



# TAJIKISTAN

## ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

The COVID-19 pandemic continued having a serious impact on LGBTQI+ people this year and many need financial help. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise in the cost of tickets to Russia, as well as lockdowns in Russia, migrant workers have been unable to go there to earn money.

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Living costs, including goods such as food, medication, and transport have increased significantly, making life difficult for members of the LGBT community.

## ASYLUM

Leaving Tajikistan has become more difficult due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

'Homosexuality' is used by both the government and unofficial political parties to shame and degrade each other. For instance, unofficial opposition parties routinely use their social media to "out" people who work for the government, calling their sexuality a disgrace. They often accuse the the current government of allowing and promoting 'homosexuality' in Tajikistan.

In response, the documentary "Besharaf" (Eng: "Disgrace"), which equates 'homosexuality' with psychopathology and terrorism, was streamed on state television channels and in universities this year, sparking homophobic discourse.

A number of hateful comments were sparked this year about the sex education of minors, with hateful language about same-sex relationships.

After reports on Radio Ozodi about 29 LGBT people from Tajikistan getting asylum in Germany, anti-LGBT hate speech was on the rise.

A Tajik psychiatrist stated on TV that "homosexuality is a disease that leads the 'sick person' to lose track of control and eventually they end up living with this 'immoral condition' for the rest of their life".

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Civil society reports that violence against LGBTQI+ people continues to be carried out on a daily basis.

The courts failed to make any meaningful development in a 2020 hate crime case, where a gay man was brutally assaulted by his colleagues after they had learned about his sexual orientation. The victim was ridiculed by the police after reporting the violence.

Life for Tajik LGBTQI+ people remained unsafe, even in cases where they had left the country. In March, a Tajik man was found guilty and sentenced to several months in prison for physically assaulting a Tajik gay man in Moscow, Russia. The case is one of many where LGBTQI+ immigrants are being "hunted", blackmailed, threatened, and/or assaulted.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In March, the draft of Tajikistan's first anti-discrimination law was sent to the parliament for a hearing. The initial draft, prepared by the working group that includes the Ombudsperson, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, and Members of Parliament, listed sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds. Civil society reported in July that the most recent draft omitted sexual orientation, and gender identity was also dropped by the end of the year.

Previously, Tajikistan received several recommendations from UN actors to introduce comprehensive and inclusive anti-discrimination legislation.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

This year, several Tajik bloggers addressed LGBTQI+ issues on their platforms and had live streaming sessions with members of the LGBTQI+ community. For instance, prominent blogger Shoira Pulatova had an open conversation with LGBTQI+ people on her page, discussing sexuality, gender, and societies.

## HEALTH

Local activists conducted a survey among doctors in Tajikistan about their knowledge, attitude and practices in relation to trans and intersex people. Most health practitioners had negative attitudes and some refused to participate in the research. The activists will publish a manual in 2022 to support medical professionals in providing quality care and services when it comes to trans specific healthcare, and also to legal gender recognition.



## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Activists continued to report being pressured, harassed, and detained by the authorities, often under false charges.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

A trans person reported being denied legal gender recognition at the first instance court, but will appeal the judgment.

Local activists published the first ever legal analysis focusing on legal gender recognition in the country. As part of the process, activists approached the Ministry of Health to learn about their commitment on the issue. The Ministry gave vague answers and noted the lack of surgical interventions in Tajikistan.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Activists reported again this year that the police continue to threaten, blackmail, harass, and detain LGBT people.

*\*Some of the information about Tajikistan was shared with ILGA-Europe by activists who for safety reasons need to stay anonymous.*



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