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# Kaos GL Newsletter

## Hate Campaign after Directorate of Religious Affairs' homophobic khutba and following developments

30.04.2020

While the world and Turkey are struggling with the COVID-19 outbreak, on Friday (April 24th), the Directorate of Religious Affairs Administration targeted LGBTI+s and the people living with HIV at [Friday's khutbah](#).



After these homophobic statements, political parties, unions and human rights NGOs from Turkey [reacted to the khutbah of hatred](#).

KaosGL.org compiled the developments that took place after the hateful khutbah and intensified attacks against the fundamental rights of LGBTI+s. You may find the related news in the following [link](#).



Lately, **President Erdoğan** [made a statement](#) supporting the khutbah and following investigation opened against Ankara Bar Association. In the statement, Erdoğan said:

*“Directorate of Religious Affairs is a state institution. The head of our institution made a statement as a necessity of his belief and his duty. What he said was completely true. (...) This is not related with Ankara Bar Association. Everyone must know their place. The wordings used against our Head of Religious Affairs have transcended the person, but become an intentional attack to Islam. The attacks against our Religious Affairs' Head is the attack to our state (...)”*

After the Ankara Bar Association, Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office has [launched an investigation](#) against the executives of Diyarbakır Bar over their statement on President of Religious Affairs' targeting remarks about LGBTI+ people.

MP of People's Democratic Party (HDP), Garo Paylan brought the hate speech to the agenda of the Parliament. [In the parliamentary question](#) that Paylan raised, he asked following questions to Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gül who also supported the hateful khutbah:

“1. Can a civil servant commit a hate crime by targeting LGBTI+ citizens? 2. Are the words of the Head of Religious Affairs not contrary to our Constitution, our laws and the international treaties that Turkey is a party? 3. How can you prevent hate crimes by embracing a hate speech? 4. Have you ever remind that Tukey is ruled by the rule of law?”

### **Hate Campaign on April 23 Children's Day**

23.04.2020

On April 23 celebrated as National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Turkey, Kadıköy Municipality LGBTI+ Assembly made a call on social media that “April 23 is also the day of LGBTI+ children” and they asked LGBTI+s to post their childhood photos with the hashtag #LGBTIÇocuklarVardır (#LGBTIChildrenExist).

On the same days, Social Workers Association (SHUDER) organized a panel session on “LGBTI+ Children in Pandemic Period”. They published their news with the same hastag on social media.

Lately, the hashtag was targeted by a huge crowd associating the issue with pedophile and harassment. Supported by many people, the hashtag become trending topic in Turkey on 23th April.

### **Hate Campaign and Homophobic Statements from RTÜK**

14.04.2020

On April 11, an homophobic hate campaign started on Twitter about a new Netflix series, Aşk101, to be released on 24<sup>th</sup> April. While individuals were calling on each other to stay at home with #StayHome hashtags and the government imposing confinement orders for certain age groups, we have also witnessed the emergence of the “YallahHollandaya” (“Go to the Netherlands”), a homophobic slur campaign on social media. This was later followed by #netflixadamol and #adamolnetflix (“#netflix Be a Man! or #behave netflix!”), both hate-motivated campaigns initiated after a hint that one of the characters in the Netflix's original Turkish series “Love101” will be gay.

One of the pioneers of the social media lynch was Yeni Akit newspaper that made a news about the series with the title “Net Provocation”. After their news, they asked for the The Supreme Board of Radio Television in Turkey (RTÜK) Head Ebubekir Şahin's opinion. Commenting on this campaign, Ebubekir Şahin, the Chair of the Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), stated, “We gave them a warning. We shall keep an eye on them. All our redlines

are clear. We are determined not to provide a free pass to immorality” and singled out the LGBTI+ community as a target



After the social media hate campaign and the statements of RTÜK’s Chair, Kaos GL Association [made a statement](#) regarding the discrimination and increasing hate speech. Criticizing Şahin’s attitude, Kaos GL called Ebubekir Şahin to apologize from LGBTI+s and stop censorship.

Media ombudsman Faruk Bildirici [commented on the RTÜK](#) (Radio and Television Supreme Council of Turkey) President Ebubekir Şahin’s discriminatory statement to Akit regarding the series Love 101 for kaosGL.org.

### How does Covid-19 Pandemic affect LGBTI+ Community in Turkey?

Kaos GL Media and Communications Program Coordinator Yıldız Tar, wrote the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on LGBTI+ community in Turkey for Heinrich Böll Stiftung Turkey.



“For many LGBTI+ people, staying home raises domestic violence concerns. Already among the most vulnerable groups regarding access to employment, LGBTI+ individuals are now facing job and income losses. Moreover, the risk of discrimination in healthcare is higher for LGBTI+ individuals. To make matters worse, hate speech targeting the LGBTI+ community in the pretext of Covid-19 is on the rise” says Tar in their article which highlights the human rights violations in 5 headlines:

1. The Right to Health; 2. Employment; 3. Is the home really safe?; 4. LGBTI+ refugees; 5. Covid-19 as a pretext for hatred!

In order to reach the full report, please [click here](#).

### **Government on METU Pride: “The Rector's Office has banned it, we are not discriminatory”**

17.04.2020

The Turkish Government responds to the letter of UN experts and rapporteurs regarding the police violence at 2019 METU LGBTI+ Pride March, charges against LGBTI+ activists, and LGBTI+ rights in Turkey.



The government on its response from the April 9th has stated that METU Pride March was banned by the Rector's Office in 2019, the ban had nothing to do with the Governor's Office, and the police entered the campus at the request of the Rector's Office; and denied the police violence, arbitrary detentions, and prosecutions.

To see the detailed news, please [follow the link](#).

### **Ankara Governor's Office appealed for the reenactment of the overturned ban!**

17.04.2020

While the Turkish government responded to the letter of United Nations experts and rapporteurs regarding the METU LGBTI+ Pride March, saying, "There is no ban issued by the Governor's Office"; Ankara Governor's Office recently

appealed to the 2nd Administrative Court of Ankara's decision to overturn the "second indefinite ban on LGBTI+ activities" in the capital.

The governor's office [filed an appeal](#), requesting the suspension of execution of the overturning decision issued by the court in the case filed by the Kaos GL Association.

On October 3, 2018, the Governor's Office argued that the second ban on LGBTI+ activities, which was declared by a letter sent to the Police Department from the Governorship of Ankara, "did not produce legal results on its own, and that it is not a violation of rights and interests".

## Hate Crime from Primary School Principles: “LGBT perverts”

01.04.2020

The LGBTI+ community was systematically targeted when children, who were also stuck at home, put up pictures of rainbows in their windows in a bid to stop feeling lonely. This highly positive global action, however, first came to pro-government newspaper [Yeni Akit newspaper's attention](#) and was met with hatred. Yeni Akit used hate speech in their news: “LGBT perverts who targeted Muslim Turkish family structure to be destroyed started to take action through children this time”

After the news, in many different cities, school principles sent same [messages to the school Whatsapp groups](#). In the messages, it was written:

*“Lately, our kids were asked to draw rainbow on paper and hang them on the windows. This is a LGBTI project. Rainbow is their symbol. This is a preparation of their Pride to be held on May. Please spread this message and warn the families. Don't let our kids become a part of this project. Let's not lend support to LGBT perverts.”*

After the targeting, SPoD, Social Policies Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Studies Association, made a statement by saying “There is no place for hatred under rainbow!”, and they launched a social media campaign to embrace the rainbow by sharing photos of rainbow pictures hanged on the windows by LGBTI+ community with the hashtag #EvdeKaLubunya (#StayHomeQueers).



## **What are the measures that must be taken for women and LGBTI+ prisoners that will be released?**

Turkish Parliament has passed a bill that proposes changes to the Law on the Execution of Sentences and Security Measures. The bill foresees the release of many imprisoned individuals

Women's Solidarity Foundation, Human Rights Association, Lambdaistanbul LGBTI Solidarity Association, Young LGBTI+ Association, and LISTAG Association jointly issued a statement called for measures to be taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic for LGBTI+ and women prisoners who may be released through the changes to the Law on the Execution of Sentences and Security Measures.

It is reminded that the changes adopted by the Parliamentary Justice Commission on April 4th as part of the measures taken against the coronavirus, is clearly criticized by rights organizations, and it is reported that the conditions of women - LGBTI+ prisoners during and after the process of release should not be ignored.

The full statement of the demands of released women and LGBTI+ regarding the need for a safe house, and other physical and psychological needs is in the [following link](#).



## ***What are LGBTI+ organizations in Turkey doing for the community in the pandemic period?***

### **Strengthening Activities from Kaos GL**

In the pandemic period, Kaos GL Association focuses more on strengthening LGBTI+ community and capacity building activities. Since the beginning, sharing empowering news from KaosGL.org, Kaos GL started special article series on different issues like what LGBTI+ community do at quarantine, raising awareness on HIV/AIDS, LGBTI+s' access to goods and services, etc. in the website.

[Kaos GL Magazine](#) has also a special issue for quarantine period. On May-June volume of the Magazine will focus on how do LGBTI+s experience quarantine, what are their stories, what they need most.

In collaboration with European Lesbian\* Conference (EL\*C), Kaos GL also organized [Locked-Down Lesbians\\* Listening](#) for lesbians\* in Turkey. The online meetings focusing on strengthening lesbians\* and increasing their visibility took place on 15, 23 and 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Besides, Kaos GL Association also works on answering the needs and necessities in LGBTI+ community by fundraising for LGBTI+s who have economic shortage at the moment, for capacity building activities.

### **Entertaining Contents from Young LGBTI+**

[Young LGBTI+ Association](#) focuses on youth issues. Besides giving consultancy services, advocating for young LGBTI+s' rights, Young LGBTI+ Association produced informative and entertaining contents during COVID-19 situation.

In the beginning of pandemic, the Association produced [informative visuals](#) about social isolation and necessary health measures. Reminding the well-being of LGBTI+s at home, they also created suggestion lists of movies, Youtube channels and websites. Lists can be found in the following links: [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#) [\(3\)](#) [\(4\)](#) [\(5\)](#) [\(6\)](#)

In order to reach Young LGBTI+ located in Izmir, Turkey for international collaborations, you may visit their [social media](#) and contact via their email: [dernek@genclgbti.org](mailto:dernek@genclgbti.org)

### **Instagram Live Stream from Pink Life Association**

Pink Life LGBTI+ Solidarity Association activists started to make live stream meetings on different topics every day on Instagram. Streaming the meetings on their official [Instagram page](#), Pink Life activists talk interactively about different issues like transition process, transfeminist discussions, sexual health, compulsory military service, coming-out and individual well-being. Besides the usual talks, they also host activists from other LGBTI+ organizations in Turkey to share their experiences.

Pink Life recently released “2019 Annual Report of Human Rights Violation towards Trans People” including the chapters as hate speech and

discrimination; hate crimes; freedom of expression and assembly. The report can be found in Turkish in [their website](#).

Pink Life Queer Fest, a queer film festival established in 2011, started to share festival movies free on their [website](#).

In order to reach Pink Life located in Ankara, Turkey for international collaborations, you may visit their [website](#) and contact via their email: [pembehayat@pembehayat.org](mailto:pembehayat@pembehayat.org)

### **Free Psychological Health Consultancy Service and Sunday Talks from SPoD**

Social Policies Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Studies Association announced that they will be providing mental health support to LGBTI+s who has an economic shortage or left unemployed in the pandemic period. The mental health support will be provided free by SPoD's psychologist network.

In order to share experience and get informed about the recent developments, SPoD also organizes "[Talks without Distance](#)" every week. On Spotify, they also prepared playlists, [women to women love songs](#) and [80s](#).

In order to reach SPoD located in Istanbul, Turkey for international collaborations, you may visit their [website](#) and contact via their email: [info@spod.org.tr](mailto:info@spod.org.tr)

### **Strengthening Online Meetings from Lambda Istanbul**

Lambda Istanbul organized [online meetings every Saturday](#); besides, they have thematic meetings on different issues like [non-binary](#), [access to urban rights](#), [lesbian feminism](#), [stories from experienced activists](#), etc.

In order to reach [Lambda Istanbul](#) located in Istanbul for international collaborations, you may visit their [social media](#).

## **CONTACT INFO**

If you would like to make comments, suggestions or complaints, you may reach Kaos GL Association via email: [damla@kaosgl.org](mailto:damla@kaosgl.org)

You may find our social media accounts as follows:



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## **Kaos GL Association**

Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association

Tunus PTT PK:12

Çankaya, ANKARA