

Statement: ILGA-Europe Condemns Escalating Repression of Civil Society in Kazakhstan

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Call for Immediate Release of Detained Activists and an End to Arbitrary Persecution

ILGA-Europe strongly condemns the escalating repression and intimidation of civil society in Kazakhstan, exemplified by the recent detention of Zhanar Sekerbayeva and Aktorgyn Akkenzhebalasy – activists from Feminita, an informal LGBTQ civil society initiative. Their arbitrary arrests and rushed sentencing to 10 days of administrative detention for a peaceful protest in 2024 mark yet another attack on fundamental freedoms.

These are not an isolated incident. It is part of a broader pattern of persecution, including arrests, fines, physical attacks, police raids, and legislative proposals designed to stifle legitimate civil society organisations advocating for equality—whether for women, LGBT individuals, or other marginalised groups. These particular arrests follow a recent unpunished violent attack on Feminita’s community event and another court decision to fine its activist, Gulzada Serzhan, for “managing an unregistered public association”. Activists anticipate further arrests ahead of Women’s Day demonstrations on 8 March.

We stand in full solidarity with LGBTI and wider civil society in Kazakhstan, who are facing an alarming crackdown on their rights and safety. Reminding the government of Kazakhstan of its international legal obligation to respect the peaceful expression of opinions, we call for the immediate release of detained activists, including Zhanar Sekerbayeva and Aktorgyn Akkenzhebalasy, an end to arbitrary prosecutions, and accountability for those enabling and perpetrating these repressions. We will be working with EU institutions to ensure that the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of assembly, is an integral part of relations with Kazakhstan.