



Carl Bildt, Minister for Foreign
Affairs, Foreign Ministry
Gustav Adolfs torg 1
103 39 Stockholm, Sweden

Stockholm 20 December 2012

Dear Carl Bildt,

Due to the recent attacks on two of our partner organisations in Pristina, I would draw your attention to the vulnerability that Kosovo's human rights defenders are living under, especially those defending lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights. It would be appreciated if you take up the matter with Prime Minister Hashim Tachi at the earliest opportunity.

The attacks were triggered on 13 December when our partner Kosovo 2.0 told the media about the launch of the journal Kosovo 2.0 - a magazine that aims to explore sexual identity, gender identity, and report on LGBT people's rights. Following the announcement, Kosovo 2.0 received threats on the organisation's Facebook page and on the staff's personal Facebook profiles. Several online media published hate speech and derogatory comments about Kosovo 2.0.

On the day of the launch about 20 men managed to get into the room, despite police presence, and demolishing the stage and beat one of the employees. Police summoned a special force but when a growing group of protesters approached the building, shouting hateful slogans, Kosovo 2.0 decided to cancel the event out of concern for the safety of the guests. Civil Rights Defenders were present and supervised the event.

Violence and attacks continued throughout the weekend. Many people who would have participated in the event have been threatened. On Sunday night, the LGBT organisation Libertas' premises were attacked with tear gas. One person was badly beaten. The police immediately came to the scene but did not manage to arrest any of the perpetrators. Charges have been filed against unknown persons.

Your involvement would mean a lot, and I ask that you use your influence and require the Prime Minister Tachi to strengthen protection for Kosovo's human rights defenders, and ensure that the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice. Any feedback on this matter are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert Hårdh

Executive Director of Civil Rights Defenders

We defend people's civil and political rights and empower human rights defenders - in Sweden and globally. Become a human rights defenders, you too! Read more about how you can support our work on: www.civilrightsdefenders.org