

THE RUSSIAN CHRONICLE

REGISTRATION OF LGBT

As of February 5th at 8 am, the president of Russia, Nikolai Putin issued an executive order that all persons over the age of 13 who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer must register at their local government offices within thirty days of identifying as such. They will then be issued a rainbow armband with the word LGBT at the bottom of the band, publicly identifying those wearing it as LGBT.

If one fails to register, they will be jailed for up to five years or a very harsh fine, a price that many Russian citizens are in no place to pay as of this year. This consequence was first

used when a citizen of The Chechen Republic refused to register in the allotted time period. He was informed that he must register within the week, or he would be persecuted to the full extent of the law. When officials were alerted that he has failed to do so, he was found, and was quickly detained. After attempting to convince him into registering peacefully and failing, he was tried in a court of law and was sentenced to five years in the local prison, with no possibility of parole. This served as an example to the Russian people, striking fear in the hearts of LGBT. After this instance, the rate of LGBT registering raised by 15% in one month.

This coincides with Putin's new policy of prohibiting divorce in heterosexual marriages when one partner is found to be homosexual. This alone lowered the divorce rate in Russia by 12.3%, making it apparent that a fair percentage of divorces prior to this law were unravelled by LGBT relationships. In Moscow, a family of four has been ostracized due to this growing issue. When the police received a call from the youngest (8 years old), that her brother (17 years old) was a homosexual, and was engaging in sexual relations with another man, the authorities responded quickly. They swiftly detained the minor and brought him in for questioning. It is likely that the teen will be charged, and will not return home.

When asked to comment on the ongoing investigation, a detective in the Moscow City Police Force said, "This situation is not isolated, and we will not rest until all LGBT are identified". It is in fact, not an isolated incident. Just 34 miles away in Andreyevka, another case arose, this time including two women, one in an heterosexual marriage and the other a widow. Whether the situation includes men or women,



the officials have begun charging both sexes with the same severe sentences, most commonly 5 years in prison.

With the new anti-divorce policy, affairs are becoming more and more common, and those who discover such affairs are greatly encouraged to report it as soon as possible. It is apparent that any person who identifies as LGBT would greatly benefit from registering as soon as possible, instead of waiting to face the consequences laid out by the Russian government.

The Russian public has begun to riot, thus beginning the first acts of violence in relation to Putin's new laws. Many citizens have begun to graffiti their neighbor's houses and local businesses with LGBT slurs and offensive symbols, claiming that they are homosexuals and have not registered as such. Instead of leaving the identification process to the police, the public has brought it upon themselves to bring undocumented LGBT out of the closet and into the public eye.

Putin and government officials have yet to condemn on the ongoing violence, leaving the media to speculate as to if this chaos is what the government expected to happen with the application of these policies.

The Russian Government has made it clear that those who remain undocumented will not be tolerated, and that the consequences should be taken seriously. Nikolai Putin released a statement in February when the laws were first enacted that, "The people of Russia need order and this preliminary action will allow for peace within this great country." Despite the recent violence, the law has allowed for the separation of LGBT and heterosexual persons, creating peace in greatly populated regions in Russia.

These policies were first enacted in Chechnya, a region known for being densely populated with LGBT, but have quickly since expanded across Russia, and aren't thought to come to fruition anytime soon. These actions mark the beginning of Nikolai Putin's climb to power, and the first one hundred days of his presidency.