



MEMO

From Sue Doster and Frank van Dalen
To Board
CC -
Date June 20th 2016
Subject Safety of Pride

Introduction

Last year an orthodox Jew attacked Jerusalem Pride and killed one person, hurting a few others. Since we have seen other killings including the dramatic shooting in Orlando killing 49 people and in La Madame, a LGBTI bar in Xalapa Mexico, killing 5 people.

The Site Intelligence Group made public that IS supporting jihadgroep Al-Thabaat has launched five posters and statements calling for 'lone wolves' to attack disbelievers taking the Orlando Shooting as an example. Two out of five available posters suggest to attack pride events.

Obviously pride events by it's character are soft targets, with the arrest earlier of the Indiana man on his way to attack LA Pride festival in mind, authorities in areas where pride events take place are taking measures to secure pride events. Also the organizing committees will feel this responsibility heavily.

In Eastern Europe we are used to extremely heavily protected pride events because of threats of extreme right-wing nationalists or other groups targeting the progress we as a LGBTI community seek. Now also in the modern western world the question how to secure big pride events will increasingly be asked.

Security and intelligence organizations

Conferences are held about LGBTI and authorities (for example in Uruguay on July 13-15 in Montevideo or the annual IDAHOT Conference in Europe) and about security, intelligence and terror threats. In both cases it seems there is every reason to either include safety of pride events and/or LGBTI's in general on the agenda. There are specific characteristics that identify a pride event and cause different kind of security risks. Solutions to secure pride events might not always be in the best interest of the pride/LGBTI movement or even be in conflict with our pride-values wanting to be visible and openly accessible.

With almost 900 pride events identified in Pride Radar there is every reason to develop an international mutual understanding amongst authorities, pride organizers and intelligence services when it comes to the threats we are facing.

Emotion counts

Next to that we have the emotional side, like fear within the community to attend pride events. In Eastern Europe there are a lot of LGBTI-people who are just to afraid to participate in a pride event. In Tel Aviv many people have a high level of awareness what can happen and how to identify risks. All of this might be absent in the "modern" western world where threats and attacks as we have seen lately are new experiences feeding fear with so far unknown consequences. Although some report lower number of participants at prides in North America recently.

Therefore: the question is at the table if - and when yes - what kind of role InterPride wants and needs to play when it comes to the new challenges we are facing.

Responsibility of pride organizers

When it comes to operational and intelligence aspects pride organizers don't have a responsibility at first. These are the primary responsibility of the authorities. But there are themes that might be needed to address:

- Understanding the concept of security and intelligence
- Being a partner in conversations with authorities (when it comes to security measure and the impact on pride and pride organization)
- Public communication – balance between warnings and feelings of unsafety (prides in North America have reported lower number of participants already)
- Volunteer security training – recognizing and addressing possible threats during the event – eyes and ears of the organization

InterPride – a role to play?

In this changing environment InterPride can play different roles and contribute in different ways:

- Organize webinar training sessions for pride organizers
- Develop a communication toolkit
- Collect and share case-studies
- Develop a security volunteer offline training program
- Advocate of conferences that include pride and authorities / security and intelligence

Board meeting

In the upcoming boardmeeting there is every reason to start the conversation about what is going on, what role to play and how to execute that role effectively.

Preventing an emotional “how bad it all is” approach but pursuing a rational and practical approach with concrete next steps and strategies can put InterPride in the lead when it comes to one of the bigger challenges the global pride movement is facing. Understanding the local context is utterly important. The United States with it's federal structure is not to be compared with the European Union. Threats from nationalists and neo-Nazi's are different then coming from a radicalized lone wolf. A government respecting the rule of law and human rights will protect the pride in stead of trying to ban it under the argument of security risks. And a society used to terror has different defense mechanisms in place then a society that doesn't when it comes in coping with risk and unfortunate ... death.