

Petition Poland: Hands Off Human Rights

Saturday 19 May 2007, by [Campaign Against Homophobia](#), [Human Rights Watch](#) (Date first published: 18 May 2007).

In recent months and years, Polish leaders have threatened criminal sanctions against lesbian and gay activists and organizations, have tried to restrict freedoms of expression and association, and have even threatened violence against LGBT marchers.

Human Rights Watch and Campaign Against Homophobia (Kampania Przeciw Homofobii, Poland's central LGBT group) ask for YOUR signatures on the attached petition demanding an end to homophobic attacks. KPH will present the petition to Polish authorities at Warsaw's Equality Parade on May 19, 2007.

Send an e-mail by NOON EST (5 PM GMT) ON FRIDAY, MAY 18 letting us know you will sign on. Give your NAME, COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, and any other identifying information you want included. (Sign up your organization here).

PLEASE CIRCULATE THIS WIDELY! And please sign the petition by writing to lgbt@hrw.org —and stand up for human rights in Poland!

Hands Off Human Rights Petition

The President of the Republic of Poland

Lech Kaczynski

ul. Wiejska 10

00-902 Warszawa, Poland

Dear President Kaczynski,

We urge you and your government to stop your attacks on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. Such attacks betray Poland's long, proud record of struggling for human rights. Upholding equal rights for all will help build a freer future.

Your government has declared it will fire gay teachers, and impose criminal penalties on "anyone who promotes homosexuality or any other deviance of a sexual nature in education establishments." This blatant violation of basic rights could deprive students of potentially life-saving information about sexuality and about HIV/AIDS. Members of your government have accused organizations working on LGBT people's human rights of "pedophilia," and threatened them with criminal investigations. A legislator in your governing coalition said that gays who demonstrate "should be bashed with a baton." In 2004 and 2005, when mayor of Warsaw, you yourself tried to ban Gay Pride marches, saying that "public promotion of homosexuality will not be allowed." Your words and

actions have contributed to a climate where violence against LGBT people is tolerated-or even encouraged.

Such words and acts threaten democracy.

This month, the European Court of Human Rights condemned your attempts to ban Gay Pride marches in Warsaw. The court praised a “pluralism Š built on the genuine recognition of, and respect for, diversity”-including “genuine and effective respect for freedom of association and assembly.”

Last month, the European Parliament, motivated by events in Poland, passed a resolution “On Homophobia in Europe.” It condemned “discriminatory remarks by political and religious leaders targeting homosexuals.” It voiced “solidarity with, and support for, fundamental rights activists and defenders of equal rights for LGBT people.” It called for an official EU investigation of what is happening to LGBT people’s rights in Poland.

Do not isolate Poland by promoting intolerance and hate. Defend all human rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.