



January 12, 2022

Pavel Durov

CEO and Co-Founder

Telegram

Dear Mr. Durov

Recognizing the role of Telegram in today's society (it has over 500 million users around the world and is the most popular messenger in Russian speaking segment of the Internet), as well as technology which giving to people more opportunities for exercising their human rights (including in cases of authoritarian governments' brutal crackdowns and censorship), at the same time we underline that Telegram, unfortunately, can be used for infringement of these rights.

In this context, we would like to draw your attention to the facts that we have recorded: posting and disseminating through the Telegram resources some video and text materials, violated the right to privacy, prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and political views, and radical forms of hate speech towards LGBTQ+ people.

Specifically, it is the case of "confession videos" that now is a common practice of Belarusian law enforcement agencies in the frame of second year-lasting repressions after Presidential elections 2020 in Belarus. The cases concerned are the cases of two arbitrary arrested top managers of Belarusian companies - Nikolai Bredelev (Belarusian Mobile operator A1) and Serhei Babashkov (Belarusian office of Hyundai) who have been forced to communicate to the recorded video about their homosexual orientation, about their salaries and their participation in peaceful protests. After that, these videos have been distributed via different open Telegram channels. Some of the channels are affiliated with the State, some of them are anonymous. Posting and reposting these videos in all cases have been followed by hate speech towards these persons and LGBTQ people in general (examples of such materials in the Annex to this letter).

By Telegram [Terms of service](#), users cannot promote violence on publicly viewable Telegram channels, bots, etc. We consider that these videos, recorded under pressure, are acts of violence and their posting has to be prohibited. Forcing to disclose personal information in these videos as well as an act of violence.

We respectfully remind that on December, 8th of 2021 the group of NGOs together with one of the most authoritative NGO in the sphere of human rights in the digital age – Access Now – addressed Telegram with a [letter](#) and underlined the necessity to mitigate human rights impacts in accordance with the [2011 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).



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We respectfully remind as well that today's commonly recognized standards of conducting business in the context of respecting human rights are based on and contained with the 2011 UN Guiding Principles which says that business has an obligation of human rights due diligence, including assessment and preventing all possible human rights abuses linked to its operations, products, or services.

We would like to mention that [Apple](#) and [Google](#) through which resources Telegram can be downloaded by users have strong commitments to human rights compliance in their business operations.

We consider it important to emphasize that we highly appreciate the importance of freedom of speech and freedom of expression, but these materials cannot be qualified as such because the only obvious purpose of their posting is the humiliation of the human dignity of named people in particular, and LGBTQ+ people and people with the opposite political views in general.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned, we call on Telegram to prevent using the Telegram resources for human rights violations, in particular:

- To block channels, which produce the largest amount of human rights abusive, discriminatory content, systematically used by the State for luring data, promoting violence and personal data and are main sources for reposting (marked with "***" in the Annex to this letter)
- To block access at least to the materials of rest of the channels, named in the Annex to this letter;
- To issue a warning to named channels about non-admissibility of further posting and disseminating of such materials;
- To block the rest of the channels from the Annex in the case of non-compliance with such demanding;
- Taking into account the fact that such practices in the Belarusian segment of Telegram from the State affiliated channels are very common, and even blocking of some channels cannot be effective enough in some cases, because new ones of the same content can be immediately created – focus Telegram's attention on this area in respect to more thorough human rights due diligence, including more detailed assessing risks of human rights violations made via Telegram resources.

Kind regards
Aleh Hulak,
Head of Belarusian Helsinki Committee



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Annex. List of public channels and examples of video and text materials, disseminated via Telegram resources, violating human rights and demonstrating violence and human dignity humiliation

List of identified channels:

Channels marked with “***” are the channels which produce the largest amount of human rights abusive, discriminatory content, sistematically used by the State for licking data, promoting violence and personal data are main sources for reposting.

1. Азаренок. СТВ (rus.) t.me/Azarenok_TV **
2. Жёлтые сливы (rus.) t.me/zheltyeslivy **
3. ГУБОП (rus.) t.me/gubopRB **
4. ЗмагарОК (rus.) t.me/carbatushka
5. Бондарева. Без купюр (rus.) t.me/grodno_specnaz
6. Советская Белоруссия (rus.) t.me/sovbelorus
7. Заметки Доктора ХТО? (rus.) t.me/d0xt0r
8. Я/МЫ ОМОН (rus.) t.me/omonby
9. Ваши сливы (rus.) t.me/vashi_slivy
10. Людажор (rus.) <https://t.me/Ludazhor>
11. Жулики Беларуси (rus.) t.me/juliki_belarus
12. Придыбайло | Субъективно (rus.) t.me/pridybaylo
13. Шкварка News (rus.) t.me/belshkvarka
14. Живет же Беларусь (rus.) t.me/ZhivetZheBelarus
15. Невольфович (rus.) t.me/nevolf
16. ЗацепилО! t.me/Zatsepil0
17. Ксения Лебедева LIVE (rus.) t.me/lebedevalive
18. ПЕРЕОБУТАЯ реальность (rus.) t.me/orsha_pereobutaya
19. Беларусь и Мир (rus.) t.me/belarusimir
20. BLIK t.me/blik20

	Channel	Content violating human rights	Comment
1.	Азарёнок. СТВ (rus.). The channel of show host from State’ TV Channel - one of the main propagandists of Lukashenko regime	1) https://t.me/Azarenok_TV/14210 a) Video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev. Transcript of the video: <i>Bredelev Nikolay Olegovich, 34 years old, Minsk. I am a homosexual and have been living with a man for more</i>	This channel is most likely used by GUBOPIK (the Department on Fighting with Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus) to leak information, incl. personal data.



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<p>https://t.me/Azareno_k_TV</p>	<p>than seven years. <i>I work at the unitary enterprise "A1". My salary is 4,500 rubles. I am the head of public relations, I work with journalists and deliver information about the company. Anton Motolko and I have known each other for over 7 years. Since June 2020 I have been providing Anton Motolko with information that is related to my professional activities. I am also subscribed to the extremist telegram channels "Motolko help", "Nick and Mike". At the moment...</i> (further the text is not legible, because it is overlapped by the montage music). The video ends with the logo of GUBOPIK (The Department on Fighting with Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus).</p> <p>b) Personal photos of Nikolai Bredelev, demonstrating his sex toys</p> <p>c) Hate speech message: <i>"A fag. Even not just a fag, but a fagissimo.</i> <i>A piece of manure on the screen you see is A1's press secretary. This creature has been living with a man for 7 years. Completely alimnts his lover (with a salary about 4 thousand 500 rubles). The house is furnished like the bourgeois apartments from the trite Soviet novels. A closet full of XXX toys. You see, that two men's pricks were not enough, they needed a third.</i></p>	<p>Further, this video (or its fragments) was used by at least 10 channels. One of them presumably is the GUBOPIK channel. https://t.me/gubopRB/3541 https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/31293 https://t.me/omonby/17971 https://t.me/belshkvarka/30643 https://t.me/blik20/15427 https://t.me/nevolf/6901 https://t.me/pridybaylo/3238 https://t.me/Zatsepil0/9086 https://t.me/lebedevalive/874 https://t.me/ZhivetZheBelarus/19946</p>
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		<p><i>A fag. Even not just a fag, but a fagissimo. Crossing out!"</i></p> <p>2) https://t.me/Azarenok_TV/14418</p>	
2.	<p>Жёлтые сливы (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/</p>	<p>1) https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/31304 a) Personal intimate photos of Nikolai Bredelev with his partner. In the photo, under the blur, the penises are distinguishable. b) comments like: <i>"And this is how they reprimand top management at A1", "In any case, he won't have any problems with sex in prison."</i></p> <p>2) https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/31312 Screenshots of personal correspondence of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character with personal photos of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character. Post text: <i>"The other side of Bredelev! A1's press secretary has proven from his own experience that mobile communications can catch even in the deepest a**"</i></p> <p>3) https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/31306</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video with forced outing of Serhei Babashkov. Transcript of the video: <i>"I am Babashkov Serhei Alexandrovich, born in 1976. I am 45 years old. I live in Minsk, participated in protest activities in the form of going to rallies, and was subscribed to extremist telegram channels. Such as: Radio Svaboda, Shraibman. At the moment I unsubscribed from them and do not advise anyone to be subscribed to them and conduct</i> 	<p>This channel is most likely used by GUBOPIK (the Department on Fighting with Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus) to leak information, incl. personal data.</p> <p>Further, this information was used at least 8 times. Two of them presumably were used by the GUBOPIK channel. https://t.me/gubopRB/3547 https://t.me/belshkvarka/30644 https://t.me/carbatushka/10518 https://t.me/belshkvarka/30664 https://t.me/carbatushka/10517 https://t.me/gubopRB/3548 https://t.me/grodno_specnaz/16978 https://t.me/blik20/15432</p>



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		<p>any extremist activities. (...) I work at Hyundai AvtoGrad LLC as director of marketing and car sales. (...))That's what my position sounds like. I am responsible for sales, I am responsible for marketing. (...) I've been with the company since its creation in 2008. (...)I went out last August for protests. (...) About my income - I have about 5 thousand rubles a month. (...) There I also have, as a member of the supervisory board, a salary once every six months. It can be quite large, that's how it is. I get more than 30,000 every six months. (...)</p> <p>Okay, that's another point - that is, yes, I live with a man. (...)I think it's, you know, it's a "don't tell - don't ask" policy in the U.S. military. We don't talk about it." (The video ends with the logo of GUBOPIK (The Department on Fighting with Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus)).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments contained offensive and derogatory slang gay names <p>The text of the post: "..... At the same time, he took an active part in the protests, followed extremist channels, therefore GUBOPiK visited him. The question is, what was he missing ? Yes, everything was enough, just pederast, so he acted... Literally pederast, who openly lives with a man.</p>	
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		<p><i>If he hadn't participated the protests he would be a just a gay. But he's a faggot.</i></p> <p><i>Well, maybe they will be put in the same prison cell with the A1 press secretary, they will be okay both there, and even will not want to go out.</i></p> <p><i>Mutually crossed out."</i></p> <p>4) https://t.me/zheltyeslivy/31293 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev. Distribution of offensive text by Азарёнок. СТБ</p>	
3.	<p>ГУБОП (rus.) t.me/gubopRB</p> <p>Chanel with the official logo of ГУБОП (The Department on Fighting with Organized Crime and Corruption of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Belarus).</p>	<p>1. https://t.me/gubopRB/3541 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev. Distribution of offensive text by Азарёнок. СТБ</p> <p>2. https://t.me/gubopRB/3547 Distribution of the personal intimate photos of Nikolai Bredelev with his partner.</p> <p>3. https://t.me/gubopRB/3548 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Serhei Babashkov.</p>	
4.	<p>ЗмагарОК https://t.me/carbatushka hka</p> <p>The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. They present themselves as a channel that "make fun of typical zmagars (note: person with</p>	<p>1. https://t.me/carbatushka/10518 Distribution of the post with: -screenshots of personal correspondence of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character -personal photos of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character.</p> <p>2. https://t.me/carbatushka/10517 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Serhei Babashkov.</p>	



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	opposite political views) and their behavioral stereotypes. We will beat carefully, but hard!"		
5.	<p>Бондарева. Без купюр (rus.) t.me/grodno_specnaz</p> <p>They present themselves as a channel "Political correctness is not about us when it comes to protecting the interests of the Motherland". The channel address is linked to the special forces of law enforcement agencies.</p>	<p>1. https://t.me/grodno_specnaz/16978 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Serhei Babashkov.</p> <p>2. https://t.me/grodno_specnaz/17800 Distribution of the post with the following content: "People are extremely outraged by the depth and scale of the sexual deviations that have plagued the management of this company. There have already been calls to make beautiful capes from sheets with pointed caps, symbolizing traditional values (according to grandfather Freud), and to gather at the main office of A1 with the aim of its further nationalization and hanging sodomites on the poles in the neighborhood".</p>	
6.	<p>Советская Белоруссия (rus.) The anonymous channel</p>	<p>https://t.me/sovbelorussia/7055 Post with the following content: "People are extremely outraged by the depth and scale of the sexual deviations that have plagued the</p>	



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	<p>propagandizing prostate position. t.me/sovbelorussia</p>	<p>management of this company. There have already been calls to make beautiful capes from sheets with pointed caps, symbolizing traditional values (according to grandfather Freud), and to gather at the main office of A1 with the aim of its further nationalization and hanging sodomites on the poles in the neighborhood.</p> <p>"Sovetskaya Belorussia" will follow the development of the situation, but in general, we approve the initiative".</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Заметки Доктора ХТО? (rus.) https://t.me/d0xt0r/</p> <p>The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position</p>	<p>https://t.me/d0xt0r/568</p> <p>The post of following content: "GAY-FASHISM</p> <p>1 A mother approves of the asocial lifestyle of an A1 pederast who worked for terrorists!</p> <p>2 A reminder that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homosexuality does not occur in the wild in animals ▪ Current science has not found any homosexual gene in humans <p>Homosexuality is caused only by personality development pathology due to mental lesions resulting from incorrect upbringing, lifestyle or psychological traumas</p> <p>3 Judging by the mother's statement, there were specific problems in her upbringing. Probably it was the parents who instilled the erroneous judgment that "homosexuality can be treated neutrally".</p> <p>4 A neutral attitude is latent homosexuality, which sooner or later turns into open homosexuality</p> <p>5 The only acceptable reaction of the healthy psyche to homosexuality is</p>	<p>This channel is promoted by the channel Жёлтые сливы (rus.) (№ 2 in the list)</p> <p>The channel is the source of reposts.</p>



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		<p>extreme disgust, gag reflex, and uncompromising dislike</p> <p>✓If you don't have that, you need to develop it, otherwise your psyche will soon degenerate completely</p> <p>✓A gay man in a managerial position is unreliable and dangerous to society. This needs to be reflected in the Constitution”</p>	
8.	<p>Я/МЫ ОМОХ (rus.) https://t.me/omonby</p> <p>They present themselves as a channel “created to support the Belarusian police’ special forces, ensuring a peaceful and calm life of our society.”</p> <p>(Note: exactly these special forces have been participated in tortures of peaceful protesters in August 2020)</p>	<p>https://t.me/omonby/17971</p> <p>Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.</p> <p>Distribution of offensive text by Азарёнок. СТБ</p> <p>Hate speech post: https://t.me/omonby/17976</p> <p>Picture: a shredder machine with the A1 company logo is shown. A sheet of paper with the image of a rooster and a dildo go through the shredder.</p> <p>(Note: in marginalized communities, "rooster" is a term for men who have had homosexual intercourse).</p> <p>Comment: <i>A question to the company, how did it happen that the zmagar (note -person with opposite political views) rubbish sat in the position of a press secretary until the GUBOP knocked on the door!</i></p>	
9.	<p>Ваши сливы (rus.)</p> <p>The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position</p>	<p>Hate speech post: https://t.me/vashi_slivy/15279</p> <p>Picture: a shredder machine with the A1 company logo is shown. A sheet of paper with the image of a rooster and</p>	<p>Have been reposted by Я/МЫ ОМОХ (rus.) https://t.me/omonby/17976</p>



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	<p>https://t.me/vashi_sli_vy</p>	<p>a dildo go through the shredder. (Note: in marginalized communities, "rooster" is a term for men who have had homosexual intercourse).</p> <p>Comment: <i>A question to the company, how did it happen that the zmagar (note -person with opposite political veiws) rubbish sat in the position of a press secretary until the GUBOP knocked on the door!</i></p>	
10	<p>Людажор (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. https://t.me/Ludazhor</p>	<p>Hate speech post: https://t.me/Ludazhor/1120</p> <p>Fragments of post, where authors name homosexuality as sexual deviance: <i>"Well, truly, if a person wants to shove something in his ass, and then pull it out, and then shove it back again... and even when he does that together with another deviant not in public, not seducing children in school, not spreading homosexual propaganda - so it is generally their choice. "</i></p>	
11	<p>Жулики Беларусі (rus.) t.me/juliki_belarus</p>	<p>Hate speech post: https://t.me/juliki_belarus/17605</p> <p>Picture: a shredder machine with the A1 company logo is shown. A sheet of paper with the image of a rooster and a dildo go through the shredder. (Note: in marginalized communities, "rooster" is a humiliating term for men who have had homosexual intercourse).</p> <p>Fragment of post: <i>"....A question to the company, how did it happen that the zmagar (note:</i></p>	



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		person with opposite political views) <i>rubbish sat in the position of a press secretary until the GUBOP knocked on the door!</i> "	
12	Придыбайло Субъективно (rus.) The Channel of Russian journalist who is one of the propagandists of Lukashenko regime https://t.me/pridybaylo	https://t.me/pridybaylo/3238 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	The channel belongs to the influencer and is the source of reposts. https://t.me/Zatsepil0/9086 https://t.me/lebedevalive/874
13	Шкварка News (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position https://t.me/belshkvarka	https://t.me/belshkvarka/30664 Distribution post with: -screenshots of personal correspondence of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character -personal photos of Nikolai Bredelev of intimate character.	
14	Живет же Беларусь (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position t.me/ZhivetZheBelarus	https://t.me/ZhivetZheBelarus/19946 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	
15	Невольфович (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. t.me/nevolf	https://t.me/nevolf/6901 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	
16	Зацепило! The anonymous channel	https://t.me/Zatsepil0/9086 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	



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	propagandizing prostate position. t.me/Zatsepil0		
17	Ксения Лебедева LIVE (rus.) The Channel of Belarusian journalist who is one of the propagandists of Lukashenko regime t.me/lebedevalive	https://t.me/lebedevalive/874 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	The channel belongs to the influencer
18	ПЕРЕОБУТАЯ реальность (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. t.me/orsha_pereobutaya	https://t.me/orsha_pereobutaya/22846 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	
19	Беларусь и Мир (rus.) The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. t.me/belarusimir	https://t.me/belarusimir/80174 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev.	https://t.me/orsha_pereobutaya/22846
20	BLIK The anonymous channel propagandizing prostate position. t.me/blik20	1. https://t.me/blik20/15432 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Serhei Babashkov. 2. https://t.me/blik20/15427 Distribution of the video with forced outing of Nikolai Bredelev. Distribution of offensive text by Азарёнок. СТБ	



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