

Polish president compares 'LGBT ideology' to Soviet indoctrination

Poland's President Andrzej Duda speaks in Solec Kujawski, Poland, June 9, 2020. Grazyna Marks/Agencja Gazeta via



BRZEG, Poland (Reuters) - Poland's president compared LGBT "ideology" to communist doctrine in a campaign speech on Saturday, as LGBT rights become a hotly debated issue ahead of a June 28 presidential election in the staunchly Catholic country.

President Andrzej Duda is an ally of the ruling nationalist Law and Justice Party (PiS), which dismisses the promotion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights as a foreign influence undermining Poland's traditional values.

On Wednesday, Duda introduced a "Family Card" of election proposals, including a vow to not allow gay couples to marry or adopt children and to ban teaching about LGBT issues in schools.

"My parents' generation for forty years fought to eliminate communist ideology from schools, so it couldn't be forced on children. So youth, children, soldiers and youth organizations couldn't be indoctrinated," Duda told a rally in the southwestern town of Brzeg.

"They didn't fight for this so that a new ideology would appear that is even more destructive."

Opposition candidates and LGBT rights groups condemned Duda's speech.

Love Does Not Exclude, a Polish rights group, told Reuters Duda's proposals were similar to the Russian government's decision to ban "homosexual propaganda".

The Left's presidential candidate, Robert Biedron, the first Polish politician to openly identify as gay, called on Duda to "be done with this hatred" in a tweet posted after the speech.

Poland is a former satellite state of the Soviet Union and was the first country to shed communism in the region in 1989. This year the country was voted the worst in the European Union for LGBT rights in a poll by Brussels-based NGO ILGA-Europe.