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# After Attacks on LGBT Rally, St. Petersburg Limits Free Assembly Zones

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LGBT Activists Rally on St. Petersburg's Field of Mars **Francesca Visser and Andreas Rossbach**

In the wake of an attack on LGBT protesters on August 12, the St. Petersburg city officials stripped the Field of Mars in the city's historic downtown from its list of open public assembly zones.

At least 15 people were injured after a group of nationalist activists used pepper spray to attack participants of the LGBT rally, with some of the perpetrators reportedly belonging to a nationalist group called Straight Edge. Police subsequently opened a criminal investigation into the incident.

**Related article**: Harassed LGBT Activists Rally in St. Petersburg

Referred to as "hyde parks," in reference to the central London park that was once known for lively political assembly and discussion, St. Petersburg's special status venues first appeared

in 2012.

The city's resolution removing the Field of Mars from the list of designated free assembly zones was passed by St. Petersburg governor on Monday, the Interfax news agency reported on Monday.

According to the city's 'hyde park' regulations, citizens can hold a public event at the locations simply by notifying city hall, without requesting or waiting for official permission. After City Hall's decision, four free assembly zones in St. Petersburg remain.

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