

Joint press release by the group of non-governmental organizations and individuals working to promote the culture of human rights in Montenegro

Podgorica, 12/09/ 2012

TOGETHER AGAINST ALL FORMS OF HATE

We express our solidarity with the director Danilo Marunović, actor Todor Vujošević and journalist Mirko Bosković, who were brutally attacked because of their support to LGBT rights and tolerance of diversity in Montenegro.

Montenegro is, by the Constitution, defined as a democracy, based on respect for human rights, including the right to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Different sexual orientation, as well as different political opinions or different religion - someone can like or dislike. However, nowadays in Montenegro none should be assaulted because of that, nor should anyone publicly want someone to be assaulted because of that, nor should anyone due to his/her orientation or preferences be considered less valuable.

The Constitution prohibits operation of any organization that is focused on violations of guaranteed rights and freedoms, or that incite hatred and violence on any ground, including sexual orientation. The Law on prohibition of discrimination clearly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as any form of harassment, insults and incitement to discrimination. Criminal Code specifically prohibits persecution of organizations or individuals for their commitment to the equality of people.

In their address to the public, anonymous organizers of the fans of the football team "Budućnost" (The Future) did not demonstrate neither that their organization, "Varvari" (Barbarians), is willing to respect human rights of all people, nor that their action is not aimed at inciting hatred towards LGBT people. On the contrary, the "Barbarians" in their reaction called LGBT people "supposedly vulnerable group of distorted individuals" and insulted Zdravko Cimbalević, the first openly declared homosexual in Montenegro, by addressing him as "gospodinica" (represents a portmanteau word that consists of mister and misses). Even though they say that "that the Barbarians are not violating the law, nor will ever violate it", the Barbarians in this way are undoubtedly violating the law.

At the same time, one of the leaders of the "Barbarians", named Aleksandar Ivanović-Caka, in the daily "Pobjeda", expressed the standpoint that "homosexuality is a disease, and the biggest threat to the Christianity" and publicly praised the attackers of Marunović, Vujošević and Bosković, although anonymous leaders of the "Barbarians" are convincing the public that attackers were not instructed by their bodies.

Podgorica is filled with graffiti calling for hatred and violence against sexual minorities, with the signature of "Barbarians" or their sub-groups, and the organizers have not distanced themselves from such actions in any way, which also constitute a violation of the law.

Due to all of the above, the claim that the attack in Podgorica was not an act of the "Barbarians" as an organized group, accompanied by the absence of their direct and unequivocal condemnation of the attack sounds like an unconvincing cover-up in front the prosecution authorities.

However, as the "Barbarians" are a fan club of a town, which is also ours, and whose member cards have large number of people from Podgorica, expressing in that manner love for their city and club, and without any intention to threaten anyone, we refuse to believe that most of these people believe that any form of violence against those who think differently is justified. We hope that they will condemn the policy of association that tolerates violence and discrimination, and in this way restore the spirit and image of the Barbarians, who were, during the 80es, a symbol of the city, pioneers of the resistance towards provincialism and promoters of the urban spirit of Titograd (which was the name of Podgorica at that time).

We expect the authorities to act towards this organization in accordance with the Constitution and secure the prohibition and punishment of any advocacy and incitement to hatred and violence.

Statement signed by:

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LGBT Forum Progress, Zdravko Cimbalevic, Executive Director

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Aleksandar Saša Zekovic, member of the Council for Civil Control of the work of Police

Goran Djurovic, member of the Council of RTCG

Dragoljub Duško Vukovic, independent journalist