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FACULTY OF LAW

INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
PROGRAM

Russia

Country Report for use in refugee claims based on persecution relating to sexual orientation and gender identity

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I. Introduction

While sexual orientation is not explicitly criminalized in the Criminal Code, Russian law allows for discrimination based on sexual orientation through its lack of explicit guarantees of protection, and, more alarmingly, through recently enacted and proposed legislation that explicitly discriminates against LGBT persons and penalizes or prohibits LGBT-specific activity. This recent activity has been cause for criticism by international organizations, such as the UN; other nations including Canada; the European Community; and human rights groups. Russian leader Vladimir Putin maintains LGBT individuals face no discrimination, despite anti-LGBT comments from other public leaders and religious organizations, growing reports of violence and aggression, arrests of LGBT people, and investigation or prosecution of LGBT organizations. Additionally, there is evidence of a widely-held belief in Russian society that so-called ‘non-traditional’ sexual orientation is at best a voluntary – though immoral – choice, or, at worst, an illness in need of treatment and correction. It should be noted that this increasingly infringement of LGBT rights is but one aspect of an increasingly broad curtailment of civil liberties in Russian society enacted by the Putin administration. This suggests that a shift in public opinion, if it did occur, may be insufficient to bring about legislative reform to protect the rights of the LGBT community.

II. Legislation

1. *Constitution of 1993* (English text as amended December 31, 2008)
Online: <http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/articles/ConstMain.shtml>
 - **Protection of sexual orientation or sexual diversity is not explicitly listed as a guarantee of equality or protection before the law.**
 - **Federal law may restrict human rights and freedoms in some circumstances, and has jurisdiction to “regulate,” as well as protect, such rights in the name of morality.**

Article 19

2. The State guarantees the equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, material and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership of public associations, or of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, language or religious grounds shall be prohibited.

3. Men and women shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities to exercise them.

Article 55

3. Human and civil rights and freedoms may be limited by federal law only to the extent necessary for the protection of the basis of the constitutional order, morality, health, rights and lawful interests of other people, and for ensuring the defense of the country and the security of the State.

Article 56

1. In the conditions of a state of emergency, in order to ensure the safety of citizens and the protection of the constitutional order and in accordance with federal constitutional law, certain restrictions may be imposed on human rights and freedoms with an indication of their limits and the period for which they have effect.

Article 71

The Russian Federation shall have jurisdiction over:

(c) regulation and protection of human and civil rights and freedoms; citizenship in the Russian Federation, regulation and protection of the rights of national minorities;

2. *Criminal Code* (Enacted by Federal Law No. 63-FZ on June 13, 1996 on the Enforcement of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation)

Online: <http://base.garant.ru/10108000/>

- **Same-sex acts were decriminalized in 1993, homosexuality was declassified as a mental illness in 1999 and transgender individuals have been able to change their legal gender since 1997.**
- **Same-sex sexual acts are still distinguished under the provisions dealing with sexual assault, and unlawful same-sex sexual acts are subject to harsher punishments than unlawful opposite-sex sexual acts in offences against minors.**
- **Sexual orientation is not explicitly mentioned as an enumerated ground given equal protection before the law against discrimination when facing criminal liability.**

- **Recently amended law against acts that upset religious feelings are seen by critics (see Sections on media and NGOs below) as an indirect measure to allow penalization of same-sex public displays of affection and LGBT visibility.**

Chapter 18. Crimes against sexual inviolability and sexual freedom

Article 132. Sexual Assault

(Amended by Federal Law No. 215-FZ on 29 July 2009)

1. Sodomy, lesbianism or other sexual acts involving violence or threat of violence to the victim (victim) or other persons, or by using the helpless state of the victim (victim) - shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of three to six years.

Article 134. Sexual Intercourse and Other Sexual Acts with a Person Under the Age of Sixteen

(Amended by Federal Law No. 14-FZ on February 29, 2012)

1. Sexual intercourse with a person under sixteen years of age and puberty, a person who has attained the age of eighteen –

punishable by compulsory works for a term of up to four hundred eighty hours, or restriction of freedom for up to four years, or hard labor for a term of four years with the deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or engage in certain activities for a term up to three years or without it, or by deprivation of liberty for up to four years with deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or engage in certain activities for a term not exceeding ten years or without it.

2. Homosexuality or lesbianism with a person under sixteen years of age and puberty, committed by a person who has reached the age of eighteen –

punishable by hard labor for a term up to five years with deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or engage in certain activities for a term up to three years or without it, or imprisonment for up to six years with deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or engage in certain activities for up to ten years or without that.

Chapter 19 Crimes Against the Constitutional Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen

Article 136. Violation of the Equality of Rights and Freedoms of Man and Citizen

Discrimination, that is, violation of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens based on gender, race, nationality, language, origin, property or official status, place or residence, attitude to religion, convictions, membership in public associations or any social groups, committed by a person through the use of the official position thereof – shall be punishable by fine... or [restrictions] to occupy certain positions..., compulsory works..., correctional labour..., hard labour..., or imprisonment.

Article 148. Violation of the right to freedom of conscience and religion

(Amended by Federal Law No. 136-FZ on June 29, 2013)

1. Public actions, expressing obvious disrespect for society and committed to insult the religious feelings of believers -

shall be punished by a fine of up to three hundred thousand rubles or the salary or other income for a period of up to two years, or by compulsory works for a term of up to two hundred forty hours, or hard labor for a term not exceeding one year, or imprisonment for the same term.

3. *'Anti-Propaganda' Bill 135-FZ: "On changes to Article 5 of the Federal Law "On Protecting Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development" and other legislative acts of the Russian Federation aimed at protecting children from information propagating the rejection of traditional family values" (passed June 2013)*
Online: <http://pravo.gov.ru:8080/page.aspx?50556#print>

- **Prohibits the spreading of information about “non-traditional sexual relations” to children, allowing penalization by means other than the Criminal Code.**
- **“Non-traditional sexual relations” are classified as harmful to children and pornographic in nature; the view that they are equal to “traditional relations” is seen as “distorted.”**
- **This representation makes LGBT persons not equal before the law and allows for prosecution of almost any form of equal rights campaigning for LGBT persons.**

Article 1 Point 1, Article 14 of Federal Law № 124-FZ dated July 24, 1998 “On Basic Guarantees of Children’s Rights in the Russian Federation” (Legislation Bulletin of the Russian Federation, 1998, N2 31, Article 3802; 2008, N 2 30, Article 3616; 2009, N 2 23, Article 2773; 2011, N2 30, Article 4600) after the words “pornographic nature” to add the words “from information propagating non-traditional sexual relations.”

Article 2 Point 4, Part 2 of Article 5 of Federal Law № 436-FZ dated December 29, 2010 “On Protecting Children from Information Harmful to their Health and Development” (Legislation Bulletin of the Russian Federation, 2011, N 1, Article 48;

2013, N 14, Article 1658) after the word “values” to add the words “propagating non-traditional sexual relations.”

Article 3 (2) [*Establishing Changes to the Code of Administrative Offenses, now in effect* (http://base.garant.ru/12125267/6/#block_60):

Article 6.21. Promotion of non-traditional sexual relations among minors

1. Promotion of non-traditional sexual relations among minors, expressed in the dissemination of information aimed at developing non-traditional sexual juvenile facilities, attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relations, a distorted conception of the social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relations, or the imposition of information on non-traditional sexual relationships, causing interest in such relationships if these actions do not have a criminal offense, –

punishable by an administrative fine on citizens in the amount of four thousand to five thousand rubles for officials - from forty thousand to fifty thousand rubles for legal entities - from eight hundred thousand to one million rubles or administrative suspension of activity for up to ninety days.

2. The actions referred to paragraph 1 of this Article, committed with the use of the media and (or) information and telecommunication networks (including network "Internet") if these actions do not have a criminal offense, –

shall entail the imposition of an administrative fine on citizens in the amount of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand rubles for officials - from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand rubles for legal entities - one million rubles or administrative suspension of activity for up to ninety days.

3-4. [Additional penalties if same actions are committed by foreign citizens or stateless persons.]]

4. *Family Code* (As amended July 2, 2013 by Federal Law 167-FZ)

Online: <http://base.garant.ru/10105807/19/>

- **Same-sex marriage is not recognized in Russia and a number of court decisions have refused to uphold foreign-obtained marriage licenses.**
- **Foreign couples in same-sex relationships (whether married or unmarried), unmarried opposite-sex couples, and single individuals from countries that recognize same-sex marriage are banned from adopting Russian children.**

Article 127. Persons entitled to be adoptive parents

1. Adopters can be adults of both sexes, except for:

... persons in union entered into between persons of the same sex marriage recognized and recorded in accordance with the laws of the State in which the marriage is allowed, as well as persons who are nationals of the state and not married.

5. *Freedom of Association: Moscow Pride Parade Ban*

Online: <http://www.gaylawnet.com/laws/ru.htm>

On 16 August 2012, Nikolay Alexeyev, founder of Moscow Gay Pride, lost an appeal in Moscow City Court against the city's 100-year ban on Pride parades. The city used its power to withhold permits as a way to ban LGBT events for the next 100 years. The European Court of Human Rights found previous bans illegal.

Proposed Legislation

1. Amendments to the Family Code

Online: <http://www.ilga->

[europe.org/home/guide europe/country by country/russia/russian дума to debate taking kids from gay parents](http://www.ilga-europe.org/home/guide/europe/country%20by%20country/russia/russian%20duma%20to%20debate%20taking%20kids%20from%20gay%20parents)

- **Ongoing legislative changes being proposed include a bill amending Article 69 of the Family Code allowing the government to consider parents' sexual orientation when determining whether a child should be put under state custody.**

III. Case Law

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Decisions

1. *RPD File No TB1-13103*, [2012] RPDD No 228

Holding: Refugee claim denied.

- **Claimant was not credible with regards to his apparent same-sex relationships.**
- **There was a "serious credibility concern" with the claimant generally.**

Claimant married in 1975 and has two daughters, whom he left behind when he fled to the United States in 1998. He stayed in the US until 2002, when he was forced to leave when his immigration file was mishandled. From 2008 until 2011 he claims to have had a same-sex partner in Russia. The Board does not find the claimant's information credible; he claims his wife of 35 years had no idea that he was gay despite the fact that he left the house every so often to pursue a relationship with a same-sex partner. The Board is also not convinced of his being gay; the pictures he presents of him with "his alleged gay lovers" do not suggest a gay relationship, and the medical reports that detail the injuries he claims to have suffered do not demonstrate that he was attacked due to his sexual orientation.

2. *RPD File No TB0-00754*, [2012] RPDD No 27

Holding: Refugee claim denied.

- **Claimant’s testimony regarding medical evidence of harm was suspicious.**
- **Claimant was found not to be credible due to lack of evidence.**

Claimant claimed he was physically assaulted twice in Ukraine because of his sexual orientation. This case is included here because he is a citizen of Russia, and the Board considers returning the claimant to either Ukraine or Russia. The Board takes issue with the medical evidence the claimant presents: he does not provide a medical report detailing the apparent harms he incurred in one of the 2009 incidences, claiming that he forgot to bring it to Canada. The Board is also suspicious of the claimant’s “Forensic Medical Examination” and when and how it was issued. They state that the “documents have the earmarks of being fraudulently fabricated.” Regarding the claimant’s sexual orientation, the Board admits that this is a difficult status to determine, but that based on the evidence there is not enough to support the claim that he is gay.

3. *HDX (Re) No TA6-13947*, [2008] RPDD No 65

Holding: Refugee claim denied.

- **Based on her behavior, claimant was not in fear of persecution upon her return to Russia.**
- **Claimant’s credibility is questioned based on inconsistencies between her PIF and her hearing, and regarding the evidence she brings in support of her being lesbian.**

The claimant came to Canada to study English in 2006, and returned that same year to Russia. She returned to Canada a second time that year and then claimed refugee protection. The Board focuses upon her return to Russia: if she were truly in fear of persecution she would not have returned. She also vacationed in Malta and Croatia but repeatedly returned to Russia without hesitation. The claim that she was “just a child” and was “dependent on her parents” did not convince the Board, as she was already 20 years old. The Board also takes issue with inconsistencies in her evidence, including the evidence of her being a lesbian. Her stories about past same-sex relationships continually change, and her membership at a certain Community Centre is not enough to prove she is a lesbian. This fact is notable as in this case and in the two other cases discussed above, attendance at a particular Community Centre did not provide conclusive evidence that the claimant was a member of the LGBT community.

4. *Davydyan v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*, [2004] RPDD No 288
Holding: Refugee claim denied.

- **Claimant failed to provide substantive proof of his sexual orientation.**

In 1995 claimant had a same-sex relationship, and was caught by his ex-wife in October 1999. Claimant's ex-wife started to blackmail the claimant, and threatened to have him beaten; claimant asserts that he was badly beaten on many occasions and that he was verbally assaulted as well. Arrived in Canada in July 2001, but returned to Russia in August 2001. Upon return to Russia, he found himself out of a job and suspects he could not find work because his former employer spread word of the claimant being gay. Ex-wife also had an influential father in External Affairs who employed his connections to prevent the claimant from finding work.

Claimant fled Russia for Canada again in August 2002 and fears he will be killed if he returns to Russia. The Board questions the claimant's sexual orientation: why was he married twice to a woman? The claimant was also inconsistent about when he was married in his application, causing further suspicion.

5. *QKK (Re) Nos AA0-01226, AA0-01227*, [2001] CRDD No 250

Holding: Convention refugee status granted.

- **Claimants established a reasonable likelihood of persecution if they were to return to Russia, based on claimant B's ex-husband's history of abusive behavior.**

Both claimants (A and B) are women who had prior marriages and have since divorced. Both (coincidentally) divorced their husbands in 1994. A and B worked together and formed a close friendship; B moved in with A in 1999, and B's ex-husband was very jealous of this relationship. At B's birthday in 1999, B's ex-husband witnessed A and B kissing and became extremely abusive, and when the police arrived, the police continued to abuse the claimants upon learning that they were lesbians. A and B claimed that they were both fired from their job when their employer learned from B's ex-husband that they were lesbians. They subsequently opened their own shop, which was set on fire in July 1999.

After the fire A and B both decided to leave the city, and fled to separate locales. B claimed her ex-husband tracked her down and beat her once again; B's daughter found B unconscious and B was hospitalized for three weeks, having suffered a concussion. A and B then decided to flee to Canada and claim refugee status.

The Board concluded that the claimants have provided enough proof to establish a "well-founded fear of persecution" if they were to return to Russia. The Board accepted A and B's testimony as credible, and stated that A and B would be under the threat of B's ex-husband

if they were to return; he has contacts with the police and it is reasonable to assume that B's ex-husband would be abusive upon their return.

6. *QDD (Re) Nos MA0-03935, MA0-03934*, [2001] CRDD No 11

Holding: Refugee claims denied.

- **Claimants' testimony regarding their fear of persecution was suspicious.**

C and D lived together as lesbians in Moscow; claimed that in 1999, they found a dead cat hanged outside of their door with a sign stating that they would suffer from the same fate. Claimants alleged that they subsequently moved to the small town of Zvenigrad out of fear for their lives. Board was suspicious of their story detailing their move to Zvenigrad; C stated in her PIF that she still lived in Moscow until she left for Canada, and the details of both claimants' PIFs generally did not convince the Board of the claimants' move. The Board was unsatisfied with the claimants' explanation of this contradiction and was skeptical that the cat incident even occurred. The Claimants did not establish a "reasonable chance" of persecution upon return to Russia, and thus the Board rejected their claim.

Federal Court of Canada Decisions

1. *Glukhova v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship & Immigration)*, [2008] FC 1208

Holding: Refugee claim denied.

- **This was an application for judicial review of case #3 above**
- **Federal Court Judge states that the Tribunal should have acknowledge the applicant's dependency on her parents when she went to Malta and Croatia.**
- **Nonetheless, she should have seemed more urgent to flee in 2006 when she came to Canada the first time, and thus should not be granted refugee status.**

Note:

It is vital to note that in almost all of the above cases, the Board cites the Russian government's amendment of Article 121 of the Criminal Code in 1993 as a "step in recognizing the rights of homosexuals in Russia." This amendment, serving to decriminalize male same-sex relationships in Russia, was seen as a step towards improving the treatment of gay men in Russia.

In light of recent changes in Russia's law, though, the Board may begin to alter their stance. At this point in time it is impossible to tell whether Canada will treat refugee claimants from Russia similarly, given that no cases have been submitted and adjudicated since the changes in Russian law.

IV. Government Reports

Canada

1. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Russia: Treatment of homosexuals by society and government authorities; legal recourse and protection available to homosexuals who have been subject to ill-treatment (2006-2007)" (5 March 2007)
Online: www.refworld.org/docid/46fa538223.html
 - **Despite marginal gains in tolerance and public awareness of LGBT issues, discrimination against LGBT people is still persistent.**
 - **Homosexuality is widely regarded as a mental illness or perversion.**
 - **Opinion polls show that 43% of Russians believe gay men should be imprisoned, 37% believe gay people should be punished, and 45% are "against homosexuality."**
 - **Homosexuality ceased to be considered a mental illness in 1999, but military cards continue to indicate homosexuality as a mental disorder.**
 - **Homosexual behaviour has been legal since 1993 in all of Russia except the state of Chechnya (under Sharia law), where it is punishable by death.**
 - **Between 2002 and 2006, there were three failed attempts to criminalize homosexual behaviour.**
 - **Russia's Human Rights Ombudsmen is opposed to gay pride parades, claiming that they "irritate society."**
 - **Russia's top Muslim cleric called on believers to "bash" LGBT people if they hold a pride parade.**
 - **Anti-gay violence involving skinhead, nationalist and religious protestors is "neither isolated nor spontaneous."**
 - **In April 2006, hundreds of protestors gathered at a LGBT club to throw bottles and rocks at the club-goers. Police responded slowly, and only charged the protestors with minor offences. The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe urged Russian authorities to prosecute the protestors.**
 - **In May 2006, 200 LGBT activists held a Pride parade. They were attacked by hundreds of protestors. Police arrested 90-120 LGBT activists, and 16 anti-LGBT protestors. There were reportedly 1000 police officers on scene.**
2. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "Russia: The Availability of State Protection to Homosexuals (January 2002-July 2004)" (22 July 2004)
Online: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=41501c5615&skip=0&coi=RUS&querysi=homosexual&searchin=fulltext&sort=date>
 - **In 2004, a Moscow-based UNHCR representative indicated that there is "no state protection" available to LGBT people in Russia because "authorities simply can't be bothered."**

- **Since 2002, the Duma (Russian Parliament) has rejected three attempts to criminalize homosexuality and one attempt to criminalize lesbianism, as well as one bill that sought to bar LGBT people from holding seats in the Duma.**
- **A priest who conducted a same-sex marriage ceremony was defrocked, because the Russian Orthodox Church does not support same-sex marriage.**

United Kingdom

1. Foreign & Commonwealth Office, “Human Rights and Democracy: the 2012 Foreign & Commonwealth Office Report” (April 2013)

Online: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/tehis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=519c75044>

- **Briefly mentions some regions in Russia passing legislation “banning the promoting of homosexuality” (at page 65).**
- **In response to this legislation, the UK supported a statement on tolerance and non-discrimination delivered by France at the OSCE Permanent Council.**

United States

1. United States Department of State, “2012 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Russia” (13 April 2013)

Online: www.refworld.org/docid/517e6de89.html

- **Section 2b “Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association”**
 - **Assembly rights of LGBT activists were violated under (then local) laws criminalizing “propaganda of homosexuality to minors.”**
 - **70 people convicted in St. Petersburg, and activist charged 5,000 ruble (\$166) fine.**
- **Section 6 “Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.”**
 - **LGBT communities “continued to suffer from societal stigma and discrimination.”**
 - **The majority of LGBT persons hide their sexual orientation due to fear of losing their jobs or homes, and threats of violence.**
 - **Medical practitioners limit services to LGBT people due to prejudice.**
 - **Gay men are targets of skinhead aggression, and police often fail to respond.**
 - **Transgender people face discrimination accessing health care, education, housing and employment.**
 - **Although it is legal for transgender people to change their names and gender classifications on government documents, it is difficult to do so because there is no standard procedure in place.**
 - **Moscow refused to allow a gay pride parade for the 7th consecutive year, despite a ECHR ruling that doing so violates the rights to freedom of assembly and prohibition of discrimination.**

V. Reports from International Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations

Amnesty International

1. “Freedom Under Threat: Clampdown on Freedoms of Expression, Assembly and Association in Russia,” 4 September 2013

Online: www.refworld.org/docid/522983384.html

- **Freedom of Assembly:**
 - **Before 2012, federal freedom of assembly laws strictly limited the power of authorities to ban public events. The Duma passed a vaguely-worded amendment of the law in 2012 that introduced fines for “violation of prescribed order,” a new offence for participating in public events that leads to the violation of social order, or physical or social infrastructure.**
 - **Following the federal amendment, 13 regional Dumas adopted laws further limiting freedom of assembly, including forbidding public events near executive buildings, malls, schools, and sidewalks.**
 - **The ECHR ruled in 2010 that Russia had violated freedom of assembly rights by refusing permits for LGBT Pride parades. Despite this, municipal authorities continue to oppose pride events.**
 - **In 2012, authorities again rejected requests to hold Pride events, calling the events provocation that would cause damage to children, insulting of religious beliefs, and humiliating human dignity.**
 - **Police have failed to protect LGBT activists from violence on several occasions. In several incidents, charges against anti-LGBT protestors were dropped, LGBT activists themselves were arrested despite evidence that they were the victims of aggression, and police response is slow.**
- **Freedom of Expression:**
 - **In March 2012, a bill proposing the banning of “propaganda of homosexuality among minors” was introduced to the Duma. The bill makes such propaganda an administrative offence, punishable by fines.**
 - **In 2009, a LGBT activist was found guilty of LGBT propaganda under a regional law to the same effect as the federal bill. This conviction was condemned by the UN Human Rights Committee for violating freedom of expression.**
 - **The ban on LGBT propaganda is based on the notion that the moral and psychological development of children is best served by denying them access to information about their sexuality; this runs counter to Russia’s obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Freedom of Assembly (pages 27-29): the report describes in detail several attempts by LGBT activists to organize public events, several incidents where LGBT activists were attacked by protestors, and the lack of police protection.

The report also includes information related to violations of freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of expression outside the context of LGBT issues.

2. "G20 leaders must reject Russia's homophobic law," 4 September 2013
Online: www.refworld.org/docid/522983384.html

- **The new law promotes violence by vigilante groups and creates a climate of intolerance.**
- **Police arrested 55 LGBT activists in June 2013 for peacefully protesting against the law.**
- **Police have failed to protect LGBT people against vigilante violence, even when perpetrators film the attacks and post them to the internet.**

Article 19

1. "Russia: Ban on 'propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships' violates international law," 11 June 2013
Online: www.refworld.org/docid/51b97f674.html

- **This ban is part of a wider effort by Russian authorities to crack down on dissent and exert greater social control, promoting traditional values at the expense of human rights**
- **Ban will prevent young people from accessing critical health information, including information on HIV**

Asylum Research Consultancy

1. "Country of origin information to support the adjudication of asylum claims from LBGTI asylum-seekers; the Russian Federation," 17 July 2012
Online: www.refworld.org/docid/501a3cf72.html

- **The report, commissioned by the UNCHR, provides a list of resources for LGBT asylum seekers from Russia. Resources include non-profit organization reports, statements and reports from inter-governmental organizations, and newspaper articles.**
- **The following topics are covered:**
 - **Legal position of LGBT persons**
 - **Implementation of legal provisions, including police and judicial treatment and punishment of same-sex sexual activity**
 - **Societal attitudes to LGBT persons**
 - **Homophobia and transphobia in government institutions**

- **State willingness and ability to provide effective protection to LGBT persons**
- **Limitations in access to social and economic rights for LGBT persons**

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

1. “Speak out against hate, stand up for human rights: an open letter from Canadian organizations regarding homophobia in Russia and the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics and Paralympics,” 22 August, 2013

Online: www.aidslaw.ca/EN/lgbt_russia.htm

- **A letter to government and Olympic authorities urging action against Russia, endorsed by 114 Canadian non-profits and institutions.**
- **The letter urges the Canadian government to publically speak out against Russia’s law against homosexual propaganda, and to identify opportunities to actively help LGBT advocates and activists working in Russia. It urges Olympic authorities to use the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies to speak out against Russia, and to support LGBT athletes. It urges Olympic corporate sponsors to withdraw their sponsorships and redirect the funds to LGBT causes.**

Country of Origin Research and Information

1. “CORI Country Report; Russian Federation, October 2010,” October 2010

Online: www.refworld.org/docid/4dc900a62.html

- **Section G of the Report focuses on LGBT issues, and gives an overview of legal treatment of LGBT persons.**
- **Courts do not recognize sexual orientation or gender identity as a basis for hate crime.**
- **Anti-discrimination legislation is not interpreted to include sexual orientation or gender identity.**
- **69% of lesbian and 33% of bisexual women are subject to physical violence.**
- **Hate crime against LGBT persons are underreported because victims fear going to the police, who can be discriminatory and even violent.**
- **Violent hate crimes against LGBT persons are widespread.**
- **Moscow’s mayor calls LGBT people “satanic,” responsible for HIV epidemic in city, weapons of mass destruction of the West.**
- **People with HIV face discrimination, often hide their status.**

Danish Institute for Human Rights

1. “Study on Homophobia, Transphobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Legal Report: Russian Federation,” 2010
Online: www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/RussiaLegal_E.pdf
 - **Study on the legal rights of LGBT people regarding the following: freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, hate crime, family issues, asylum and refugee issues, social security, education, employment, housing, health care, access to goods and services, media, and miscellaneous.**
 - **Includes judicial decisions, legislation, and empirical evidence of discrimination.**
 - **Summaries of significant case law related to LGBT persons.**
 - **The Constitutional Court refused to hear a complaint regarding the Anti-Propaganda Laws, holding that traditional values of “family, motherhood and childhood” require state protection.**
 - **The study outlines a number of problems faced by LGBT people, and concludes that despite legal protections, the “practical realization of the rights by LGBT persons is often difficult.”**

2. “Study on Homophobia, Transphobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity; Sociological Report: Russian Federation,” 2009
Online: www.coe.int/t/Commissioner/Source/LGBT/RussiaSociological_E.pdf
 - **Study on the social climate and treatment of LGBT persons, based on empirical findings by NGOs working in Russia.**
 - **Includes the same topics as the 2010 Legal Report described above.**
 - **General attitudes are ambivalent, but homophobia tends to manifest when public is openly confronted with homosexuality (for example, during gay pride parades).**
 - **Increasing instances of organized, violent hate crimes against LGBT persons, also known as “gay hunt.”**
 - **Very few NGOs can provide support to transgender persons.**

European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA-Europe)

1. “ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2013; Russia,” 2013
Online: dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15245131/2013.pdf
 - **Succinct overview of recent cases of discrimination against LGBT people in areas of: hate speech, hate crimes, official criminalization, education, family, employment, foreign policy, freedoms of speech, assembly and association, health, and law enforcement**
 - **Cases outlined by the report include, among others: a transperson attacked by a group of men, with police failing to respond until 45 minutes after the attack was reported; the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia calling singer Madonna a “slut” for her opposition to the Anti-Propaganda Law; a non-profit’s movement to ban Facebook for recognizing same-sex relationships;**

Russia's disassociation from the G8's proclamation of support for LGBT people's rights; several instances of violence against LGBT activists; the forced rehabilitation of a LGBT teenager; and several instances of police detaining LGBT activists and dismissing cases where the victim is LGBT.

- **The report concludes that institutional discrimination against LGBT people and the social climate are of serious concern. The most worrying development is the recent adoption of "homosexual propaganda" laws, which are strongly condemned by European institutions and breach the UNHR Committee's International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.**

Human Rights Watch

1. "World Report 2013—Russia," 31 January 2013
Online: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=510fb4d3c&skip=0&coi=RUS&querysi=homosexual&searchin=fulltext&sort=date>
 - **By the end of 2012, nine provinces had adopted legislation banning "homosexual propaganda."**
 - **In 2010, the ECHR rejected the Russian government's argument that there is no general consensus on issues relating to the treatment of "sexual minorities."**
 - **Moscow banned Pride Parades in 2011 and 2012.**
2. "'We Have the Upper Hand'; Freedom of assembly in Russia and the human rights of LGBT people," June 2007
Online: www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/lgbt/moscow0607/moscow0607web.pdf
 - **Documents the events of May 27, 2007, in which LGBT activists were assaulted for staging a peaceful public demonstration in Moscow (in attempt to hold a gay pride parade).**
 - **Police sided with aggressors, and arrested nonviolent protestors.**

International Federation for Human Rights

1. "Russian Federation: Stop the anti-LGBT law now," 17 June 2013
Online: www.refworld.org/docid/51cc38ca18.html
 - **The bill contradicts international standards that bind Russia, and the Russian Constitution, which guarantees equal rights.**
 - **Bill will paralyze work of LGBT NGOs and activists.**

Inter-Regional Social Movement (Russian LGBT Network)

1. “The Situation of LGBT People in the Russian Federation,” July 2012
Online: lgbtnet.ru/en/content/situation-lgbt-russian-federation-last-three-months-2011-first-half-2012

- **Russia is facing a period of “traditionalist revanchism,” dominated by right-leaning political and religious forces, which has promoted “traditional family values.”**
- **Conservative political groups actively oppose equal rights for LGBT persons.**
- **Documentation of human rights violations against LGBT persons: arbitrary law enforcement, restriction of freedom of expression, discrimination at work and in schools, physical violence and hate crimes, and psychological violence and hate speech.**
- **Documentation of city and state level legislation restricting LGBT persons’ rights.**

The Report contains five articles on the situation of LGBT people in Russia. The first discusses political sentiments driving negative attitudes towards the LGBT community, including nationalist and religious groups. The recent rise in aggression is a response to the increase in LGBT awareness and visibility after centuries of invisibility and perceived inferiority. The author counters the notion that awareness of LGBT issues is detrimental to children and teenagers. LGBT youth especially can benefit from greater awareness; the author cites that 26% of LGBT attempt suicide, many in their teenage years.

Article #2 focuses on the political and cultural attitudes against LGBT people, attributed to the rise of “traditionalism” and conservatism. It discusses the role of several anti-LGBT groups and non-profits that have spread the notion of traditional family values. This has led to a culture war between traditionalists and liberals who believe in universal human rights.

Article #3 documents many instances of aggression, discrimination and police discrimination/inaction against LGBT people between 2011 and 2012. The many incidents include: violence against LGBT activists, severe bullying in schools, threatening hate speech such as “you’re not a human being!” and “she should have her vagina cut out,” and priests conflating LGBT people with pedophiles, among many others.

Article #4 provides information on all the regional laws prohibiting “promotion of homosexuality among minors,” and discusses the recent history of federal initiatives to adopt a law to the same effect.

Article #5 provides information on relevant international conventions and committees that protect LGBT people, specifically focusing on various UN Committees.

2. “Implementation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment in the Russian Federation in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity,” 23 November 2012
Online: lgbtnet.ru/en/content/implementation-convention-against-torture-rf-relation-sogi

- **Uses empirical data from St. Petersburg region to illustrate problems regarding the implementation of the prohibition on torture.**
 - **Examines 3 problems:**
 - **(1) hate crimes and hate speech**
 - **LGBT is not recognized as a “social group” in legislation (and thus not protected)**
 - **No official statistics on hate crimes against LGBT persons**
 - **No protection system for witnesses or victims**
 - **(2) coercive medical interventions in relation to transsexual people**
 - **It is legal to change gender on official documentation, but unclear mechanisms make it difficult**
 - **Some cases included sterilization requirement to change gender**
 - **Many regions lack medical professionals willing to work with transsexual people**
 - **(3) coercive medical interventions in relation to homosexual people**
 - **Homosexuality is not officially considered a disease, but LGBT people may still be diagnosed with mental illness due to discrimination.**
3. “Discrimination and Violence Against Lesbian and Bisexual Women and Transgender People in Russia,” 30 July 2010
 Online:
www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/LGBTNetwork_RussianFederation46.pdf
- **Report related to violence against LGBT women, including domestic violence; recognition of gender identity; discrimination and violence against human rights defenders; violation of the rights to education and health; discrimination in employment and family relations.**
 - **The Report provides information on Russia’s domestic laws and UN obligations to protect LGBT people from discrimination and violence. It then provides empirical evidence of wide-spread discrimination and violence.**
 - **The report concludes that Russia has failed to adequately protect LGBT women, and provides a list of recommendations for Russian authorities, such as implementing awareness programs, supporting LGBT women’s participation in civic engagement, and amending laws to specifically prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.**

The empirical evidence cited by the report include, among others: a girl being forced to renounce her sexuality or be expelled from her college; a teacher dismissed for “health reasons” related to her sexuality; fathers of children of LGBT women denying the women their rights to their children; and the gang rape of a LGBT woman, followed by the court refusing to find a homophobic motive for the crime.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. “Basis of Claims and Background Information on Asylum-Seekers and Refugees from the Russian Federation,” 24 June 2004
Online: <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=40a88b60a&skip=0&coi=RUS&querysi=homosexual&searchin=fulltext&sort=date>

Gender-Related Claims (pages 12-13):

- **The most common LGBT refugee claims involve claimants who have faced extreme public hostility, violence, abuse, or “severe or cumulative discrimination.”**
- **In many claimant cases, an LGBT claimant faces discrimination by refusing to adhere to socially or culturally defined gender roles.**
- **Even where homosexual practices are not criminalized, a claimant can establish a valid claim if the state condones or tolerates discrimination, or if the state is unable to protect the claimant against discrimination.**
- **LGBT people fall within the definition of a particular social group.**

Homosexuals (pages 49-50):

- **The current Criminal Code does not explicitly criminalize same-sex sexual activities, although offences do include “compulsion to perform certain sexual actions, such as illicit relations, pederasty, [and] lesbianism” (article 133), and “pederasty, lesbianism or any other sexual action with the use of violence” (article 132).**
- **At the time of this report, public opinion and the press did not openly condemn homosexuality.**
- **Majority of LGBT people hide their orientation, and fear discrimination in the workplace.**
- **LGBT people face heightened abuse in prisons, along with rapists and child molesters. They have little or no protection from prison authorities.**
- **In June 2001, 3 out of 4 Moscow gay venues were subject to unauthorized police searches. Victims of police brutality did not file a complaint for fear of publicity.**
- **LGBT people may face discrimination in the military.**

VI. Russian and International Media Reports on LGBT Rights

1. “Gay rights protest in St. Petersburg ends in clashes, arrests,” Liza Dobkina and Jason Bush, The Chicago Tribune, 12 October, 2013.
Online: <http://archive.globalgayz.com/europe/russia/gay-rights-protest-in-st-petersburg-ends-in-clashes-arrests/>
 - **67 people arrested following a fight between gay rights activists and their opponents.**
 - **The event began with a small protest (15 participants) by gay rights activists, who were outnumbered by anti-gay demonstrators.**

- **Opponents of the protests included “several dressed as Cossacks and Orthodox priests” as well as “elderly women who chanted Russian Orthodox prayers.”**
 - **Police alleged to have assisted the anti-gay demonstrators, though police representative claims those detained included activists from both sides of the fight.**
2. ““Lesbianism” and “War Games”: Russia’s Internet Censorship Continues,” Andrey Tselikov, Global Voices Online, 2 October, 2013.
Online: <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/10/02/lesbianism-and-war-games-russian-internet-censorship-continues/>
- **Broad anti-piracy law eases shutting down of online resources based on copyright infringement claims.**
 - **Function of shutting down websites also used for websites that infringe on the Russian propaganda law. For example: Looo.ch, an art blog hosting an art project meant to satirize homophobia found itself included on a forbidden website registry with no explanation given about the reason.**
3. “Russia ‘gay propaganda’ law may fall after historic court ruling,” Joe Morgan, Gay Star News, 2 October, 2013.
Online: <http://archive.globalgayz.com/europe/russia/russia-gay-propaganda-law-may-fall-after-historic-court-ruling/>
- **Court case against LGBT activist Irina Fet appealed by Moscow Pride to UN Human Rights Committee, which ruled in their favour.**
 - **Ryazan regional court concurs with UN ruling, cancels charges and verdicts.**
 - **Moscow Pride engages in new process with Finance Minister to compensate Fet for ‘moral damages’ – process may last as long as two years.**
 - **Law in question is a regional statute – ruling does not affect nationwide ban.**
4. ““Stephen Fry is evil and gays are not welcome here” says lawmaker,” Hannah Osborne, International Business Times, 27 September, 2013
Online: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/509621/20130927/vitaly-milonov-russia-anti-gay-laws-stephen.htm>
- **Vitaly Milonov, author of anti-propaganda law, denounces Stephen Fry after publication of Fry’s open letter to the IOC.**
 - **Milonov: “We could say that paedophilia is a sexual choice, we could say that murder is a way to survive. But truth is truth and we cannot change the way things are. Homosexuality is not normal, I’m sorry.”**
5. “Russia: Bill would allow children to be taken away from gay parents,” David M. Herszenhorn, The New York Times, 5 September, 2013.
Online: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/06/world/europe/russia-bill-would-allow-children-to-be-taken-away-from-gay-parents.html?ref=russia&_r=0

- **Lower house of Russian Parliament proposes bill that would allow state to take custody of children if one or both parents is gay.**
 - **Member who introduced the bill is a member of United Russia party, which nominated Putin as president and controls a majority in the Duma.**
6. “Russian anti-gay law prompts rise in homophobic violence,” Alec Luhn, The Guardian, 1 September, 2013.
Online: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/01/russia-rise-homophobic-violence>
- **Rise in homophobic ‘vigilantism’ as a consequence of legislation banning “homosexual propaganda” in Russia.**
 - **Groups named “Occupy Pedophilia” and “Occupy Gerontophilia” use the legislation as justification for luring LGBT people into meetings where they are ambushed and humiliated on camera.**
 - **LGBT Russians describe how they live in secrecy and fear the consequences of their sexuality being discovered.**
7. “Russia raids Nikolia Alexeyev’s home; people encouraged to turn in gay neighbors,” On Top Magazine Staff, On Top Magazine, 29 August, 2013.
Online: <http://archive.globalgayz.com/europe/russia/russia-raids-nikolia-alexeyevs-home-people-encouraged-to-turn-in-gay-neighbors/>
- **Complaint from anti-LGBT lawmaker prompts police to ransack home of Russia’s leading gay rights activist.**
 - **There are reports of landlords encouraging tenants to aid police in locating violators of the ‘gay propaganda’ law.**
8. “Russia: LGBT rights and isolationism,” Simon Speakman, The Moscow News, 19 August, 2013
Online: <http://www.themoscownews.com/news/20130819/191864007/Russia-LGBT-rights-and-isolationism.html>
- **In response to Russian propaganda law, British writer Stephen Fry publishes an open letter to IOC calling for the Sochi 2014 Olympic Games to be taken out of Russia.**
 - **Popular response in Russia suggests Russians resent this criticism, finding it unfair and unlikely to affect what is perceived as a good law.**
 - **Sociologist Olga Kryshstanovskaya: “When Russian people hear that the world is against Russia’s opposition to gay propaganda, we think that the world has gone insane.”**
9. “Canada to favour refugee claims by gay Russians,” Daniel Bitonti and Campbell Clark, The Globe and Mail, 12 August, 2013.
Online: www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-to-favour-refugee-claims-by-gay-russians/article13724670/

- **Immigration Minister states that Canada’s refugee board is likely to favour Russian asylum-seekers claiming persecution related to sexual orientation.**
 - **Lawyer Rob Hughes, currently representing two gay Russian refugee claimants, expects more Russians to make such claims.**
 - **Roughly 140 to 225 Russian claim refugee status in Canada annually, about half of which are approved.**
10. “How Russia’s science of sex threatens gays,” Laurie Essig, Washington Post, 9 August, 2013
 Online: http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-09/opinions/41225606_1_gays-homosexuality-sochi
- **Account of life for LGBT people in Russia by Laurie Essig.**
 - **Outlines anti-gay propaganda law, ban on adoptions by same-sex couples.**
 - **Describes activities of Occupy Pedophilia, an anti-LGBT group that uses classified ads to lure LGBT victims into ambushes and equates homosexuality with pedophilia.**
 - **Predominant belief in Russia that ‘non-traditional’ sexual preferences are learned and can be corrected; as a result, many lesbians are hospitalized to reorient desire.**
 - **Gay men are not considered ‘sick’ and in need of treatment, but as criminals in need of punishment.**
11. “Gay rights in Russia: facts and myths,” Alexey Filippov, RT News, 2 August, 2013
 Online: <http://rt.com/news/russia-gay-law-myths-951/>
- **LGBT behaviour not criminalized, but spreading information about it or suggesting it is a positive or natural lifestyle is illegal under ‘gay propaganda’ law.**
 - **Mixed messages from Duma representatives cast doubt about whether propaganda law will be used against athletes or guests at 2014 Sochi Olympics.**
 - **Official statistics show 12 homophobic attacks in Russia last year; activists claim these statistics are meaningless as assaults are rarely reported and never recorded as hate crimes.**
12. “Russia: Gay athletes and spectators face arrest at Sochi Olympics,” Ewan Palmer, International Business Times, 31 July, 2013.
 Online: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/495868/20130731/russia-gay-athletes-arrest-winter-olympics-sochi.htm>
- **Despite reassurances from Russian officials, co-sponsor of propaganda bill Vitaly Milonov claims the legislation cannot be suspended to exempt Olympic athletes or spectators.**

13. “Dutch tourists arrested under gay propaganda law,” Ewan Palmer, International Business Times, 23 July, 2013.
Online: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/articles/493640/20130723/dutch-tourists-arrested-gay-propaganda-russia-law.htm>
- **Four Dutch filmmakers arrested while shooting a film about gay rights in Russia.**
 - **Filmmakers were taken in by police and questioned for eight hours, were fined for violation of visa regulations, and had their film confiscated.**
14. “‘Recognizing same-sex unions brings us closer to the apocalypse.’ – Head of Russian Orthodox Church,” RT News, 22 July, 2013.
Online: <http://rt.com/news/church-same-sex-unions-404/>
- **Patriarch of Russian Orthodox Church calls for Russians to ensure that “sin is never formalized by the rule of law.”**
 - **Claims that codification of LGBT rights would set Russia down a path of self-destruction.**
15. “Russia’s Putin signs law limiting adoption by gays,” Associated Press, 3 July, 2013.
Online: http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/07/03/russia-putin-gay-adoption/2486913/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3AUsatodaycomWorld-TopStories+%28News+-+World+-+Top+Stories%29
- **Adoption of Russian children by married same-sex couples in foreign countries, single parents, and unmarried couples in those countries is prohibited.**
 - **This follows on a total ban on adoption by Americans from 2012.**
16. “Why is Russia homophobic? Ask the 42 percent,” Anna Arutunyan, The Moscow News, 1 July, 2013.
Online: http://themoscownews.com/potemkin_tales/20130701/191661580/Why-is-Russia-homophobic-Ask-the-42-percent.html
- **Polls indicate that number of Russians who believe homosexuality should be a crime is on the rise.**
 - **Many Russians (including members of the LGBT community) feel that Pride parades and similar rallies “exacerbate animosity” and make “the LGBT community sound hysterical.”**
 - **Suggests that such strong-handed methods are perhaps not the most appropriate way to promote LGBT rights in Russia.**
17. “Putin signs ‘gay propaganda’ ban and law criminalizing insult of religious feelings,” RT News, 30 June, 2013.
Online: <http://rt.com/politics/putin-law-gay-religious-457/>

- **Propaganda bill prohibits LGBT rallies, as well as distribution of information about LGBT rights and lifestyles to children, as well as material that suggests such lifestyles are good, or might provoke an interest in ‘non-traditional’ sexual behaviour.**
 - **Violation of the ban by Russians punishable by fines; foreigners who violate the law may be jailed up to 15 days and deported.**
 - **Second bill criminalizing insult of religious feelings carries penalties of fines up to half a million rubles (approx. 15, 600 USD) and up to three years imprisonment.**
18. “Mizulina and anti-gay hysteria: suffer the little children,” Natalia Antonova, The Moscow News, 6 June, 2013.
Online: <http://themoscownews.com/oped/20130617/191617823/Mizulina-and-anti-gay-hysteria-suffer-the-little-children.html>
- **State Duma deputy Yelena Mizulina approves ‘anti-gay propaganda law’ seeks to establish basis for removing children from custody of same-sex couples.**
 - **A leaked video from a state care facility in Amursky depicts systematic beatings of young boys by an older child, with no adult intervention.**
 - **Child psychologist and adoption expert Lyudmila Petranovskaya notes that such occurrences are not the worst that have happened in Russian state care facilities, raising questions about the consequences of the proposed new law.**
19. “No more rainbows: anti-gay sentiment rises in Russia,” Kristen Blyth, The Moscow News, 20 May, 2013.
Online: <http://themoscownews.com/russia/20130520/191526788.html>
- **Applications to allow Moscow Pride demonstrations denied annually since 2007 leading to annually attempted demonstrations ending in violence.**
 - **Milk label depicting “cartoon cows frolicking beneath a rainbow” results in complaints to authorities about LGBT ‘propaganda.’**
 - **Moscow gay nightclub stormed by 20 masked gunmen.**
 - **Vladislav Tornovoi murdered while celebrating Victory Day over allegations he was gay: he was raped with beer bottles, set on fire, and had his skull crushed by a concrete slab.**
 - **Lawmakers deny connection between gay propaganda law and violence; Duma deputy Yelena Mizulina dismisses alleged connection as ‘silly’.**
20. “Moscow court upholds 100-year ban on gay pride events,” RT News, 17 August, 2012
Online: <http://rt.com/politics/moscow-ban-gay-events-910/>
- **Moscow court rejects appeal of 100-year ban on LGBT pride events by Nikolai Alekseyev.**
 - **Alekseyev said he would report the ruling to the Ministers’ Committee of the Council of Europe.**

- **Alekseyev claimed he did not believe his group would obtain a licence for their parade by the appeal, but wanted a concrete reason to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights.**
21. “Top Russian judge insults Euro court ruling on gays,” Rex Wockner, Between the Lines News, 13 January, 2011.
 Online: <http://users.pridesource.com/article.html?article=44982>
- **Chairman of Russian Constitutional Court, Valery Zorkin, criticizes European Court of Human Rights decision striking down Moscow’s annual bans on gay pride celebrations.**
 - **Accuses ECHR of disrespecting Russian sensitivities, especially those of Islamic republics within Russian federation.**
22. “Russian gay leader Alekseev abducted, released,” Rex Wockner, Between the Lines News, 23 September, 2010.
 Online: <http://www.pridesource.com/article.html?article=43343>
- **Moscow Pride founder and leader seized when crossing passport control at Domodedovo Airport in Moscow in September, 2010.**
 - **Alekseev was taken to a police facility in Kashira, where he was mocked, possibly drugged, and pressed to sign a paper agreeing to drop his lawsuits with the European Court of Human Rights over bans on gay pride parades.**
 - **Alekseev moved to another police facility in Tula, and his phone is used to text false information alleging he has fled to Belarus and dropped his lawsuits.**
 - **Released on outskirts of Tula three days after his arrest; left to make own way back to city center and find transportation back to Moscow.**