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### **Russia: Human rights defender Yan Dvorkin targeted for so-called “LGBT propaganda”**

On 21 April 2023, law enforcement officers summoned human rights defender **Yan Dvorkin** to the Moscow Police Station Mariyna Rosha. The reason for the summoning was an administrative case that was launched against the human rights defender, for so-called “LGBT propaganda.” According to Yan Dvorkin, the Court hearing is scheduled for the week of 24 April 2023.

[Yan Dvorkin](#) is a human rights defender and psychologist. He is the founder and the Head of [Centre T](#), a Russian human rights group, that provides various types of assistance to transgender and nonbinary persons all across the country. Centre T also supports relatives and people close to members of the community. The human rights group advocates for access to gender-affirming surgeries and legal gender recognition in Russia, offers psychological, legal and social support, functions as a community organising space, and provides multiple resources to transgender and nonbinary communities. In his capacity as a transgender and nonbinary friendly psychologist, Yan Dvorkin also offers leadership and education opportunities to psychologists and well-being professionals on the issues of transgender and nonbinary sensitivity.

On 21 April 2023, human rights defender Yan Dvorkin was summoned with a telegram to appear in the Moscow Police Station Mariyna Rosha to sign a proces-verbale, as he is being prosecuted for so-called “LGBT propaganda,” as stipulated by the Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences. The human rights defender reported that the inspector raised her voice multiple times and initially refused to let Yan Dvorkin’s lawyers attend or let Yan Dvorkin take pictures of the case materials. Eventually, the inspector allowed the lawyer to enter and for the human rights defender to photograph his casefile in full. The casefile contained screenshots of Yan Dvorkin’s social media posts, that highlighted hatespeech against the LGBTIQ+ community from some state officials. The casefile also contained a review of the posts, concluding that the human rights defender’s posts contain “positive assessment of non-traditional sexual relations (not those between a man and a woman). Such positive assessment is accompanied by the explanation that non-traditional sexual relations are described as natural,” thus pertaining to his accusation of propaganda.

Persecution for so-called “LGBT propaganda” in Russia began on a national-scale in 2012, targeting “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relationships among minors using the Internet” under Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences. Since then, a discriminatory law was [misused against a number of LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders](#), including [Lena Klimova](#) and [Evdokiya Romanova](#), who were sentenced to administrative fines. On 5 December 2022, the Russian Federation officially expanded the so-called “LGBT propaganda” law to include persons of all ages; now Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences prohibits the “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations and/or preferences, and sex change.”

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the targeting of human rights defender Yan Dvorkin with the so-called “LGBT propaganda law” for his legitimate and peaceful human rights work. Front Line Defenders urges the government of the Russian Federation to stop labelling LGBTIQ+ human rights work as propaganda and ensure, that LGBTIQ+ rights defenders can freely perform their work to protect and support the community in Russia.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the government of the Russian Federation to:**

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1. Immediately cease persecution of human rights defender Yan Dvorkin for his non-violent and legitimate human rights work;
2. Cease mislabelling civic rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ+ persons and the work of human rights defenders covering LGBTIQ+ issues as propaganda;
3. Repeal Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences that limits so-called “LGBT propaganda” among all age groups as it fosters censorship;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Russian Federation can carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, in line with the Russian Federation’s international human rights obligations and commitments.