

Minister of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights
Nikos Paraskevopoulos
Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights
96 Mesogeion Avenue
115 27 Athens
Greece

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you in connection with the case of Kostas and Zabi, a Greek-Pakistani gay couple as they were brutally beaten on 23 August 2014. Kostas, a Greek art-teacher, and his partner Zabi, a Pakistani construction worker were sitting on a bench in a square in central Athens when a group of 12-15 young men wearing black shirts violently attacked them. The attackers punched and kicked them for more than 10 minutes, overturned a trash bin over Kostas's head, and broke his leg in three places above the ankle, leaving him in need of surgery and months of recovery. Unfortunately, this was not the only case they were attacked. According to Kostas, it often happens to them and their acquaintances. Until today, no perpetrators have been punished, and no suspects have been identified.

Hate crimes are no news for Greece. According to the Greek NGO Colour Youth, there has been an alarming surge in the recordings of violent attacks on grounds of real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity so far in 2015. Additionally, the lack of legal recognition for same-sex relationships severely affects hundreds of thousands of people whose rights are not recognised and face discrimination in their day-to-day life.

I call on the Greek authorities to take all the necessary measures to ensure LGBTQI, migrants, and all people affected by Hate Crimes in Greece see their human rights fulfilled, and live free from harassment and violence. I also urge you to ensure that all crimes perpetrated with a discriminatory motive, including hate crimes on grounds of real or perceived sexual orientation and race, are fully and effectively investigated, including by taking all steps to highlight the discriminatory motive behind the crime.

Furthermore, I ask you to ensure the effective implementation of Circular 7100/4/3 which obligates the police to investigate possible racist motive and update it accordingly following the adoption of Article 81 (A) of the Criminal Code so as to include other discriminatory grounds including sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Finally, I ask you to ensure that any alleged hate motive is duly taken into account in the prosecution and sentencing of perpetrators of hate crimes and to ensure marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Yours sincerely,