to the personal freedoms of specific individuals, but also to public safety because they lead to additional stigmatization and marginalization of victims. (From direct speech of a victim, an elderly man who has repeatedly been beaten by a group of people with consequences for health up to the hospital: “I’m a faggot. Laws do not work for me.”) It should be clarified that almost half of cases of violations are repeated or have a continuing character, indicating additional vulnerability of LGBT people. Below we examine an overall statistic of the LGBT rights violations in the Samara region, as well as specific examples of discrimination.

Physical violence is noted in five cases. Almost all the victims (23) were subjected to personal verbal abuse, nine of them were accompanied by threats, ten - of hate speeches against the whole community.

Eight respondents reported systematic bullying (harassment) in the workplace, school or family. For example, a young man (cisgender, homosexual) applied for legal assistance with complaints of insults, harassment and threats to be kicked out from home by his family and to be disinherited. Mother and father, aware of their son’s orientation, systematically insult him and constantly threaten to “kick him out of the house, since he’s a fagot, and

that he would never get the apartment”, which is why he “doesn’t even want to go home.” Another girl, because of constant homophobic ridicule and bullying by her mother, had to live for a while in another city at her friend’s.

Victims are offered free psychological help of an LGBT friendly specialist, but it usually remains unclaimed. Internal homo- and transphobia, as community divides, doesn’t let a specific person to use the method of self-healing, if they are not familiar with acceptance (more than half of the respondents are closed or not accepted even by their own families).

Violations in labor law - 4 cases

Only in two cases it was possible to minimize the damage by legal methods: prevent (using the complaint procedure) attempt of unjustified deprivation of premiums in the first case and to prevent violation of labor rights of employees at reduction in the second case. In two other cases, harassment in labor law led to unjustified dismissals.

An example of unjustified dismissal in a form of compulsion to the early termination of a contract of their own volition. The victim (transgender woman who now lives in Samara) was fired at the request of her employer (one of hypermarkets “Auchan” in Moscow), she was recognized as not appropriate for her position (a supermarket worker, then assistant in the kitchen-bakery “Auchan”) although she fulfilled industrial standards and complied with labor schedule of the enterprise. A head of subdivision motivated the dismissal with the fact that “administration and colleagues are dissatisfied with overly feminine appearance, a soft voice and behavior (although she represented herself as a man according to the passport, being unable to change the gender in the passport); male colleagues pay attention, the director believes there is a real risk of sexual violence.”

Violations of the rights of transgender and genderqueer people - 11 cases

Representatives of the trans community are aware of low probability to obtain justice in court, while the communication with public authorities, as a rule, leads to secondary victimization. As a result, in most cases, they do not appeal to the court, and generally do not interact with the public authorities, which leads to a near total social exclusion. Transgender people go to law

enforcement agencies only because of egregious cases of violence.

Example: In the evening, on October 16, 2015 transgender women P. and A., living as a couple, went boating in the area of a cottage house that belonged to one of them, 120 km away from Samara. Neighbors (two men they were acquainted with) expressed dissatisfaction with the behavior of P. and A. as a couple and their appearance (one of them was wearing a skirt and a wig, both of them had feminine hairstyles), insulted them, and threatened with physical violence. The victims left the meeting place on the boat and went back home.

After a while, two neighbors came by boat to their house, one of them was armed with a hunting shotgun. Four strangers reached another lake's edge. All together they broke into the house, swiping everything aside in the path. The criminals separated the couple, then several people started kicking them and beating them. One of the victims was beaten to loss of consciousness (later she got into the neurosurgical department because of a traumatic brain injury), the second victim got many facial bruises, including a broken nose, and bruises all over the body.

The aggressors demanded that they identify who they were, one of the women told them about transgenderism, and tried to explain what it meant. They were threatened with being raped and being burnt alive inside the house, as well as with being forced to swim until they drowned. One of the victims was knocked unconscious while the other woman was begging the aggressors on her knees to let them go.

Around midnight, the women were brought outside; the criminals set the house on fire, damaged four boats, and took one boat along. The perpetrators left the women with no opportunity to cross the river, being far away from the city and hospital, so they couldn't follow the criminals, couldn't escape, and could not call the police or an ambulance. Their mobile phones, money and documents burned down (in addition to the rest of the property).

Once the group of attackers had left, the couple untied pontoon jetty and crossed canal on it. They walked a few kilometers to a forester's home, who took them by car to a place of communication with the city, supplying the women with money for crossing. In the following days, one of the victims went to the emergency room at the place of residence and the second woman was hospitalized.

While questioning one of the victims in the hospital and while accepting the report from another woman, the police ignored the homophobic motive that was claimed by both survivors, and they applied for legal assistance of "Avers." Now the case is run by a lawyer, measures for additional information and fixation of LGBT specifics of the case are taken.

3. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the specifics of regional reports, it is important to highlight main groups of offenses, depending on the region and the tendency.

1. New patterns of law enforcement practice, that are harmful to LGBT, were identified in 2015. City administrations and courts still use the law of propaganda to limit the constitutional right to freedom of assembly and expression. However, in 2015, the law started to be used as a reason for interference in a purely private sphere - family relations, namely to restrict the parental rights of LGBT people. Another worrying case concerns the use of so-called “law of Dima Yakovlev” not only against foreigners who are in same-sex partnerships, or who are citizens of countries where it is permitted, but against Russian citizens who exercised their right to enter into such a partnership abroad. Deprivation of women’s custody from Astrakhan after three years of living with a child on the basis of concluded civil partnership with another woman in Germany demonstrates the vulnerability of LGBT families.

2. A motive of hatred while investigation of cases of physical violence against LGBT people is persistently ignored. Even when the hate motive against a social group is considered (case of Kolegov et al., Republic of Komi), the punishment is disproportionate to committed crimes due to alleged “immoral activities of victims.” Such cases demonstrate prejudice of judges against LGBT as a social group. Another unfortunate tendency is a highly active use of gay online dating sites and “baits” for violence and robbery. Although over the last year crimes committed according to this pattern were investigated, the number of groups involved in such “hunting” is enormous, and actions of law enforcement officials are disproportionate to the scale of the problem.

3. Moreover, the law on propaganda is obviously dangerous for LGBT people who work with children. LGBT teachers become objects of harassment and are forced to resign “voluntarily” because of the conviction of school administrations that their SOGI can cause problems at school in case of disclosure. Not all principals themselves are homophobic, though they do commit illegal acts in relation to their employees. People believe that they don’t violate the law, forcing employees to resign on discriminatory grounds. It is

the result of legal illiteracy and school administrators' conviction that LGBT people can be subjected to harassment with impunity; moreover, not subjecting them to harassment may be punishable. This picture of the upside-down world is created with aggressive rhetoric of xenophobic and discriminatory state legislation.

4. Another trend identified by monitoring is the vulnerability of transgender community. Most cases of discrimination and harassment in the workplace concern transgender people. Also refusal or poor-quality medical care, flagrant abuse and neglect by the law enforcement agencies were recorded. Socialization of transgender people in the desired field and attaining safety in their communication with government officials or employers face insurmountable obstacles connected with a lack of established procedure for changing documents. Change of references to gender in the passport is always paired with litigation, illegal demands of operations and dissolution of marriage, and even endless visits to the courts and gender reassignment surgery do not guarantee success. Project of legal assistance for transgender people (pravo-trans.eu) is involved in legal support for transgender people in Russia, it contains hundreds of stories about denials to change documents at civil registry offices.

5. Another important group of cases is intersectionality discrimination, i.e., containing more than one ground... Belonging to two or more minority groups makes people especially vulnerable to violence and discrimination. This is evident in the example of a transgender woman originally from the North Caucasus, who was accompanied by humiliation not only with transphobic insults and groundless accusations of terrorism in the train, but also with allegations of her being dangerous to passengers on the basis of ethnicity. In a few other cases, victims of violence didn't go to the police because they didn't have a registration; it's also quite a common problem for Russia: people with no registration are vulnerable and are not socially reserved. Cases of physical violence against LGBT people with disabilities are also recorded, during an interview, a victim pointed out that LGBT people are very vulnerable within organizations that support people with disabilities as well, and they often face violence there.

6. There is still a matter of concern that victims of violence and discrimination against LGBT people are unwilling to go to law enforcement agencies. Of equal concern is the unwillingness of law enforcement agencies to investi-

gate cases where LGBT people are affected, and classify such crimes as hate crimes. Let us recall that on May 17, 2015 LGBT activist Alexander Ermoshkin was beaten in front of the camera and six witnesses, the criminal case was closed due to “failure to identify the attacker.” Also, law enforcement agencies hamper the work of LGBT organizations in response to denunciations of questionable content from dubious individuals. A similar case, for example, happened on October 9, 2015, when the prosecutor’s office disrupted an event in the Perm community center, insulted and searched participants.

From the foregoing it can be concluded that homophobia and transphobia levels are high in Russian society and is heated by laws and legislative initiatives. Low legal literacy in questions of discrimination and violence, caused by hatred of a social group, makes the LGBT community vulnerable. In particular, the problem of low legal literacy concerns law enforcement officials, who often prevent LGBT people from exercising their right to a fair trial.