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# Photo Essay: The Dangers of Being Gay in Russia

BY **MADS NISSEN/PANOS/SCANPIX** 2/10/14 AT 2:28 PM

Life for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Russia has just gotten worse, following a new law in the State Duma banning “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations” among minors. The law states that “it is essential to put in place measures which provide for the intellectual, moral and mental well-being of children, including a ban on any activities aimed at popularizing homosexuality ... including instilling distorted ideas that society places an equal value on traditional and nontraditional sexual relations.” While “it would not be an offence to be a person of homosexual orientation,” activists worry the wording of the law is vague enough to leave officials across Russia the freedom to harass, intimidate and ultimately prosecute LGBT people on flimsy grounds.

The law, which follows years of creeping anti-homosexual legislation in a number of Russia's regions, has been widely condemned by foreign governments, especially leading up to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. Most recently, [the Associated Press reports](#), on the opening day of the games, Feb. 7, 2014, Russian police arrested at least four gay rights activists in St. Petersburg with a banner reading, “discrimination is incompatible with the Olympic Movement. Principle 6. Olympic Charter.”

The penalties for transgressing this law are harsh. For Russians it could mean fines of up to \$150, for officials up to \$1,500 and for organizations engaging in “propaganda,” up to \$30,000. Engaging in these activities on the Internet, however loosely defined, carries significantly harsher fines. For foreigners the penalties are no less harsh, carrying a 15-day prison sentence and/or deportation from the country. What actually constitutes “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations” among minors, however, has left many in the dark.

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Abombanation in the sight of God so sad.

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**Cesar Jouvin** · Works at MOCA | The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

To the people in Russia what you don't know or understand about Gay people. You should not JUDGE because your not GOD. Your scared because you don't understand that is different out of the normal. When you kill some one just because their gay, your are commenting a SIN. So look at the mirror before you throw a stone at some one. Get educated don't JUDGE

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**Broadway D Michael**

It's still Russia... I don't even think men are allowed to cry in public yet, without the possibility of incurring a violent reaction from the public. With violence being so customary in their culture, you'd think the gay people of that said culture might know better than to show off/display their feelings and affections in public and then expect everything to be alright afterwards 😬 That Video-Show that they use to lure people into false-encounters is pretty fucked though..

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