

ARMENIA

Police and law enforcement are not the first and often desirable point of contact for individuals who faced violence or other violations of their rights. For more information, see sections Family, Equality and Non-Discrimination and Freedom from Torture.

BELARUS

In February, [amendments](#) were made to Decree No. 355, expanding the military's authority to use weapons, allowing for more arbitrary use of force against civilians and diminishing institutional safeguards.

In February, a trans woman was [detained](#) multiple times for "harbouring" an LGBTI person from Ukraine.

During her detention, law enforcement officials forced her into confessing on camera and circulated the video, as well as details about her gender transition and intimate photos.

In April, the House of Representatives [passed](#) the draft Law "On Amendments to Laws on the Investigative Committee." The draft law aims at granting the Investigative Committee the authority to access personal data from information resources and systems without individuals' consent.

In September, a recent wave of arrests targeting the LGBTI community in Belarus was [recorded](#) by TG House, with at least eight trans people being detained since August.

Throughout the September, authorities [intensified](#) the crackdown which began in late August, leading to an estimated 15-20 LGBTI people being detained across multiple cities. Among the detainees, trans people were primarily charged with hooliganism, while others faced criminal charges related to the dissemination of pornography. Many of them cited instances of beatings, psychological intimidation, and verbal abuse during detention. TG House [clarified](#) the information regarding the total number of detentions, reporting that, in 2024, at least 32 LGBTI activists were detained. According to the organisation, activists consistently reported threats, public shaming, and surveillance, as part of a broader campaign to suppress dissent and align with the state's promotion of so-called "traditional values."

In November, Polityvazynka and TG House [reported](#) the case of Evgeniya, a trans woman who experienced significant violence when security forces raided her apartment. As part of the testimony, the organisations reported that police forces found her in her underwear and mocked her, asking, "So are you a woman or a man?" before forcing her to record a video while they ridiculed her gender identity, expressing uncertainty about which cell to place her in due to her gender identity.

BELGIUM

Circular [COL13/2013](#) setting out guidelines for public prosecutors, labour auditorates, police forces and inspectorates was amended in March. The reviewed Circular improves the recording of complaints relating to discrimination thanks to a new classification system that identifies several social phenomena to which offences may be linked, including homophobia.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In March 2024, the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina amended its Criminal Code to include sexual orientation and gender identity as protected characteristics against hate speech. These changes aim to address discrimination in the region, but their implementation will require an adjustment period, including educating relevant institutions. This move has intensified pressure on the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to update its own Criminal Code to ensure consistency and avoid legal uncertainty regarding the sanctioning of hate speech.

In July, the Republika Srpska Government proposed replacing the term "gender identity" in the draft amendments to the RS Criminal Code with the more ambiguous term "other personal characteristic." Earlier in April, the Council of Europe released a report on trans rights, highlighting the importance of explicitly including gender identity and gender expression in anti-discrimination legislation. However, the RS Government's move reflects a broader resistance to acknowledging gender identity in the region. The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the amended Draft Law of the Criminal Code in November.

BULGARIA

Law enforcement has been cooperating with NGOs to strengthen the investigation of SOGIESC motivated crimes. As part of this initiative, 55 investigative police officers from across the country and 10 prosecutors from the Sofia Regional Prosecution were trained by Deystvie on these matters.

CROATIA

Višnja Ljubičić, Croatia's ombudsman for gender equality, has [criticised](#) President Zoran Milanović's statement that the Minister of Economy might be gay and sought an expert opinion from the Personal Data Protection Agency on the legality of the president's comment. The ombudsman [highlighted](#) that disclosing one's sexual orientation without consent could lead to severe consequences, which led to the request for clarification on whether such disclosure violated privacy protections.

In March, following the murder of a 20-year-old woman by her former partner, Croatia's parliament amended its criminal code

to classify the killing of women due to their gender as a distinct crime. This makes Croatia the third EU country, after Cyprus and Malta, to officially recognise femicide as a separate offence.

ESTONIA

In July, the Estonian Human Rights Centre took up the case of a Russian trans woman and her partner, advocating for their right to be recognised as a family in Estonia. The Police and Border Guard Board had previously denied recognition, citing the absence of marriage or cohabitation registration in Russia.

FINLAND

In June, the Helsinki Pride march attracted an estimated 100,000 participants. This year's event was notable for the first-time involvement of the Rainbow Police of Finland, an LGBTI police association established in 2020 by current and former police officers and civilian staff.

The state prosecutor requested the Supreme Court's permission to appeal the acquittal of Christian Democrat MP Päivi Räsänen on three counts of incitement to hatred. The charges stemmed from her derogatory statements about homosexuality, for which she was acquitted by the Helsinki District Court.

The District Court of Southern Ostrobothnia fined an individual for making illegal threats and inciting hatred against an LGBTI group on social media in July 2022.

FRANCE

In March, multiple LGBTI advocacy organisations called for the repeal of the "surname and first name correspondence table." The organisations argued that the file tracks people who have changed their civil status, including trans people and immigrants, exposing them to risks of outing and discrimination. They highlighted concerns that this file, accessible to police, could lead to outing, discrimination, and violence against trans individuals, as well as the potential misuse of data regarding immigrants who have Frenchified their names.

GEORGIA

Following recent anti-democratic political developments in Georgia, trust in the police and investigative institutions among LGBTI people has significantly decreased, leading many to refrain from reporting incidents to the police.

In November and December, during mass protests against election fraud and the ruling party's halt to Georgia's European integration, police forces and special units carried out brutal arrests and beatings of civilians. Multiple reports state that homophobic language was used by law enforcement while

arresting and assaulting the protesters. Additionally, Zviad Kharazishvili, head of the Special Tasks Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), reportedly publicly disseminated homophobic hate speech.

(See also under Freedom From Torture, Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment.)

GREECE

In July, the Athens Appeal Court convicted two men for the 2018 murder of Greek LGBTI activist Zack Kostopoulos. The murderers, aged 65 and 80, were sentenced to six and five years respectively. The court ruled that the older of the two could serve his sentence at home.

In June, the murderer of Anna Ivankova, a trans woman who was killed in Athens in 2023, was convicted to life imprisonment without the recognition of mitigating circumstances.

IRELAND

A student who assaulted a gay couple and directed homophobic slurs at them while involved in a dispute with his girlfriend has been given a two-and-a-half-year prison term, suspended entirely on the condition that he remains law-abiding during this time.

Irish former Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar suggested that Ireland might need to adopt policies akin to Scotland's regarding the housing of trans women in prisons.

KAZAKHSTAN

In February, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev enacted amendments to the country's children's rights legislation. These amendments aimed at barring LGBTI people from adopting or mentoring children and setting up specific psychological tests to assess the sexual orientation of potential mentors and adoptive parents.

In April, journalist Botagoz Omarova reported a series of police raids targeting LGBTI parties in Astana. Omarova detailed that during one weekend, around 70 individuals were detained at a police station, where they were reportedly coerced into providing statements. According to documentation reports, two raids in Astana's gay nightclub and a private LGBTI party in April resulted in the detention of approximately 300 people overall. Law enforcement officers forced the detainees to disclose sensitive personal information, including their sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), under duress. During the raids, police also forced HIV tests in non-confidential settings, and coerced individuals to sign statements about their SOGI with no definite explanation about the data's use. Despite fears of further persecution, 33 detainees from the Astana raids sought legal

support, leading to an unprecedented collective appeal by 27 of them to challenge the police's actions and a progressive ruling by the local prosecutor's office in July.

In June, in a closed LGBTI chat on Telegram, an activist shared a video of themselves holding a Pride flag in one of the courtyards of Astana's residential complexes. A day later, police officers visited the activist's mother and asked her to contact them for an interrogation about the alleged theft of a bicycle in the courtyard. After continued disturbances, the activist met with the police, where they were interrogated by an unknown local akimat (mayor's office) employee, shown the video, and warned of harsher punishment if their actions ever repeated.

In July 2024, a pre-trial investigation was launched by the Karasai District Police Department in response to a video featuring choreographer Alisher Sultanbekuly dancing in high heels inside a yurt. The video, which sparked significant outrage online, led to the investigation for incitement of social, national, or religious hatred, carrying a penalty of up to seven years in prison. Minister of Culture and Information Aida Balayeva warned that such content could divide society and threaten Kazakhstan's cultural norms. Sultanbekuly's video was widely discussed, particularly regarding the tension between freedom of expression and maintaining cultural traditions.

A similar case was recorded in August, when Aman Aubakirov – a high-heels dancer – was fined by police for hooliganism after performing a high-heels dance in an advertisement video. He was asked intrusive questions regarding his relationship status, sexual orientation, and police required him to write an explanatory note that the advertisement video was not created with the intention of "spreading LGBT propaganda".

KYRGYZSTAN

In Kyrgyzstan, trans women are particularly vulnerable, with many turning to sex work due to societal discrimination and lack of opportunities. Although sex work itself is not criminalised, the Kyrgyz Criminal Code contains provisions prohibiting the operation of brothels, which law enforcement often uses as a pretext to raid the homes of trans women. These raids are frequently accompanied by extortion, as officers demand money from the women under threat of further legal action. The vulnerability of trans women has been further exacerbated by recent amendments to the Criminal Code on June 26, 2024, which regulate webcam studios. Since many trans women in sex work connect with clients through the internet, these amendments directly target them. Law enforcement officials exploit their gender identity for blackmail, intimidation, and extortion, using their status to pressure them for money. Furthermore, personal information about trans women is often shared among law

enforcement officers, leading to continued violations of their rights and further harassment for personal gain.

LITHUANIA

In March, the Lithuanian Prosecutor's Office decided to terminate the investigation into the disruption, by conservative groups, of a peaceful protest to support the repeal of a provision in the Lithuanian Law on the Protection of Minors and to promote inclusive education, held in 2023. Although the protest had been legally coordinated with both the Vilnius Municipality and Police, it was met with disruption by a group of "traditional family values" supporters. Despite the growing tension, police officers present at the scene did not intervene to protect the protesters or stop the harassment. The prosecutor referred the case for potential administrative offences but did not classify it as a hate crime.

In April, Seimas Ombudsperson Erika Leonaitė criticised the inadequate police response to the disruption. As part of their statement, they underscored that authorities failed to act against provocateurs who physically and psychologically intimidated protesters.

In June, activist Raimondas Šimaitis conducted a protest near the National Martynas Mažvydas Library in Vilnius, during which he burned several pieces of colored fabric. Authorities interpreted this act as the burning of the LGBTI flag, leading to his detention and a subsequent fine of €15. Šimaitis contested the penalty, viewing it as political persecution, especially in light of his announced candidacy for the upcoming elections. Critics argue that such a minimal fine may inadvertently encourage similar provocative actions in the future.

MOLDOVA

In February, the former president of Moldova, Vladimir Voronin, and six other opposition deputies were summoned by the Chisinau Appeals Chamber to face court proceedings over their involvement in a 2022 anti-LGBTI flash mob.

In June, the Court ruled in favour of a gay man who had been persecuted in the army because of his sexual orientation. As part of the ruling, the court ordered his aggressor to pay approximately 60,000 lei in compensation.

In June, the Chisinau Court ordered Bishop Marchel of Balti and Făleşti ordered to pay 10,000 lei in moral damages to two LGBTI people for inciting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

NETHERLANDS

In July, the Council of State of the Netherlands, an advisory body routinely consulted by the cabinet on proposed legislation before

a law is submitted to parliament, ruled that Aruba and Curaçao must introduce same-sex marriage. The ruling overturned their previous bans on the practice, and pushed for an alignment of their policies with those of the Netherlands.

NORWAY

In July, the Oslo District Court upheld a fine of NOK 65 million imposed by the Norwegian Data Protection Authority against the app Grindr for having shared sensitive user data with numerous commercial entities without consent. Grindr has appealed the case.

POLAND

A priest was sentenced to 18 months in prison for sexual and drug related offences. He had been arrested and charged in connection with a gay orgy in which one of the attendees collapsed due to an overdose of erectile dysfunction pills.

Mariusz Dzierżawski, a board member of the Pro-Right to Life Foundation, was sentenced to 20 hours of community service per month by the District Court in Gdańsk. The conviction followed Dzierżawski's involvement in the organisation of a controversial street campaign equating members of the LGBTI community to paedophiles.

In June, in Warsaw, six people were detained for attempting to disrupt the Equality Parade by organising a counter-demonstration.

In June, Poland's Prosecutor's Office announced it will cease investigating same-sex marriages conducted abroad. This decision derived from the revocation of a policy implemented by the previous right-wing government that required such marriages to undergo scrutiny.

RUSSIA

In March, a Russian court placed two employees of the Pose bar in custody, accusing them of involvement with an "extremist organisation." The employees could be condemned to up to ten years in prison if convicted of having promoted "non-traditional sexual relations" among the bar's patrons.

A St. Petersburg court fined Alexei Nazarov 5,000 rubles for referencing an article from 'Meduza', calling for activists from Russia and Belarus to address systemic issues faced by women in Russia on his VKontakte page.

In May, Istories published a study by a graduate student from the University College of Dublin's Law School, which analysed 1,500 court decisions involving "non-traditional orientations in Russia."

The study underscored that over the past two years, Russian authorities have fully criminalised the LGBTI community through discriminatory legislation, leading to increased hate-based violence against LGBTI people.

In a report released in August, Civil Control and the Sphere Foundation examined the law enforcement practices regarding the ban on "LGBT+ propaganda" in Russia. The study analysed 64 court decisions made between December 2022 and March 2024, focusing on administrative articles 6.21 and 6.21.2 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offenses, which prohibit the "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" among both adults and children. The report highlighted systemic issues and contradictions in the application of these laws. The report also criticised the independence of experts used by courts, noting that many of these experts were affiliated with state bodies responsible for initiating administrative offense protocols.

In November, Russian security forces raided the "Zebra" club in Voronezh, where a closed LGBTI costume party was being held. According to PostNews, approximately 40 people were present at the event when the raid occurred. Following the raid, a criminal case was opened against the event organisers under the article on extremism.

In late November, Russian police raided several bars and nightclubs in Moscow, enforcing laws criminalising "LGBT propaganda." During the raids, authorities confiscated smartphones, laptops, and video cameras, and checked the documents of club-goers. Social media footage showed police ordering partygoers to lie on the floor at the Arma nightclub, while another video depicted people being escorted out of the popular gay club Mono with their hands over their heads with a police van waiting outside. The Interior Ministry also reported a raid on a nightclub on Skladochnaya Street for allegedly promoting the "ideology of the banned LGBT movement."

In December, a trans girl in Moscow was detained by the police at a bus stop and sent to the military registration and enlistment office, as reported by the Sphere Foundation, which supports LGBTI people. The police did not provide an explanation for her detention but stated their intention to send her to military service. The girl was held at the Perovo police department from about 12.30 - 09.00, without food or the ability to communicate. She was then taken to the district military registration and enlistment office, followed by a transfer to the North-Eastern Administrative District of Moscow. At around 21.00, she was sent to the City Assembly Point but managed to escape. However, she was re-detained later that evening and taken to the Pechatniki police department. At the time of writing, the girl's whereabouts were unknown, and efforts by her lawyer to obtain information from the police were unsuccessful.

SERBIA

In February, Serbia's Interior Ministry [announced](#) that the Prosecutor's Office would investigate claims of police misconduct. This decision followed the alleged beating and humiliation experienced by two LGBTI people during an apartment search in Belgrade.

In February, two LGBTI individuals in Belgrade were subjected to police brutality, including abuse, torture, and sexual harassment, during a police search of their apartment. In early March, several hundred Serbian LGBTI activists and supporters [gathered](#) in Belgrade to protest the incident, demanding the criminal prosecution of the involved officers and quicker sanctions against police who commit violence.

SLOVAKIA

In 2024, the Slovak government continued to [dismantle](#) independent institutions designed to combat corruption, which also led to the abolition of specialised units within the police and prosecution dedicated to tackling extremism and hate crimes against LGBTI people.

In January, Special Prosecutor Daniel Lipšic [announced](#) that the investigation into the October 2022 attack on the Tepláreň gay bar in Bratislava was concluded. Lipšic confirmed the perpetrator was a secondary-school student who took his own life following the attack.

In September, two individuals were [arrested](#) and charged with leading Terrorgram Collective, an online white supremacist group that promoted hate crimes and terrorist attacks. The group has been linked to the deadly shooting at a queer bar in Slovakia in October 2022, which resulted in the deaths of two people. New details suggest that the Terrorgram Collective played a role in inspiring the attack, as the shooter had been influenced by the group's rhetoric.

TAJIKISTAN

Since the beginning of 2024 human rights organisations have documented over 20 cases involving severe violations of the fundamental rights of LGBTI people, including arbitrary detention, illegal confiscation of personal devices, torture, coercion to testify against fellow community members, blackmail, extortion, and the forced disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity, including cases of sexual assault. In each documented case, LGBTI individuals were blackmailed with threats that their intimate photos and private correspondence would be publicly disclosed.

In 2024, multiple [instances](#) of LGBTI people being arbitrarily detained, having their phones confiscated, and their personal

information accessed without court approval by reason of Article 241 of the Criminal Code, have been recorded.

Under Article 241, which addresses the "illegal production and circulation of pornographic materials or objects," the dissemination of intimate images can be prosecuted as the distribution of pornographic materials, which carries criminal penalties.

After seizing cell phones, law enforcement officers were reported to copy contacts, photos, and messages to lure other suspected LGBTI people into meetings, where they too are detained and subjected to abuse.

When individuals living with HIV are detained, they face further harassment through criminal proceedings under Article 125 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises HIV transmission.

During research visits, the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) documented dozens of credible cases of intimidation, physical and sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and extortion involving LGBTI people. As [reported](#) by IPHR, police continued to threaten LGBTI persons that they would turn them over to family members, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues or others, or initiate criminal proceedings, if they did not pay bribes or provide contact details of wealthy LGBTI acquaintances.

TURKEY

In February, the legal proceedings filed against those responsible for targeting the 2022 Pride Week in Gaziantep were initially stalled at the Prosecutor's Office, and later at the Gaziantep 5th Criminal Court of Peace. The Prosecutor eventually chose not to pursue the case, a decision that was appealed by rights advocates. However, the court sided with the Prosecutor and [dismissed the appeal](#). In light of this, LGBTI rights advocates from Gaziantep Pride Week are now preparing to take the case to the Constitutional Court, seeking a resolution.

In May, a [report](#) by Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) highlighted episodes of police brutality against LGBTI people during the 2022 Ankara Pride March. The report documented physical assaults by officers, including kicking and slapping, as well as excessive use of force, such as using pepper spray at close range.

In October, police forces intervened and shut down a private party at an LGBTI bar in Istanbul, detaining 30 individuals present at the venue. According to a joint statement by Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride Week and Trans Pride Week, two migrant LGBTI people among those released were sent to the Arnavutköy Immigration Administration. The statement also highlighted that the detainees were subjected to torture and mistreatment during their detention.

TURKMENISTAN

Without formal channels for complaints, LGBTI individuals face significant barriers in seeking justice. Complaints require personal details that many fear will lead to further harassment.

Law enforcement agencies sometimes exploit dating apps to extort money from victims or coerce them into providing information about others. Those who do not cooperate face severe penalties, including physical abuse and forced medical examinations.

In Turkmenabad, Lebap province, police raids of private homes and businesses have targeted sex workers and members of the LGBTI community as part of a campaign to “ensure public order and maintain morality.” Police forces often conduct surprise raids, scrutinising mobile phone apps and investigating contacts with known LGBTI activists or human rights organisations to identify members of the LGBTI community.

In early July, following the release of the documentary ‘Invisible Rainbow of Turkmenistan’, authorities ramped up efforts to identify LGBTI people, including organised raids. (See also under Participation in Public, Cultural, and Political Life)

UKRAINE

In 2024, the Nash Svit Centre revealed that in at least two cases, Ukrainian police and prosecutors disregarded precedents from previous court rulings and the April 2024 ECtHR decision in *Karter v. Ukraine*. In these instances, the Prosecutor’s Office of the Solomianskyi District of Kyiv and the Bucha District Prosecutor’s Office rejected requests to reclassify the cases from minor bodily harm to violations of equality.

In January, the District Prosecutor’s Office of Sumy reopened the investigation into threats made against journalists from the local publication “CUKR,” who had reported on issues related to the LGBTI community, after the case had been closed by police authorities in December 2023.

In April, Gender Stream and the Department of Main Inspection and Human Rights Compliance of the National Police signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to develop guidelines for ethical communication with LGBTIQ+ individuals and organise training sessions for police officers. This collaboration ensured security at several events, including Prides and a national conference.

In June, the Territorial Recruitment Centre visited the Closer Art Centre in Kyiv’s Podil district during preparations for a Pride month event, checking documents of attendees and attempting to detain men who could not provide proof of completing the military medical commission.

UNITED KINGDOM

In February, a group of police officers launched the “Police Sex Equality and Equity Network” to challenge what they describe as the dominance of “pro-trans ideologies” within UK policing. The network accused police chiefs of embedding gender ideology in their practices, which they claim fosters a “culture of fear” for those who do not support trans rights. According to the group, this focus on gender issues risks undermining public confidence in the police, and officers who believe in the immutability of biological sex feel unable to express their views without fear of disciplinary action due to the influence of alleged lobby groups and activists.

In March, Eddie Ratcliffe, one of the individuals convicted of the murder of trans teenager Brianna Ghey, expressed his intention to appeal his life imprisonment sentence. The Mirror reported that the appeal was rejected as the minimum terms were deemed acceptable.

In April, a senior police officer expressed concerns that Scotland’s new Hate Crime and Public Order Act could erode public trust in the police as individuals might feel unfairly targeted if their details are recorded under the new legislation. The Scottish government responded by assuring that the law includes protections for free speech and that a comprehensive training and guidance programme would be provided.

In September, the Metropolitan Police rejected plans to introduce gender-neutral uniforms after consulting with 30,000 officers. As a result, the force decided to continue using separate male and female uniforms, extending the current supplier contract for uniforms until 2026.

UZBEKISTAN

Ozodlik documented an incident where police in Samarkand set a dog on a group of trans people.

In another case, a trans woman was imprisoned on charges of sodomy, having returned from Moscow to change her passport.