

News

Transgender Women Endure Alleged Mob Attack at Home

• 30/05/2022 - 14:13 🔥 25 📖 3 minutes read

Five transgender women were attacked by a mob of up to 30 men at their home in Chugureti District, Tbilisi, early on May 29, LGBTQ+ rights groups reported yesterday.

Tbilisi Pride, key local rights group, **said** that the attackers, armed with stones and bricks, assaulted the women as well as their landlord, and damaged their house. The attackers also made death threats, the group reported.

The rights group said "there is a suspicion that the group attack was pre-organized."

One of the women, remaining anonymous, **told** *Formula TV* that the incident first began as she returned home to find waiting outside her bedroom an unknown man, who offered her to have sexual intercourse.

She said she kicked the man out of the house, but the alleged assailant returned later and made death threats. The woman said she called the police, the investigators arrived and "then everything seemed to go peacefully."

But afterward, she said, two of her roommates were assaulted by three men when returning back home. The men, joined by dozens of others, then arrived outside the women's house and launched the attack, she recounted.

The Interior Ministry told *Civil.ge* today that they started an investigation under Article 151 (2a) of the **Criminal Code**, which refers to the threat of killing or injury by a group of persons.

The crime is punishable by a fine or community service for a term of 170 to 200

hours, or by corrective labor for a term of up to two years and/or imprisonment for a term of up to three years.

The Ministry said it did not have information at the moment whether anyone had been detained as part of the probe.

LGBTQ+ Rights Group Calls for Effective Investigation

Tbilisi Pride **called** on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to “immediately and effectively investigate this brutal manifestation of transphobia and ensure the safety of transgender women victims of the attack.”

It also urged the Prosecutor’s Office to consider the motive of intolerance on grounds of gender identity as an aggravating circumstance of the alleged crime, when prosecuting the perpetrators.

“Dealing with violence is part of the day-to-day lives of the transgender people,” the Tbilisi Pride also said.

“This is an echo of the impunity for aggressors and government-encouraged violence against the members of the LGBTQ+ community,” the group said.

“To date, the state still does not have a policy aimed at eradicating homophobia and transphobia, which makes it impossible to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people and enforce anti-discrimination legislation,” it added.

They asserted that the state also needs to provide a shelter for LGBTQ+ people who were left homeless after falling victim to hate crimes or domestic violence.

Equality Movement, another prominent LGBTQ+ rights group, has **pledged** to provide legal assistance to the victims of the alleged attack.

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The alleged assault comes as the LGBTQ+ community continues to fight for its rights in Georgia, a country where anti-LGBTQ+ views have somewhat declined over the years but still **remain high**.

The Georgian Dream Government has come under persistent allegations of encouraging anti-LGBTQ+ violence, following July 5, 2021, when a Tbilisi Pride march had to be **canceled** amid largely unchecked homophobic pogroms in downtown Tbilisi, after counter-demonstrations called by the Georgian Orthodox Church and the far-right, pro-Russian Alt Info group turned violent.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili had **said** that holding the pride march would be “unreasonable” as it contained risks of “civil confrontation” and the majority of the public found it “unacceptable.” He had also claimed the event was organized by “radical opposition” headed by ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili.

In total, the Tbilisi City Court has **sent** all of the 27 people detained for attacking journalists covering the homophobic pogroms on July 5. The authorities have not charged anyone for **organizing the violence**.

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