

NIKOLAY ALEXEYEV

b. December 23, 1977

RUSSIAN ACTIVIST

“Without an ideal, nothing is possible.”

**His leadership
brought international
attention to LGBT
rights in Russia.**

Nikolay Alexeyev is Russia's best-known and most quoted LGBT activist and the founder of Moscow Pride. In 2010 he won the first case on LGBT rights violations in Russia at the European Court of Human Rights.

Alexeyev was born and raised in Moscow. He graduated with honors from Lomonosov Moscow State University, where he pursued postgraduate studies in constitutional law. In 2001 the university forced him out, refusing to except his thesis on the legal restrictions of LGBT Russians. Claiming discrimination, he filed an appeal, but the Moscow district court denied it.

In 2005, after publishing multiple books and legal reports on LGBT discrimination, Alexeyev fully dedicated himself to LGBT activism. He realized “that it wouldn't be possible to change things in Russia just by writing” and that he should be involved in more direct activism.

Despite an official ban on LGBT events, Alexeyev founded and served as the chief organizer of Gay Pride in Moscow. Participants in the Gay Pride parades were attacked and bullied by anti-gay protesters. Police arrested Alexeyev and fellow activists multiple times.

Through both illegal public protests and legal appeals, Alexeyev's uncompromising fight for the right to hold Moscow Pride drew international attention to the issue of LGBT rights in his country. In 2009, alongside Russian, French and Belarusian LGBT activists, Alexeyev organized a protest to denounce the inaction of the European Court in considering the legality of the Moscow Pride bans. In 2010 he finally won his battle. The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia had violated Alexeyev's right to protest and fined the government. The verdict marked the first international legal defeat of the Russian government on the issue of LGBT rights.

In Russia's intensely homophobic political and social environment, few have risked as much as the publicly outspoken Alexeyev. He has campaigned against Russia's “homosexual propaganda” and anti-LGBT hate speech; against the gay blood-donation ban; and for recognition of same-sex marriage. In 2008, in response to Alexeyev's campaign, the Russian Ministry of Health eliminated a provision banning homosexuals from donating blood.

Alexeyev has received numerous international awards, including an honor from the International Gay and Lesbian Cultural Network (IGLCN) for “outstanding and courageous efforts in the face of unusually fierce homophobia.”



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