

# **Transgender people in Russian society**

**Research 2016–2017**

**Transgender Legal Defense Project  
2018**

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This report was prepared by Transgender Legal Defense Project and is based on the results of the research we undertook in 2016-2017, during which we carried out a detailed analysis of the situation of transgender people in Russian society and documented numerous violations of their rights.

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# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	4
Research methodology . . . . .	7
Research results summary . . . . .	10
Discrimination in the sphere of healthcare. . . . .	17
Discrimination against transgender people in the educational sector . . .	29
Labor discrimination against transgender people . . . . .	34
Discrimination in the service sector . . . . .	55
Violations in dealing with the law enforcement authorities . . . . .	62
Domestic and family difficulties . . . . .	65
Violence and hate crimes . . . . .	71
Conclusions . . . . .	82
Recommendations . . . . .	84
Acknowledgments . . . . .	87

# Introduction

Transgender people are those whose self-perceived gender (gender identity) doesn't agree with the gender they were assigned at birth. This incongruence may cause a sense of extreme discomfort called “gender dysphoria”.

In order to alleviate gender dysphoria and to bring their body and social status into alignment with their sense of self transgender people may undergo a gender transition. Transition may (but does not necessarily) include medical interventions (such as hormone replacement therapy and surgeries) as well as legal (legal gender recognition) and social (a change in self-expression and presentation) aspects.

Legal gender recognition (change of legal name and gender, i.e. ID gender marker) is an important part of transitioning for many trans people since it allows them to harmonize their social status and interactions with their sense of self.

This report on the situation of transgender people in Russian society and the problems they routinely face was prepared by Transgender Legal Defense Project based on the results of the research we undertook in 2016-2017.

We must point out that in February 2018 the Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, issued on October 23, 2017 # 850H “On the approved standard and procedure for the issue of a sex reassignment certificate”(registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation on January 19, 2018, record # 49695), entered into force.

This Decree simplifies and speeds up the legal gender recognition procedure, allowing for this matter to be settled out of court. We ex-

pect this to lead to an improvement in the situation of transgender people in Russian society. As of the time of writing, some transgender people have already changed their legal gender out of court thanks to the newly established procedure.

However, all cases featured in this report were documented between June 2016 and the end of 2017, before the above-mentioned Decree was issued or entered into force. Consequently, during that period, the legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people could not yet have been considered to be quick, accessible or transparent<sup>1</sup>.

Before the Ministry of Health Decree entered into force, the process of legal gender recognition used to be quite lengthy (taking up to several years), while in the meantime, transgender people had no choice but to use ID papers that did not match their appearance and gender identity. As a result, trans people would routinely face abuse, violence and difficulties in the sphere of labor, healthcare and education as well as denial of various services requiring identification.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the extent and details of this issue during 2016-2017 as well as to identify other challenges faced by transgender people in Russian society, and finally, to suggest recommendations as to their solution.

**Transgender Legal Defense Project** was initiated in 2012 to provide legal assistance to transgender people seeking to obtain legal gender recognition as well as to defend their rights. We offer legal advice as well as legal representation in court to transgender people in cases

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1 These three criteria - quickness, transparency and accessibility of the legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people - are found in international human rights recommendations. Cf., for instance: Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, §§ 20 & 21; Resolution 2048 (2015) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe “Discrimination against transgender people in Europe”, §§ 6.2.1 & 6.2.2; Report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights “Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe” (2011), §§ 5.1 & 5.2; CEDAW Concluding Observations, Kyrgyzstan (2015), §§ 33 & 34; CEDAW Concluding Observations, Belgium (2014), §§ 44 & 45; CESCR Concluding Observations, Russia (2017), § 23.

related to legal gender recognition, family and parental rights, protection of the right to privacy as well as discrimination. Besides, we organize educational events concerning legal gender recognition for the benefit of lawyers and legal advisers as well as members of the transgender community and their close ones.

# Research methodology

The monitoring research was conducted by Transgender Legal Defense Project between and including June 2016 and December 2017. Cases of violation of the rights of transgender people during this period were documented as part of the monitoring. The monitoring research was mainly focused on incidents of conflict and discrimination that arose due to a discrepancy between the appearance and gender identity of the survivors on the one hand and their ID papers on the other. We included cases of overt denial (of various services or employment) as well as incidents of extreme disrespect in connection with the survivors' legal ID, appearance and/or transgender status. We also noted cases of domestic hostility and violence against transgender people, as well as hate speech and crimes.

The research was undertaken by a volunteer team led by a coordinator who collected data from various regions of Russia through personal contact with the survivors, creating a database that served as a basis for this report. In cases when the survivors were not available for a personal interview (for instance, due to geographical reasons), the interviews were carried out over the Internet, through voice communication or by email. Those of the interviewees who were in need of psychological or legal assistance and support were given the contacts of local LGBT, transgender and human rights organizations and initiative groups.

All personal data of the interviewees were given in accordance with their desired degree of confidentiality. Some of the interviewees had requested full anonymity, therefore their personal data are not included in the report. The age of the interviewees is given as of the time of the incident featured in a given case.

Within this research, a given case may feature a single instance or a prolonged period characterized by a negative attitude towards a transgender person on the part of third parties which may include:

- denial of employment or a workplace conflict;
- denial of medical help or difficulties in accessing it;
- difficulties in receiving education;
- denial of service or difficulties in accessing it;
- transphobic and/or homophobic hate crimes and speech;
- domestic conflicts;
- other negative incidents.

Concerning several incidents belonging in different categories, involving the same person: cases of this sort are featured in this report as a single text (for the convenience of the readers) in the category that we found to be the most appropriate. All cases when enough factual information regarding incidents of discrimination had been provided by the interviewee were included in the statistics (cf. “Research results summary”). In cases when the transgender interviewee had not given us any details regarding the incidents of discrimination they had faced, these cases were included in the text for illustrative purposes but did not make the statistics due to insufficient data.

Several cases from Saint Petersburg were documented by Coming Out LGBT initiative group<sup>2</sup>. These cases are also featured in the report on the results of the discrimination monitoring in 2017 published by Coming Out.

Certain cases were documented by the monitoring program of the Russian LGBT network Public Movement<sup>3</sup> as part of the monitoring of human rights violation on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

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<sup>2</sup> Coming Out is an LGBT rights initiative group, active in Saint Petersburg since 2008. Coming Out runs several programs for the benefit of the community: legal assistance, discrimination monitoring, strategic litigation and advocacy, a transgender program, a support for LGBT families program, a parents club.

<sup>3</sup> Russian LGBT Network in an inter-regional non-governmental human rights organization for the promotion of equality and respect for human dignity regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity by way of integration and development of regional initiatives, advocacy and socio-legal assistance.

In addition to this, we collected general statistics on the situation of transgender people in Russia via several online surveys. The surveys were aimed to investigate the economic status of transgender people, their access to healthcare (transition-related and otherwise) as well as to identify the difficulties they usually face in the sphere of labor, education and in everyday life.

Since the surveys were conducted solely via the Internet and were completely anonymous (for the sake of protecting the respondents' privacy), they reflect only the opinions and experiences of those transgender people with an access to social media and dedicated Internet sources. The survey results are given for reference purposes only and in order to illustrate the cases that are described in the report.

# Research results

## summary

**During the research, 69 transgender and non-binary people from 23 regions of Russia were interviewed by the monitoring team. 107 cases of discrimination and hostility against transgender people were included in our research database. Among these cases:**

- 36 are related to the sphere of labor (employment, workplace relations with co-workers and the management);
- 21 cases are transphobic and homophobic hate crimes against transgender people;
- in 13 cases transgender people were denied various services;
- 12 cases are related to the access to medical help;
- 12 cases involve hostility towards transgender people on the part of their family members;
- 9 cases involve discrimination against transgender people in the educational sector;
- in 4 cases, transgender people faced discrimination and hostility when dealing with the law enforcement authorities;

Most cases we documented took place in the following regions:

- Saint Petersburg and Leningrad region — 31 cases;
- Omsk and Omsk region — 17 cases;
- Moscow and Moscow region — 14 cases;
- Perm and Perm region — 6 cases;
- Chelyabinsk — 5 cases.

This distribution is explained by the presence of the monitoring team members in these regions rather than by a higher than average level of transphobia.

Three anonymous online surveys among transgender people were conducted as part of the research.

### **798 respondents took part in the survey “Transgender identity and Russian society”.**

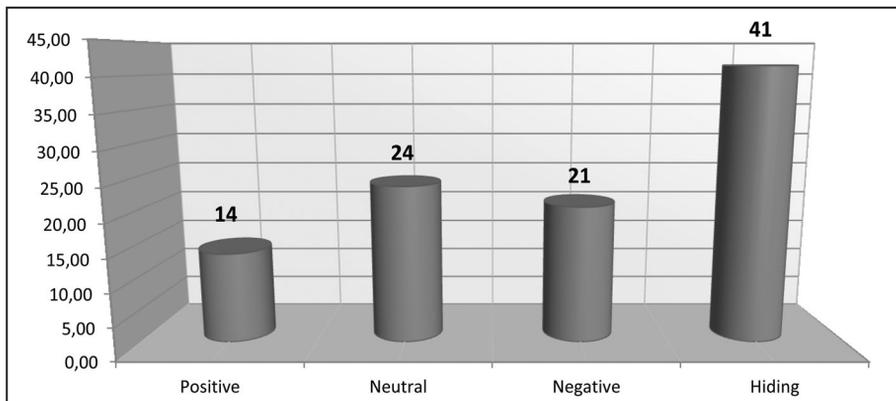
In response to the question concerning the attitude of their family circle to the fact of their being transgender, most of the survey participants (41%) claimed hiding their transgender status from their family members (either because they had not been transitioning yet or else due to not being in touch with their families).

24% of the respondents replied that the attitude of their families was neither negative nor positive.

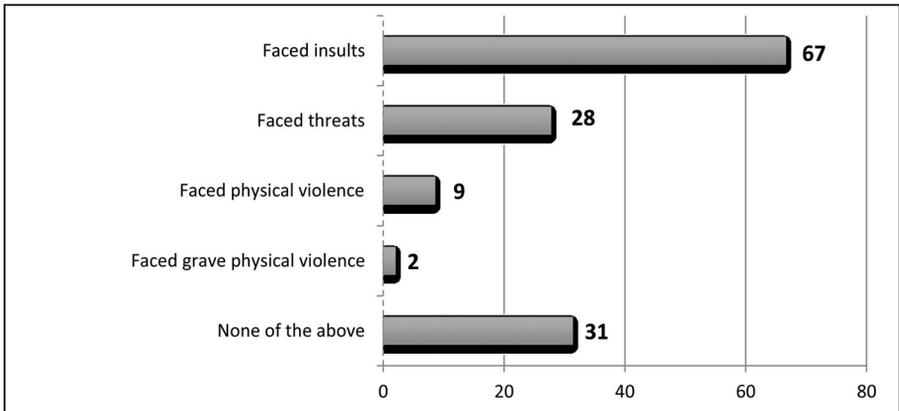
21% reported that their families' attitude was thoroughly negative.

**Only 14% claimed being supported by their families.**

In response to the question “Have you been verbally or physically abused due to the fact of being transgender?” the survey participants were offered several answer options. The results can be seen on the chart below.



**Chart 1.** Family acceptance of transgender people (%)



**Chart 2.** Transgender people facing verbal and physical violence (%)

**Only 31% of the respondents claimed having never faced this kind of violence.**

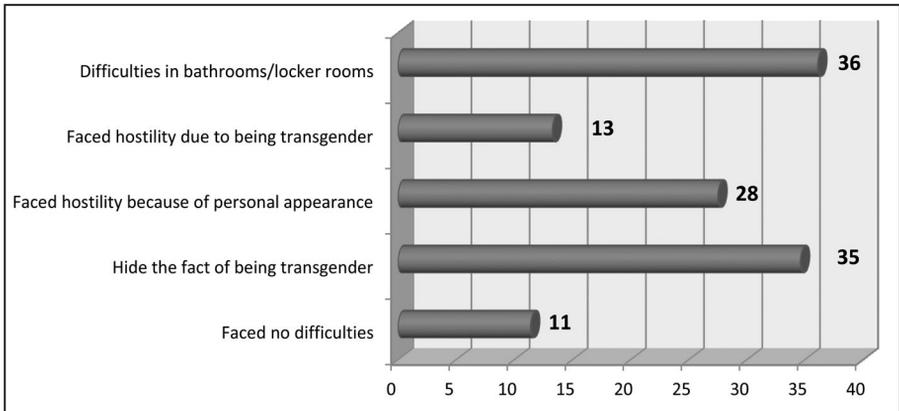
In response to the question “Have you faced any difficulties in educational institutions due to being transgender?” the survey participants were offered several answer options. The results are displayed on the chart below (only the replies of those respondents who had attended educational institutions are included).

35% of the respondents reported hiding the fact of being transgender from the teaching staff and their fellow students.

**Only 11% of the respondents having attended educational institutions reported having had no problems.**

**30% of the transgender people who had attempted to find employment between June 2016 and late 2017 reported having been denied employment due to being transgender.** Denials were motivated by the negative reaction of the prospective employers to the transgender seekers' appearance as well as to their IDs that didn't match their presentation.

56% respondents who had sought employment during this period reported having hidden their transgender status from their employers.



**Chart 3.** Difficulties in educational facilities (%)

**17% of transgender respondents reported having been denied various services for various reasons, mainly due to their ID not matching their presentation.**

### **340 people participated in the survey “Transgender people and medical help in Russia”**

25% of the respondents having sought medical help between summer 2016 and the end of 2017 were overtly denied medical help.

In addition to that, 68% of the respondents reported having deliberately refrained from seeking medical help during this period for fear of a negative reaction on the part of the medical professionals.

Transgender people were also requested to give their opinion concerning the accessibility of medical help in Russia for transgender people prior to obtaining legal gender recognition:

41% replied that receiving medical help was nearly impossible or extremely difficult;

45% believe that though some difficulties exist, the situation is tolerable on the whole;

Only 14% believe that transgender people have no difficulty in accessing medical help in Russia.

In response to the question “Please evaluate the overall quality of

transition-related medical help<sup>4</sup> in Russia” we received the following answers:

59% of the respondents rated the quality of transition-related medical help as “dreadful” or “poor”;

32% found it to be “acceptable”.

Only 9% replied that they found the quality of this sort of medical services to be high.

### **386 transgender people participated in the survey “The economic situation of transgender people in Russia”**

11% of the respondents reported being hardly able to afford food.

32% replied that they could afford food, but could barely afford clothes and footwear;

Those transgender people who had enough means to afford large purchases such as a car were only 6%.

The results of these surveys match more or less those published by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VTsIOM) in May 2017<sup>5</sup>, that is to say, at first sight the economic situation of transgender people does not differ greatly from that of the rest of the Russian population.

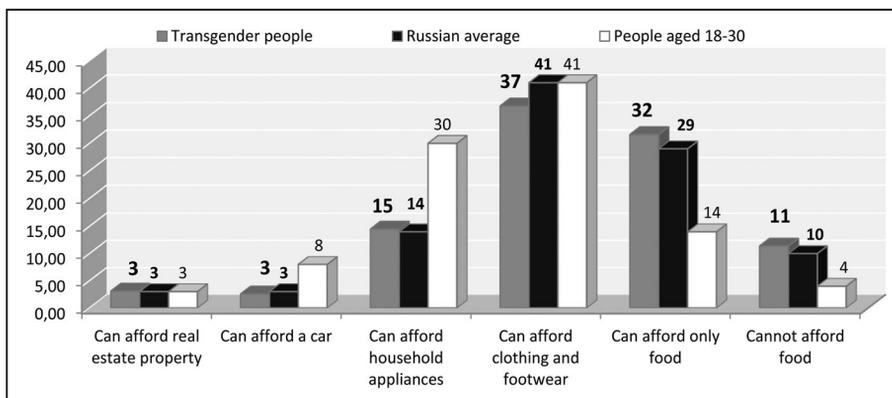
However, it is important to note that VTsIOM conducted their research by personally interviewing respondents at their places of residence, which means that it included individuals without an Internet access (unlike our transgender respondents who answered the questions online).

A considerable share of our respondents (39,1%) reported attending educational institutions at the time of the research. Thus, it might make sense to compare our statistics with the numbers that reflect the financial situation of Russian youth. Such a survey was conducted by

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4 These medical services include hormone replacement therapy management, medical examination and diagnosis, surgical interventions.

5 VTsIOM, “The consumer power of the Russian citizens: the monitoring”, Moscow, 29 June 2017, №3407,  
URL: <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=116289> (requested on 26 April 2018)



**Chart 4. Economic status – a comparison (%)**

the Foundation Public Opinion (FOM) in 2016 among people aged from 18 to 30<sup>6</sup>.

A full comparison of the statistics can be seen on the chart below.

**Thus, we may conclude that, according to the results of our survey, the economic status of transgender people in Russia is somewhat lower than average for the Russian population.**

We have also found out how many of our respondents were denied employment at least once between June 2016 and August 2017. The share of these transgender people turned out to be 75%. This number is impressive, but we must remember that it includes all cases of denial of employment and not just those motivated by discrimination on grounds of gender identity. A transgender person may hide their transgender status, or may have already changed their legal gender, but be still denied employment due to other causes.

Also, 16% of our respondents claimed being currently neither employed (not even self-employed) nor attending educational institutions. This number may be seen as the transgender unemployment rate of

<sup>6</sup> FOM, “A youth survey: family and economic status, where and with whom young Russians live and where they get the means”, 8 September 2016, URL: <http://fom.ru/Obraz-zhizni/12842> (requested on 26 April 2018)

sorts. However, we prefer not to compare this number to the official Russian statistics since our calculation methods may differ.

The last question of the survey demanded the respondents' opinion as to the chances of transgender people finding employment in Russia prior to obtaining legal gender recognition:

57% replied that they saw these chances are “poor” or “extremely poor”;

25% believed these chances to be “average”;

Only 18% claimed that transgender people had “high” or “very high” chances of finding employment before changing their legal gender.

# Discrimination in the sphere of healthcare

On seeking medical help transgender people often face abuse, disrespect and even overt denial of assistance. Denial of medical help, delayed help or forced self-medication can make a negative impact on a person's health or even put their life at serious risk. In addition to this, many transgender people are compelled to frequently contact medical specialists in order to receive the certificates that are necessary for obtaining legal gender recognition as well as hormone prescriptions.

## **Mark, a transgender man, 21, Saint Petersburg, undergoing hormone replacement therapy (HRT), has undergone surgery**

Mark had been seeing an endocrinologist at the polyclinic #94 of Nevsky district of Saint Petersburg. He had been issued a medical certificate testifying that he was undergoing hormone replacement therapy by this doctor, she had also referred him several times for blood hormone level tests (he had not requested hormone prescriptions from her because he routinely purchases his hormone medication via the Internet).

In January 2017 this endocrinologist stopped referring Mark for blood tests after his request for a hormonal sex reassignment certificate for the civil registry office.

According to the endocrinologist, in order to issue the certificate she had to contact the polyclinic administration who, on learning that Mark had been undergoing hormonal replacement therapy for-

bade her to issue him referrals for blood tests with the explanation that blood tests for transgender people were not covered by the compulsory medical insurance<sup>7</sup>.

Besides, the endocrinologist refused to issue a certificate for the civil registry office, claiming that she would only be able to issue it in case Mark underwent a hysterectomy (irreversible surgical sterilization).

Currently, it is a gynecologist who refers Mark for blood tests.

After being denied referral for blood tests by the state polyclinic #94 endocrinologist, he was compelled to use the services of a private laboratory as a paying client for awhile. He found it rather inconvenient.

### **Pauline, a transgender woman, 33, Perm, has undergone surgery**

In December 2016 during a trip to Ryazan she called an ambulance for what she feared might have been a blood clot in her leg. She was examined and rushed to the hospital. During the examination at the hospital, the staff treated her inappropriately, advising several times in either a jocular or a rude manner that she refrain from transitioning and taking hormonal medication.

However, she did receive help. Pauline confesses being stressed during this experience, as well as feeling apathy afterwards.

When she sought medical help at a Perm hospital, she was treated politely by the staff and was told immediately that they would not place her in a general ward because they expected her to be harassed by other patients.

Pauline also faces regular harassment at her workplace. The management keeps demanding that she present in accordance with her legal gender. Pauline was on the verge of resigning, but the

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<sup>7</sup> According to the Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation issued on 20 December 2012 # 1221H- blood hormone level tests are indeed not covered by the compulsory medical insurance; the only thing it does cover is a consultation with an endocrinologist.

loyal customers who stood for most of the company's revenue came to her defense. In the end, she was transferred to the company's least profitable branch office, "just to get her out of the way". Quoting Pauline: *"I'm already used to them picking on my appearance all the time. I just scowl at them and then get back to my work"*.

**Ekaterina, a transgender/transsexual woman, 34,  
Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

On 12 April 2017 Ekaterina came to donate blood at the blood donation facility of the City oncology center. "I spent two days trying to prove that there were no contraindications for me being a donor. They told me to bring a certificate from an endocrinologist testifying that I may donate blood. The endocrinologist, though she hadn't had much experience with trans people, she was plainly puzzled by this demand and said that turning me down as a donor for endocrinological reasons was ridiculous".

When Ekaterina finally brought the certificate to the oncology center, she was subjected to a half an hour long conversation with the head of the department, as well as a series of medically unfounded arguments.

Among these was the fact of Ekaterina undergoing HRT, though the head of the department did not bother with any explanations and ignored all questions. She also claimed that Ekaterina's hormone dosages were excessive; likewise, that she could not test Ekaterina's hormone levels and believed that the effect of the latter on the blood recipients might have been unpredictable; she also claimed that Ekaterina's blood might be harmful for patients with hormone dependent tumors. In response to Ekaterina's argument that her blood estrogen level was the same as an average cisgender woman's, the department head observed that women's blood contained no testosterone.

Ekaterina has recorded the entire conversation and is currently corresponding with the Ministry of Health and the Federal Biomedical Agency (FMBA), defending her right to be a blood donor.

## **Alexey, a transgender man, 19, Ekaterinburg**

In 2017 Alexey was undergoing an evaluation in Sverdlov regional neurosis clinic “Sosnovy Bor” (“Pine Forest”) as to whether he met the criteria for an F 64.0 diagnosis. Alexey relates that he had been told during his first phone conversation with the clinic that one must be over 21 for a diagnosis certificate to be issued, but an appointment was nonetheless scheduled. The clinic staff would not describe the entire diagnostic procedure to Alexey and seemed to be prolonging it unnecessarily, adding more additional criteria: at first, they had demanded that he be socialized and get a job, then gave him a list of medical tests to undergo. They also said that he would have to be hospitalized. However, the hospitalization was delayed because Alexey lacked chest X-ray results.

Alexey's doctor also made him write an autobiography; as Alexey was writing, the doctor would take the pages that had already been filled, so Alexey found it hard to preserve the continuity of his story. Instead of giving him back the pages, the doctor would chastise him for his lack of discipline.

When Alexey was taking a personality test containing 566 questions, the supervisor accused him of cheating. According to Alexey, he had been merely leafing through and ticking off the answers on the go because most questions were short, and when he came across a longer one, he sometimes had to turn back the page because he hadn't had the time to read it properly.

The doctor told Alexey that he lacked motivation, chastised him for losing his head X-ray referral and kept pressing him to finish his autobiography. The doctor also claimed that Alexey's behavior was not masculine and that therefore there was no need for him to transition. Then he scheduled a panel for the next day and suggested that Alexey spend the night in the women's ward.

Alexey recalls: *“I came for the panel, the supervisor was there and also another doctor. This other doctor talked to me and said that unless I was socialized (with a job and colleagues) he would not sign my certificate. He suggested that I take sessions with a therapist to find out the real cause of my being transgender and added that “maybe it wasn't so bad to live as a woman after all”. The*

*doctor who was in charge told me to complete all the tests for everything to go smoothly the next time. Now, every time I come for an appointment, he calls me by my birth name and uses “she” pronoun”.*

Alexey believes that tests like chest and head X-rays as well as hospitalization were completely unwarranted.

Alexey also has serious domestic troubles. His father has been harassing him ever since he first came out as transgender, that is, since 2015. *“At first, he would call me “a boy named [old name]”, and when I explained everything to him, he said that he would only ever call me by the name that is in my birth certificate. From that time on, he knows that it matters to me what people call me, and he uses that old name on purpose because he knows that it will hurt me. He won't listen to any explanations and says rudely that he doesn't care. Mom and I suggested that he talk to a family therapist but he just won't”.*

The situation has been getting gradually worse in 2016-2017. Alexey's father would scream at him and his mother. He would also hit him in the head and back. He won't accept Alexey as transgender and thinks it is all nonsense. He forbade Alexey to tell anything to family friends and relations and started making sexist jokes about Alexey, always emphasizing his being female. He would also say things like “you're a girl, so go do the dishes and clean the apartment”.

Alexey feels constant anxiety and fear when he is at home. His parents are close to getting a divorce.

On 23 May 2017 Alexey's father broke in his room's door because Alexey had not opened it soon enough, even though he knew that Alexey had problem knees and could not walk fast.

### **Erik, a transgender man, 24, Novosibirsk, undergoing HRT**

In June 2017 Erik came back to his native town to change his legal gender. He made an appointment at the private clinic “A Healthy Family” as a paying client for a hormone prescription, he had all the necessary certificates, including a certificate testifying that he was undergoing hormone replacement therapy and naming the medica-

tion he had been using, issued by Almazov National Medical Research Center, a certificate testifying that he had been diagnosed with “Transsexualism” (F 64.0) and his blood test results. The clinic refused to fulfill his request; at first, the receptionist claimed that his ID was false, then on seeing his certificates, told him that his case was outside the clinic's area of expertise.

Later Erik's friends gave him the names of several doctors who might write him a prescription, among them a doctor who worked at the clinic that had refused to help Erik. When Erik contacted this doctor, at first the latter agreed to write out the prescription and inquired about details. However, on learning what kind of medicine Erik needed, the doctor refused abruptly, since “he had no desire to get involved with illegal substances”.

Erik then went to the medical center “Panacea”, again as a paying client, was referred for a blood test and came back with the results two days later. However, then he was told that they wouldn't be able to help him due to a lack of practice in this area.

Erik mentions his attempts to get a prescription in several other clinics: the medical center “Juno”, “Zdravnitsa” (“Health Resort”) on Shevtchenko str., “Reproductive Health+” on O.Zhilina str., the diagnostics and treatment center “Raduga Zdorovya” (“The Rainbow of Health”) on Planovaya str.; all were fruitless. He did not provide any details, but pointed out that every doctor he had seen had refused to write out a prescription either because “it was outside their area of expertise” or claiming that they were not qualified in this area. Erik believes the real reason was that none of them wanted to assume the responsibility for treating transgender patients.

Erik ended up wasting time and money on tests and clinic appointments and had to purchase his medication on the black market.

Erik also faced discrimination in Saint Petersburg. In August 2017 he applied for a job in Coffeeshop Company. After a successful interview he completed a course of instruction at the company's head office and began his trial period at a coffee shop on Vostaniya square, where he lasted for about a week. During this time one of the coffee shop staff made several negative comments about

Erik's appearance. Then one day this colleague and the coffee shop manager walked into the staff room (supposedly, by accident) while Erik was changing and saw his binder. They were surprised, then left and closed the door. When Erik left the staff room in order to resume work, the manager told him that they no longer needed his services. Erik believes this to be a lie, since they clearly lacked staff. As this had been a trial period, he was not paid.

On 14 November 2017 Erik passed two intoxicated men in the street. One of these men remarked: "Those like you are the reason why everything's going to the dogs" and hit Erik squarely on the face, giving him a bloody nose. The men resumed their peaceful conversation and walked on. This was not the first time Erik had been assaulted, but the previous incidents had happened before 2016-2017. He had reported on of those incidents (involving a knife) to the police but the police had never contacted him again.

### **Anna, a transgender woman, 24, from Rostov-on-Don, undergoing HRT**

In June 2017, Anna underwent an evaluation at the multidisciplinary health center "Kristall" in Saint Petersburg and was diagnosed with "transsexualism" (F 64.0). On returning to her home town, Anna decided to entrust the endocrinological and psychological management of her transition to the psychiatric research center for treatment and rehabilitation "Phoenix". This center was advertised as having ample experience with providing psychological, legal and endocrinological assistance to transgender people for many years. The head of the center, Olga Bukhanovskaya had publicly claimed on repeated occasions to be the most experienced transgender specialist in Russia, referring to her father's experience in this area. Anna made an appointment with Olga Bukhanovskaya in September 2017, hoping that the latter's support and assistance in dealing with the endocrinologists and psychiatrists of the center would ease the pains and challenges of Anna's transition.

On studying Anna's certificate, issued by the medical center "Kristall", Olga Bukhanovskaya told Anna the following: "So you've been taking female hormones already? Stop immediately! I under-

stand that you're now going through a hard time, but you're not transsexual. I disagree with this diagnosis. You know my opinion about Dmitry (the doctor who had issued the certificate). I won't speak badly of him for the only reason that it's unethical. I am sorry, but we can't help you. I won't let my staff manage your transition. Our responsibility would be too great. I insist on a second panel at our center in order to rule out hypogonadism and schizotypal personality disorder. I believe there is a chance you might actually be transsexual, but I am more inclined to believe that you're hypogonadal or suffering from a schizotypal disorder. An evaluation at our center costs 70,000 rubles, but I am offering you an unprecedented discount, so it will cost you only 40,000. You have time to make your choice”.

To all practical intents and purposes, Anna was denied help at “Phoenix”, and adding insult to injury, she was made to doubt her own sanity, for which transgender people are already at an increased risk and which can cause significant mental trauma. Anna had refrained from seeking transition-related help until she was 24 for fear of being diagnosed with F 20 (schizophrenia) which would destroy her entire life. She confesses this: *“I left this research center (whose business cards claim that their approach to patients is the most humane in the world) in tears and took a long time to come back to my senses”*.

### **Ilya, a transgender man, Saint Petersburg**

In March 2017 Ilya was very depressed; he had just quarreled with his girlfriend and was suffering from acute distress caused by the conflict between his legal gender and his sense of self. Tired to keep it all inside, he approached his mother and came out to her as transgender, he also told her that he had a girlfriend and was hoping that his mother would soon meet her. His mother was quite upset and begged Ilya to stop telling her these things that she found so dreadful. She tried to convince him that he was sick without realizing it, that she loved him and wished him all the best, and finally urged him to seek psychiatric help so that she may have a normal

daughter. This led to a heated argument and Ilya, being very angry with his mother, blurted out “in this case I'd rather die”.

Later that night his mother called a mental health unit. He was taken to one of Saint Petersburg mental health institutions where he was neither questioned nor examined. Instead, he was immediately confined to a closed women's ward, where a nurse made him take off all his clothes, including his underwear, gave him a hospital gown and then, an injection. He had to share the ward with four patients, one of whom was staring wildly around herself, swinging from side to side and making disturbing noises, another lay down, groaning into her pillow, falling asleep every now and then and crying every time she woke up. He was afraid to stay in their company but the door was locked, then the drug kicked in and he fell asleep.

The next morning he was summoned to a doctor. She inquired how he had slept, questioned him about his goals in life and why he had been upset the day before. Ilya told her everything that had happened. He came out to her as transgender, told her about his intention to transition as well as about the quarrel with his mother who neither understood nor accepted him, which had caused their conflict. He shared his discomfort of being socialized in the wrong gender. He also told her about his relations with his family and about his girlfriend whom he had been dating for two years. Making notes, the doctor asked Ilya about his relations with men, when he had understood that he was male, and what had made him think so. She inquired if he had tried dating men and suggested that he try it before jumping to conclusions. When the interview was over, he was taken back to the closed ward.

The doctor came to see him again two days later, asked him how he was feeling and left. She did not answer his question regarding the time of his release. All this time Ilya was given injections which were making him woozy and slow. The only thing he felt like doing was sleep. A week went by in this fashion.

Ilya recalls that *“Staying in that hospital was simply unbearable. I felt basically naked, with only this gown to cover my body. I was scared of these women I was locked up with, they were insane, really sick women. I had to go to the bathroom in front of everyone, there were no partitions or doors”*.

Only a week later did his girlfriend finally succeed in visiting him, claiming to be his sister. On seeing his condition, she discussed this situation with his other relations, and in particular, with his real sister, with whom Ilya had been close. His sister questioned Ilya's doctor and learned from her that he had been diagnosed with schizophrenia. They claimed that both his attraction to women and his desire to change his sex had been caused by this disorder. They intended to continue his treatment until successful, without disclosing the treatment methods, and there was no talk of transferring him to a regular ward either.

Quoting Ilya: "I'd love to know what criteria these doctors actually use to diagnose you with such severe disorders. I wonder how they know what to do with you. Like, for example, in my case they had this task: how do you make a patient to want what a normal person is supposed to want? How did they intend to make me want to be a girl, and to make me suddenly want to date men and dream about having kids more than anything?"

The doctors refused to release Ilya into his sister's charge, so other measures had to be invented. Ilya started telling his doctor what the latter must have wanted to hear: that he really liked men and that his attraction to women had been a temporary confusion, and that he had never liked women before, that he was planning to finish his studies and take care of his love life as soon as possible, and that he really wanted to marry a man and have kids. He told her that he had been deluded, thinking that he wanted to be a man, that he had no intention of changing sex, that he felt like a woman and wanted to be a woman. This was the whitest of lies. His sister in the meantime raised 50,000 rubles and gave this money to the doctor, with a request for Ilya's release attached. All of Ilya's friends and even his mother, who had originally wanted him to be "cured", had united in the struggle for Ilya's freedom.

Quoting Ilya: *"I was free after two weeks in this circle of hell. It took me a long time to become myself again. Those drugs they had given me, they had messed up my sense of direction and my memory, I started getting anxiety fits out of the blue. My name is still on their records, and that diagnosis is still valid".*

## **Christina, a transgender woman, 29, undergoing HRT**

In August 2017, after being evaluated and diagnosed with transsexualism (F 64.0), Christina began HRT on her own because she had heard that the doctors' attitude may be problematic. After a week of taking hormone pills she began experiencing heart trouble, shortness of breath and fainting fits.

Christina did not know where to seek help, so she made an appointment with a GP at her district polyclinic and demanded to be referred to an endocrinologist. She described her symptoms, warning the doctor that it was a delicate personal matter. The doctor assured Christina that she had nothing to worry about because her only concern was her patient's well-being. Christina then told her that she had been on HRT which she had begun on her own and showed her the medication she had been taking. According to Christina, the doctor's facial expression changed dramatically and she demanded that Christina describe her situation once again. Christina repeated her story and mentioned once again that it was a sensitive topic. At this moment the doctor switched to a casual form of address (translator's note: she started using the 2nd person singular forms (thee/thou) typically used by friends and acquaintances rather than the 2nd person plural normally used when addressing people the speaker barely knows) and spoke in a sententious tone: "I don't want to see this, put it away. You tell me instead, why are you doing this? Are you an idiot or what? Got nothing worthwhile to do? What is all this nonsense you've been telling me? You've lived like a normal guy for 29 years, and then something flew into you and you now want to be a girl! These things just don't happen! Do you even understand how dangerous it is, that these things can kill you?! Just look at yourself, you're such a handsome guy, just take a look. Just stand before a mirror and take a good look! You can have such a good life! And you, even if you don't care what happens to you, haven't you thought about your mother! How is she going to take this?! Look at all the girls around, you should go and take care of those girls, and you want to be one instead. Aren't you ashamed?" When Christina tried to protest, mentioning her certificate and diagnosis and asking for a referral to an

endocrinologist, the GP ignored her. Christina rushed out of her office in tears.

She reported the incident to the head of the polyclinic, who apologized to Christina and promised to have a talk with the doctor in question. However, this incident caused Christina such stress that she later developed a phobia in relation to polyclinic doctors. She has only used the services of commercial clinics ever since.

**Anonymous, a transgender woman, Samara  
(case documented by Avers regional public LGBT movement,  
member of the Russian LGBT network)**

A transgender woman called an ambulance after developing an acute allergic reaction (allergic swelling of the throat), mentioning her transgender status to the operator. Since the ambulance was taking a long time, she was forced to call again. It ended with the operator shouting at her and claiming that she had been rude. Finally, she had to take a taxi to the nearest hospital, but they would not admit her and sent her to the ambulance parking lot.

On hearing that she was transgender, the ambulance drivers would not listen to her and attempted to drive off. She was only taken to the hospital after her mother stood in front of an ambulance. In the hospital she was given an injection and admitted. It took a long time for the staff to understand why she had male ID. After her explanation they decided that she belonged in the men's ward. They only agreed to put her in a single paying ward for a double fee.

# Discrimination against transgender people in the educational sector

Discrimination in the sphere of education may include disrespect and hostility on the part of the teaching staff and fellow students, which may escalate to bullying and even physical violence.

## **Yanick, a transgender man, 17**

Yanick is a student at a regional music college. Most other students and teachers respect his identity. Some of the staff took the initiative in suggesting to use his chosen name and to address him in the masculine.

However, in December 2016 the college director overheard other teachers addressing Yanick in the masculine in class. On inquiring into the situation, she learned that most of the staff accepted Yanick as a man. For some reason she was unhappy about it and forbade the teachers to address Yanick in the masculine, referring to the fact that he had not changed his legal gender yet. She told Yanick personally that until he produced his new passport no-one would address him in the masculine.

Yanick finds this situation to be an inconvenience, as well as stressful and unfair.

## **Alexandra, a transgender girl, 16, Irkutsk, undergoing HRT**

In 2017, at the time of the interview, Alexandra is a 9th grade student. She is compelled to wear the school uniform in accordance

with her legal gender. Since Alexandra is undergoing HRT, she does not look like a boy, but rather like a girl wearing a men's suit who has to answer to a male name.

She is constantly bullied by her classmates, some teachers also treat her with disrespect, paying her undue attention, asking inappropriate questions and criticizing her both overtly and behind her back.

Alexandra has not come out as transgender in plain terms, but on being questioned by the teaching staff, she answers honestly that she intends to transition. The teachers have been reacting with comments in the vein of: "Just don't tell anyone about your perversions", "Poor your parents", "Throw this garbage out of your head and get down to work".

Alexandra does not want the teachers to discuss this issue with her parents because her parents usually take out their anger on her. After she had been beaten in school on two occasions, her mother refused to go to the police because she felt ashamed, and said that it had been Alexandra's own fault. The teachers knew about the beatings, but did nothing. Alexandra also heard from a local boy gang that they would kill her if they found out she was "not a chick".

This continuous bullying and isolation have caused Alexandra incessant stress to the point that she has undertaken a suicide attempt.

Currently, she has left the school after the end of the school year and has been admitted into a college, where the administration has agreed to officially use her female name.

### **Oleg, a transsexual man, 19, Moscow, undergoing HRT**

In winter 2016 Oleg, a student at Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology of Russia, was taking an oral examination and used masculine verb forms when referring to himself.

The professor interrupted him and started correcting his verb forms. On hearing Oleg's explanation that he preferred using the masculine, she remarked: "But you're a girl, you'll get over this nonsense, you'll have lots of kids. Oh, this silly generation". Oleg tried

arguing with her, claiming that people were different and everyone should be able to choose how to live their life, but heard only empty assertions invoking family values and blaming the Internet. The exam did not go well, so Oleg had to take it again with another professor and passed successfully.

### **B., a transgender girl, 18, Omsk, undergoing HRT**

In summer 2016 B. took the entrance test to continue her studies in high school and successfully passed. The principal and the vice principal were against letting her continue studying at their school (which she had attended for 9 years). B. looks feminine and is openly transgender. Apart from this, the school administration referred to the fact that B. had been hospitalized in a neuropsychiatric clinic and diagnosed with an “organic personality disorder” — in reality, the diagnosis was needed to avoid military service. In spite of this, B. insisted and was allowed to continue her studies. In autumn 2016 a traditional yearly student autonomy day took place. There were not enough 11th year students, so some of the 10th-graders were called in. B. really wanted to try her hand as a teacher and volunteered, but was rejected due to being transgender. She was told that elementary school students would not take her seriously because of her appearance. She was only allowed to collect questionnaires with the marks the student teachers had received for the lessons they had given in elementary school.

B. is currently an 11th year student, and since she has been in high school she has been bullied more than ever by her classmates, she is routinely verbally abused and even physically assaulted. In late September 2017 one of her classmates tried to set her hair on fire. One of the teachers has forbidden B. to wear an earring to her classes, even though the school regulations do not prohibit it.

B. is often criticized for her appearance and her choice of clothing. She was even chastised for her clothing on Saturday, when the students do not have to wear the school uniform. In reality, B. never wears feminine clothes to school, her clothes are usually unisex.

Some of the teachers also keep insisting that B. get a short haircut.

B. also reports being outed several times on board an intercity bus. Ticket inspectors often call out B.'s passport name loudly, refusing to believe that this is in fact her ID. On hearing it, other passengers and the driver usually make fun of B. When taking the city bus, B. usually avoids using her school ID that entitles her to discount fare (in Omsk a full bus ticket costs 22 rubles while a school discount ticket costs 16 rubles) since she often faces disbelief and a negative reaction when showing it and is made to pay full fare anyway.

In winter 2016 B. was undergoing her army physical at the conscription office, in accordance with her legal gender. She faced a negative reaction on the part of the staff: "How come he's still alive?" Some of the draftees attempted to cut B.'s hair, others suggested that she fellate them.

In summer 2017 when B. was waiting in queue near a bank office, a GP she knew came up to her and asked B. to come and see her at her office in the hospital. When B. finished her business at the bank, she went to the hospital, expecting a conversation regarding her health. However, the GP only made remarks concerning B.'s choice of clothing and how she was "supposed" to dress.

In July 2017 a friend of B.'s from another town came to see her. He had left his ID at home and when he wanted a drink, he asked B. to go and get it. However, B. was unable to purchase alcohol since the salesperson would not believe that her passport belonged to her.

### **Alexander, a transgender man, 15, Moscow**

In 2017 Alexander was a 9th year student. In October, his life skills education teacher noticed that he was using masculine forms when referring to himself and reported this to his class tutor. The latter summoned Alexander for a conversation.

She insisted that he use the appropriate grammatical forms, but Alexander kept refusing. Finally, she agreed to let him do as he pleased. However, the life skills education teacher kept insisting

that Alexander “must use the feminine because his ID was female, god had made him a woman and transgender people were sick”. Soon thereafter she complained about Alexander’s behavior to the principal and his mother was summoned to his office.

Alexander, the principal, the teacher and Alexander’s mother met to discuss the matter. The principal insisted that Alexander use the feminine and in case “he disagrees with this, he may change schools”. Alexander’s mother shouted her reproaches at Alexander afterwards: “[his parents] had done everything for him, but he had no love for them”.

Quoting Alexander: *“I don’t think they have a right to discriminate against me in this way. I can’t tear myself in half and behave differently with different people”*.

# Labor discrimination against transgender people

Labor discrimination is one of the main problems that transgender people face before obtaining legal gender recognition, as well as afterwards, in case their transgender status is revealed. Labor discrimination may include unfounded denial of employment, workplace harassment on the part of colleagues and the management as well as unwarranted dismissal.

Problems of this sort are apt to cause stress, depression and have a significant impact on the quality of transgender people's lives, especially considering the fact that many transgender people face additional expenses due to HRT, medical examinations and/or surgeries.

## **Chloe, a transgender girl, 19, Moscow, undergoing HRT**

In June 2016 Chloe applied for a service job (she cannot recall the company name). Her interview went fine until she produced her passport. She was denied the job with the explanation that they did not know how to handle cases of this sort and would rather choose another candidate.

In June 2016 Chloe also applied for a job in a cocktail bar (she cannot recall the name). On showing her passport she was told that it would not be a problem, and that they did not mind hiring unusual people. They promised to get back to her the next day and tell her when she could start. However, they did not call, and when she

contacted them herself two days later, she was told that the job was no longer vacant.

Chloe will not elaborate because since she went through about 20 similar situations in a very short time, she cannot recall the details.

Chloe has also been harassed in the street. In June 2016 she was returning home after shopping. A young man asked her for a cigarette. She speculates that he must wanted to find out what her voice sounded like. However, Chloe just shook her head and kept walking. After awhile she realized that she was being followed by a group of about ten young men. She heard shouts of “are you a guy or a gal?” and other phrases in this style. Soon they caught up with her, made her stop and began questioning her outright. She ironically offered to let them see her chest, which left them at a loss for awhile.

She resumed walking and then from what she heard behind her, she realized that they intended to assault her, so she started running. Luckily for her, a bus arrived, so she hopped on and in this way escaped. The driver did not allow the aggressive gang to board. They set after the bus but eventually gave up.

### **Nikita, a transsexual man, 35, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

Nikita has been employed at the sex shop “Eroboutique” since August 2016. The shop employees have no uniform, however the shop manager used to insist that Nikita must dress according to his legal gender, constantly pressing her point and making unpleasant remarks, such as: “Girls must look like girls”, “There was this lesbian and I made a proper girl out of her, now at least she's nice to look at. You're next”. Nikita had to live through several months of constant stress.

However, he did not quit his job and, according to him, he finally made everyone respect his right to his identity. He reports no more problems of this kind at his workplace.

## **Sergey Gordeev, a trans man, 28, Chelyabinsk, undergoing HRT**

In August 2016 Sergey applied for a manager's job at the company "Alternative" selling software such as "Glavbukh" ("Chief accountant"), "Yurist" ("Lawyer") and others. The interview went well, the employer was pleased with Sergey's work experience and personality. When it came to Sergey's ID, he informed them that he was medically transitioning and still had female ID, however, this did not cause any problems and Sergey got the job. According to him, everything went fine during his first week on the job, but on Wednesday the information about his transgender status was somehow leaked to the staff and people started talking. After awhile colleagues began asking Sergey inappropriate questions. He overheard several obscene anecdotes about himself during breaks. He only lasted three weeks in this atmosphere and then quit without hesitation.

In October 2016 Sergey was on a filming trip in Kyshtym. The men's rooms at the railroad hotel where they were staying turned out to have no booths, so he asked a female friend to check the ladies'. When no-one was around, he briefly went into the ladies and did his business. However, when he was leaving the ladies' room the hotel administrator caught sight of him and called the security. He was repeatedly questioned regarding the situation, the reason why he had female ID which the hotel staff did not believe belonged to him, as well as why he had been in the ladies' room. They refused pointblank to believe his explanations and even suggested that he take off his clothes. Fortunately, the matter was settled peacefully at last.

In February 2017 in Saint Petersburg Sergey was not allowed to board the train # 146 bound for Chelyabinsk because the train attendant claimed that his ID was false. Sergey had to wait until all the passengers had boarded the train to explain the situation to the train attendant's satisfaction. However, the journey caused Sergey discomfort and anxiety since the train attendant made a point of loudly addressing him by his passport name in front of his fellow travelers who already knew him as a man.

Sergey confesses being stressed and inconvenienced by these incidents.

**Jessy Oliver, genderqueer, 26, Chelyabinsk, undergoing HRT, has changed their legal name and gender**

On 2 February 2017, Jessy came for an interview for a job as a waiter's assistant in a vegetarian cafe "Rada". The administrator of the cafe who conducted the interview was quite pleasant at first. They discussed the working duties, the schedule, the wages and Jessy's working experience. The interviewer found Jessy's voice, and probably some other things as well, rather unusual, and she made an attempt to inquire about Jessy's gender. When they started discussing the paperwork, she began asking impolite questions. She voiced considerable surprise and disbelief, laughed and treated Jessy with disrespect when the latter attempted to explain to her how they identified using the term "Androgynous". Then the cafe administrator became reluctant to hire Jessy, explaining that the customers would not understand it and that it would cause conflicts, even though Jessy's prospective job did not involve direct contact with customers. She went on to say that the staff would not understand Jessy either, and that it would cause conflicts as well. Finally, she said that she personally did not mind hiring Jessy, but that she would have to discuss it with the management. They parted politely, but Jessy received a phone call from her several minutes later, informing them that the management had refused to give them this job.

**Olesya, a transgender/transsexual woman, 27, Moscow, undergoing HRT**

From early August 2016 till the end of February 2017 Olesya was humiliated and abused by her colleagues and management, even featuring threats such as "I'll split your skull" and similar. This would often happen in the presence of other people: she was not physically assaulted but was prevented from leaving and made to listen to everything they had to say about her. The management would not address these incidents unless Olesya's abusers happened to be of the same rank as herself, while her superiors went unpunished. However, the chief culprit was finally sanctioned and demoted.

When Olesya sought help of the company psychologist, the latter observed that everyone did not understand people like Olesya and though their treatment of her had obviously been wrong, she must have expected things like this to happen.

### **Anna, a transgender woman, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

Anna had been working in Dennis Osipov Beauty Studio since October 2016. She had originally applied for this job as male. After she came out as transgender in November 2016 and began presenting as female, the attitude of her colleagues did not change and she was still addressed in the masculine, even though the management had promised her otherwise. The management also failed to have her profile on the company's website updated, nor were the clients informed that her personal data had changed.

Anna refused to attend a corporate party, stating constant misgendering<sup>8</sup> as the reason. Following this, her colleagues began using her female name and their attitude improved. However, her boss told her: "When you have a new ID we'll call you what you like. You're not a girl yet".

Anna's co-workers did not come to her defense, except on certain occasions, when one of them had reduced her to tears by misgendering her. She quit in April 2017, misgendering being one of the chief reasons.

### **Zhanna, a transgender woman, 32, Sergiev Posad, Moscow region, undergoing HRT**

In September 2016 Zhanna applied for a job in the big-box store chain "Lenta" ("Ribbon") and was invited for an interview. When she arrived, the security guard took a long time scrutinizing her ID and her person and then told Zhanna to wait since the interviewer had not arrived yet. Zhanna had to wait for nearly an hour, being closely watched by the security guard who still had her passport and only

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<sup>8</sup> The term misgendering refers to a transgender person being addressed in the wrong gender, in this case, masculine.

gave it back to her on her request. When the HR manager arrived, she let Zhanna fill in a questionnaire and then asked to see her passport. On seeing it, she told Zhanna that the job the latter had applied for was very hard and involved spending long hours inside a fridge and in the stockroom, and ended up claiming that they had already given this job to someone anyway. Zhanna wondered why she had been invited to the interview to begin with if they had no vacancies, and the manager replied that the only vacancy they had was in the cheese department, but Zhanna could not work there because they only gave that sort of job to women. Zhanna inquired a little impatiently once more whether they had a job for her or not, and the manager replied that indeed they did not. It is important to point out that Zhanna had not come out as transgender, nor had she requested to be called by a female name or mentioned it in the questionnaire, and therefore concludes that the only reason why she was rejected had been her appearance.

Since 13 December 2016 Zhanna was officially employed as a salesperson at checkout in the chain store O'stin, situated in "Kapitol" shopping mall. The storeroom employee took a dislike to Zhanna's appearance and demeanor, calling her "a gay" and threatening her with physical violence. However, the store manager succeeded in settling the issue. Zhanna did not come out as transgender at this job either, believing that it made no sense without an official diagnosis. It was however upsetting to be constantly called by a male name. The clients would usually address her as a female unless they heard her colleagues using her legal name. She made friends with two of her female co-workers who knew that she was transgender, but on her request did not reveal this information.

Zhanna had problems visiting the bathroom: *"People would basically ask me in plain text what I was doing in the men's room. But I was afraid to use the ladies' because most of the mall staff knew that my legal gender was male since I'd been working there for over six months. It was sheer hell. I would not eat or drink anything during the hours so as not to have to go"*.

Zhanna was not allowed to do additional work in order to get a promotion, even though other staff who had been hired after her

were given this opportunity, so she saw no chance of career advancement in this company.

On several occasions some of the staff would call her gay in public, sometimes using obscene language or throwing items at her in sight of the customers, she was often help up during breaks or made to carry heavy objects, like 40 kg water cooler containers. When she explained that she could not lift heavy items due to a spine injury, the store manager relied that in this case she may not drink the water.

Zhanna recalls: *“On July 14 I went out for a lunch at KFC with a friend from work, and then this girl gets a message from another colleague, saying that the manager had told her in secret I was going to get the sack after the sales in September, and begged her not to tell anyone about it, they were always scheming against me. I was so fed up with what the manager was doing. When I asked her why they had hired me in the first place, she replied that at least I had been dressed as a dude then”.*

On 8 November 2017 a conflict occurred between Zhanna and the store administrator. After this the store manager made Zhanna resign. Zhanna believes that the real reason of the conflict and the hostility of the staff had been the fact that she was transgender, since by that time the management already knew about it. Zhanna had come out in summer, showing them the certificate she had been issued in August 2017.

In December 2017 Zhanna applied for a job at the chain store “Snow Queen” in the “Golden Babylon” shopping mall in Moscow. She had presented as female and showed her male ID and her certificate to the store manager during the interview. This led to an abrupt change in the manager's attitude. The latter openly told Zhanna that she could not hire her because her appearance and her ID didn't match: “we don't need staff like this”. Besides, she recommended that Zhanna “use her real ID when applying for a job rather than hiding behind a fake name”.

In December 2017 Zhanna made several more attempts to find employment. After her previous misfortune she began using her legal name and refrained from coming out as transgender.

On 13 December she was interviewed for a job in the company “Korablik” (“Little Sailing Boat”). The interviewer was quite at a loss when Zhanna gave her male name. He told her that the security service needed a couple of days to check her, and added that in case she got a job offer elsewhere in the meantime, she need not hesitate to accept. He promised to get back to her but never did.

Zhanna mentions several other failed attempts at finding a job that unfolded in a similar fashion, without giving any details; she tried her luck at “Detsky Mir” (“Children's World”), “Baon”, “FinFly”, “O'kay”, “Marx and Spenser”, “Chitay-Gorod” (“A Reading City”).

Zhanna's difficulties in finding employment have been putting a considerable stress on her relationship with her family (mother and sister) that share her living quarters. She is constantly stressed: they have been threatening to turn her out of the household unless she gets a job.

### **Dmitry, a transgender man, Rostov-on-Don**

In December 2016 Dmitry got a job at the diner “Bukharest” at 9A, Proselochnaya str. He had been first interviewed by the administrator, then by the restaurant owner. The latter agreed to hire Dmitry and let him use his male name. However, soon the staff learned that Dmitry was transgender, they began talking behind his back, making jokes and even abusing him. Following a few sharp replies on his part, they complained to the management. As a result, Dmitry had to leave without any wages. Since he hadn't been officially employed, he could not sue the restaurant.

### **Alexander, a transgender man, 26, Tver**

In September 2016 Alexander came to be interviewed for a job as a ride supervisor in an amusement park. He was rejected with the explanation: “Do you realize this is a place for kids? You can't possibly work here, with them looking at you and wondering if you're a man or a woman.”

Alexander confesses feeling disappointed because he had been enthusiastic about this job.

**Alexandra, a transgender woman, 19, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

In March 2017 Alexandra sought a job at the beauty supply chain store “Podruzhka” (“Girlfriend”). She presented as female and came out as transgender during the interview. According to Alexandra, she was not treated with any disrespect, but she did not get the job since, as she was told, they could not hire a girl that would have to wear a badge with a male name. She was told that she qualified for the job but her male ID was a problem and she was encouraged to come back after changing it.

**Ivan, a transgender man, 18, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

In March, Ivan spent 6 days working unofficially (with a prospect of official employment) as a courier for the company “Obkom”, but was dismissed when his transgender status became known. Since his job required a POA, he had to show his passport. At first things went well, but then the manager wondered why Ivan had male first and last name, but a female patronymic and legal gender and demanded to see Ivan's birth certificate. Ivan explained that his birth certificate contained the same data as his passport, and when questioned, claimed being an intersex person, hoping that it would increase his chances of acceptance. However, he was let go after that, for the reason that the co-workers and clients “might not understand this”.

Ivan shared what the company management had messaged him afterwards: “Since we're a public company, it would be difficult for us to explain this personal data that doesn't match up. This would not be a problem if only this job did not involve constant identification... and then again, society can't always accept these mistakes of nature. Please understand that we cannot keep using your services. Your wages for the time you've done will be paid to your bank card account.”

### **Sasha, a transgender woman, 27, Saint Petersburg**

Sasha has been working for “playkot.com” for over three years. At first she had worked as a technical support department manager, later she began supervising a separate project. About a month ago she came out as transgender to an HR manager and her immediate co-workers, the rest of the staff were informed by their supervisors at team meetings. The management allowed her to change her corporate account logins and her email and gave her leave to use the ladies' room. Sasha made a post in the corporate online chat, saying that she would not mind being misgendered at first because she understood how difficult it could be for her colleagues. She received words of support from many of her female colleagues after this.

Sasha shared that at the time of our interview almost all of the company staff were using her female name with the exception of several colleagues who had found it especially difficult to relearn. Most of Sasha's colleagues are young people, but a couple of them are over 40. According to her, one of these two, who happened to be the only religious staff member, started treating Sasha with passive aggression, was rude and would not exchange greetings with her. Sasha chose not to wait for the situation to escalate and appealed to the HR department. She heard the HR managers have a long conversation with the staff member in question. She even overheard phrases like “this dude goes and has his dick cut off and now claims he's a woman, that's unheard-of!” on the part of her aggressive colleague. Sasha hopes that this employee will be dismissed since she is not the only person whom he has been giving trouble.

### **Sonya, a transgender girl, 18, Omsk, undergoing HRT**

At the end of May 2017 Sonya sought a job as a waitress. She came out to her prospective employer during the interview, warning her that she still had male ID. The employer refused to hire Sonya because her appearance did not match her ID and recommended that Sonya come back after changing her legal gender.

By November 2017 Sonya had already changed all her papers apart from her school certificate. When she applied for its replacement, the principal told her to announce its loss in the local newspaper and bring the receipt to the school. Only then would they issue her a new certificate provided that the records for her graduation year were intact. The principal also observed that it was not necessary to change the certificate since it did not contain a gender marker anyway<sup>9</sup>. Sonya chose not to argue with the principal and did as she was told since, according to her, she only wanted to get it over and done with.

### **Leonid, a non-binary transmasculine person, 22, Saint Petersburg**

In August 2017 a friend told Leonid that an X-ray lab were seeking a receptionist. Leonid was ready to start work and there were no other seekers, but following the interview the prospective employer ignored queries from Leonid for nearly two weeks. They motivated this lack of response by the fact that they had to settle certain questions with the previous employee and promised Leonid to contact him later. According to Leonid, the lab never got back to him, and he later learned that when a cisgender person had sought that job, they had been hired without delay.

### **D., a transgender man, undergoing HRT, has undergone surgery**

Almost immediately after D. graduated from the university he found a job as a programmer (he prefers not to share the company name). By that time he had begun undergoing HRT and for this reason decided to come out to his employer. To D.'s great surprise, his boss took the matter in his stride and suggested that D. use his chosen rather than his legal name and that his legal ID be kept secret. D.'s

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<sup>9</sup> This demand contradicts the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, issued on 14 February 2014 # 155 “On the approved procedure of completion, registration, issue and reissue of certificates of basic general and second general education”

job did not involve contact with customers, while the office staff accepted D.

However, in early 2017 the company was bought over and there was a complete change of management. The new management became intensely interested why the chief programmer was filed under a female name. According to D., explaining the matter did not help and arguments were to no avail. At that time D. was already in the process of changing his legal gender, but neither this information nor his diagnosis helped to change the management's mind, so D. was asked to quit.

### **Roman, a transgender man, 29, Chelyabinsk, undergoing HRT**

In October 2017 Roman came for an interview in the pawn shop "Pobeda" ("Victory"). They were seeking a security guard/salesperson/goods appraiser. Roman had presented as male for the interview and, according to him, the prospective employer found his skills and experience satisfactory; the day for the beginning of his trial period was set. After that Roman came out as transgender and showed his female ID, his certificate from an endocrinologist and his psychiatrist.

The interviewer changed her attitude at once, she looked tense and puzzled and her manner of talking also changed. Referring to the security aspect of the job, she began questioning him about schizophrenia, his mental health history and drug use. She said that they would need certificates in relation to this. She also inquired about his family and whether any of his parents had a history of mental health issues or substance abuse.

She said that "the security service would inquire and verify everything and they would contact Roman next week". Before she learned about Roman's transgender status, she had suggested that he start work in two days. When they said goodbye, she was rather rude. No-one called him the next week. Roman believes that he had been rejected because of his transgender status and his ID.

On 20 November 2017 Roman was interviewed for a job as an alarm console operator at the security company "Holding" AN-Security. The interview went successfully and Roman was told that:

“the company was lucky to have found him since they didn't need to instruct him because he already had the necessary skills”. They also said that there was no need for a trial period or a security check because he had worked for a similar company before and had good recommendations.

They gave him the workplace address and inquired whether he could begin in two days. Roman tells that the interview had been a pleasant experience.

After that Roman showed the interviewer his passport, came out as transgender and explained that he had been transitioning. To this the interviewer replied: “Personally, I respect transgender people and have no problem with this. However, we are a large company and I cannot predict how the management is going to react. I can't guarantee that this information won't spread. It may interfere with the working conditions, people will talk. I don't know how the security might take this either. So I am sorry, we can't hire you”. The manager made her apologies, said that it had been a pleasure interviewing him and wished him luck.

Roman told us that he had been rejected during interviews for the same reason on several other occasions. The prospective employers' attitude would switch from respect to hostility, he had even been insulted. These occasions were about ten in all since the beginning of 2017. Roman gave no further details, confessing that the memories were disturbing.

### **Nikolay, a transgender man, 23, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

In September 2017 Nikolay got a job as a general worker in the chain supermarket “Pyaterochka” (“Five”). The management told him not to worry about his ID which was still female and hired him. He was introduced as Nikolay to the staff. He liked his co-workers, made a few friends and they were always helping each other.

Three months went by and things went well. However, one day while unloading a truck, which Nikolay had always done well and on par with his co-workers, he happened to drop a crate of fruit, which spilled over the floor. The store manager came running and shouted

at Nikolay: “If you're not a man, you should stay away from men's work”. His colleagues came to his defense, arguing: “Why are you humiliating him like this, this could have happened to anyone”. She replied: “He's a man, my foot, I got HER ID in my office, it says in black and white who she is”. She also said that if Nikolay wanted to play at being a man, others were not obligated to play along and that she was not doing it anymore. Nikolay's colleagues were flabbergasted. He was shocked because he had not expected something like this. After the incident he quit. He had resigned of his own accord, but the record in his labor book claimed that he had been dismissed due to “lack of trust”.

### **Vitaly, a transgender man, has changed his legal gender**

Vitaly was issued a new passport in December 2015, and on returning from vacation had all his papers updated. The company he was working for did not mind, the top management had been informed of the situation and were even happy to finally have everything in order.

However, the HR department was not happy. The head of the HR department refused to update Vitaly's file and other papers and issue him a new pass. She became very emotional and went so far as to insult and humiliate Vitaly in the presence of other staff: “how the hell did you get this new passport issued”, “on what grounds”, “this paper means nothing to me”. According to Vitaly, later during a meeting she demanded that the management find a reason for dismissing him; it was decided to leave things as they were for the time being, and later to manipulate the circumstances so as to make Vitaly resign. This solution had been suggested by the head of the legal department; apparently, the management had no intention of dealing with subsequent lawsuits.

Vitaly recalls: “The situation culminated with the head of the HR department tossing my papers into my face. I picked them up, calm and composed, and went to the head manager and described the situation. After that, I could not get into the building for several weeks because I had no pass. I was forced to ask my colleagues or the management to get me one-time passes, that was my tempo-

rary solution, because the HR lady was angrier than ever and was still trying to catch me being late or AWOL”.

In late December Vitaly was finally issued a new pass, after proving his determination not to resign. However he found a new bully in the person of his immediate superior who would routinely abuse Vitaly, threatening to ban him from the routine qualification test or to falsify the test results. Vitaly sought legal assistance of Transgender Legal Defense Project team, who helped him draw up an explanatory memorandum; as a result, the management made the decision not to let him take the test for awhile. Vitaly worked for 6 months, lacking qualification.

The management then resorted to claiming that Vitaly had domestic trouble: the libel had been concocted by the head of the department. When Vitaly adduced a positive assessment of his character from the local police department the matter had to be dropped.

After the New Year holidays Vitaly was summoned to the deputy head manager and informed that he had one month to find a new job, and the bullying recommenced. The deputy head manager would summon him 3 to 5 times daily to inquire whether Vitaly had found a new job yet; he was constantly watched, all his absences from his workplace were carefully noted and timed, including bathroom visits, abuse and harassment on the part of the supervisor and the HR also continued. As a result of this attitude and the stress of the whole situation Vitaly had to go on sick leave. The sick list that Vitaly submitted to the HR department afterwards magically disappeared, while a remark “absent for reasons unknown” appeared in his file.

Later Vitaly learned that the ordinary staff had been intending to petition against his dismissal. On returning from sick leave he was summoned to the deputy head manager and was allowed to resume his work, and also to take the qualification test.

However, after the funeral of the head of the department who had been one of Vitaly's chief bullies, Vitaly got a phone call from his immediate superior, informing him that the latter had had a car accident. During the following 4 months (from 11 May till 7 Septem-

ber) Vitaly officially fulfilled the duties of his superior, doing twice as much work, later three times as much, when the supply manager went on vacation.

The management's attitude had undergone a slight improvement, even though he was underpaid for the additional work he had done "by omission"; the new head of the HR department (the old one had retired) was treating him better.

On 8 September Vitaly's immediate superior resumed his work and began his first day back in the office by publicly insulting Vitaly and expressing his dissatisfaction with the latter's work instead of showing gratitude. According to Vitaly, obscure accusations, abuse and even attempts to provoke a fight followed. The superior was not sanctioned in any way for this behavior. Vitaly however had a hypertensive crisis on the same day following which he was on sick leave from 8 till 26 September. While on sick leave he communicated several times with the deputy head manager. At first the latter expressed doubt as to the authenticity of the sick leave cause, so Vitaly adduced copies of an extract from his medical record; the deputy head manager then relented and suggested they discuss the matter when Vitaly was back at work. Vitaly returned to the office on 27 September and went to see the deputy head manager immediately and, following their conversation, applied for a leave with subsequent resignation. The day of his resignation was 16 October, he got his labor book the following day. The trade union never interfered during all this time.

Vitaly still gets phone calls and messages from his former colleagues, he has even been seeing some of them. According to him, he had practically made enemies of only 2-3 persons in a company whose premises occupied an entire 5 story building.

Following these events, in October, Vitaly addressed himself to the head of the public employment service. The latter treated him rather harshly at first, being sure that Vitaly had been dismissed, and was genuinely surprised on seeing the latter's labor book. The other employment service staff were quite friendly but told him they could only offer him vacancies from the common database, with wages around 10-12,000 rubles. He did not come back.

After that Vitaly sought employment in state organizations. He sought for vacancies in a related organization (since he had stayed on good terms with his co-workers). One of his former colleagues told him in secret what he had accidentally overheard one of the management saying to Vitaly's prospective employer who had requested recommendations: that "Vitaly was a problematic and conflict-prone employee that they must not hire in any circumstances".

Simultaneously with this, Vitaly tried finding a job looking through vacancy announcements, but since it was a small town, he did not succeed.

As a result of this, Vitaly is currently in financial straights and has been suffering from poor health.

**Anastasia Vasilyeva, a transgender woman, Saint Petersburg, has changed her legal name and gender (case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

Anastasia had been working as a printer in a company manufacturing plates used for printing on packaging. Before Anastasia changed her legal gender, during a routine evaluation of working conditions the inspecting commission had concluded that her post may not be occupied by a woman. It is curious however that a year previously during the same inspection, that at the time was called workplace evaluation, no such gender-based limitations existed. Anastasia does not believe that her workplace conditions had changed in any way in the course of the year that had elapsed. When in July 2017 Anastasia informed her management that she had changed her legal gender, she was offered a choice: she could resign "by an agreement between the parties", or else she would be dismissed "due to the impossibility of the labor relation to continue".

Anastasia remarks: "I think this situation was a perfect pretext for legally getting rid of me. The management could have offered me a different job, doing something else. They could have

simply changed the title of the job I already had. But they just wouldn't".

**Yulia, a transgender woman, Perm  
(case documented by Rainbow World Perm initiative group)**

Yulia is an IT specialist. She describes herself as highly qualified. Towards the end of 2017 she noticed that her colleagues had begun avoiding her, one of them barely talks to her these days, she finds it increasingly hard to work in this atmosphere. According to Yulia, she would like to discuss this problem with her management but she fears that "their attitude might be the same".

At present Yulia is worried that she might have to change jobs again. She had to quit her previous job two years ago after her colleagues had found out that she was transgender and began harassing her.

**Masha, a trans woman, Perm  
(case documented by Rainbow World Perm initiative group)**

Masha was employed as a teacher in a vocational school. In this school teaching contracts were renewed yearly based on the results of a competitive examination. Masha considers herself to be a very good teacher and loves her job, but her colleagues and especially the principal were not happy about having a transgender woman among their ranks. Masha believes that when the examination time came, she was deliberately underrated and her contract was not renewed, while a new and less experienced person was hired instead.

**Anonymous, a trans woman, Tumen  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

When she was being interviewed for a job, she was subjected to insults and abuse on the part of the interviewer due to the fact that she had not changed her legal gender yet and had male ID. According to the survivor, the only reason why she avoided physical assault was the presence of a police officer in the vicinity.

**Anonymous, a transgender man, Samara  
(case documented by Avers regional public LGBT movement,  
member of the Russian LGBT Network)**

A transgender man had been working in a fitness chain club “Botek” for 5 years, until 2016. He had been sure of the management's positive attitude towards the fact of his being transgender. In 2016 he quit, having found a job with better wages. However, he lost the new job in September 2016 due to a staff reduction. Knowing that he could go back to “Botek” (there had been precedents) he first met the club director I.V. Zhestovskikh and the fitness coordinator Anna Simonenko. They told him that they needed time to discuss it, after which a silence followed. When he inquired whether they had a job for him, Simonenko told him that they had no vacancies at the moment. However he knew that they were constantly hiring new coaches. He made an appointment with “Botek” club chain owner Igor Viktorovitch Dubishkin and came to see him on 1 November 2016.

It was a shock to hear that “they had put up with his transsexuality while he was employed, but they wouldn't take him back on”, spoken in a squeamish tone of voice.

**Anonymous, a transsexual man, Samara  
(case documented by Avers regional public LGBT movement,  
member of the Russian LGBT Network)**

In November 2016 he came for a job interview at the company “Alex-fitness”. The fitness room coordinator was quite pleased and was ready to give the job to the interviewee. The latter had come out as transgender at the very beginning of the interview since he was tired of people talking behind his back. The fitness room coordinator said that he had no problem with it and, in fact quite the opposite, was delighted with the seeker's achievement. However, another interview, this time with the club director Evgeny Milostivenko remained. The interviewee told Evgeny that he had worked in the fitness department for many years and also happened to be a transsexual man. At first the director could not understand what the inter-

viewee had meant, so the latter had to reiterate it in plain terms (“Female to male”). The director was taken aback, disconcerted and at a loss for words. He mumbled that he had to discuss it with his superiors.

The interviewee did not get this job in the end; a year later he got a threatening message from Timur Bulatov (translator's note: an anti-LGBT activist of ill fame) via the social network VKontakte, who had also outed him. The survivor wonders whether the two events are connected.

**Anonymous, a trans woman, Tumen  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

On 2 March 2017 one of the interviewee's colleagues was having a workplace birthday party. Since the interviewee had been told that “the staff did not want her to take part”, she decided to wish her colleague a happy birthday on her own. So she did: she gave her a birthday card and a gift (money) just like all the other colleagues had done jointly. However, the colleague returned the gift (she lay the money back on the interviewee's desk in the latter's absence) and did not invite her to the party. There was some alcohol at the party as well (during the working hours).

A little while later the director came rushing into the office that the interviewee shared with her colleagues, hit her hand with the door of the safe she had just opened to get out some papers. After that he began insulting her, grabbing her hair and threatening to beat her up “and set a bunch of lowlives at her”. When she wondered why she may not wear long hair, the director could not give a sensible answer and shouted even louder.

**G., a transgender person, Perm  
(case documented by Rainbow World initiative group, member  
of the Russian LGBT Network)**

In autumn 2017, this transgender person who had worked for a long time in an organization in Perm, received a warning from their management concerning their appearance. After G. began transitioning,

their colleagues started complaining about G.'s appearance and especially their clothes that were wrong for their gender. It is important to note that G.'s work does not involve representing the company in public and that their clothes are always unisex. However, the colleagues claimed that G.'s appearance was inappropriate for the office.

**Maxim, a transgender man, Saint Petersburg  
(case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out  
LGBT initiative group)**

In spring 2016 Maxim found a job as a salesperson in a Nike chain store. At the end of the year he came out to his co-workers and management as transgender and told them that he had begun transitioning. The store director was quite accepting, began addressing Max in the masculine and agreed to let the name on Maxim's badge to be changed, but many of his colleagues would not accept Maxim and kept using the feminine and his legal name. One of Maxim's immediate superiors shouted at him, using the pronoun "it" and claiming that solving problems by appealing to the management was "feminine behavior". Since Nike is a European company, according to their official policy transphobia on the part of the staff is prohibited. The director who shared this position explained it to his employees, and as a result, Maxim's working conditions improved and his colleagues stopped harassing him. However, they kept using female pronouns when referring to him, were constantly outing him to the customers and made a show of avoiding him.

Maxim was motivated to keep working for Nike and had considerable chances for promotion which however, never happened. His prospective new superior told him frankly: "I had to keep in mind how to address you correctly during the whole interview, and if I had such a hard time of it, how hard do you think are the staff going to find it?"

At the end of summer Maxim quit.

# Discrimination in the service sector<sup>10</sup>

Transgender people may be denied service and face extreme disrespect when trying to access various services in the commercial as well as public/municipal service sector.

Repeated denials of service as well as frequent conflicts may cause considerable stress and inconvenience.

## **S. a transgender man, 32, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT, undergone surgery**

In late June 2016 S. came to a notary's office on Obukhovskoy Oborony Avenue in Saint Petersburg with the purpose of drawing up a POA for a lawyer to represent him in court in relation to his legal gender recognition process. The notary's secretary, on seeing S.' passport, inquired why he, to all appearances a man, was showing a female ID. S. explained the situation and the secretary invited him into the notary's office. According to S., "the notary greeted him with a sour face and a phrase in the style of "Whatever on earth is this supposed to be?" S. explained his situation to the notary and suggested that she take a look at his medical certificates and the copy of his court application. The notary refused to read the papers, claiming that his ID was false and that she could not identify him. S. insisted on his right to the service, explaining that he could not receive a new passport without the POA, but the notary repeatedly re-

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<sup>10</sup> This includes commercial as well as public/municipal services.

fused in an abrupt and disrespectful manner. When S. voiced his intention to leave a complaint of an unwarranted denial of service, he was told that there was no complaints book in the office and that “he could leave a complaint on the website but would only waste his time”.

According to S., this refusal caused him stress and made him really angry because this visit had indeed been a waste of time.

The next day S. went to another notary's office, where he got what he wanted and was treated with politeness and respect.

### **Stas, a transsexual man, 28, Saint Petersburg**

In September 2016, S. failed to rent a room at 5, Shkolnaya str., due to being transsexual. He had called the phone number given in the advertisement and they were about to agree on a visit when he was asked to tell more about himself. He informed the lady on the phone that he was a transsexual man and was planning to start transitioning. His interlocutor inquired: “So your appearance is going to change a lot? And you ID as well?” When he replied in the affirmative, she apologized and explained that “the subtenant and the landlord would not understand”.

### **Marcel, a trans man, 25, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT**

In March 2017 Marcel went into a hair salon on Yakornaya str. in the vicinity of Okhta-Mall and requested a simple men's haircut.

Marcel relates: “When I went in, I had to make everything clear just in case, though I usually pass as male and people don't have a problem with identifying my gender. “Good day! I would like to see a men's stylist and I need a men's haircut”, I told them right from the start”.

When Marcel described the haircut he wanted to the stylist, she wondered: “Why do you need a men's stylist at all? You've just described a regular women's haircut to me”. Marcel inquired why she found the haircut he had described to be women's and what she thought then was a men's haircut. The stylist offered him a catalog

so that he may choose whatever haircut he liked. Marcel followed her advice. He finally found a haircut that looked similar to what he had wanted with a few minor modifications that must have been an easy task for a professional. All the while, the stylist kept urging him to go to the women's stylist, making what Marcel thought were absurd arguments, explaining something about the direction of male hairgrowth and which way hair swirled.

Marcel recalls: *"I argued that everyone's hair, including men's, grows in different ways and people have different hairlines and swirls and things. And then I asked her: "What would you do if a young man walked in and wanted a creative hairstyle or a unisex hairstyle, will you also tell him to go to the women's stylist?" To which she replied "Well, no...no". And then I began to realize that she just plain didn't want to do it"*.

After that the stylist pointed to the haircut that Marcel had requested and explained in an annoyed tone that the model was a "100% manly man" which Marcel would never be, and then suggested openly that he may go and get his haircut elsewhere.

### **Eugenia, a transgender woman, 27, Tobolsk, undergoing HRT**

On 21 June 2017 Eugenia applied to the MOI (Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, MVD) department for migration in Tobolsk where she was currently residing for a replacement of her passport due to a change in her appearance. The officer would not believe that Eugenia's passport belonged to her and requested a certificate from an endocrinologist, testifying that Eugenia's appearance had been altered due to HRT.

According to Eugenia, she had been seeing a doctor, but the latter had told her that she would not issue a certificate concerning HRT without an F 64.0 diagnosis. When Eugenia informed the officer about this, the officer told her that there was nothing she could do for her.

Eugenia was quite stressed following this: she was worried that this discrepancy between her ID and her appearance would cause her problems on her trip to Moscow where she was planning to travel soon to be evaluated and diagnosed. The next day Eugenia

returned to the passport office and was referred to the head of the department, where she had to wait for over an hour. The head of the department began by telling Eugenia that the latter didn't need to change anything because her appearance had not changed at all, but then told her that she may apply for a new passport and that she did not need to bring any certificates. The officer however kept demanding a certificate, and Eugenia was ready to apply for a new passport "due to loss or damage" (in that case the fee would be significantly higher). Eugenia mentioned this fact to the officer and added that this was plain and ordinary extortion. The officer once again inquired what it was that Eugenia wanted changed; according to Eugenia, the former pretended having not realized that all Eugenia had wanted was a new photo. On closer inspection however the officer rejected Eugenia's application again because her military registration certificate "had expired"<sup>11</sup>

The stress Eugenia had experienced made her ill: according to her, she had high fever and lower back pain, could not leave her home for several days and could barely walk.

### **Alexey, a trans man, 22, Saint Petersburg**

Alexey is a 3rd year student at a technical college; when using the means of public transportation he uses a proximity smart transport card that has his photo and name. Using this student public transport card is cheaper than paying a full ticket price.

In February 2017 Alexey took trolleybus #16 to college and displayed his transport card to the ticket controller. The latter inspected the card thoroughly, told Alexey that he must have stolen it and demanded to see his passport. While he was rummaging for his passport, she made loud comments: "This young man claims he's a girl, now do you think it's possible? The police will tell if you're a girl or a boy! The lengths people go to for a free ride these days!" The other commuters offered their own comments and speculations. In the meantime Alexey found his passport that had the same data as the

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<sup>11</sup> Since military registration certificates are valid permanently, this refusal was against the law.

transport card. The ticket controller did not apologize. Alexey hopped off the trolleybus on the next stop.

According to Alexey, he was greatly stressed during this incident: the ticket controller had deliberately humiliated him, drawing other passengers' attention to his person; some of those passengers had been, in fact, people Alexey knew, and who did not know that he was transgender, which was not a fact Alexey had intended to share.

### **Veronika, a trans woman, 22, Omsk, undergoing HRT**

In summer 2016 Sberbank refused to issue a debit card to Veronika for the reason that her appearance did not match her ID. Later this incident re-occurred twice, in February and in June 2017 in other Sberbank branch offices: both times her application was rejected. The third time the bank teller informed her that the result would have been the same even if she had tried to look like her passport photo.

Veronika also failed to find employment on multiple occasions for the same reason. Finally, she had her fill and decided to have her passport photo replaced; for this purpose she applied to the AFMS (Administration of the Federal Migration Service) authorities, paying the 1500 ruble fee for replacement of lost or damaged passport. However, since her appearance did not match her legal identity, she was forced to explain the situation that had caused the need for passport replacement and after she did, her application was rejected. Veronika did not know at that time that the fee she had paid could have been reimbursed to her due to non-usage of funds, and later the receipt was lost. At present Veronika is in the process of changing her legal gender based on the medical evaluation and diagnosis certificate.

The rejection of Veronika's applications for a debit card and replacement of her passport photo caused her considerable inconvenience and financial difficulty.

Veronika was also denied employment several times. She was denied the job as a salesperson in a small store in an underground passage with the explanation that "the management wouldn't un-

derstand”. When she applied for the job of a waitress in a restaurant, the prospective employer demanded that she dress in accordance with her legal gender. This however might have attracted unwanted attention to Veronika on the part of transphobic customers. Veronika had to turn down this offer for reasons of personal safety.

**L., a trans woman  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

While walking through the city L. spotted a store window, decorated in a rustic style. Curious, she walked in. However, the salesgirl loudly expressed her disinclination to serve L., pointing her finger at the latter, calling her a sodomite and a pervert, and informed her that “characters from the mythological past wouldn't be served there”. She refused to answer any of L.'s questions, observed that there was ample information on the Internet on the matter, and demanded that L. vacate the premises. When L. left the store, she cast another glance at the window and realized that she had just had the pleasure of visiting a store owned by Sterligov. The window also bore a plaque that said “\*censored\* not allowed”. In that moment, a passer-by who had been filming the entire scene on her cell phone ran up to L. and said: “So lucky that you went in, I've been trying to document these incidents, have been hanging out here since the morning and they haven't had a single customer”.

In February 2018 L. reported this incident to the public prosecutor's office.

**Anonymous, a trans girl  
(case documented by Rainbow World initiative group, member of the Russian LGBT Network)**

A transgender girl went to the conscription office to have her name taken off the military register. She adduced all the necessary medical documents: a certificate, testifying that she had been diagnosed with “transsexualism” (F 64.0) as well as a certificate testifying that

she had undergone surgery, but her request was denied and she was urged to undergo a medical examination in accordance with the established procedure, that is to say, together with other draft-ees, which would have been quite humiliating to her. She had to seek legal help and collect additional data before reapplying to the conscription office. After discussing her case at a special staff meeting the conscription office agreed to take her name off the register without her undergoing the medical examination.

## **Violations in dealing with the law enforcement authorities**

Transgender people often encounter problems when identifying themselves to the law enforcement authorities. Incidents of this kind may involve extreme disrespect, threats and unfounded accusations.

### **Anna, a transgender woman, Saint Petersburg (case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

On 28 December 2017 Anna's car was flagged for a traffic violation. She was stopped by the traffic police and had to follow the police officers to the police station in order to get her ticket. The latter procedure was carried out quickly enough, but the police refused to return Anna's driver's license. When she inquired the police about her papers they replied that they had doubts concerning her identity and therefore she must wait. She spent several hours in the police station corridor that lacked seats. During all this time the police station staff scrutinized her, verbally abused her using obscene language and laughing. Finally Anna got back her ID and was let go.

### **Francis, a transgender man, Saint Petersburg (case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

On 13 December 2017 Francis left his apartment where he lived together with his grandmother and his partner Vitya. On the staircase

landing he was stopped by a stranger who claimed being a police officer, demanded to see Francis' ID and inquired about the residents of the apartment. The stranger did not show any police ID. Francis did not want to argue and showed his passport.

After this the stranger summoned several other people and then informed Francis that the latter was being charged with incitement to suicide and demanded to be let into the apartment. When Francis attempted to record the conversation he was threatened with physical violence. When inside the apartment, the police proceeded to vandalize Francis's room under the pretext of performing a search, demanded that he give up his digital devices and hormone medication. All this time the police officers kept abusing Francis, using obscene language and referring to him as "it", claiming that he was "not human". When Francis received a call from a member of Coming Out legal team that his partner Vitya had contacted, they took away his phone. Then one of the police officers demanded that Francis take off his pants because "they had to know what cell to put him into". They also asked Francis irrelevant personal questions such as: in what manner Francis preferred to have sex, whether he had "grown a dick", "so do you have both a hole and a dick?"

Apart from the cellphone, they seized two laptop computers that belonged to Francis and looked through his personal photos. All protests on the part of Francis were met by threats with a sexual undertone, they promised to take him to jail where "they would stick him into a cell, check all his holes and make him stand with his bottom up". Finally, Francis was taken to the police station. On the way there, he was subjected to further insults and abusive jokes, questions and comments as well as invitations to oral sex. He was not told where he was being taken nor what charges exactly were being brought against him.

When they arrived at the police station, transphobic abuse and questions were reiterated. Francis was forced to give up the passwords for his laptops, telephone and social media accounts. Afterwards he understood that a certain girl he had no personal acquaintance with had filed a claim against him, alleging that he had been sharing suicide methods with her, as well as administering a "death

group” on social media. Since these allegations were false, Francis was filed as witness and finally released two hours later without a copy of the official detention report. Francis's seized property has not been returned to him yet; the police have also visited his apartment building and inquired about him in his absence.

## Domestic and family difficulties

This chapter features cases of extreme hostility towards transgender people leading to psychological abuse and physical violence on the part of their families. As a result of incidents of this sort transgender people are often compelled to move and reduce their family interactions to a minimum.

### **Marina, a transgender girl, 20, Saint Petersburg**

Marina decided to come out to her family as transgender. She had already been using female pronouns for a long time but her family had failed to notice it.

When Marina came out, her father replied: “Enough of your propaganda”. Her parents urged her to meet a psychiatrist and members of the ecclesiastical order. She agreed, hoping to make her family realize the seriousness of her intentions as well as her concern for their feelings.

In June 2016 she was taken to see a psychiatrist at a state institution “for the mentally disabled”. Marina asked a friend to accompany and support her just in case. The conversation with the psychiatrist went surprisingly well.

Several days later Marina's father brought two priests (of the Russian Orthodox Church) to the family home. The older one was dressed in a regular business suit, the younger one was “all dressed up”, wearing a beard and a cassock. The first priest went to have a talk with Marina's father in her room; following this “talk” (which rather resembled a police search) all her belongings were scattered around. The second priest had a chat with Marina: he

suggested that she try “changing her perception of the vessel” with the help of certain substances (supposedly, narcotic), threatened her with physical violence and treated her with disrespect.

The next day Marina left her home. She also had to quit her job which she had found thanks to her father's connections. As a result, Marina experienced stress, major inconvenience and found herself in financial straights.

### **Miron, a transgender man, 19, Omsk**

In April 2017 Miron left his family (mother, father and paternal grandparents) after coming out as transgender. Originally, he had informed them that he was moving out because he could no longer stand living with them. A scandal followed, and in the heat of the moment Miron came out as transgender, hoping that this would make his family averse to his presence, facilitating his departure. However, the effect was contrary: his family decided to lock him up. A close friend of Miron's who had come both to support him and help him move, witnessed the whole scene and then was made to leave the apartment, showered with abuse.

The conflict escalated to a physical struggle: Miron's family attempted to physically stop him from leaving, mocking him and abusing him.

Being at a complete loss, Miron called his friend who had witnessed the incident, and the latter called the police. When a police officer arrived, he explained to Miron's parents that being of age, Miron was free to go and they had no legal right to stop him. The family protested, trying to prove the police officer wrong. However, with the help of the police officer, Miron succeeded in leaving the apartment and went to stay with his friend for the time being.

However, Miron had failed to bring any of his personal effects or ID papers with him. He had attempted to grab his most important documents but dropped some of them in the struggle, which he only realized afterwards. Among the missing documents were his national and foreign passports and his medical security policy. He had only his driver's license, his social security card and his diploma.

On 17 April Miron came back to his family home to get his documents. His mother, on seeing him, went into her room but later came out to shout and abuse him, then went back to her room. His father took away his cell phone. However, Miron had the time to delete all the applications that had an access to his social media and other accounts. Miron achieved nothing by begging and arguing and had to leave.

On 19 April Miron moved to another part of the city and began his independent life. According to him, lacking ID, he could not get a well-paying job. Without his foreign passport he failed to attend a conference on the part of a project he participated in, unintentionally doing his colleagues an ill turn.

However, Miron confesses that apart from financial inconveniences, he enjoyed his life and his mental condition improved considerably during this time.

Then Miron's mother, by having the social media accounts of his above-mentioned friend hacked (as he speculates), succeeded in getting access to his VKontakte and Twitter accounts and began sending inappropriate messages to his friends on his behalf. This went on until he took measures to improve the security of his accounts.

Only Miron's closest friends knew where he lived; Miron had shared his address with these people via VKontakte, without however giving his staircase, story and apartment number. Miron is convinced that none of his friends could have told his mother where he lived.

On 8 May Miron was sitting by the window and suddenly spotted a woman taking pictures of his apartment building from the other side of the street, and recognized her as his mother. After awhile she went into his building and knocked on his apartment door, loudly shouting his legal name, causing him extreme anxiety and panic. A friend of Miron's witnessed the proceedings. The behavior of Miron's mother made a negative impact on his relationship with his neighbors.

The next working day Miron reported the incident to the police, but the consequences turned out to be negative. On 1 June Miron

was awakened by a phone call from his mother, which he didn't answer. He is sure that she had learned his phone number from the police. The phone call brought on a panic attack, extreme anxiety, suicidal thoughts and eventually, a suicidal attempt.

Finally, Miron was compelled to apply for a new passport due to loss with the resulting fine and a fee, which was a source of financial inconvenience.

Miron's mother also called one of his friends, making what Miron perceives as threats against his person. In connection to all these events, Miron concludes that his mother might be mentally unstable.

### **Tomas, a trans man, 17, Omsk**

Tomas' family deliberately ignores the fact that Tomas might have any problems. Nothing that has to do with his being transgender is taken seriously. Every time he corrects their use of pronouns and verbal forms, they give him ironic looks. His mother makes a point of calling him her “daughter”, ignoring all his attempts to explain himself.

Besides, Tomas has been harassed in the street. Once, on his way home from a bus stop he was accosted by a man in a state of alcoholic intoxication. When Tomas asked to be left alone, the man, in an attempt to find out Tomas' sex, tried grabbing his privates. Tomas managed to fight off the man and escape.

As a result of this, Tomas is living under considerable stress.

### **Ilya, a trans man, 32, Omsk, undergoing HRT, undergone surgery, has changed his legal gender**

Ilya lives together with his partner, both have children from previous marriages. Once every year they are forced to travel to Volgograd with the kids to see the family in order to avoid conflicts with their aggressive relations. Earlier these relations had reported the young couple and their children to the police as missing, they had also subjected the couple to various threats, including threats to take away the custody of their children.

It was the family of Ilya's partner that had caused the most trouble, especially her mother who never took back her police application; moreover, she had taken the trouble to renew it every time the statutory limitations had expired. As a result, Ilya and his partner had often had problems traveling and were subjected to frequent ID checks (several times during the same train trip).

On one of these occasions in July 2016 during the trip their IDs were checked on every station and there were even attempts to take them off the train. Ilya was in constant worry about the custody of his children since in that time he had not changed his legal gender yet. At present, he has finally been able to officially marry his partner, but the trips to see the relations are still a major risk and a source of inconvenience for his family, while the relations' behavior, as the spouses confess, is causing them both paranoid fear and extreme stress.

In July 2017, while visiting the relations and walking in the vicinity of their apartment building, Ilya spotted an old acquaintance who knew that Ilya was transgender. Ilya pretended not to recognize this person and steered his steps towards the building entrance. Out of the corner of his eye Ilya saw that the acquaintance was following him with a heavy tree branch he had picked up from the ground. On reaching the entrance Ilya rang the intercom but before there was an answer, the acquaintance hit him powerfully in the back of his neck with the tree branch, which caused a short-term loss of consciousness. When Ilya came to, he called his wife who gave him first aid. Ilya chose not to report the assault to the police due to prior negative experiences with the law enforcement authorities.

Also, in September 2016 Ilya came to A.N.Kabanov City clinical hospital #1 for a chest X-ray. At the time of this visit, Ilya still had his old ID which did not match his gender expression. Though people perceived Ilya's gender as male, the nurse invited him to the women's changing room to prepare himself for the procedure. Though Ilya had informed her that he was undergoing HRT and had had surgery, the nurse ignored this information and forced him to go to the women's changing room. However, the patients who happened to be inside at that moment strongly disagreed with the

nurse's decision, and following their angry shouts she was finally compelled to let him use the men's changing room. While Ilya was getting ready, the nurse permitted herself to comment on his gender expression and to loudly discuss his transgender status with other staff members.

**Anonymous, a trans woman, Tumen  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

The interviewee's father, on learning about her intention to transition, offered her a choice: "Either you give up and become a normal guy again, or else get the hell out of here".

The interviewee was forced to leave her family's home. She gave no further details.

**M., a transgender man, Saint Petersburg  
(case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

In spring 2017 M. was turned out of the household by his parents due to being transgender. For several months he was compelled to live in the street or stay with friends, since he could not find a job or rent a room because of the discrepancy between his ID and his appearance. Unfortunately, the interviewee gave no further details regarding this situation.

## Violence and hate crimes

Hate crimes in the context of this report are criminal acts with a transphobic or homophobic hate motive. It is often difficult to separate these two motives since the hostility against a transgender person that eventually leads to physical assault may be caused by the way their appearance is perceived by others.

### **Theodor, a trans man, 18, Izhevsk**

Theodor is an 11th grade student. According to him, the teachers usually treat him as female in the presence of other students. Theodor has often protested against it, but the teachers refuse to change their attitude. They know that Theodor is transgender and respect his identity in private conversations, but always emphasize his legal gender in class.

The interviewee has also confessed avoiding school bathrooms unless he absolutely needs to visit them due to prior conflict situations. As a result of this treatment, Theodor feels constant stress when at school.

In summer 2016 Theodor was visiting his grandmother in Kamchatka. About 9 pm on his way home he spotted a group of people with a baseball bat and began walking faster to sooner reach the building entrance. He had no keys, so he started ringing the intercom. The aggressive group began shouting hateful comments at him, kicking his backpack, hitting it with their bat and putting their fingers through his ear tunnels. Then his grandmother opened the door and he ran in at the moment when one of the gang members was aiming the bat at his head.

The interviewee also shared other conflict incidents in the street that might have ended up in physical violence. He believes to have been attacked because of his appearance.

He also confessed having family troubles, but did not elaborate.

### **Stanislav, a trans man, Moscow**

In February and March 2017 a close relative threatened Stanislav with physical violence and hospitalization in a psychiatric institution, referring to Stanislav's transgender identity as "a sign of disease". His mother witnessed the incident but did not take it seriously; Stanislav confesses that this episode led him to lose his trust in his family.

Between early November and late December 2016 a close friend made several attempts to force Stanislav to sexual intercourse to prove that the latter "must be a girl". These events caused Stanislav depression and fear. Every time it had happened they had been alone in the apartment, without any witnesses. He did not seek help, not expecting anyone to believe him.

Stanislav did not give any further details, confessing that recalling these events was disturbing.

### **Maxim, a transgender man, 24, Arkhangelsk**

In May 2017 Maxim was walking in the street at night. He was accosted by two strange young men. Maxim speculates that they must have taken him for a "young man that wants to change his sex to become a woman and steal their amazing girlfriends".

Maxim comments: *"Yes, I do look somewhat androgynous. I like having long hair and wearing platform boots. But! I am a man. I consider myself to be a man and I behave like one."*

The two men demanded that Maxim show his ID. When he refused, they took his passport by force, claiming that he was "a disgrace to the male gender" and hit him twice in the shoulder with their fists, their attitude was quite aggressive. In order to defend himself Maxim had to claim that he actually was a girl.

Then he tried to call the police but the attackers took away his cell phone. According to him, he only avoided serious trauma thanks to his female ID and because he pretended to be mentally ill: he threw himself on the ground and began screaming. The attackers were stupefied, tossed Maxim's things on the ground and left.

In conclusion Maxim confesses: *"I developed severe social phobia after all this. These folks saw my passport and now they know where I live. I'm scared that they will find me and turn up at my door. I'm scared that they will keep harassing me. I'm seriously considering quitting my job and spending several years (not months but actually years!) in my room. I'm scared just to go out. The mere thought makes me cringe. And I can't even talk about this to anyone, my parents won't get it, and I don't want any new social contacts after all this. It makes no sense to go to the police either, I don't even have any bruises left anymore, so I got nothing to show them"*.

### **Alexandra, a trans woman, 18, undergoing HRT**

Alexandra has been beaten by her parents for trying to talk about her gender dysphoria. She has been regularly punished for showing her gender identity: for letting her hair grow, for wearing bright clothes, for decorating her room with flowers.

Not yet being of age, and not being able to officially begin transitioning, Alexandra resolved to start HRT on her own, buying her medication on the Internet.

In 2016, a month before graduating from school, Alexandra decided to come out to her parents. She came home, wearing a dress and light makeup, accompanied by two friends. Alexandra's father was quite aggressive and subjected Alexandra to physical violence. Covered with bruises and her dress torn, Sasha was rescued by her friends. They decided to report this incident to the police, but the police station staff only laughed and would not accept their report: "It's your own fault, you pervs".

After this incident Sasha broke with her family completely and moved to Novosibirsk to stay with her friends. In 2018 she intends

to get officially diagnosed, at the time of the interview she was seeing an endocrinologist and had a job at a cafe belonging to her friends, presenting as female.

**Anton, a transgender man, 39, Saint Petersburg, undergoing HRT, undergone surgery, has changed his legal gender**

On 14 October 2017 Anton and two of his friends, S. and M., all transgender activists, were assaulted. They had met at Killfish bar at 17, Ivanovskaya str., (in the vicinity of the Lomonosovskaya metro station) to celebrate M.'s birthday. The bar was nearly empty, so they had chosen a table at the very end of one of the wings. When M. came up to the bar to make an order, two men who occupied a table nearby spotted a rainbow bracelet on his wrist and complained loudly that “these days there's so many gays around, we were always doing them in, in the military”. They inquired whether M. was gay in a sarcastic tone. M. ignored their question, seeing that they were intoxicated, got his beer and returned to his table. However, one of these individuals went over to the friends' table and began threatening and insulting them, accusing them of “propagating their perversions” and demanding that M. go out into the street to “have it sorted out”. After the attacker grabbed a metal chair and swung it at Anton, the latter ran to the bar to call the security and the police. As it turned out, the barman had already called the police when the aggressors had first accosted M., but the security guards were absent since they only work in the evenings.

While Anton was away at the bar, the aggressor grabbed M. by the hair and attempted to stick a fork into his eye, but M. managed to kick him away, following which the aggressor's companion came and dragged him away back to their table.

Several minutes later the aggressor returned, commenting that “everyone here was gay” and that those like them, “you gotta do 'em in”, then hit Anton and S. in the ear, after which his companion dragged him away once more.

Anton recalls: *“The police were taking a long time, so this public morality defender came back for the third time and hit me squarely*

*in the face, cutting my lip, I started bleeding. I jumped up, the attacker grabbed S. by the hair, S. managed to free himself, one of the tables was turned over (there had been two small tables standing side by side), all the dishes crashed to the floor, all the beer spilled. The attacker once again tried to reach M., so M. broke one of the glasses and, holding out its jagged base towards the attacker, told the latter to stay away. "Now you're gonna die", shouted the attacker, but his companion appeared again, pushed him out of our corner and away, and then came back to us and explained that it had been all our own fault because we had been publicly advertising our perversions, that we must stay at home while we're at it (obviously, he didn't put it quite so politely, but this was his point), then he dragged his comrade away towards the exit where they stayed ten more minutes squabbling with the barman and the administrator, and then finally left the bar".*

Two police officers arrived shortly thereafter. They were polite, took down the attackers' descriptions, gave their phone number to the survivors and told them to wait while they were searching the neighborhood for the attackers.

After about an hour Anton called the police officer who had left his number. He learned that the police had not succeeded in apprehending anyone, and was told to go to the E.R. Anton and his friends did accordingly, then Anton was taken to Alexander hospital, maxillofacial surgery department, while S. was taken to Mariinskaya Hospital for his ear injury. Anton was given stitches.

Later that evening the survivors reunited to report the assault to the police station #10. They took nearly an hour and a half writing down all the details, mentioning the homophobic motives of the attackers. The reports were accepted, the police were polite, all three survivors got receipts with their report numbers.

On leaving the police station and waiting for the taxi, they saw a group of four, who shouted that the survivors were gay (their appearance must have clashed with these people's ideas regarding normative masculinity), but, apparently due to the vicinity of the police station the aggressors did not dare to attack.

**Anonymous, a trans woman, Ekaterinburg  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

The interviewee relates that she was physically assaulted after the attackers realized she was a trans woman. She did not report the assault to the police because she does not believe in the efficacy of police action as well as due to prior negative and humiliating experiences of interaction with the law enforcement authorities.

Unfortunately, the interviewee did not elaborate.

**M., a trans woman, Perm  
(case documented by Rainbow World Perm initiative group)**

When M.'s former classmates learned that she was transgender, they began harassing her with phone calls, insulting and threatening her, shouting disparaging things about her outside her house as well as spreading defamatory information. For the sake of her safety M. had to change her phone number and her account on the social network VKontakte.

According to M., these events caused her depression and panic attacks.

**Anonymous, supposedly a transgender woman, Voronezh  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network, based on open sources and media reports)**

On 19 January 2017 a murder occurred in Voronezh. According to several Media, the victim was (supposedly) a transgender woman, since they mention “a young man, dressed as a girl<sup>12</sup>”.

“[...] the perpetrator was a 31 old local resident with prior convictions [...] During the investigation the suspect confessed, explaining that on 19 January he and the apartment owner had a quarrel, during which he subjected the latter to a beating and then grabbed him

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<sup>12</sup> Cf.: Gorkom36, “Sentenced to 11 years: career criminal goes to jail for transgender murder” 11.12.2017, URL: <https://gorcom36.ru/content/dali-11-let-v-voronezhe-osudili-retsdivista-za-ubiystvo-transgendera/> (requested on 28 April 2018).

by the neck and held him until the victim stopped showing signs of life. Afterwards the perpetrator set a paper box on fire and fled the scene”, — this information was published on the website of the Investigative Committee for Voronezh region<sup>13</sup>.

We must point out that the website of the Investigative Committee gives no information regarding the gender identity of the victim; information in that regard comes from other open sources.

The perpetrator was sentenced to 11 years to be served in a high-security penal colony, as well as to 90,000 rubles and 1,000,000 rubles to be paid to the mother of the deceased in material and moral damages respectively, by the Central district court of Voronezh<sup>14</sup>.

### **Anonymous, a transgender woman, Murmansk region (case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

A transgender woman, the citizen of Uzbekistan, was returning home together with a male friend from a visit at their friends' home, and was assaulted by other Uzbekistan citizens, one of whom had previously had consensual sexual intercourse with the survivor. Both the survivor and her friend were forced into a car and taken to a rented apartment. During the trip she was repeatedly beaten (hit and slapped in the face), threatened and insulted with homophobic slurs. On arriving, one of the attackers took the survivor up to the apartment (the other attacker had stayed downstairs with the survivor's friend). Inside, the survivor was forced to speak her legal (male) first and last name and confess being gay while filmed. Then the attacker took her to the bathroom where he compelled her by threats and physical violence to engage into oral sex with him, also filming the act on his cell phone. Afterwards the malefactors blackmailed the girl, threatening to publish the footage. Since she did not

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13 The investigative department of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation for Voronezh region, “A 31 year old man who had murdered a local resident during a quarrel and subsequently set the apartment on fire was apprehended”, 23.01.2017, URL: <http://voronezh.sledcom.ru/news/item/1095843> (requested on 28 April 2018).

14 Vesti Voronezh, “Voronezh resident jailed for 11 years for murdering a transsexual”, 11.12.2017.

have the whole sum they had demanded with her, and giving in to the threats, she asked her friend to lend her the money and pay the criminals. The young man agreed and left to fetch the money in the company of two of the criminals. The woman and one of the criminals stayed in the apartment, where the latter compelled her to anal sex. When the blackmailers received the money, they let the survivors go.

The survivors immediately reported the crime to the police, pressing charges of blackmail and rape. Two of the suspects were apprehended, the third one escaped and is now wanted. A criminal case for blackmail was brought. In court, during the choice of preventive measure the accused attempted to covertly threaten the survivor with physical violence (which was confirmed by the translator).

**ST, a trans woman, Samara  
(case documented by Avers regional public LGBT movement,  
member of the Russian LGBT Network)**

ST had agreed to meet a new acquaintance at her home. A young man arrived, introducing himself as Yegor and they went in the direction of her apartment building. At the staircase door, while ST was looking for her keys, Yegor hit her in the back. ST fell against the door and hit her head, losing consciousness for a short time. Yegor and his accomplice dragged ST into her apartment, took off her jacket, then threw her on the floor and kicked her repeatedly, while demanding that she reveal the place where she kept her money. As a result of the beating ST passed out. When she came to, the criminals were gone, her furniture was broken. Later she discovered that money and her cell phone were missing. ST herself was tied up. The apartment door was open and she called for help. Her next door neighbors called the police and an ambulance.

The police and the neighbors believed ST to be a cisgender girl. Originally the police intended to press charges of prostitution and keeping a den. Later these charges were withdrawn due to the fact that ST intended to file a counter claim against the attacker.

**Anonymous, a trans woman, Tumen  
(case documented by the Russian LGBT Network)**

The interviewee is a taxi driver. One day she had two passengers, one of whom noticed her painted nails and, on hearing her deep voice, began making homophobic jokes and verbal threats, as well as suggested that she engage into oral sex with him on the spot. When asked to get out of the car, the aggressors refused. On arriving to their destination, these passengers refused to pay and one of them attempted to start a fight by hitting the interviewee in the face. However, she succeeded in defending herself and drove away.

**D. and F., transgender men, Saint Petersburg  
(case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

On 24 May 2017 D. and F. were walking down the street hand in hand. They were accosted by a gang of about 10 people, indignant at seeing two young men holding hands. At first they insulted D. and F., then physically assaulted them. One of the company was filming the proceedings. Suddenly, a passer-by interfered and drew the attackers' attention away; the survivors escaped.

According to the survivors, this is not the only incident of this kind. On the night of 8-9 June 2017 they descended into the underground passage at the intersection of Sedova and Ivanovskaya str. They saw a company of people in a state of inebriation, one of whom had a child with him. One of these people walked up to D. and pulled his ear that had a large earring in it. After that he began insulting D. and F. Another man from the group splashed his beer into F.'s face, shouting that they must never show their faces in this neighborhood again, then began hitting F. with his fists and the folding chair he had been holding. He would not stop even when the survivors attempted to escape. Then he repeatedly hit D., who dropped his eyeglasses, became completely disoriented and began calling for help. Passers-by asked the men why the latter were bothering a girl, to which the attackers replied that D. was not a girl, after which the passers-by said nothing and left. Finally, the attackers

lost interest; D. and F. walked out into the street and called an ambulance. They were both covered in blood, their faces were bruised. In the morning they reported the incident to the police. The police station staff asked D. questions about F., such as “why he looked like this”, “what was his birth sex”, whether he “had a dick”. They refused to initiate a criminal case, nor did they give a copy of the decision to the survivors. On 24 June the survivors filed a complaint to the public prosecutor's office for violation of the police procedure. On August 17 they received a reply, stating that the commissioner of the district police station #10 had issued a decision not to bring criminal proceedings.

**N. and K., a transgender man and a non-binary person, Saint Petersburg  
(case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

On 10 July N. and K. were walking down the street in the vicinity of Prospekt Veteranov metro station, holding hands, they also briefly kissed. A young couple, a man and a girl, were walking in the opposite direction. When the two couples came level with each other, the young man sprayed pepper spray in N.'s and K.'s faces, verbally abused them and walked away.

N. and K. did not report the incident to the police, believing it to be pointless.

**Max, a transgender man, Saint Petersburg  
(case documented by the monitoring program of Coming Out LGBT initiative group)**

In summer 2017 Max with two friends were walking in a public garden in the center of Saint Petersburg. The appearance of all three of them was gender non-conforming, they were wearing brightly colored clothes and had unusual hairstyles. They were approached by three men in a state of alcoholic intoxication, who at first poked fun at the friends' appearance and later, on learning that Max was

male, verbally abused him for a long time, demanding that he take off his clothes and prove his gender identity. They called out to another passing company who joined the first one and together they continued discussing Max's appearance and abusing him, but finally left.

# Conclusion

Our research shows that the main cause of discrimination and hostility against transgender people is the way others perceive their appearance, as well as a discrepancy between their appearance and their ID (as in the cases of all those who have been undergoing hormone replacement therapy).

The main problem of transgender people in Russia, as we pointed out in our previous report<sup>15</sup>, remains labor discrimination: unable to find employment or to keep their jobs after the beginning of their transition, trans people have difficulty in accessing medical help, including the medical examination and certificates, necessary for changing their legal gender. Thus, trans people find themselves in a vicious circle: they cannot find employment without changing their legal gender first, but they cannot access the medical procedures, necessary for changing their legal gender, without first finding employment.

We can also draw the conclusion that this situation has a negative impact on the economic status of transgender people in Russia.

Many cases of misunderstanding, confusion and aggression on the part of other people occur when a transgender person is compelled to show ID papers that do not correspond with their appearance and gender identity.

This problem can be solved by simplifying and speeding up the legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people in Russia.

Abuse, hate speech and hate crimes, including those on the part of their families, are another serious problem that transgender people

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<sup>15</sup> Cf.: Violation of transgender people's rights in Russia: research results, 2016, report published by Transgender Legal Defense Project.

face. A considerable number of these cases testify to a negative attitude towards transgender identity as a phenomenon in society as a whole. We may speculate that this is caused by a distorted view of this phenomenon, which in its turn results from the fragmented and erroneous information available to the public.

Being aware of this situation, many trans people avoid being open about themselves and keep their transgender status secret in educational institutions and at work, avoid seeking medical help without extreme need as well as choose not to come out to their families and close ones.

In our opinion, the solution to this problem lies in a greater number of educational and awareness-raising materials and events, destined for a wider audience as well as targeting specific groups, such as: employers, medical specialists, law enforcement authorities, teachers and faculty members.

# Recommendations

## **To non-governmental organizations (including LGBT-organizations and initiative groups):**

- 1) To hold internal trainings in transgender sensitivity and correct treatment of transgender people, with an active participation on the part of trans people themselves.
- 2) To involve transgender volunteers in event organization and in the general work.
- 3) To provide workplaces for transgender people whenever possible.
- 4) To include transgender rights issues in the agenda and projects – in particular, in legal assistance and strategic litigation projects.
- 5) To organize educational events dedicated to transgender issues with the participation of trans activists.

## **To trade unions:**

- 1) To hold internal (for union members only) and outer (for workers) transgender sensitivity and inclusion trainings with an active participation on the part of transgender people.
- 2) To openly include an LGBT agenda into the policy in order to provide a possibility for discrimination survivors to seek help in the trade union.

## **To private organizations:**

- 1) To avoid violations of the rights of transgender people such as: denials of employment due to being transgender, workplace bullying

on the part of the management and staff, unfounded dismissals of transgender people.

2) To avoid denial of service to transgender people, to ensure that all customers are treated equally regardless of their gender identity.

### **To major foreign companies:**

To elaborate and implement a transgender inclusive anti-discrimination policy in accordance with the international standards and the Constitution of the Russian Federation

To the administration of the educational institutions:

- 1) To prevent bullying and harassment of transgender students.
- 2) To organize transgender sensitivity and inclusion trainings for the teaching staff.

### **To medical specialists**

1) To seek/promote professional qualification growth and self-education in relation to transgender issues.

2) To hold transgender sensitivity trainings for medical organizations staff.

3) To prevent cases of unwarranted forced treatment of transgender people and denial of medical care to transgender patients.

### **To the law enforcement authorities:**

1) To ensure investigation and prosecution of cases of homophobic and transphobic violence against transgender people.

2) When qualifying these cases, to apply the provisions of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation concerning the motive of hatred or enmity towards a social group.

3) To hold transgender sensitivity trainings for the employees of the law enforcement authorities, with emphasis on cases when a person's ID documents do not match their gender identity or appearance.

## **To Human Rights Ombudspersons:**

- 1) To raise the question of discrimination of transgender people in the relevant committees.
- 2) To include data concerning discrimination based on gender identity in the annual reports.
- 3) To promote the protection of transgender people's rights within the scope of authority in relation to discrimination based on gender identity.

Besides, our chief recommendation remains the establishment of a quick, accessible and transparent legal gender recognition procedure for transgender people in Russia. However, considering the fact that in February 2018 the Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation № 850H “On the approved standard and procedure for the issue of a sex reassignment certificate”, issued on 23 October 2017, entered into force, we may consider this recommendation partially fulfilled. Transgender Legal Defense Project will continue observing the practical application of this Decree throughout 2018. The eventual problems will be included in the next report of the monitoring program.

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If you are transgender and need legal assistance, you may apply for free legal advice using the form on our website:

**[pravo-trans.eu](http://pravo-trans.eu)**