



KYRGYZSTAN

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many LGBT+ people remained without income and struggled to afford food and other basic necessities. Those most vulnerable, including trans sex workers and migrants had no access to state assistance. Between 2020–2021, Kyrgyz Indigo (KI) provided food to 132 people and hormones to 69 trans people.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

Fake news, misinformation, anti-LGBT trolling, and calls for violence remained widespread (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). For instance, social media posts accused the American University of Central Asia of “making Kyrgyz people gay”. Anti-LGBT hate speech was also common by politicians.

Several videos of trans women were shared, some exposing their names and social media profiles and risking their safety.

In October, State Secretary Kasmambetov compared feminism and homosexuality to Islamic radicalism in an interview, saying they are pseudo-ideologies imposed on Kyrgyzstan.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

KI documented several cases this year where LGBT people reported being lured on a fake date by undercover police, facing threats and extortion; cases of conversion therapy; physical assault; threats; and forced outing. KI provided legal assistance in 19 cases and consultation in 86.

In April, a young woman Aizada Kanatbekova was abducted and murdered, receiving nationwide attention. The police had failed to respond to Kanatbekova’s cries for help. A rally against the police’s failure and bride abduction was disturbed by provocateurs who shouted that it was organised by LGBT people. According to a video, these included police officers in civilian clothes.

A few days later, an anti-LGBT and anti-NGO demonstration was held in Bishkek. The protesters called on the state to “protect” minors from Western LGBT ideology. It was later rumoured that several protesters were police officers.

EDUCATION

The Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy presented the draft Concept of Spiritual and Moral Development and Physical Education in April, which calls for education on ‘traditional values’ and ‘family ideals’. Civil society warned that the Concept could be used to silence civil society and the media. The police referred to this decree as a legal basis for conducting raids against sex workers.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Labrys published their report on the needs of LGBT people, in Kyrgyz and Russian, highlighting high levels of institutional discrimination and violence. The report is based on responses from 174 individuals.

Civil society continued advocating for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation, as part of consultations on the National Gender Strategy.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) recommended Kyrgyzstan to criminalise hate speech and violence against LGBT women, ensure their freedom of assembly, and introduce comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

FAMILY

On 11 April, the parliament adopted a new Constitution after a successful referendum, which retains the provision stating “marriage is between a man and a woman”.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

The UN Committee against Torture recommended that torture and ill-treatment against LGBT people by law enforcement, are investigated and prosecuted.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Women’s Day March was banned by court again, but despite the difficulties and risks, the 8/365 Movement successfully held the event on 8 March. Before the event, the organisers received threats from the police that participants would be arrested.



FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Several provisions of the new Constitution, adopted in April, could restrict LGBTI activism by requiring burdensome financial reporting and restricting activities that “contradict moral and ethical values and public conscience”.

On 17 June, parliament adopted a law subjecting NGOs to additional scrutiny on financial reporting, similar to Russia’s ‘foreign agent law’, which CSOs hear might target LGBTI rights work. Despite national and international outcry, the President signed the law in July.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In August, the President signed the law on “manipulating information”, also expected to further limit freedom of expression.

Labrys, in collaboration with other NGOs put in place funding to encourage more content on LGBT issues from journalists and activists in the region.

HEALTH

KI published an analysis of barriers to HIV/AIDS services for key populations, including men who have sex with men. The report finds an increase in the number of people living with HIV who know their status, due to outreach programs but difficulties in accessing services due to the hostile political environment.

The CEDAW recommended Kyrgyzstan to decriminalise the transmission of HIV.

Labrys published a resource on COVID-19 vaccines.

HOUSING

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued, many LGBT+ people remained with hostile families. Several LGBT+ people, including particularly migrants, trans people, and trans women reported being denied housing, evicted, and becoming homeless. One in three respondents in Labrys and KI’s needs assessment of trans people said that they were homeless due to being trans. Trans people also reported being unable to access state benefits as their documents did not match their appearance. The change in legal gender recognition (LGR) procedures (see below) has further exacerbated the issue. NGOs organised safe

housing for several LGBT+ people, including a trans man who was assaulted by police.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Anti-LGBTI and anti-civil society attacks have intensified since March. Several videos emerged demonising LGBT+ activists and organisations, revealing names and phone numbers, misgendering and/or publicly outing them. Several KI activists faced surveillance. A video was circulated calling for violence against LGBT activists, saying “if the authorities do not take action, we will”.

Following the 8 March demonstration, a trans activist’s information was leaked online. Kanykei’s social media page was hacked and she received countless threats. Other participants of the March also reported countless threats targeting them.

The Special Rapporteur on the situation with human rights defenders released a joint communication to the government.

In this difficult environment, human rights defender Diana Arsenyeva of Labrys spoke in a TV interview in May about the situation of LGBT people in the country.

Labrys held its second Activism Factory week in September, where 30 LGBT people learned about advocacy and community building.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

KI turned to the Constitutional Court requesting the annulment of the 2020 amendments of the law “On acts of civil status”, which no longer make it mandatory for the authorities to approve LGR applications on the basis of a medical certificate. The Constitutional Court refused to address the case, but the Administrative Court ruled in favour of a trans applicant, who then successfully changed his gender marker. This means that trans people can now access LGR, but through a burdensome and time consuming court procedure, to challenge the initial denial of their application.



PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

In February, Labrys [released](#) 'A book about happiness for young (and not so young) (not only) LGBT people'. The first book about a Kyrgyz trans person, [Adam+](#), was also published this year.

KI [prepared](#) memos for activists on what to do in case of arrest, interrogation, search, and a list of friendly lawyers and journalists.

KI also conducted an LBQ media camp for activists (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

KI held a ball in October fundraising for a rainbow house for the community.

Openly gay and internationally known mountain climber Dastan Kasmamytov [shared](#) a personal interview in April.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

KI continued its outreach and training work on sexual and reproductive rights, including by publishing a [video](#) in partnership with a known blogger, reaching over 260.000 people. KI held three gatherings for people living with HIV, including for people from Central Asia and one for women.

**Some of the information about Kyrgyzstan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists and so far had not been public.*



MORE INFORMATION ON WWW.RAINBOW-EUROPE.ORG