

Turkish court postpones trial of 19 Pride attendees, infringing their right to fair judicial process

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The Turkish courts' postponement until next April of the trial of 19 people accused of "unlawful assembly" after taking part in an LGBTI Pride march last year is clearly infringing their right to a fair trial, and sending a worrying signal from the judiciary, says ILGA-Europe.

During the hearing, all the defendants gave testimonies explaining how this trial is a cloud over their heads which negatively impacts their everyday lives. The trial has lasted one and a half years so far, and has affected them personally, academically, and professionally. This further postponement to 30 April 2021 means that the defendants will have been under this pressure for almost two years, and they argue that this constitutes a violation of their human rights.

According to Özgür Gür, from METU LGBTI+ Solidarity: "This trial is not only against the METU students, but against Pride marches around the country."

Melike Balkan, from METU LGBTI+ Solidarity added: "We have repeatedly asked the police to give us the reason for their presence at the campus, and they continued to point to the ban by the governor of Ankara, but it is clear through the Turkish governments' response to the UN that the governor could not ban an event on campus grounds. Police forces misled us and prevented us from exercising our basic human rights."

According to Katrin Hugendubel, Advocacy Director at ILGA-Europe: "LGBTI rights have been systematically attacked in Turkey in recent years and by postponing the trial yet again without any comprehensible reasons, the courts are clearly infringing the right to a fair trial and fair judicial process. This is a worrying signal from Turkey's judiciary, especially in the context of rising hate-crime and hate-speech against the LGBTI community in the country. In 2020, LGBTI activists in Turkey have seen their offices targeted by violence, their online spaces restricted, and the LGBTI community has been blamed for the COVID-19 pandemic by religious and political leaders.

"The right to freedom of assembly, which Turkey is bound to respect according to its Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights, to which it is a party, needs to be clearly upheld. ILGA-Europe will continue to work with international institutions and supporters to try to ensure a fair trial that will respect the right to freedom of assembly and non-discrimination of LGBTI people in Turkey, and which will acquit the unlawfully accused activists at the next hearing."

On Wednesday, in a separate case, a district court in Istanbul ruled that last year's ban on the city's Pride march was unlawful and in breach of the Turkish Constitution, the European Convention on Human rights, and other international agreements to which Turkey is party.

Further information:

- Read our joint statement with 8 international human rights organisations [here](#), and download it

in [English](#) and [Turkish](#).

- Read our pre-trial press release, published on [7 December 2020](#).
- [Timeline](#) of the story so far.

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