



# NORWAY

## ASYLUM

On 3 May, the Gender Equality Ombudsman (LDO) sent a formal letter to the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) criticising the current family reunification requirements, i.e. that partners must be married, or living together for at least two years, or have children together. These are either impossible or too dangerous for most LGBTI refugees to fulfil. The UDI responded that the current regulations are adequate and that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. The Ministry of Justice and Emergency agreed.

Nahia Riviera, a trans asylum seeker, was sexually assaulted in a reception centre. The perpetrator got away with a 10,000NOK (1,000EUR) fine. Riviera was later denied asylum.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

The Institute for Social Research (ISF) published a report on hate speech, highlighting that 23 per cent of LGBT people have been targeted within the past year, which is twice as high as in the general population. 15 per cent of LGBT people have personally received threats during the same period, compared to four per cent in the general population. Those belonging to several minority groups, especially LGBT Muslims, were at significantly higher risk of being targeted. Ethnic minorities also reported feeling excluded from LGBT groups. Most cases of hate speech took place online.

The neo-Nazi group, the Nordic Resistance Movement (DNM) continued to be active this year. LGBTI activists reported that members of the DNM came to their events and took photos of attendees, intimidating the community.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Hate crimes against LGBT people have been on the rise in recent years, particularly around Pride events. In March, the Oslo police district warned of the increasing hate crime rates in the capital: 238 cases were documented in 2018, which is a 20 per cent increase compared to 2017. Following ethnic minorities (57 per cent), LGBT people are the second most targeted group (20 per cent). The total number of reported hate crimes in Norway also increased by 13.7 per cent during the same period, to a total of 622 cases.

Hate crime related measures of the LGBTI Action Plan, such as police training, are yet to be implemented. Civil society hopes the Parliament will add gender identity and expression to the Penal Code's hate crime section in 2020. As part of its third UPR review, Norway accepted a recommendation to combat anti-LGBT hate crimes, hate speech and discrimination, but noted one on adding GIE to the Penal Code.

## BODILY INTEGRITY

The Norwegian Directorate For Children, Youth and Family Affairs published two reports regarding intersex people's human rights this year. In March, they released the "Law and Intersex in Norway: Challenges and Opportunities" report, recommending postponing any medical interventions on intersex children until they are able to consent; including 'sex characteristics' in anti-discrimination, hate crime and hateful speech legislation, introducing flexible gender recognition systems, e.g. gender-neutral social security numbers. No recommendation was made to ban medically unnecessary and non-consensual surgeries performed on intersex children.

The second report, "Life situation for people with variation in physical development in Norway" was based on interviews with intersex people, parents, and healthcare professionals. It found that two out of three medical professionals believed their job was to choose a gender and align a baby's body accordingly. Parents were overall convinced that surgery was a good idea and expressed concern about bullying and wanting their children to be/feel "normal". While some intersex adults were satisfied with their surgeries, many felt stressed in intimate relationships, felt lonely, different, or struggled in everyday life.

In June, the Labour Party announced a ten-point plan on LGBTI rights, including banning intersex genital mutilation and conversion therapy. The Parliament rejected the plan.

## EDUCATION

The new National Education Plans were published in December. The Plans are less concrete than before and include SOGIESC issues to a lesser extent.



## FAMILY

In May, the expert group reviewing the Children's Act, which was set up last year, held a [hearing](#). FRI advocated for the Act to become more inclusive of diverse families. The group will present its final report next year.

## HEALTH

The working group, created in 2018 presented the draft of the new national guidelines on trans healthcare in the fall. The group includes civil society representatives and aims to bring the regulations in line with ICD-11 and WPATH's standards of care. The [guidelines](#) were referred for public consultation in November, which will end in February 2020. The draft states that non-binary trans people must have access to trans healthcare, that a psychiatric diagnosis should not be a requirement of access, and that healthcare providers must respect everyone's self-defined gender identity. Civil society welcomed these standards, but is concerned about the continuing central role of the National Treatment Centre for Transsexualism (NBTS), e.g. in creating more gender clinics, increasing the capacity of healthcare professionals, and establishing "inclusion and exclusion criteria". The draft also includes "contraindications", such as someone being on the autism spectrum.

In September, the Norwegian Patient Organisation for Gender Incongruence (PKI), [published](#) the [findings](#) of its survey on trans people's experiences with the NBTS. 71 per cent of the 148 respondents reported mistreatment.

Responding to civil society pressure, the Ministry of Health confirmed in May that the NBTS cannot deny services to trans people who have accessed hormones or surgeries elsewhere, as [set out](#) in a policy it adopted last April. However, the NBTS declared in several cases this year that it did not have the competency to diagnose people who were treated elsewhere. Several reported fearing rejection by the NBTS. Further, the NBTS reported several trans healthcare providers to the health authorities this year, possibly to deter other facilities from providing healthcare services.

A number of trans people reported the NBTS pressuring them to undergo sterilisation, saying they were told that their placement on the waiting list for top surgery would not be secure otherwise.

As part of the UPR, Norway [agreed](#) to guarantee the right and access to healthcare for trans people.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Oslo police district organised a public discussion during Pride to publicly [apologise](#) for contributing to anti-LGBT attitudes, discrimination and violence in Norway's past.

FRI's training program, Pink Competency Justice faced funding cuts again, which threatens its future.

The new [Action plan against racism](#) was published in December, and includes the creation of a national competency centre regarding hate crimes.

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In June, the Parliament voted to [amend](#) the abortion law, restricting the right to reduce the number of fetuses during pregnancy. Those carrying multiple fetuses and wanting a reduction will now have to appear before an abortion committee to present their case.