



KYRGYZSTAN

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

Due to the continued tension at the Tajikistan border and the war in Ukraine, a lot of Kyrgyz internal and external migrants returned home and Russians fled to Kyrgyzstan. The political situation hiked up inflation rates, unemployment, and rent prices.

ASYLUM

In 2023, there has been a discernible surge in the demand for specialised assistance from LGBT+ organisations in addressing cases pertaining to individuals seeking asylum in other countries.

Given the escalating anti-LGBT+ policies and sentiments in Kyrgyzstan in 2023, for many LGBT+ people residing in other countries, returning home was deemed too dangerous. Consequently, they often seek asylum in their host countries.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

According to Kyrgyz Indigo's monitoring of the media space, all news about LGBTI rights or people shares the same rhetoric, emphasising the danger of moral decay, "wrong democracy," "psychological and physical health of children," etc. Almost every article which mentions non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is about receiving foreign funding, and is replicating the rhetoric of Russian propaganda related to "traditional values," "Western ideology," and "imposing values." The majority of articles were either based on homophobic statements by decision-makers or initiated by the editorial boards themselves.

Labrys continued to publish a quarterly analysis of media and social media content on LGBT issues, finding that a significant rate of articles and posts remains hostile.

In February, chairman of the NGO World League of Citizens and Civil Associations, Bolotbek Batilov wrote that the US State Department gave a grant to Kyrgyz Indigo "to promote transgender ideology in schools".

Anti-LGBT hate speech remained common among politicians. In March, several MPs criticised UNDP funds for HIV-related work going to NGOs in the country and questioned what they were really used for. Speaker of Parliament, Nurlanbek Shakiev said NGOs who receive the money influence youth, and that the state should tackle the 'issue' of trans people. In April, MP Zhyldyz Sadyrbaeva (Ata-Zhurt Kyrgyzstan) alleged that instead of fighting HIV, the funds are used to build the LGBT movement and sex worker movements. Also in April, MP Meikinbek

Abdaliev (Ata-Zhurt Kyrgyzstan) said "let them get infected", meaning that LGBT people should not receive any HIV-related treatment or preventive services.

In June, MP Bakytbek Sydykov (Ata-Zhurt Kyrgyzstan) said that talking about 'homosexuality' made him "sick to [his] stomach"; that a "man is a man and a woman is a woman"; and that LGBT people should live in countries where they are accepted, not in Kyrgyzstan.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

According to monitoring of a local organisation, Kyrgyz Indigo, LGBT people continue facing discrimination, harassment and violence both from state and non-state actors.

In 2023, according to the organisation, 119 cases of such discrimination and violence were reported. Furthermore, trans people continue facing difficulties in obtaining legal gender recognition (LGR) as a result of removal of legal provision for LGR in 2020. Kyrgyz Indigo reported 15 such cases. Local organisations also continue providing legal consultations for LGBTI people. Within this year, Kyrgyz Indigo reported providing such support to 105 cases: outings and threats (18%), fake dates and blackmail (13%), physical violence (10%), family violence (16%), theft and extortion (10%), police violence (20%). It should be noted that more than a third of fake date cases were perpetrated by the police.

ECOM's annual Report on Violations of LGBT People's Rights in Kyrgyzstan in 2022 documented 31 cases. Most cases related to discrimination in employment and healthcare, and being lured on 'fake dates'. Most of those discriminated against were people living with HIV.

On December 25, 2023, members of the Kyrgyz Parliamentary Committee on social policy rejected a draft bill on anti-discrimination, citing the need for improvements. In the discussions, MP Aigul Aidarova (Butun Kyrgyzstan) emphasised the necessity of clearly defining the grounds for non-discrimination in the law. She expressed concern that without precise definitions, "people with other sexual orientation" might exploit the law, suggesting that the anti-discrimination legislation should not be misused to shield the LGBTI community from discrimination.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

(See also under Freedom of Expression)

Since 2020, authorities continue to impose bans on peaceful assemblies and protests in city locations. To conduct the



Women's Day March on [March 8](#), it is mandatory to obtain approval from both the mayor's office and law enforcement agencies.

In 2023, a prohibition was instituted regarding the display of paraphernalia such as flags representing specific countries, notably Ukraine and Russia, as well as items associated with the rainbow symbol. A man who wore a rainbow-coloured face mask was [detained](#) by the police. Several others who had symbols relating to LGBT+ rights or Ukraine were also approached by the police.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

After MP Nadira Narmatova's (Ata-Zhurt Kyrgyzstan) [request](#) for a stricter foreign agents law in 2022, the public consultation on amending the law on non-profit non-governmental organisations was [launched](#) in May. The bill would place NGOs under the control of the General Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Justice with regard to internal and financial matters. It would also [introduce](#) the concept of 'foreign non-governmental organisation'. The law aims at restricting the freedom of speech of civil society, as it threatens the closure of NGOs in the Kyrgyz Republic, including LGBT+ organisations, as well as the persecution of human rights defenders and activists.

The law introduces the term "foreign representative," and equates advocacy and civic activism with "political activity" and activists who are undesirable to the authorities may be subject to a fine or five to ten years in prison. In October, at the meeting of the parliamentary committee discussing the amendments a video was [shown](#) by the members of the parliament about the alleged harm that NGOs cause in the country, including through 'LGBT propaganda'. On 25 October, the draft bill passed the first reading without public discussion.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In Spring, several draft amendments to the Mass Media Law were [tabled](#), [prohibiting](#) materials that "form a positive attitude towards non-traditional sexual relationships" and promote the "propaganda of same-sex marriages". National and international civil society called for the withdrawal of the amendments (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

In June, the parliament [adopted](#) the new law On Measures to Prevent Harm to Children's Health, Their Recovery, Intellectual, Mental, Spiritual, and Moral Development, which was first [tabled](#) in March and [signed](#) into law by the President in August.

The law is similar to those in Russia and Hungary, and [bans](#) the

spreading of information that denies family values, promotes "non-traditional sexual relationships". The law [calls for](#) age limit signs on media content, books, and other materials, similar to the 'foiling' in Hungarian bookstores and a complete ban on discussing LGBT rights and experiences in schools. The law also calls for SIM cards for children to be registered, to ensure that harmful content is blocked on their phones.

In July, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the crackdown on the media and freedom of expression in Kyrgyzstan, expressing deep concern about the law, which was also criticised by civil society in the country and abroad (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

HEALTH

The political rhetoric against LGBT people and sex workers seriously threatened [critical](#) healthcare service provision this year. In March and April, several parliamentarians attacked the distribution of Global Funds in the country (see under Bias-motivated Speech). In April, the Country Coordination Committee to Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (CCM) was [disbanded](#) after MP Zhyldyz Sadyrbaeva's [appeal](#).

The government decided to merge the Republican Centre for Control of Viral Hepatitis and HIV with the National Institute of Public Health. The Center and people living with HIV, hepatitis, and TB their loved ones [sent](#) a joint letter of concern to the government, saying the move could completely jeopardise the ongoing work and what Kyrgyzstan has achieved to date. They argued that the system is working effectively and patients have trust in the Centre, but would avoid seeking care through the state. In May, MP Meikinbek Abdaliev [asked](#) for a list of people living with HIV in the country.

In June, the Ministry of Health [adopted](#) an order introducing the merger. In July, patients and representatives [held](#) a rally at the Ministry of Health building to demand an explanation. The head of the National Institute of Public Health, Zharkynbek Kasymbekov, later [made](#) derogatory statements about them on social media, for which the advocates [demanded](#) an apology.

A week later, the same advocates [filed](#) an administrative complaint with the Ministry of Health, demanding that the order be withdrawn. The Ministry issued a [statement](#) saying that the Center will remain independent and would not be affiliated with the National Institute of Public Health. At the same time, the order was [not](#) withdrawn. In August, activists [turned](#) to the Ombudsman, who called on the Ministry to ensure that it respects the rights of people living with HIV and hepatitis.



The Global Fund considered suspending its funds to Kyrgyzstan in September, but negotiations continued. In December 2023, the Global Fund approved the next cycle of funding until the end of 2026 through UNDP in Kyrgyzstan in spite of Kyrgyz Parliament's objections to not include LGBTI people. Sufficient funding will be allocated for support to MSM and trans communities.

LGBT+ organisations continue providing mental and general health support to LGBT+ people. KI provided psychological assistance to 62 people and Labrys provided psychological assistance to 61 people and medical care to 34 people.

HOUSING

Due to social stigma and discrimination, LGBT+ people often choose to reside independently from their families. However, the influx of immigrants to the Kyrgyz Republic from Russia and subsequent rise in rental costs have obliged LGBT+ individuals to return to familial homes, despite facing emotional abuse (see under Access to Goods and Services).

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Since 2022, the persecution of civil society by the state has become more frequent, with foreign media and people speaking out against NGOs in Kyrgyzstan. An ultraconservative organiser in the US appealed to the Kyrgyz President to monitor the work of Kyrgyz Indigo.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Since amendments were made to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Civil Status Acts," in 2020, legal gender recognition for transgender individuals has become impossible.

In 2023, 22% of all documented cases concern the consequences of the aforementioned law change, including document alterations, document loss, conscription into the military, difficulties in securing housing, job searching, and more.

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



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