**Sphere – UKRAINE**

**Assaulted, intimidated, abused for defending LGBTI & women’s rights**  
Sphere NGO have been championing LGBTI and women’s rights since 2006, and are among the oldest organizations of their kind in the country. Founded by activists Anna Sharyhina and Vira Chernygina, they provide a safe space for women and LGBTI people in Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city.

Although Ukraine is considered one of the most progressive post-Soviet countries on LGBTI rights, it’s still failing to address the growing rate of hate crimes. As groups targeting LGBTI people have proliferated across the country, Sphere have suffered numerous discriminatory attacks. These groups have set upon Sphere’s supporters and premises, urinating on their walls, daubing faeces on the doorknobs, breaking windows and chanting homophobic slogans at them. There have been dozens of attacks like these. Anna and Vira report them to the police, but no one is held accountable.

In 2019, Sphere organised Kharkiv’s first Pride ever. Despite threats and intimidation, Sphere created a hugely successful event attended by up to 3,000 people. But the police failed to protect marchers from violence, instead joining in by hurling homophobic abuse. Anna and Vira say that police inaction in the face of constant attacks has left Sphere and their supporters in a permanent state of fear.

"I want our attackers to be held accountable in accordance with the law,” says Anna. Add your voice to Anna and Vira’s.

**Tell Ukraine to bring Sphere’s attackers to justice.**

Sphere NGO have been championing LGBTI and women’s rights since 2006, and are among the oldest organisations of their kind in the country. Founded by activists Anna Sharyhina and Vira Chernygina, they provide a safe space for women and LGBTI people in Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city. In recent years, however, they have suffered dozens of attacks by violent anti-LGBTI groups. Anna and Vira report these incidents, but the police have failed to hold anyone accountable.

**Write to Ukraine’s authorities**

Tell them to ensure that the attacks on Sphere – including the hate motive – are investigated, and those responsible are held to account in fair trials.

Ministry of Internal Affairs

vul. Akademika Bohomoltsa, 10

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**Sample letter**

Sphere – Ukraine

Ministry of Internal Affairs

vul. Akademika Bohomoltsa, 10

01601

Kyiv

Ukraine

Dear Minister

Sphere NGO in Kharkiv is one of the oldest LGBTI and women’s rights NGOs in Ukraine. But as groups targeting LGBTI people have proliferated across the country, Sphere has endured dozens of discriminatory attacks. These include physical attacks, destruction of their property and homophobic chants hurled at supporters. I urge you to ensure that the attacks on Sphere – including the hate motive – are investigated, and those responsible are held to account in fair trials. Ukraine must build on its recent progress on LGBTI rights and end impunity for hate crimes.

Yours sincerely

**Solidarity action**  
**Stand with Sphere**

Take a photo of yourself holding messages of support for Sphere at your city’s landmarks, and send it to Sphere. Remember to post it on your social media channels, tagging Sphere (@spherewa on Facebook and @KharkivPride on Twitter and Instagram).

You can also sign a Pride flag, add your city’s name to it, and send it to Sphere so they can use it to decorate their community centre.

Sphere

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