

PRESS RELEASE

The Queer Face of War: Portraits and Stories from Ukraine

- European Exhibition Tour 2026 – A Collaboration between J. Lester Feder & Queer Emergency Aid Ukraine

Berlin, May 2026 — ***Queer Emergency Aid Ukraine (QNU) and award-winning journalist and photographer J. Lester Feder announce the European tour of *The Queer Face of War: Portraits and Stories from Ukraine* — the first in-depth visual and oral history documenting an LGBTIQ+ community living through war, published by Verlag Kettler.***

Drawing on more than a decade of reporting in Ukraine, Feder's photographs and firsthand accounts give voice to queer Ukrainians — soldiers, medics, activists, refugees, and survivors of war crimes — revealing both the harsh realities of full-scale war and systemic discrimination, and the extraordinary resilience and self-determination of the community. The project documents how Vladimir Putin's rhetoric about “protecting traditional values” and the instrumentalization of homophobia became weapons of war — and how LGBTIQ+ Ukrainians have fought back: fighting for their country alongside their fellow Ukrainians — and fighting for the rights this country has long denied them.

Realised in collaboration with QNU, the exhibition combines journalistic storytelling with grassroots expertise and community insight to create an urgent, authentic, and politically resonant testimony of queer lives. As authoritarian movements across Europe and the world echo Moscow's anti-LGBTQ+ propaganda, *The Queer Face of War* stands as a testament to resistance, solidarity, and the power of images and words. LGBTIQ+ visibility is not just representation — it is power, and a measure of democracy itself.

*“We want to be seen—seen by other Ukrainians, who are increasingly supporting LGBTQ+ people’s rights in the face of Russian homophobia, and by people around the world who are facing their own battles against forces that would crush democracy. This is a fight J. Lester Feder knows well. *The Queer Face of War* is a portrait of the fight for our core values in the face of authoritarianism.”*

- Olena Shevchenko, TIME’s 2023 Woman of the Year and executive director of the organization Insight, from the foreword

European Tour Dates

Vienna, 8–22 May 2026 The Queer Face of War has been selected as an official part of the "OffStage" programme at the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna. Through a two-week presentation at Atelier Galerie Roland Puschitz, during which Lester will lead personal guided tours, the exhibition reaches a pan-European audience — including over 2,500 ESC delegates as well as the general public.

Berlin, 19 May 2026 In collaboration with LSVD+ and Queere Nothilfe Ukraine, J. Lester Feder presents The Queer Face of War on Tuesday, 19 May 2026, 6:00–8:30 PM at the Bundesstiftung Gleichstellung (Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 34, 10178 Berlin). The evening combines a book presentation with a get-together and is aimed at representatives from human rights policy, LGBTIQ+ organisations, civil society, academia, and the diplomatic corps.

Amsterdam, July – August 2026 Selected by the WorldPride Empowerment Fund as an official collaboration partner, the exhibition will be presented during WorldPride Amsterdam under the central theme of UNITY. Venue and exact dates to be announced.

About J. Lester Feder

J. Lester Feder is an American journalist of Ukrainian descent who has been reporting in and around Ukraine for more than a decade. His honours include a Journalist of the Year Award from the Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists, a GLAAD Media Award, and a Feature Shoot Emerging Photography Award. His work has appeared in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Rolling Stone, and Vanity Fair, among others. His New York Times essay on war crimes targeting queer Ukrainians won the 2025 Excellence in Journalism Award from the Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists.

[The Queer Face of War](#) by J. Lester Feder is published by Verlag Kettler, ISBN 978-3-98741-199-1.

About Queer Emergency Aid Ukraine

Queer Emergency Aid Ukraine (QNU) is a German alliance of over 70+ LGBTIQ+ organisations that has been providing emergency aid, advocacy, and community support to queer people from Ukraine since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion. QNU connects international solidarity with on-the-ground expertise and is continuously committed to strengthening international queer networks and amplifying queer Ukrainian voices.

For further information: www.thequeerfaceofwar.com | www.queere-nothilfe-ukraine.de

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J. Lester Feder is available for interviews. Please contact Louise Juhl to arrange.