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BRIGHTON BEACH PRIDE MARKS 10 YEARS WITH MAY 2026 PARADE

Brooklyn, NY — For a decade, the annual Brighton Beach Pride (BBP) has served as a vital beacon of visibility and belonging for Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ individuals across New York City. The first Pride event dedicated to NYC's Russian-speaking LGBTQIA+ community, BBP was launched in 2016 in response to escalating anti-LGBTQ+ laws in Russia, which prompted many LGBTQ+ people from post-Soviet countries to seek refuge in the United States – including in the Russian-speaking enclave of Brighton Beach.

In the years since, BBP has expanded its focus to spotlight pressing issues facing Russian-speaking queer* immigrant communities, including asylum protections for LGBTQ refugees. It has steadily grown in both size and visibility, drawing hundreds attendees each year. In a neighborhood long considered a conservative stronghold – particularly among its largely Soviet immigrant population – BBP has become a powerful symbol of resistance and resilience.

"For ten years, Brighton Beach Pride has been our declaration that we belong," says Yelena Golstman, founder of QARAVAN. "Who are we? We are Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees from many Asian and European post-Soviet countries. Like everyone else, all our lives we are searching for where we belong. For ten years we have come to Brighton Beach — the heart of New York's Russian-speaking community — to say clearly that we belong: to this community, to this city, and to this country. We have accomplished a great deal, but there is still much work ahead, especially in today's difficult political climate. Please join us — you belong here too. **We are not going anywhere.** We are here to stay, and together we will build a future where everyone can live openly, safely, and with pride."

Objectives of the pride march include:

- Educating residents of the Russian-speaking community of NYC about the realities faced by LGBTQ+ immigrants, both in their countries of origin and here in the United States.
- Creating a visible, affirming, and culturally relevant space where Russian-speaking LGBTQ+ individuals feel safe, celebrated, and empowered.

- Standing in solidarity with those who remain silenced, persecuted, or isolated, and to amplify their voices.

Each year, the BBP takes place along the Riegelmann Boardwalk, beginning in Coney Island (gathering at 11:30 am Stilwell Ave Entrance to the Boardwalk) and proceeding east through the very end of Brighton Beach. The event will take place on **May 31, 2026**, from 12 - 2pm, rain or shine. For more information, visit https://www.qaravan.org/events**.**

About Qaravan:

Founded in 2008 and headquartered in New York City, Qaravan (formerly RUSA LGBTQ+) is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to supporting, organizing, and empowering LGBTQ+ immigrants and refugees from post-Soviet countries. Through direct support, mutual aid, and community events such as Brighton Beach Pride, Qaravan helps people connect, build community, and stand together while pushing back against discrimination and fighting for greater acceptance of LGBTQ+ people worldwide.

For more information, visit: https://www.qaravan.org/