

URGENT ACTION

LGBTI+ RIGHTS DEFENDERS ON TRIAL

Emirhan Şaşmaz, Kerem Dikmen, and nine other leaders of a group called Genç LGBTI+ are being put on trial for breaking a law about how organizations should operate. This law can be used to limit what groups can do or even shut them down. They are also accused of going against a rule in the Constitution that is meant to protect families and children. In December 2025, a court decided to close the group in a separate case, but the group is asking a higher court to review that decision. Many people believe these actions are unfair, limit people's freedom to form and join groups, and treat LGBTI+ people unequally. They are calling on the government to drop the charges and respect human rights.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: September 17, 2026

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- Click here to report your action(s) on UA 17.26. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor
Ali Yeldan
Çınarlı Mahallesi
Şehit Polis Fethi Sekin Caddesi No:11/A
Konak / İZMİR
Fax: +90 232 435 04 37
Email: izmircbs@adalet.gov.tr

Send a copy of your letter to the address below
CC: Embassy of Türkiye in the United States
Ambassador Sedat Önal
2525 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Email: embassy.washingtondc@mfa.gov.tr

Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,

I am writing because I am worried about a group of people from an organization called Genç LGBTI+. Some of its leaders, including Emirhan Şaşmaz and Kerem Dikmen, are being taken to court because of their work supporting their community.

Their organization was closed by a court in 2025 because of a few illustrations shared on social media. However, the association did not even know about some of the court hearings, which seems unfair.

The claims against them are based on unclear ideas about "morality." Because of this, their right to speak freely and work together as an organization is being restricted.

I respectfully ask you to drop the charges against the members of Genç LGBTI+ and to make sure their rights are protected.

Sincerely,

Learn More About Genç LGBTI+ Association



The process to close Genç LGBTI+ started in 2024 when the Ministry of Interior reviewed the group. Officials said that five social media posts broke laws about “obscenity” and did not follow rules about protecting families and children.



On December 10, 2024, the İzmir Governorship made an official complaint about those posts, which were shared between 2019 and 2022. They asked for a criminal investigation and wanted the organization to be shut down. In early 2025, an investigation began against the group’s leaders, accusing them of sharing harmful content and running an organization for illegal reasons.

On February 3, 2025, a court case was started to close the organization. The first hearing happened on March 11, but the group did not know about it because they were not properly notified, so they could not attend. Later, they found out and sent their response. At the next hearing on April 8, their lawyers were able to join and defend them.

Another investigation about the same issue started in March 2025. The first investigation was closed in August 2025 because officials decided the posts were not a crime. However, the second investigation was not dropped.

On October 28, 2025, prosecutors charged 11 leaders of Genç LGBTI+. Then, on December 11, 2025, a court decided to close the organization. The court said the posts reached many people, encouraged LGBTI+ identities, and went against public values and the Constitution. The group is now appealing, which means they are asking a higher court to review the decision. Some laws about “public morality” are unclear and can be used in unfair ways. These laws can limit people’s freedom to speak, gather, and form groups, especially when it comes to issues of identity and human rights.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

[Vocabulary Chart](#)

[The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Worksheet](#)

[Tips for Letter Writing](#)



Directions: Below are some “power words” that you will need to understand as you learn about this Urgent Action. In groups, pairs, or individually, research the definitions of the terms below. Write the definitions in your own words in the space provided and then discuss the critical thinking questions at the bottom of this document.

<i>Power Word</i>	<i>Definition in Your Own Words</i>
Genç LGBTI+	
Trial	
Constitution	
Higher Court	
Criminal Charges	
Court Hearings	
Morality	
Ministry of Interior	

Obscenity	
Criminal Investigation	
Illegal	
Prosecutor	
Public Morality	
LGBTI+	
Appeal	
Accountable	

International Human Rights Law	
Human Rights	
Respect Human Rights	
Protect Human Rights	
Fulfill Human Rights	
Atrocity	

Critical Thinking Questions:

1. Do you think it is fair for a government to shut down an organization because of social media posts? Why or why not? What rights might be impacted in this situation?

2. The authorities say they are using laws about “morality” and protecting families. How could these laws be used in different ways to both protect people and harm people?

3. Why are freedom of expression and freedom of association important in a society? What could happen if these rights are restricted for certain groups?