



Ukraine

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In August, [Ukraine's government](#) introduced a [bill](#) aimed at strengthening legal protections against discrimination, hate crimes, and hate speech, explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity. The initiative forms part of Ukraine's commitments under its Association Agreement with the European Union. [Registered](#) as draft law No. 13597, "On Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Criminal Code of Ukraine to Combat Manifestations of Discrimination," the bill seeks to enhance accountability for hate-motivated crimes and expand the legal tools available to combat discrimination. The draft legislation introduces criminal liability for acts of discrimination and broadens the list of protected groups as existing laws often classify hate-motivated crimes as administrative offenses or simple "hooliganism," allowing perpetrators, including those committing violence against activists, to avoid meaningful criminal responsibility.

Ukrainian civil society organisations, including Gender Stream, continued to advocate for the adoption of the draft law, engaging with members of parliament, law enforcement bodies, and international partners to strengthen accountability for hate-motivated offences. By the end of 2025, the draft law remained pending before parliament and had not been adopted.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, Ukrainian violinist Daniel Skrypnyk was physically [attacked](#) in Kyiv by an unidentified man. According to Skrypnyk, the assailant used homophobic language, stating that Skrypnyk "had no right to speak because he was gay," and threatened to kill him before physically assaulting him. Skrypnyk reported that he contacted the police multiple times over approximately 30 minutes before officers arrived. Despite the reported homophobic motivation and severity of the assault, the alleged perpetrator was allowed to leave the scene.

In March, a blogger and activist was subjected to [harassment](#) and threats by a group of young men in a city centre. According to the activist, the group surrounded her and her friends, directed verbal

abuse at them referencing the LGBTI community, and poured beer on her. In a video later published by the activist, the men can be heard stating that LGBTI people "have no right to stay in Ukraine" and making explicit threats of violence, including threats to kill. One individual also claimed that, upon reaching adulthood and acquiring weapons through military service, he would commit violence against LGBTI people. By the end of 2025, no public information had emerged about arrests, charges or investigative outcomes.

In May, a trans woman was physically [attacked](#) during the "Strip" festival at the Closer club in Kyiv. According to the woman, an unidentified individual threatened her with violence because of her gender identity and subsequently struck her in the face, causing her to fall down a staircase. The victim filed a complaint with the police but reported that officers initially attempted to dissuade her from pursuing the case. She also stated that the club's security later accused her of provocation, and that the venue's administration did not follow up with her after the incident.

In October, a man in Kharkiv threatened and [pursued](#) an LGBTQ+ activist with what appeared to be a firearm on a subway platform after identifying her as a member of the community. According to the activist's account, the assailant chased her while making violent threats before fleeing when police were called. The activist filed a report with police following the incident, and colleagues urged authorities to classify it as a hate-motivated offence under Ukrainian law. There are no confirmed reports how the case was classified.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In July, the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) [withdrew](#) Bill No. 5488, which would have introduced criminal liability for hate crimes, following the resignation of Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal's government. The bill, drafted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2021 and submitted on behalf of the former prime minister, formed part of Ukraine's European integration agenda but never reached its first reading. According to the National LGBTI Consortium, while the bill was ultimately abandoned, the advocacy efforts surrounding it helped

consolidate both state and non-state actors around principles of equality and non-discrimination. This stalled reform was later followed by a separate legislative initiative, introducing a new draft (see also under Bias-Motivated Speech).

In January, the commander who discriminated against non-binary soldier Evelyn Schönbrenner in the International Legion was demoted following an investigation prompted by the public organisation Ukrainian LGBT+ Military for Equal Rights. Schönbrenner, a US national who joined the International Legion in March 2022, faced repeated harassment over their gender identity and sexual orientation. In November 2022, their commander forbade them from wearing a unicorn patch and demanded the removal of a TikTok video in which they publicly supported LGBTI rights in Ukraine, claiming such acts "humiliated Ukraine." In December 2023, they filed a report to the Gender Adviser of the Land Forces Command and Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada for Human Rights, whose investigation confirmed the discrimination and resulted in demotion of the commander.

FAMILY

In July, Kyiv's Desniansky District Court issued a landmark ruling formally recognising a same-sex couple as a family under Ukrainian law. The case, brought by diplomat Zoryan Kis and his partner Tymur Levchuk, marked the first legal precedent of its kind in Ukraine. The couple, together since 2013 and married in the US in 2021, had filed a complaint after the Foreign Ministry refused to acknowledge Levchuk as Kis' spouse and denied him diplomatic spousal rights. In September, the Kyiv Court of Appeal upheld the landmark decision recognising same-sex couples as families and rejecting appeals that cited "traditional family values" against the ruling.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In January, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled that Ukraine had violated Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights, protecting the right to peaceful assembly, and Article 13, guaranteeing effective legal remedies. The case arose from an LGBTI rights march planned for May 2013 in central Kyiv. The Kyiv City

State Administration sought to block the event, citing Kyiv Day festivities and alleged risks to public order. Despite proposals from organisers to adjust the route, authorities instead imposed a blanket ban on the march in the city center, forcing it to relocate to the outskirts. After the march, organisers appealed the ban in Ukrainian courts. The ECtHR found that the Ukrainian authorities had imposed disproportionate restrictions and further denied the organisers an effective opportunity to defend their rights.

In March, plans to hold Lviv's first-ever Trans Day of Visibility action were cancelled under pressure from far-right groups and local authorities. The demonstration, organised by Bilkis, Cohort, and Resistance, was meant to take place in Rynok Square and draw attention to the prejudice and discrimination that trans people continue to face in Ukraine, despite recent reforms simplifying the transition process. However, after news of the event spread online, radical groups began issuing threats and calls for violence. Local police suggested that organisers relocate but ultimately, under mounting pressure, the demonstration was called off.

In April, the Sunny Bunny LGBTQ+ film festival in Kyiv was disrupted by far-right protesters. Members of the extremist group Prava Molod ("The Right Youth") gathered to denounce the event in the name of "traditional values," sparking clashes with police. Officers detained the demonstrators to verify their identities, though it remains unclear whether charges will follow.

In April, a discussion event, held in a non-public setting, titled "LGBT+ and Christianity: In Search of Dialogue" was disrupted in Lviv when a group of masked individuals attempted to forcibly enter the private residence where the event was taking place. The organising NGO condemned the incident and rejected media characterisations of the attackers as "activists" or "concerned citizens," stating that the actions constituted intimidation and violence rather than lawful expression.

In June, over 1,500 people joined the Kyiv Pride march despite counterprotests, marking one of the most visible demonstrations for equality in wartime

Ukraine. That same day, [KyivPride Park](#) – an open-air forum of public discussions, speeches, and creative performances – took place beneath the Foreign Ministry building after terrorism threats forced a venue change.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In March, commanders of the A4030 military unit [pressured](#) openly gay serviceman Volodymyr Veselovskyi and the news agency Ukrinform to remove an interview he had given. According to the association Ukrainian LGBT+ Military and Veterans *for Equal Rights*, the demand was explicitly linked to Veselovskyi's sexual orientation. The incident drew a swift reaction from the Ministry of Defense, with the Gender adviser and the Department for the Protection of Military Rights expressing support for Veselovskyi.

In June, Russian occupation authorities in Sevastopol [fined](#) a 19-year-old college student a total of 99,000 rubles (approximately €990) on charges of "discrediting" the Russian army and "promoting non-traditional sexual relations." According to occupation police, the young man held "pro-Ukrainian beliefs," criticized Russia's war in Ukraine, and openly identified as gay in Telegram chats.

HEALTH

In January, Ukraine [adopted](#) a norm that guarantees equal access to medical services regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. The provision is part of the newly adopted Strategy for the Development of the Health Care System until 2030. The inclusion of "family status" was also described as a major achievement, as it compels healthcare workers to recognise diverse family constellations, including same-sex couples and households with multiple children.

DATA COLLECTION

In December, the Nash Svit LGBTI Human Rights Centre published its [report](#) on the situation of LGBTI people in Ukraine covering January-September 2025. The report notes that, since the beginning of the year, there have been no significant legislative advances in the protection

of LGBTI rights. However, the adoption of relevant laws has been included in Ukraine's EU accession roadmap, and some regulatory documents from various state institutions now explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. While the Ukrainian government has demonstrated willingness to implement international recommendations to meet European standards, progress in parliament remains limited.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In September, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [appointed](#) Ivan Verbytskyi, who is known as a human rights activist and an open representative of the LGBTI community, as Deputy Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications, the Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications announced. In this role, Verbytskyi will oversee the protection of cultural heritage, guide the development of the museum sector, and supervise the processes of export, import, and repatriation of cultural assets.