# Kyiv Pride march sees calls for unity and legal protections amidst continued threats



The first Kyiv Pride march since Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine took place on June 16, 2024, in central Kyiv. Several hundred participants gathered at 10am local time amid rain, holding rainbow flags and banners advocating for unity and peace. Chants included "glory to the heroes" and "make Russia pay," with calls for legal protections, equal marriage rights, and military support.

The march was halted by police after only ten minutes due to threats from anti-LGBTQ+ groups. Attendees were directed to nearby subway stations for safety. Organizers, including Robert Lutsenko of Kyiv Pride, highlighted the ongoing opposition and threats faced by the LGBTQ+ community in Ukraine.

In preparation for potential conflict and security threats, the march’s location was kept confidential until a few hours prior. Heavy police presence was maintained, and measures were taken to ensure participants' safety.

Despite the disruption, the event marked a significant display of resilience. Previous Ukrainian Pride events have experienced violence; in 2015, ten marchers and several police officers were injured. The Kyiv Pride team collaborates closely with authorities for security due to dual threats from conservative groups and Russian attacks.

The lack of comprehensive legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals in Ukraine persists. Events like Kyiv Pride continue to pressure for legislation that criminalizes hate crimes and discrimination. Organizers also emphasize the urgency of legal recognition for same-sex marriages, especially relevant for LGBTQ+ military personnel.

Several participants, including soldiers and activists, voiced their support for greater LGBTQ+ rights. The ongoing war has intensified these calls for legal reforms, aiming to align Ukraine with European Union standards. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has faced criticism for not prioritizing these issues, citing legal constraints during wartime.