

URGENT ACTION

PRIDE MARCH MUST BE ALLOWED TO GO AHEAD

A student-organised Pride march, is due to take place on 11 May*, on the Ankara based Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) campus, but is at risk of being blocked by the Ankara Governorate and university authorities, in violation of the right to freedom of assembly. The march must be allowed to go ahead and the ongoing blanket ban on all LGBTI events in Ankara lifted.

An annual student-organised Pride march, is due to take place on 11 May, on the Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) campus in Ankara, but is at risk of being blocked by the Ankara Governorate and university authorities. According to the LGBTI student group and march organisers, **ODTÜ LGBTI Dayanışması**, in early April, the university authorities informed the Ankara Governorate of the student's annual spring festival, which this year takes place from 9 – 11 May, and the Pride march, on 11 May. The Governorate responded that both the festival and the march could not go ahead because of risk of 'provocation'.

The annual spring festival has been organized by student groups at ODTÜ for the last 31 years and is a celebration of different cultures. For the last seven years, the Pride march has been taking place on the day after the festival, with the support of a wide range of student groups. This year, ODTÜ LGBTI are also planning a week of events, including a 'queer salsa dance' and a collective rainbow painting event, starting on 7 May.

ODTÜ LGBTI told Amnesty International that the University's Rector told them on 26 April that he would make representations to the Governorate for the festival to go ahead but would not negotiate in favour of the Pride march. On the same day, an article in a pro-government newspaper referred to the march and its organisers as "deviants [who] are planning on displaying their lack of morals under the slogan 'we are everywhere, we are the country' without regard to religious sensitivities a short time before the start of Ramadan".

An indefinite blanket ban by Ankara Governorate on all LGBTI events in Ankara has been in effect since November 2017. The right to peaceful assembly is guaranteed under domestic and international law. To be lawful, any restrictions on this right must be necessary and proportionate, meaning that there must be a pressing social need, in order to protect a legitimate concern. The ongoing indefinite blanket ban on all LGBTI events in Ankara is therefore unlawful, which includes any blocking of the ODTÜ students' march for Pride.

**Note: an earlier version of this Urgent Action misstated that the Pride march was to take place on May 12. We have now confirmed that the march is scheduled for May 11. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.*

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Calling on the Governor of Ankara to ensure that the student's Pride march can go ahead without unlawful restrictions, and to immediately and unconditionally lift the indefinite blanket ban on all LGBTI events in Ankara;
- Calling on the Rector of the Middle East Technical University to ensure that the Pride march planned for 11 May takes place without any unlawful restrictions imposed on it.

Contact these two officials by 14 June, 2018:

Governor of Ankara
Mr Ercan Topaca
T.C. Ankara Valiliği Ulus
Ankara, Turkey
Email: ankarabilgi@icisleri.gov.tr
Twitter: [@TopacaErcan](https://twitter.com/TopacaErcan)
Salutation: Dear Governor

Ambassador Serdar Kiliç
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
2525 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: 1 202 612 6700 OR 202 612 6701
Fax: 1 202 612 6744
Email: embassy.washingtondc@mfa.gov.tr
Contact Form: <http://washington.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/Contact>
Twitter: [@SerdarKilic9](https://twitter.com/SerdarKilic9)
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 83.18*

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 18 November 2017, an indefinite blanket ban imposed by the Governorate of Ankara on all LGBTI events has been in effect, introduced under the ongoing state of emergency in the country in place since the failed coup attempt of July 2016. LGBTI organizations and activists in Ankara speak of the devastating impact of the ban, forcing the once vibrant and growing movement to near invisibility. Ankara based LGBTI organizations, KAOS GL and Pink Life are mounting legal challenges to the ban, which are ongoing.

The LGBTI student group ODTÜ LGBTI was established in 1996 and has been requesting formal recognition from university authorities ever since it was founded, which has still not been granted. The group has been actively defying the ongoing blanket ban on LGBTI events in Ankara since last November and are calling for international solidarity to ensure that the Pride march takes place for the eighth consecutive year.

Name: LGBTI student group, ODTÜ LGBTI
Gender m/f: all

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