



GEORGIA

ASYLUM

LGBTQ people continued to flee from Russia and Ukraine to Georgia. At the same time, there is ongoing concern that Georgia is classified by some EU countries as a ‘safe country’, but positively. Some countries removed Georgia from their list this year.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

(See also under Equality and Non-discrimination; Freedom of Assembly; and Freedom of Expression)

The spread of misinformation and the rhetoric juxtaposing LGBT rights and the West continued this year. ECRI’s report, published in March, highlighted anti-LGBT hate speech and impunity as a key concern. Political movements and parties continued to instrumentalise anti-LGBT hate, particularly as the 2024 elections are approaching. Anti-gender rhetoric in particular, also increased this year.

The Prime Minister and other high officials justified the adoption of the foreign agents law using LGBTIphobic arguments. Preceding the Tbilisi Pride Week, held in July, government representatives, religious leaders, and far-right extremists of the Alt-Info made countless anti-LGBT statements (see here, here, here). Alt-Info spread hateful messages for days prior to the event and called on people to join efforts to attack and disrupt Pride. Pride flags were also burned. Religious groups published a joint letter in July alleging that the Pride week will “promote perverted lifestyles, including propaganda among the youth”.

In July, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said that ‘LGBT propaganda’ in kindergartens and schools was unacceptable. Earlier in May, the PM joined an ultraconservative conference in Hungary and said that LGBTQ+ “propaganda was destroying traditional family values”.

In July, the Tbilisi City Court issued a ‘protective order’ in the case of a minor who was featured in a homophobic video that was spread on social media.

In September, the Girchi political group suggested in parliament that the term ‘gender’ should be dropped from legislation, including for instance the Law on Gender Equality, and that gender identity and expression should be deleted from the anti-discrimination law.

WISG and TEMIDA submitted a complaint to the Journalist Ethics Charter against a pro-government TV channel for

a transphobic story, alleging a minor underwent gender-affirming surgeries influenced by “LGBT propaganda” and later regretted it.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

(See also under Foreign Policy; and Freedom of Assembly)

In January, the Tbilisi Appeals Court overturned a 2022 ruling and acquitted six people who were involved in the 2021 anti-LGBTQ attacks, by dropping the charges of group violence on grounds of SOGI. The Court also reduced their prison term from five to four years. Human rights groups called the ruling alarming. The Prosecutor’s Office will appeal. In September, the European Commission requested that Georgia submit information about the investigation. The request was made as part of Georgia’s process of being a candidate for EU membership.

In January a Human Rights Watch report highlighted, among other things, violence against the LGBT community.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

(See also under Bias-motivated Speech)

The new State Concept of Gender Equality, adopted in January, is cis/hetero normative and fails to mention sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. The 2022-2030 National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights also completely omits LGBTQI+ rights. CSOs repeatedly appealed to the government but received no answer.

In March, Levan Ioseliani was appointed as the new Public Defender. Civil society had supported three of the 19 candidates competing for the position, but Ioseliani was not one of them.

On the occasion of IDAHOBIT, the Public Defender released a statement identifying the LGBT+ rights situation in Georgia as a serious problem. Embassies and international organisations also published a statement, highlighting that Georgia’s key policies on human rights and development fail to mention LGBTQI people and that politicians keep perpetuating hate speech.

FAMILY

ECRI’s report, published in March, highlighted that Georgia is yet to analyse where same-sex couples face discrimination due to a lack of legal recognition.



In June, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili [expressed](#) concern that foreigners use surrogacy services in Georgia and that some of them may be LGBT, and [announced](#) stricter legislation on surrogacy.

FOREIGN POLICY

The attacks against Tbilisi Pride this year were [seen](#) by many as a [threat](#) to Georgia's EU candidacy status (see under Freedom of Assembly). In September, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy [said](#) during their country visit in September that "more signs of progress" were required.

On November 8th, the European Commission [recommended](#) that Georgia is granted candidate status for joining the EU. The European Commission's [report on Georgia](#) critically evaluates a number of LGBTQI protections, including hate crime, hate speech, LGR, etc.

On December 14, Georgia was granted EU candidate [status](#), on the understanding that the steps set out in the European Commission's [recommendation](#) of 8 November 2023 are taken.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

Regarding the implementation of the 2020 ECtHR judgement in [Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia](#), in October, WISG, the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC), and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) [submitted](#) a report to the Committee of Ministers showing the lack of follow-up action by the government. Since the decision of ECtHR in 2020 and despite ongoing investigation, no one has been brought to criminal justice yet

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

[Tbilisi Pride Week](#) was [held](#) between 1-8 July and was targeted by hate and violence again this year, including by the far-right Alt-Info group. Pride week, held under the motto "Love Cannot Be Defeated!" was [joined](#) by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and [supported](#) by embassies and UN agencies. All the events were [held](#) indoors and with pre-registration.

Prior to Pride week, far-right groups [carried](#) out mass mobilisation, called for violence, and [spread misinformation](#). Previously, civil society groups [called](#) for police protection and the organisers [held](#) months-long negotiations with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who vowed to protect the events.

On 8 July, about 2,000 violent far-right protesters [broke](#) the police cordon, and stormed and [attacked](#) the venue where the the Pride festival was [scheduled](#) to take place. Instead of expelling the mob, the police [evacuated](#) the Pride organisers, who had to [cancel](#) the event.

In a [joint statement](#), human rights groups have [emphasised](#) that the police [failed](#) in its duties to protect the participants. The organisers [suspect](#) that the government coordinated the disruption with the far-right Alt Info group and the evacuation [was](#) the default plan all along. The Ministry of Interior and the speaker of the Parliament both [condemned](#) the violence but welcomed that the police were able to prevent physical injuries.

The President said such statements were not meaningful when the government continues to perpetuate hate speech. The [Public Defender](#), several [politicians](#), Embassies, [Council of Europe](#) and UN mandates [condemned](#) the violence. The Public Defender [affirmed](#) that it was the state's responsibility to protect the Pride participants. The European Parliament's LGBTI Intergroup [urged](#) the European Commission and the Equality Commissioner to condemn the attack and [impose](#) targeted sanctions on Alt-Info and its leader, Konstantin Morgoshia.

On 11 July, MP Fridon Indzhia of the Alliance of Patriots of Georgia party [said](#) that while sexual minorities should be accepted, their gathering in public spaces should be limited.

In October, WISG together with EHRAC and GYLA [submitted](#) a report to the Committee of Ministers indicating that since the 2021 ruling of the ECtHR in the [WISG and others v. Georgia](#) case, no one has been brought to criminal justice, no one has been granted a victim status, the LGBTQI community in Georgia is not able to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and the State is not taking any measures towards minimising the level of LGBTphobia in society.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Media freedom continued to [deteriorate](#). Alt-Info continued attacking events (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

In March, the parliament [voted](#) against the draft foreign agents law following massive public outcry and demonstrations (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) in the country and criticism from abroad. Over 60 media outlets and civil society groups had promised they would not comply with the law. The police [used](#) excessive force, including water cannons and tear gas, against the protesters.



Far-right politicians and religious leaders [called for](#) a ban on a number of books and screenings this year, for spreading ‘LGBT propaganda’.

Several political and religious leaders again suggested introducing an ‘LGBT propaganda’ law, including the Prime Minister (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

In June, rainbow-coloured umbrellas were [removed](#) from a park in Tbilisi.

HOUSING

Temida [published](#) a report on the housing situation of LGBTQ people, finding difficult access to housing and a lack of state support.

The housing situation of LGBTQI and particularly trans people was further worsened by the war in Ukraine, and state support is still not available.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

ECRI’s report, published in March, [highlighted](#) that Georgia needs to put in place a clear legal gender recognition (LGR) framework. In 2022, several UN and Council of Europe entities, including the European Court of Human Rights called on Georgia to remedy this gap and introduce quick, accessible, and transparent LGR on the basis of self-determination (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

In 2022, the European Court of Human Rights [ruled](#) in three LGR cases against Georgia, establishing that the lack of a clear legal framework for LGR is a violation of Article 8. In October, NGOs submitted a report on the implementation of the judgement, [highlighting](#) that one trans man re-applied for LGR this year, but was again rejected.

The appeal of an intersex woman, who was denied LGR without proof of surgery in 2021, is ongoing.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

WISG held training for the staff members of state-funded crisis centres and State legal aid service employees.



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