



TAJKISTAN

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Russia's anti-LGBTI laws have significantly influenced Tajikistan, with numerous unofficial social media reports documenting detentions or prosecutions widely perceived as targeting individuals based on their sexuality or gender identity.

Visual evidence has also emerged showing LGBTI people subjected to harassment and physical attacks. These incidents have provoked strong societal reactions, further amplifying anti-LGBTI sentiments and exposing deeply rooted structural and cultural stigmas. However, many crimes against LGBTI people remain unreported due to fears of rejection or harm.

In the Sughd region, more than 10 cases have been reported this year in which law enforcement officers allegedly lured LGBTI individuals into fake meetings to trap them. These unofficial raids are used to falsely register them in a database, gather their personal information—such as social media contacts—and extort money from them.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Tajikistan's anti-discrimination legislation only partially aligns with the minimum standards outlined in the UN Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation. Although a working group was established in 2020 to draft the country's first Anti-Discrimination law including sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds, by the time the law was adopted in July 2022, SOGI had been removed, leaving only "sex" as a prohibited ground for discrimination.

Since 2016, there have been reports that security forces in Tajikistan allegedly maintain a registry of individuals with diverse SOGI, subjecting them to systematic discrimination and human rights violations, including forced HIV testing. These actions are often driven by corruption or personal career advancement, linked to performance quotas that require officers to meet a minimum number of arrests or convictions. Authorities have reportedly targeted these individuals under criminal code articles related to HIV transmission (Art. 125) and more recently have shifted to using pornography-related charges (Art. 241). Those charged under Art. 125, particularly LGBTI people, often lack access to free government-provided legal aid and are convicted without sufficient evidence, as Tajikistan lacks the capacity to conduct proper testing to trace HIV transmission.

In 2024, a [report](#) prepared by ECOM documented at least 25 cases of human rights violations directed towards LGBTI people. In 15 of these instances, the report underscored that the offenders were law enforcement officers who arranged fake dates to force people to undergo rapid HIV testing, threatening to out them, and in some cases, revealing their HIV status to their colleagues and family members.

FAMILY

In Tajik society, a family member's sexuality or gender identity becoming publicly known is often perceived as a profound source of shame for the family. Consequently, "coming out" is rarely a viable option for LGBTI people, as it risks subjecting their families to public ridicule, social isolation, and damage to their reputations. This often leads to sham marriages or marriages of convenience. In one specific case, an individual's family discovered their sexual orientation and proceeded to beat them, tie them up in a room, leaving them without food for days. Ultimately, they were forcibly married to a man they had never met. Upon reporting the situation to the police, no action was taken. The victim was eventually manipulated by their family into dropping the accusations, leaving them without legal protection.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

Over the span of 18 months in 2022-2023, more than 700 NGOs were dissolved in Tajikistan, with an additional 53 liquidated in the first half of 2024 alone. Among those targeted was "Equal Opportunity," the only NGO dedicated to promoting equality and non-discrimination, including the rights of LGBTI people. This crackdown has drawn international concern, with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders underscoring that the dissolution of human rights NGOs signals a deteriorating environment for civil society and human rights defence in Tajikistan.

FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

In 2016, Tajikistan's law enforcement agencies reportedly compiled a list of over 300 individuals from the LGBTI community, labelling them as "high risk" for HIV infection. At a press conference on February 15, 2023, Ramazon Rahimzoda, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan, categorically denied the existence of such a list, asserting that the Ministry had never compiled or published such records. However, Radio Ozodi uncovered a departmental publication from the Prosecutor General's Office in which Rahimzoda himself reported on the creation of this list. The existence of this list led to widespread human rights abuses during 2024, including torture, blackmail, and extortion, during raids and illegal detentions. Following international pressure, the situation improved temporarily, with reduced instances of violence and harassment against LGBTI people.

HEALTH

In Tajikistan, although health programs are officially equal for all and public medicine is free, medical care often comes with high costs for consultations, tests, and treatments, making it inaccessible for many. Access to quality care typically requires

visiting private clinics, where most skilled specialists have migrated due to better working conditions. However, for members of the LGBTI community, particularly those with limited financial means, this is rarely an option. In the mid-2000s, a UNFPA-supported project created “umbrella” organisations that distributed grants for health initiatives, including HIV testing and prevention programs aimed at men who have sex with men. However, under state pressure, these organisations were shut down.

As a result, the beneficiaries of these programs became fearful of accessing the services, going “underground” to avoid scrutiny. This fear extended to HIV and STI testing, which led to a spike in infections within the community.

Violations of confidentiality by AIDS centre employees, and sometimes even by NGO workers, further eroded trust, causing LGBTI people to avoid essential healthcare services. Confidentiality breaches are particularly dangerous, as they can lead to law enforcement visiting people’s homes and disclosing their HIV status, often followed by an epidemiological investigation to identify and track down their sexual partners. This invasive process generates widespread fear and deters individuals from undergoing HIV testing or seeking medical support.

Additionally, the threat of criminal prosecution under Article 125 of the Criminal Code, which imposes penalties of two to five years in prison for knowingly infecting another person with HIV, exacerbates the situation.

Despite recommendations from civil society and the WHO, the legal framework of Tajikistan continues to criminalise people living with HIV under Article 125 of the Criminal Code (endangerment of HIV transmission). The bill punishes those who knowingly put another person at risk of contracting HIV with penalties of up to three years of restricted freedom or two years of imprisonment.

Access to medical services for trans people in Tajikistan is very limited. Medical professionals and psychologists are generally inexperienced in trans health issues, and there are no official recommendations for professionals to prescribe hormone replacement therapy.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In July, at the eleventh annual meeting of the European Union–Tajikistan Cooperation Committee, the EU reiterated its call for the Tajik authorities to conduct thorough investigations into human rights violations. The Committee particularly expressed concern over the continued imprisonment of human rights defenders, journalists, and bloggers in Tajikistan.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Civil registry offices may also reject the application and insist on considering the request for a gender marker change through

the court system, which is not the best option, as there are no laws regulating LGR in Tajikistan that can be used to obtain such a change through the court system. In practice, given that LGR is neither prohibited nor permitted in the country, it is likely that professionals, including doctors, judges, and civil registry office managers, are hesitant to conduct any procedures regarding LGR for fear of the consequences, as well as the unacceptability of transgender people to the state.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

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.



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