

Anti-LGBTI violence in Europe and Central Asia: The Numbers

[Blog](#), [Safety](#), [Annual Review](#), [Bias-motivated Violence](#)

The latest ILGA-Europe Annual Review reported on a deeply worrying rise of violence against LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia, most of it related to the growing prevalence of hate speech from public figures. Here are the facts in the 34 countries we reported on.

In 2022 there was a stark rise in violence against LGBTI people, not only in numbers but also in the severity of that violence, as reported in the latest edition of our [Annual Review of the Human Rights of LGBTI people in Europe and Central Asia](#). In this blog you will find the main figures and key cases that reflect the situation in every country. Learn more about how LGBTI organisations and activists are boldly responding to anti-LGBTI violence and much more in our [full report](#).

Armenia

In October, two young gay men [committed](#) suicide after a photo of them kissing went viral and received endless hate messages. The suicide shook the community. A discussion was [broadcast](#) on TV afterwards, featuring anti-LGBT statements.

Pink documented 27 cases of physical and sexual violence, and threats of violence and threats towards LGBT people during 2022, ten of which were committed by family members. These included beatings, stabbings, and other serious attacks. The ten recorded cases of domestic violence on grounds of SOGI were of physical, psychological and economic nature. In most cases, the parents learned about the LGBT identity of the victims, and then beat, harassed, threatened, or locked them up. One case was partner violence. Of the 27 cases of violence, seven were lesbian or bisexual women, 11 were gay or bisexual men, and 12 were trans or non-binary.

Austria

Hate crimes [continued](#) to be a serious issue, with over [two hundred incidents](#) just in the first three months of the year. The Ministry of Interior's annual hate crime report [documented](#) 376 hate crimes against LGBTIQ people in 2021 although over 80% of the cases may not be reported. SPÖ (Social Democratic Party) also published a report and called for a national strategy against hate, exclusion and discrimination.

Azerbaijan

One of the most prominent LGBTIQ+ activists in the country, Avaz Hafizli, was brutally [mutilated](#) and [murdered](#) by his cousin in February. The police, who previously ignored Hafizli's requests for protection, [wrapped](#) the body in a rug and transported him in a garbage truck.

In August, the court [sentenced](#) the perpetrator to nine and a half years in prison but ignored the [homophobic](#) motif and the brutality of the murder. Civil society has firmly [criticised](#) the meagre judgment, which could have given twice as many years to the killer.

Another human rights activist, Bakhtiyar Hajiyev was kidnapped by masked men and tortured. A man on the metro in Baku [threatened](#) to kill LGBT people with a hammer.

On 7 September, a trans woman Emily Hajizade was [attacked](#) in Baku Boulevard by the park's security guards. Emily was also abused by her family, who threatened to kill her. In September too, a trans woman was [stabbed](#) several times in Baku's Narimanov park. She was previously [detained](#) and her head was forcibly shaved by the police. The police denied the murder and said they merely detained her. Activists and her family have been unable to find her since.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo Open Centre documented 11 anti-LGBTI hate crimes this year – six were reported to the authorities.

Belgium

The Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities (Unia) [shared](#) that the number of homophobic hate crimes had been on the rise and continued to grow between 2020-2021.

A study based on 42 testimonies from LGBTQIA+ people was [published](#) in May, revealing that underreporting is extremely common in the Brussels region, that the anti-LGBTQIA+ motif of attacks is often unregistered by the police, and investigations rarely yield results.

In August, a study in Flanders [found](#), on the basis of over 400 responses from LGBTQ+ people, that one in four have been subject to threats or physical assault.

Croatia

The Ombudswoman's annual report found that 2021 marked a sharp increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes. The Ombudswoman affirmed that hate speech by politicians can contribute to such a trend. In July, for instance, three gay men were verbally and physically assaulted in a club.

Estonia

On 9 July, a migrant black trans woman from Jamaica was [murdered](#) in her accommodation in downtown Tallinn. Two men were arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

Finland

Pride organisers across Finland [said](#) in a survey that vandalism and hate speech were far too common

In the town of Lapua four youngsters detonated [a homemade bomb](#) at the other end of a building where a Lapua Pride event was taking place. Lapua Pride also received [violent threats](#) in social media. In the town of Mikkeli, a homemade bomb was detonated by two young persons close to where the Pride march was taking place.

The case of high school students in Savonlinna made headlines in August. Several students [spoke](#) about suffering anti-LGBT harassment, including death threats, intimidation, being followed home, and being almost run over by cars. The students have been targeted by these attacks for years and had not received support from the school or the police.

France

The Ministry of Interior [shared](#) that the number of anti-LGBTI hate crimes rose by 28% between 2020-2021. Between 2016-2021, the number of incidents doubled. 2021 saw a temporary decrease presumably due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry also highlighted that these numbers are in no way total, as a mere 20% of victims report threats and attacks to the police.

SOS Homophobie [found](#) a similar increase this year, noting the high rates of anti-trans insults and violence.

Georgia

Trans women were verbally abused and their home was [attacked](#) in May – the police made no arrests. In November, a cisgender woman was [killed](#) in Tbilisi. The perpetrator was under the impression that the woman was trans.

Germany

Hate crimes [continued](#) to be a [serious](#) issue this year, but about 90% of cases continue to go [unreported](#). In [Berlin](#), for instance, anti-LGBTI hate crimes [rose](#) by 17% in the [past year](#). Lower Saxony also [recorded](#) an increase in homophobic crimes. The fatal [attack](#) against a trans man, who tried to stop a man from harassing two women at a Pride march, shook the community.

Greece

The national hate crime monitoring body's annual report, published in May, [found](#) that crimes against LGBTIQ+ people [continued](#) to be very common in 2021.

Hungary

Several hate crimes were committed this year, with the perpetrators in some cases [referring](#) to the 2021 'propaganda' law as being "on their side".

Iceland

Several hate crimes took place this year and were [reported](#) to the police. Anti-LGBTIQ+ 'barking' [grew](#) increasingly common this year.

In August, the rainbow-coloured steps of a church were repeatedly [vandalised](#). Also in August, nine rainbow flags were [ripped](#) down in Hellu, another flag in Kópavogur was [vandalised](#), and posters were [tagged](#) with nazi symbols.

Samtökin '78 [received](#) ten reports of anti-LGBTQ harassment following Pride week.

Ireland

Hate crimes against LGBTIQ+ people [continued](#) to be a serious issue, also [affirmed](#) by the government, the [police's annual hate crime statistics](#), and Dublin City where bias-motivated violence has [become](#) a particular concern.

In April, two men were [murdered](#) in separate homophobic attacks in the town of Sligo – a 22-year-old man [awaits](#) trial. Vigils were held in over 25 cities and towns.

Italy

In the follow-up of the Zan law having failed in 2021, anti-LGBT hate crimes continued (see a list of attacks [here](#) and [here](#)). Three migrant sex workers, including a trans woman, were murdered in Rome in November. In June, a trans woman who was suspended from her teaching job after socially transitioning [committed](#) suicide. A 19-year-old trans girl, Chiara [committed](#) suicide in October. Another trans woman, also called Chiara, took her own life in June.

The national observatory on lesbophobia published its report [documenting](#) one lesbophobic hate crime per month between 2011 and 2021. Non Una Di Meno's monitoring work [identified](#) 112 lesbophobic and transphobic murders nationwide in 2022.

Latvia

Mozaika [documented](#) nine anti-LGBT hate crimes this year. None of the victims reported the cases to the police.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyz Indigo's (KI) Urgent Response Group provided legal consultation in 105 cases this year, which included outings and threats (18%), fake dates and blackmail (13%), physical violence (10%), family violence (16%), theft and extortion (10%), and police violence (20%). More than a third of the fake date cases were perpetrated by the police.

Montenegro

The LGBTI Drop-in Centre in Podgorica was [vandalised](#) with fascist and anti-LGBTI [messages](#) in July. The Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation and the police have identified the perpetrators. On 21 December, Juventas' LGBTIQ Centre in Podgorica was [attacked](#). Police responded quickly in identifying the attackers.

Netherlands

The government [reported](#) 2,471 anti-LGBTI violence and discrimination cases in 2021, up from 2,336 in 2020 and 2,072 in 2019.

The Social and Cultural Planning Office's (SCP) study, published in July, [found](#) that LGBT people face disproportionate rates of violence, one in three bisexual women has experienced sexual violence in the past five years and 44% have been targeted by online or offline sexual harassment in the past year.

A new report, ['Invisible in Two Worlds'](#) found that trans people face domestic violence in great numbers, and that state assistance is inadequate.

North Macedonia

Coalition Margins documented four gender based/ domestic anti-LGBT hate crimes.

Norway

On June 25, a gunman [killed](#) two people and wounded more than 20 people outside Oslo's queer haven and oldest queer bar, the London Pub. The terrorist attack, which was carried out during Pride week and on the night before the Oslo Pride march, shook the community and the country and was widely condemned.

[The 2021 hate crimes report](#) of the police found a drastic increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes, from 97 in 2020 to

240 in 2021.

Portugal

Between January and early December this year, ILGA Portugal received a total of 830 requests for contact or immediate support in cases of violence at home, loss of income, and evictions. Of these, 268 came from people who reached out for the first time. 220 cases of domestic violence and assault were reported this year, of which 71 were cases of gender-based violence.

Romania

Four hate crimes were [perpetrated](#) over the span of three weeks in the summer – all were reported to the police. Leaflets showing a gay man in a gas chamber and a nazi soldier pressing the gas button were left in MozaiQ's courtyard in August. Civil society [attributed](#) the rise in violence to the tabling of the 'propaganda' bill. There was a clear rise in hate crimes during Bucharest Pride – over 20 victims asked ACCEPT for legal advice.

Russia

Hate crimes against LGBTI people, including murder, [physical violence](#) and extortion were committed again this year. The authorities failed to classify them as anti-LGBTI hate crimes.

Serbia

In its annual hate crime [report](#), Da se zna! [documented](#) the highest number of anti-LGBT incidents since 2017: 83 cases of anti-LGBT hate crimes, hate speech, and discrimination in 2021, marking a 38% increase compared to 2020 (52). The number of hate crime cases sharply increased in August and September following a series of hateful statements by political and religious leaders. EuroPride billboards were vandalised.

The Belgrade Pride Info Centre was again attacked in [February](#) and [October](#). For the first time, a politician, Belgrade's deputy mayor Goran Vesić condemned the violence. None of the perpetrators in the 14 attacks have been prosecuted.

Several people were attacked during, directly after and in the [weeks after](#) EuroPride.

Slovakia

On 12 October, two young men Matúš Horváth and Juraj Vankulič were [murdered](#) by a gunman outside one of Bratislava's two queer bars, Tepláreč. The gunman wounded a woman as well and [claimed](#) responsibility for the [unprecedented](#) white supremacist terrorist attack before killing himself. This was the first [terrorist](#) attack in modern Slovak history.

Civil society had warned about the consequences of the growing anti-LGBT political rhetoric and the inadequate response to hate crimes by law enforcement before – many have [interpreted](#) the murder as the culmination of the past years.

Slovenia

Legebitra documented four hate crimes and two cases of vandalism.

Spain

The annual report of the Ministry of Interior [documented](#) a record number of 466 anti-LGBT hate crimes in 2021 (2020: 277), with one in every four hate crimes targeting LGBT people. This is a 68% increase in one year. Coruña's Observatory against LGBTI-phobia [published](#) its fourth annual report, finding a 71% increase in cases compared to 2021.

Anti-LGBTI murals and graffiti were also common this year. Several rainbow-coloured benches were vandalised in small towns again this year (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

Sweden

The concept Drag Queen Story Hour, during which drag artists read fairy tales to children in libraries, came under serious attack this year.

Switzerland

Anti-LGBT [attacks](#) continued to be an issue, with the number of hate crimes [increasing](#). The joint report by TGNS, LOS, and Pink Cross [documented](#) 96 anti-LGBTQ hate crimes in 2021 – 50% more than the previous year. The majority of the incidents [took place](#) close to the 2021 referendum and parliamentary action on marriage equality. There was a sharp increase in transphobic hate crimes reported.

Turkey

Kaos GL's annual monitoring report [found](#) that 2021 was one of the most violent years against the community to date, with eight recorded murders but suspects the actual number of murders is higher. The report also highlights the issue of widespread police violence, torture and ill-treatment, and unlawful detention, particularly at demonstrations. It was also reported that 30 per cent of all violations against LGBTI+ were about freedom of assembly and expression.

Ukraine

Nash Mir's annual report documented 55 hate crimes against LGBT people in 2021. Nash Mir documented more than 75 hate crimes in 2022, the majority of which were in some way connected to military operations. Nash Mir noted that the numbers might be much higher as it was difficult to document cases in occupied territories.

United Kingdom

Hate crimes against LGBT people in the UK have reached dramatic numbers. The UK Home Office's annual hate crime statistics report [highlighted](#) that homophobic hate crimes increased by 41% and transphobic hate crimes by 56%, in England and Wales. This marks the starkest annual increase since 2012. The report attributes the rise in transphobic hate crimes in part to anti-trans media reporting. Galop's 2022 Hate Crime Report echoed these numbers and the reasons behind them.

In Northern Ireland, there were more hate incidents recorded across each hate motivation strand when compared with the previous twelve months (with the exception of faith/religion incidents) with 15% increase in homophobic and 24% in transphobic incidents. Research carried out by The Rainbow Project in 2021, has shown that 51% of those who had experienced hate crime had not reported it to the Police Services of Northern Ireland. The most common response was that they are still not confident that their complaints will be taken seriously, some unaware that PSNI can take action and were fearful of repercussions.

Galop's report '[LGBT+ Experiences of Abuse from Family Members](#)' highlighted that 29% of LGBT+ people have experienced abuse from family members – 60% attributed this to them being LGBT+. 63% of the victims were

under 18 when they first faced violence at home. Galop's adjoining report [warned](#) that support services for LGBT+ victims are rare and insufficient. Galop also published its '[LGBT+ People & Sexual Violence Report](#)' on the basis of almost 1,000 LGBT+ survivors. More than half thought that the violence was inflicted upon them due to them being LGBT+ and most reported detrimental consequences on their mental health.

Search for your country chapter in our Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of LGBTI People in Europe and Central Asia [here](#).