

UKRAINE

Vitalina Koval: Violently attacked for supporting LGBTI rights

Women human rights defender Vitalina Koval has always wanted to make a positive difference. She uses her incredible energy to support local LGBTI people in her home city, Uzhgorod. But she and other activists have been violently attacked by far-right groups, just for speaking out against hate.

On 8 March 2018, Vitalina organized a peaceful demonstration in support of women's rights and LGBTI rights to mark International Women's Day. Because she and others had endured some violent attacks during the same event in 2017, she asked the police for protection. The police assured her that she and her fellow demonstrators would be safe.

On the day, six members of the Karpatska Sich far-right group shouted insults and hurled red paint at them. Vitalina received chemical burns to her eyes. Police detained her attackers briefly but released them a few hours later. Members of the group have continued to threaten Vitalina and others. In one instance, they followed two activists home and beat them up.

There has still been no effective investigation into what happened on 8 March. The attacks are part of a wider surge in violence and intimidation by far-right groups in Ukraine. The groups claim that the inclusive values supported by people like Vitalina are "unhealthy".

Women human rights defenders in Ukraine like Vitalina can be targeted because of their gender and what they are advocating for. But Vitalina and women human rights defenders like her won't give in to fear and hate.

Ask Ukraine to protect Vitalina and other activists defending women's rights and LGBTI rights.

To take action, go to the next page.



*Everyone has the rights
to security of person,
to freedom of expression
and to peaceful assembly.*

*Articles 3, 19 and 20
Universal Declaration
of Human Rights*

**WRITE
FOR
RIGHTS**

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



Unleash your pens and keyboards!

Please write to the Minister of Interior.

- ◆ Start with Dear Minister.
- ◆ Describe who you are and what concerns you about the attacks against Vitalina Koval and other activists who defend women's rights and LGBTI rights.
- ◆ Welcome Ukraine's considerable progress in protecting LGBTI rights thus far and ask him for prompt and effective steps to protect LGBTI human rights defenders like Vitalina from attacks by far-right groups.

Send your letter to

Arsen Avakov
Minister of Interior
Vul. Akademika Bohomoltsa, 10
01601 Kyiv, Ukraine
Email: pgmia@mvs.gov.ua
Twitter: @AvakovArsen
Facebook: www.facebook.com/arsen.avakov.1
Postage: \$2.50

Please send a copy to

His Excellency Andrii Shevchenko
Ambassador for Ukraine
310 Somerset Street West
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0J9
Fax: 613 230 2400
Phone: 613 230 2961
Email: emb_ca@mfa.gov.ua
Postage: \$.85

Human rights defenders like Vitalina Koval are at risk around the world. Join Amnesty's efforts to protect the rights of those who defend our rights.

#WriteforRights #W4R2018 #LGBTI
www.amnesty.ca



Vitalina Koval participates in the International Women's Day event, March 2018 © Pierre Crom

Support Vitalina! She says she has gained so much strength from those who have supported her so far.

You may mention Amnesty International and include your return address but **please do not send religious cards**. Vitalina likes collecting artwork and handmade accessories that incorporate LGBTI rainbow symbols. Postage is \$2.50.

Vitalina Koval
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04050 Kyiv, Ukraine

Twitter: @VitalinaKovalUA

Віталіно, ми підтримуємо тебе!
(We support you, Vitalina!)

Бунтуй! Кохай! Права не віддавай!
(Rebel! Love! Don't give up your rights!)

CANADA

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TAKE PART: writeathon.ca