



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Yorkers to Protest Violation of LGBT Human Rights in Russia 'Vodka Dump' at Russian Consulate Kicks Off Protests Nationwide

New York, NY — On July 31, 2013 at 12:00 PM (noon) EDT, New Yorkers will gather at the Russian Consulate (9 East 91st Street) to protest new anti-gay laws passed in Russia that subject LGBT Russians and foreign nationals to fines, arrests and possible jail time, and which have provoked violent attacks on LGBT Russians.

The protest is being organized by RUSA LGBT (Russian-Speaking American LGBTQ Association) and Queer Nation, a New York-based organization committed to direct action to end homophobia and anti-LGBT violence. The protest has the support of a wide range of LGBT activists and organizations in Russia, the United States and around the globe.

Protesters will dump Russian vodka into the gutter and will picket the Russian Consulate. Business owners who are participating in the "Dump Russian Vodka" campaign will be on hand to explain their commitment to the boycott of Russian products.

Protesters are demanding:

- 1) The Russian government repeal the "anti-gay propaganda" law before the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.
- 2) A boycott of all Russian products, including Russian vodka. We are calling for all New Yorkers to stop ordering and purchasing Russian made products and demand that their bars and restaurants stop serving Russian products, including Russian vodka.
- 3) A boycott of the Sochi Winter Olympics, with a suggestion to move the 2014 Games to Vancouver, Canada.
- 4) Corporate sponsors of the Sochi Olympics withdraw their sponsorship of the Games. Olympic sponsors include: Coca-Cola, Omega Watches, VISA, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Procter & Gamble, Samsung, and Panasonic.

On June 11, 2013, Russia's Parliament (The Duma) unanimously passed the federal act banning "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations." The new law imposes steep fines on anyone who equates the value of same-sex relationships between consenting adults with relationships between individuals of the opposite sex. The fines become significantly higher if one promotes the ideas of equality through the mass media or the Internet. Foreign nationals charged with such "propaganda" are subject to arrest, 15 days in jail, fines, and deportation. Russian authorities are already arresting and fining both citizens and visitors.

These laws make it illegal to discuss LGBT topics in public forums and to offer support to gay minors (under the age of 18). Hate crimes are on the rise in Russia since the laws went into effect. Entrapment and brutal beatings of people perceived as gay have been widely reported.

According to LGBT Russian activists, international pressure is essential in the months before the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi as Russian lawmakers continue to propose new laws that persecute Russia's LGBT community. Currently, the State Duma is gearing up to propose legislation allowing the State to remove children from committed same-sex families and single gay and lesbian parents.