



# Uzbekistan

## ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In February, Uzbekistan enacted the [Law](#) "On the Provision of Psychological Assistance to the Population", which undermines confidentiality protections by requiring psychologists to disclose client information at the request of a court or investigative authority. In a context where homosexuality remains criminalised, this provision makes it dangerous for LGBTI persons to seek psychological support, as their personal information may be shared with law enforcement.

In April, the legal representative of a 24-year-old man detained under Article 120 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises consensual same-sex relations between men, declined to continue representing him, stating that association with such cases could damage his professional reputation. The lawyer reportedly encouraged the family to resolve the matter discreetly and advised that a confession would be "the best way out." A state-appointed defence lawyer was subsequently assigned but failed to attend interrogations, did not submit procedural motions, and similarly advised the defendant to confess. The lawyer also reportedly pressured him to disclose the identities of his partners, suggesting that doing so could lead to a reduced sentence.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan indicated that, even when cases of violence are formally registered, investigations and court proceedings are frequently affected by bias. Documented cases from 2025 showed that perpetrators of violence against LGBTI people were often subjected to minimal penalties, while the victim's sexual orientation was reportedly treated as a mitigating factor for offenders. In one recorded incident, a young gay man was assaulted by a group of men who used homophobic insults; when police arrived, officers reportedly declined to register the attack and instead blamed the man for his appearance. In another case, during court proceedings relating to an assault against an LGBTI person, the judge reportedly attributed responsibility for the violence to the victim's visible expression of difference. The research further highlighted that

domestic violence against LGBTI people remains widespread, with numerous cases occurring within the family. These included severe physical abuse, forced expulsion from the home, and instances of so-called "corrective" sexual violence against lesbian women by male relatives.

In May, a group of anonymous Telegram users published photographs of alleged gay men, inciting followers to carry out "public punishment." Two days later, the list was updated to include a local beauty specialist, who was physically attacked and injured soon after.

In August, a 19-year-old woman was compelled to marry after her neighbors spread rumors about her supposed romantic friendship with another girl. Once married, she endured repeated physical and sexual abuse from her husband and his relatives, who claimed they were "correcting" her behavior. After several months, she escaped to Tashkent and sought legal help, but officials refused to investigate, dismissing the violence as a private domestic issue.

## EDUCATION

In February, a secondary school teacher organised an extracurricular lesson titled "Human Rights and Everyone's Dignity," aimed at promoting respect, discussing women's rights, and addressing bullying, including of pupils perceived as different. Shortly afterwards, the parents of two students submitted complaints to the local Department of Public Education, alleging that the lesson promoted LGBTI "ideas" and "Western values." Following an order to investigate the complaints, the teacher was summoned to the district education office, where officials reportedly warned that such discussions could harm the moral development of young people.

## EMPLOYMENT

In June, a doctor at a municipal clinic was forced to resign after a colleague accidentally saw private messages on his phone revealing communication with a male partner. The following day, rumors about his sexual orientation circulated among the staff. The chief physician called him in for a meeting, stating that his "behavior does not align with the moral values of the medical team" and "could erode

patients' trust," before demanding that he submit a voluntary resignation.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

In March, Uzbekistan adopted [Law No. ZRU-1051](#), amending Article 244 of the Criminal Code to [criminalise](#) the "training or financing of the organisation of mass disturbances," carrying prison sentences of five to seven years. While officially presented as a measure to combat extremism, the amendment broadens the scope for arbitrary prosecution of civil society [gatherings](#), human rights trainings, and peaceful assemblies.

## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In 2025, an independent journalist who had published an article critical of a controversial investment project was summoned for questioning by the State Security Service (SSS). During the meeting, officers shifted the discussion to his private life, presenting printed copies of his private correspondence with other men, which they used to imply same-sex relations. They then threatened to prosecute him under Article 120 of the Criminal Code – criminalising same-sex conduct – unless he ceased publishing critical reports.

In June, ahead of the EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue, the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and the Association for Human Rights in Central Asia (AHRCA) released a [joint briefing paper](#) drawing attention to severe restrictions on civic freedoms in Uzbekistan. The document underscores that human rights defenders, independent journalists, bloggers, and other critical voices remain at constant risk of imprisonment and reprisals. Authorities have intensified suppression of media freedom, including by shutting down independent information platforms and broadening the list of banned materials.

## HEALTH

Throughout the year, human rights defenders recorded 15 cases in which LGBTI people faced violations of their rights in AIDS treatment centres. The incidents revealed a recurring pattern in which medical staff breached confidentiality by passing patients' sexual orientation and HIV status to

colleagues and even to the police. In some instances, doctors intimidated patients into disclosing personal details about their partners, warning them that care would differ for "people like them," and later used those statements to inform law enforcement. For instance, in January, a man who discovered he was HIV-positive following a routine pre-employment screening was later called to the AIDS centre for a follow-up consultation. During the meeting, a psychologist coerced him into revealing the name of his sexual partner. Soon after, the named partner was detained by the authorities and ultimately convicted on two separate charges.

In July, a gay man visited a public clinic due to abdominal inflammation. After examining his tests, the attending urologist questioned his sexuality in invasive terms and, upon learning he had a male partner, berated him, claiming his illness was the result of his orientation and that he needed "spiritual healing" rather than medical care.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

In October, a trans woman was forcibly committed to a psychiatric institution after neighbors filed complaints about her "behavior" and way of life. She was held in a locked ward for three days, denied access to her phone and prevented from contacting anyone during her detention.

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN, OR DEGRADING TREATMENT

According to the same independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan, 12 cases of persecution against trans people were documented in 2025, including two prosecutions under Article 120 of the Criminal Code. The research highlighted ongoing concerns regarding detention practices, noting that trans women were routinely detained in facilities designated for men, based on sex assigned at birth. This practice reportedly exposed detainees to heightened risks of humiliation, physical abuse, and sexual violence by both other detainees and prison staff.

## LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In June, [reports](#) spread on social media claiming that Uzbekistan had legalised legal gender recognition. However, these claims stemmed from amendments adopted to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 550 regulating the procedure for changing personal data in passports, but only in strictly defined medical cases. Specifically, they apply to individuals with rare congenital conditions, including intersex variations. In such circumstances, following a full medical examination, diagnosis, and surgery, a change in official records may be authorized.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In March, an LGBTI woman sought access to in vitro fertilisation at a private clinic. Despite providing the required medical documentation and hormone test results, the attending physician refused to proceed, stating that IVF services were available only to women married to men and advising her to marry before reapplying. The incident reflects the broader legal framework in Uzbekistan, where access to assisted reproductive technologies is restricted to heterosexual married couples, effectively excluding LGBTI women from such services. No remedies or policy changes addressing this exclusion were reported by the end of the year.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL LIFE

In January, a virtual [exhibition](#) of Uzbek queer artists titled *Queer Square* opened on the metaverse platform Spatial. The online setting offers safety and anonymity, enabling LGBTI artists to present their work free from censorship and allowing audiences to view it without fear.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

According to independent research conducted by local civil society organisations on the situation of LGBTI people in Uzbekistan, authorities in 2025 carried out unwarranted searches of locations frequented by LGBTI people, including saunas, clubs, country houses, and rented apartments, without judicial authorisation. The research further documented the routine use of undercover informants posing as

clients or community members at LGBTI gatherings. In addition, law enforcement officers reportedly accessed private messages and photographs on detainees' mobile phones during detention, raising serious concerns regarding violations of the right to privacy and the misuse of investigative powers.

According to independent civil society monitoring, Uzbek authorities conducted a nationwide campaign referred to locally as "Oriyat," involving coordinated operations by the State Security Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs at entertainment and hospitality venues. Monitoring reports described interrogations of hundreds of individuals, the initiation of criminal cases under Article 120, and allegations of arbitrary detention, seizure of personal devices, coerced HIV testing, and mistreatment during questioning.

In February, two young men were detained in Tashkent on charges of "indecent behaviour" and were reportedly subjected to non-consensual forensic anal examinations despite their objections. In March, two other young men were detained for kissing in a park; police forced them to unlock their phones, found intimate photos, and threatened prosecution unless they paid a bribe.