



Kyrgyzstan

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FOOD

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many LGBT+ people lost their income and could not afford rent and basic necessities. Kyrgyz Indigo's study on the impact of the pandemic found that 68% of the 52 LGBT+ respondents had no paid work and struggled to pay for food. NGOs provided [support](#) to 2,000 LGBT+ people across the country.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

On 8 March, several hate speech incidents took place following the women's rights rally and several participants were arrested. Kyrgyz parliament deputy, Zhyldyz Musabekova [said](#):

"Very right. Tired of these gays who are turning the holiday into a mess. They did the right thing, that they were dispersed. Now we need to drive them out of the country."

Urmat Usenov, an adviser to the Minister of Culture, [said](#) that no Kyrgyz girls were seen at the rally.

Uran Ryskulov, former representative of the Kyrk Choro organisation, spoke in a derogatory manner about human rights defender Azimzhan Askarov, who [died](#) in July. Ryskulov questioned why the government, which "appeals to the UN for gay rights" did not fear for Askarov.

A video of two men having sex was posted online and widely shared on social media, along with the men's personal information. Many LGBT+ activists called for an end of persecution targeting the community. In the following days, a number of Telegram messaging groups posted the personal information of LGBT+ activists and allies, inciting violence against them.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A trans woman was sexually assaulted by an alleged client in June, and threatened and physically assaulted by four other men who came along with the perpetrator. The victim appealed to Kyrgyz Indigo and filed a criminal complaint with the police.

Police harassment against sex workers also increased during the pandemic, manifesting in raids and threats of eviction. In numerous cases, the police threatened to report sex workers for "running a brothel" in their apartment. A police officer repeatedly threatened a trans woman, who was eventually evicted by a court order in September. Kyrgyz Indigo filed a complaint to the Prosecutor's Office.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Ombudsperson falsely [stated](#) in February that no LGBT person had contacted their office in the past years. One activist publicly answered that she has in fact turned to the office for help and was given advice in a discrimination case.

In May, NGO Anti-Discrimination Centre published a [report](#) on the situation of LGBTI people in Central Asia.

In March, Kyrgyzstan received a dozen [UPR recommendations](#) to adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Kyrgyzstan noted the recommendations.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The mayor of Bishkek [announced](#) in early March that he would not let participants of the Women's Day March carry LGBT symbols this year. The organisers said they could not influence what signs the participants would bring along. [Last year](#), public attention was drawn to slogans and banners on LGBT rights - some calling the event the first Pride march in Central Asia.

The Women's Day March was [banned](#) on 5 March, on the basis of public health and safety arguments with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. Activists [believed](#) the arguments were fake, in lack of any recorded cases in the country, and were designed to suppress their voices. The ruling was eventually reversed the next day.

The march was held on 8 March, but was [attacked](#) by a large group of masked men, who forced the participants on the ground and took their posters and signs away. The police detained the participants of the march, not the attackers. 70 participants were taken to the police station. The detainees chanted their slogans and sang the national anthem at the station.

"Today they wanted to throw our rights into the trash. But now our march will take place at the Sverdlovsk district police station instead." - Mokhir Suyarkulova, an organiser of the march to [reporters](#)

The 8/365 Movement, organisers of the march, filed a lawsuit against the police for illegally detaining the participants and failing to protect them from the attackers. The Sverdlovsk District Court and the Bishkek Court initially sided with the police, and imposed an administrative fine on the 8/365 Movement. The Supreme Court however, overturned these rulings in November.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The bill mandating civil society organisations to report on their activities and funding, passed two parliamentary hearings, but was then removed from the parliament's agenda in June. Human rights defenders warned that the bill threatens freedom of association.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The government used the state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic to suppress human rights. A controversial bill on "manipulating information" limiting freedom of expression online and on social media was swiftly passed through three parliamentary hearings and was sent to the President in June. The move came ahead of the parliamentary elections, and considering that a number of journalists were attacked and assaulted earlier this year. In July, the President expressed his support for the bill, but sent it back to parliament for improvements. The President later resigned, and new elections will be held in 2021.

HOUSING

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many LGBT+ people, and particularly trans sex workers faced a sudden loss of income and could no longer cover rent costs. Many had no supportive families to return to and stay with. The government failed to support marginalised groups in this difficult time. NGOs organised safe housing for several LGBT+ people.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Smart Jaran Association and Kyrgyz Indigo published a study on trans people's experiences with legal gender recognition (LGR), identifying the following issues: long waiting times to receive a diagnosis, lack of public health coverage for medical tests, and inappropriate behavior by medical staff. Although LGR does not have a surgery requirement in Kyrgyzstan, some were denied LGR in lack of a surgery certificate.

Some were positive about the clerks in the registry office, saying they made an effort to be understanding, or to use the person's right name and pronouns. Others reported hostile attitudes, and feared violence from those in hearing distance. Many highlighted the issue of gendered personal numbers that do not change even after LGR.

On 1 August, a new version of the law "On acts of civil status" came into force, no longer making it mandatory for the authorities to approve LGR applications. A trans man was denied LGR on 12 November - the clerk cited the amendment as

grounds. Previously, trans people could change their legal gender with proof of a gender dysphoria diagnosis.

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

A documentary entitled 'Her Story' was made about the life of LBTQ women in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyz Indigo published a video, 'LGBT+ Answers Homophobic Questions', generating 95,000 views.

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

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