



DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL DNI
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONALE DEI
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL DCI
the worldwide movement for children's rights

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Winter Olympic Games 2014: Human Rights Controversy

This year's Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia have arrived, but not without great controversy regarding the protection of human rights, in particular lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (**LGBT**) rights. The Russian President's controversial statement last month that homosexuals need to "leave children alone" continues to raise concerns of Russia's stance concerning human rights.

Recently approved anti-gay legislation prevents "gay propaganda", making the publication or distribution of information regarding homosexuality a crime that can result in large fines and even imprisonment. Alongside this law has come an increase in documented attacks and violence against LGBT people; children of LGBT parents are facing discrimination in schools and on the streets as a result of such laws. Not only is this a large step backwards for human rights, but it also suppresses an instrumental democratic claim, the freedom of expression.

A subsequent draft law was proposed in October 2013, to remove children from gay and lesbian parents. Although the draft law has been removed from discussion within the State Duma (Federal Assembly of Russia), the proposal is still alive, raising concerns that it will be reconsidered once the Olympics end (23 February 2014). Similar legal proposals have been brought forth in countries like Uganda and Nigeria; India's Supreme Court has recently deemed homosexuality illegal.

Further concerning activities arise in Russia, as November 2012 saw the adoption of a "Foreign Agent" Law, forcing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which receive foreign funding to register as "foreign agents"; and when such NGOs speak publically, their status is to be stated. The term "foreign agents" reverts NGOs back to the Cold War sentiment of

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spying and animosity between nations. Additionally, the government has been provided more authority through this law to monitor activities and finances. NGOs that have faced ongoing problems include the Center for Social Policy and Gender Studies in Saratov, LGBT organization "Coming out" and Memorial Anti-Discrimination Center in Saint-Petersburg.

Defence for Children International (DCI) is concerned about Russia's digression with regards to human rights and the status of NGOs within the country. DCI applauds the international efforts to promote and protect human rights for all, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status – in light of the Olympic Games, and beyond. And furthermore, to guarantee the freedom of association and protection to NGOs in Russia.

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