

Support Trans People in Poland

[statement & call to action](#), [protection from violence and hate](#)



The past week Poland has been at the center of public attention for all the wrong reasons. The horrific scenes spreading on social media of police brutally attacking defenseless activists sent many in fury and disbelief, but for the LGBTQI community in Poland, this was an escalation of an ongoing battle.

The incident on 7 August 2020, now referred to as the [Polish Stonewall protest](#), saw the arrest of 48 people in Warsaw during a protest in solidarity with LGBTQI activist Margot Szutowicz, who has been jailed for two months.

A [recent report](#) published by the Polish Ombudsman's office indicated gross human rights violations as detainees complained about police brutality, beatings and injuries, and denial of medical treatment and water. The complainants reported having been interrogated in the absence of their lawyers, even in cases when the lawyer was available.

This was not an isolated incident; it follows a two-year period in which the governing Law and Justice Party (PiS) launched an anti-LGBTQI campaign as part of its electoral strategy in local European parliamentary and presidential elections. During the electoral campaign period early this year, [President Andrzej Duda argued](#) that LGBT did not represent people, but that it was an ideology "more destructive" than communism.

In March 2020, activists produced an [Atlas of Hate map](#), depicting municipalities that had passed resolutions discriminating against LGBTQI people. The map indicated that 100 Polish municipalities had adopted resolutions that are either "against LGBT ideology" or "pro-family." Over 30 of the resolutions in question are based on a [Municipal Charter of Family Rights](#), sponsored by Ordo Iuris, a conservative legal group.

According to Emilia Wiśniewski, Office Coordinator and supporting group facilitator at Trans-Fuzja Foundation, while trans and non binary issues are not usually singled out for attack, the situation is dire right now for the community. The person arrested, Margot Szutowicz, is a non-binary person. There are also reports that trans people were targeted and exposed to sexual harassment and forced to strip in front of police officers during the arrest last week.

“The state-controlled media and some government officials are more vocal about trans issues. The fact that many such media outlets were deadnaming trans and non-binary people is also concerning. There are also reports that Margot is being held in a male prison, as Poland has no laws recognising non-binary identities.”

Emilia added that most people who were detained and mishandled by the police were between 18 and 30 years old, and that there were some trans and non-binary people greatly impacted by these violations. “We are intensifying efforts to reach out to our community members and assist with legal and psychosocial support. This is a difficult period for all in the community.”

“We are more united than ever with various LGBTQI people, some proactive media outlets, and human rights organisations. We are working tirelessly to support those in distress. There is more work to do, especially supporting people with mental health needs who might not have been at the protest but are concerned and affected by the situation,” Emilia remarked.

Emilia added that “things are getting worse. We want the situation here to change for the better, but now we have to struggle with a rising wave of homophobia and transphobia, with the hate campaign of the ruling party and its media, with political repression and with how it affects our safety, mental health, and everyday life.”

Julia Kata, Advocacy Officer and Vice President at Trans-Fuzja, said, “Human rights in Poland are at a critical state. We need international attention on what has been happening and your support. Please share the information, support Polish organisations, and check on your Polish friends. We deeply need this.”

How to support

Below are some ways in which you can support Polish LGBTQI organisations.

[Lambda Warszawa](#): biggest LGBTQI support provider, based in Warsaw.

[Trans-Fuzja](#): trans organisation member of TGEU. Campaign already finished, but it is still possible to donate.

[T?czówka Association](#): offers workshops, psychological consultations, support group meetings.