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Russia:
Treatment of the LGBTQI+ community by state and non-state actors

Asylos, April 2025

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Dear reader,

This report was researched, written and edited by Asylos, an international network of volunteers providing free-of-charge research for lawyers helping asylum seekers with their claim. Everyone engaged in Asylos believes that asylum matters and so do fair decisions, based on the best available knowledge. We believe that your work as a lawyer dealing with such cases is so important that it is a good thing to assist you for free - and we do that in our spare time.

Please note that Asylos' volunteer researchers are not legally certified experts in the matters we research and cannot be classified as expert witnesses. We compile primary and secondary information to address certain country-specific questions, but we do not provide assessment or analysis of the data. **Accordingly, this report is intended as background reference material for the asylum seeker and his/her counsel, to assist in their preparation of the case. It should not be submitted directly to asylum adjudicators.**

Further, the COI presented is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain, nor is it determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. While we strive to be as comprehensive as possible, no amount of research can ever provide an exhaustive picture of the situation. It is therefore important to note that the absence of information should not be taken as evidence that an issue does not exist.

Please help us track the impact of our work. It is our best reward and it helps us reward our funders. If you are reading this report or using any part of it to inform your case, please:

1. Go to **https://resources.asylos.eu/give-feedback/**
2. Insert the case reference number **CIS2024-07** and press submit.

If you want to, you can even leave a message for the volunteers who worked on the research.

Many thanks,

Your Asylos Team

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Research Timeframe

The earliest source dates from JULY 2019 and the most recent source dates from APRIL 2025.

Sources consulted

All (web) sources were consulted in OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2024. Additional research to update the report was conducted in APRIL 2025.

1. **International Organisations**
   - European Union Agency for Asylum
   - Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)
   - UN General Assembly
   - UN Human Rights Council
   - UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. **Governmental sources**
   - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
   - United States Department of State
   - United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
     The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body that monitors and reports on religious freedom abroad and makes policy recommendations to the U.S. president, secretary of state, and Congress.

3. **(I)NGOS and think tanks**
   - ACCORD
     ACCORD is an agency under the Austrian Red Cross that provides individual research on human rights, political and humanitarian situation in countries of origin of asylum seekers.
   - Amnesty International
   - Coming Out
     Coming Out describes itself as "a regional nonprofit initiative group founded in 2008 in St. Petersburg, Russia. We have been protecting the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and helping queer people in Russia live more peacefully. Our main goal is to establish equal legal and social rights for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Wemonitor discrimination to collect evidence of the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Russia and work with the authorities on cases of discrimination and violence."
   - Human Rights Watch
   - ILGA-Europe
     ILGA-Europe is the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. It is an advocacy group promoting the interests of

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lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people, at the European level. Its membership comprises more than 500 organisations from throughout Europe and Central Asia. The association enjoys consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council and participatory status at the Council of Europe.

- Memorial Human Rights Centre
  Memorial Human Rights Centre was a human rights organization that was dissolved by the Russian authorities in December 2021. It focused on the protection of human rights, mainly in conflict zones in and around Russia.
- North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group
  North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group describes itself as "a Russian NGO founded in 2017, which works with LGBTQ+ individuals in the republics of the North Caucasus. NC SOS assists victims of SOGIE-informed torture and abuse in fleeing the region and provides them with legal and social support."
- Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)
  The Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik is a German think tank in international relations and security studies. It advises the German parliament and the federal government on foreign and security policy issues, and also advises decision-makers in international organisations relevant to Germany, above all the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. It is incorporated as a foundation.

4. Media

- Al Jazeera
- NBC News
- Meduza
  Meduza is an international news outlet, publishing in Russian and English. Meduza states: "We value our independence and strive to be a reliable, trusted outlet for verified, unbiased information about Russia and the former Soviet Union […]"
- Parni PLUS
  Parni PLUS is a socio-educational LGBTQ+ media resource in Russian language whose annual audience reaches 3.5 million people.
- Rossiyskaya Gazeta
  Rossiyskaya Gazeta describes itself as a "a modern multimedia holding company that provides quality information on significant events of federal, regional and international scale 24 hours a day. It is the leader in terms of audience size in the segment of socio-political and business newspapers.
  'Rossiyskaya Gazeta' is a daily socio-political newspaper. Founder - Government of the Russian Federation. After publication in "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" laws and regulations come into force" [this description was originally in Russian at: https://rg.ru/pages/about. The description was translated using online translation software, therefore the accuracy cannot be 100% guaranteed.]
  CAUTION: The independence of this source was not possible to verify. We recommend that readers of this report undertake an independent source assessment if seeking to

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use information from this source. Although the independence of this source could not be verified, in this instance, Asylos has included some information from this source that was deemed to shed valuable light on the situation of the LGBTQI+ community in Russia.

- RT
  RT describes itself as "a global TV news network providing breaking stories, current affairs coverage, commentary and documentaries in ten languages: English, Arabic, Spanish, French, German, Serbian, Chinese, Hindi, Portuguese and Russian; it also includes sister multimedia news agency RUPTLY. […] RT covers stories overlooked by the mainstream media, provides alternative perspectives on current affairs, and acquaints its global audience with a Russian viewpoint on international events." CAUTION: Media Bias / Fact Check (MBFC), an independent website, founded in 2015 by Dave Van Zandt, rates the bias, factual accuracy, and credibility of media sources. MBFC concluded the following in relation to RT: "Overall, we rate RT Questionable based on promoting pro-Russian propaganda, conspiracy theories, numerous failed fact checks, and a lack of author transparency."
  Although the neutrality and credibility of this source are questionable, in this instance, Asylos has included some information from the source that was deemed to shed valuable light on the situation of the LGBTQI+ community in Russia.
- The Moscow Times
  The Moscow Times describes itself as an "independent English-language media outlet."

5. Academic Sources

- Sergey Katsuba, PhD Candidate/University College Dublin

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Findings are presented in reverse chronological order.

Findings

1. State treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Russia

A multitude of reports from international sources indicated that state actors in Russia sought to restrict LGBTQI+ rights. Sources refer to changes in the law in recent years that have curtailed LGBTQI+ rights, public hostility expressed by Russian public officials, and promotion of homophobia through state-owned media. Furthermore, sources document the suppression of free speech, state surveillance, arbitrary arrest and police brutality targeting LGBTQI+ people in Russia.

State attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people

In an interview with the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, he expressed his opinion on the recent election of President Trump in the United States.

- […] So, this split is motivated first of all by the departure from Christian values by the leadership of the Democratic party, in my view, by promoting without any limits the LGBTQ, whatever comes next, you know I mean one WC for any gender.

  I once found myself in Sweden where the OSCE was conducting a ministerial meeting and it was in a stadium specially arranged for the ministerial meeting, and I wanted to go out and I saw a WC sign, and I asked the guy who was accompanying me whether this was a gents or ladies. He said everybody. I don't want any of my friends to experience this themselves.

  And this is just of course a tiny manifestation of those divisions. But the Rust Belt America is of course not very much keen to embrace those values. The fanatic persistence with which those values were promoted to the population certainly made quite a number of people to decide for themselves that this is not what they want and they supported Donald Trump.

  So it's back to normalcy as we understand normalcy. We are Orthodox Christians. The values are basically the same though Catholicism now is more and more deviating toward the new trends which we cannot understand and which we would not accept.

  But the fact is that a normal administration without any, you know, unchristian ideas came to power and the reaction was such an explosion in the media, in the politics all over the world is very interesting and very telling […]".

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview to the US bloggers Mario Nawfal, Larry C.Johnson and Andrew Napolitano, Moscow, March 12, 2025", 12 March 2025, last accessed: 25 April 2025

In a Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, she expressed the Russian government's position regarding the closure of USAID.

- […] We also take satisfaction in the fact that we have withstood a horrendous storm of criticism, accusations, insults, and threats, culminating in the closure of USAID in Russia. [...] Colossal amounts were spent to promote pseudoscientific concepts related to LGBT issues, transgenderism, non-binarism, and quadroberism. Huge sums were allocated to stir public sentiment and the media, which undermined freedom of speech and turned into instruments of propaganda, a practice prohibited in the United States […]"

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova", 6 February 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

The US Department of State (USDOS) human rights report published in 2024 highlighted the link between "official promotion of homophobia" and societal stigma and discrimination.

- "LGBTQI+ persons reported significant societal stigma and discrimination, which some attributed to official promotion of homophobia, including campaigns on state-controlled media that derided LGBTQI+ persons as 'perverts' and conflated homosexuality with pedophilia."

USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April 2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

Recent legal developments relating to LGBTQI+ people in Russia

An April 2025 article in RT* reported on the designation of the Elton John AIDS Foundation as "undesirable" by the Russian Prosecutor General.

**See the Sources Consulted list for further information on potential bias and credibility issues relating to this source.*

- "The Office of the Russian Prosecutor General has designated the Elton John AIDS Foundation 'undesirable' in the country, alleging its involvement in harmful propaganda campaigns.

  In a statement released on Thursday, the agency accused the charity, founded by the British

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pop star in the early 1990s, of 'using humanitarian projects as a cover' for supporting Western economic pressure against Russia. It further asserted that the foundation's core pro-LGBTQ initiatives threaten traditional family values.

The Elton John AIDS Foundation operates as a dual entity registered in the UK and US. Its multimillion-dollar budget is primarily sourced from donations by Western billionaires and entertainment industry groups such as AEG Presents. Its stated mission focuses on providing support to individuals living with AIDS and promoting tolerance for sexual minorities.

John, 78, an openly gay, globally renowned songwriter and performer, was knighted in 1998 for his musical achievements and philanthropic efforts. The Russian statement claimed he 'plays along' with the agenda of imposing Western culture on other nations.

The designation as 'undesirable' prohibits the organization from functioning in Russia, providing for legal consequences for local residents and firms engaging in financial interactions with it. The Justice Ministry maintains a list of over 200 such groups, including prominent Western influence operations such as George Soros's Open Society Foundations, US think tank the German Marshall Fund, and the pro-NATO Atlantic Council […]"

RT, "Russia bans Elton John foundation", 3 April 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

In February 2025, The Moscow Times reported that the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia had violated the freedom of speech of six nationals who operated websites supporting LGBTQI+ people.

- "The European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday ruled that Russia violated the free speech rights of six nationals who operated websites supporting and advising LGBTQ people.

  The case was brought by six Russians who had been found guilty of administrative offenses under the country's law against 'promoting homosexuality among minors.' Russian authorities blocked access to their websites, webpages and online groups, arguing that their content was 'harmful for children.'

  The Strasbourg-based court said Russia's restrictions on content presenting same-sex relationships as equal to heterosexual ones violated the plaintiffs' freedom of expression, which is protected under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

  The court also ruled that Russian security services violated privacy rights by collecting user data from one of the plaintiffs on the Russian social media website VKontakte.

  In a separate ruling also issued Tuesday, the court found Russia failed to take action after the personal details of three gay people, including their sexual orientation, were published

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on social media in incidents it called 'homophobia-driven.' It ruled that Russia had not done enough to protect their privacy or prevent discrimination.

The European Court of Human Rights is part of the Council of Europe, which expelled Russia following its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Russia withdrew from the human rights convention later that year, but the court still has jurisdiction over cases brought against Russia before September 2022."

The Moscow Times, "European Court Rules Russia Violated Free Speech of LGBTQ+ Website Managers", 4 February 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

In January 2025, Meduza reported that the Russian Justice Ministry had filed a lawsuit to close a Russian organisation working on transgender rights.

- "The Moscow branch of Russia's Justice Ministry has filed a lawsuit to dissolve the Transgender Foundation, a Russian trans rights organization that has been active for over 15 years, state media reported.

  In February 2024, the ministry called for the organization's closure following a routine inspection, according to the group's director, Yael Demedetskaya. She told journalists that the inspection report cited quotes from participants of a 2017 seminar taken from social media. The ministry claimed the seminar involved discussions of 'basic moral and cultural norms, religious principles, the institution of marriage, and societal family values,' while accusing the group of 'actively promoting permissiveness, immorality, and selfishness.'

  Founded in 2007, the Transgender Foundation grew out of the website transgender.ru, which originally coordinated support group meetings for trans people in Russia. It later expanded to include a clinic offering medical support for those undergoing gender transitions. In 2017, the project's founders left Russia due to the risk of persecution."

Meduza, "Russian authorities seek dissolution of prominent transgender rights organization founded in 2007", 28 January 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

Citing various sources, the November 2024 EUAA report set out the consequences of Russia's adoption of the so-called "anti-gay propaganda law".

- "Institutional discrimination[197] and hostility toward LGBTIQ persons in Russia increased after the adoption of the so-called 'anti-gay propaganda' law in 2013, which banned the 'promotion of non-traditional sexual relations' to minors.[198] The law's vague wording allowed for selective enforcement, leading to censorship of positive or neutral expressions related to sexual orientation and gender identity. In December 2022, the 2013 legislation was expanded to prohibit the so-called 'gay propaganda' among adults, effectively outlawing

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any media or public representation of LGBTIQ relations as well as advocating for the rights of LGBTIQ people."

197 INHS, Authoritarian backlash on LGBTQ rights: a case of Russian anti LGBTQ laws and the increase in the level of hate crime that they triggered, 2 August 2024, url

198 UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova [A/HRC/54/54], 15 September 2023, url, para 37

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The same report referred to a law introduced in 2023 that prohibits gender-affirming medical treatment, healthcare, and gender recognition for transgender people.

- "In July 2023, a newly introduced law prohibited gender-affirming medical treatment,[201] health care for trans people,[202] as well as 'legal gender recognition for transgender people'.[203] The law also revoked previously registered marriages of transgender people, prohibited adoption and guardianship of children by transgender persons,[204] prohibited changes to gender markers in official documents, and permitted 'coercive medical interventions on intersex children.[205] In its 2024 ranking, ILGA-Europe placed Russia at the lowest level, noting that Russian legislation made 'legal gender recognition completely impossible.'[206] As reported by openDemocracy, 'intersex and gender nonconforming people' who tried to amend their documents prior to the legislation were unsuccessful as their applications were rejected by civil registry offices.[207] In January 2024, LGBTIQ rights NGO Sphere reported on three instances where police asked, called or sent summonses to transgender people to ask about circumstances in which they got gender transition certificates: two of these cases were recorded in Arkhangelsk region and one in St. Petersburg.[208]"

201 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url; AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319

202 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url

203 AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319

204 AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319; Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, n.d., url

205 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url

206 ILGA-Europe, 2024 Rainbow Map, n.d., url

207 openDemocracy, Russia's draconian new law is forcing trans people to flee the country, 26 July 2023, url

208 Sphere, Telegram, 19 January 2024, url

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

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A report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation noted that the Supreme Court banned the "international LGBT social movement" in November 2023.

- "In November 2023, following a closed-door hearing, the Supreme Court banned the 'international LGBT social movement' as 'extremist' and outlawed the rainbow flag as an 'extremist' symbol. […] At least three LGBT groups have closed for fear of prosecution."

  UN HRC, "Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova [A/HRC/57/59]", 13 September 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024

Similarly, the USDOS report on human rights practices published in 2024 referred to the ban on the "international LGBT social movement" as well as the expansion in December 2022 of laws that criminalise LGBTQI+ "propaganda".

- "On November 30, the Supreme Court granted a Ministry of Justice request to designate the 'international LGBT public movement' as an extremist organization. No such formal organization existed, leading to widespread concerns the designation could allow authorities to arbitrarily target any LGBTQI+ person or advocate for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons with criminal charges. During the year, authorities developed and issued implementing regulations for amendments adopted in December 2022 that broadened the law criminalizing the distribution of 'propaganda' of 'nontraditional sexual relations' to children. The law effectively limited the rights of free expression and assembly for citizens who wished to advocate publicly for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons or express the opinion that homosexuality was normal. The law completely banned such 'propaganda' among persons of all ages through media, including the internet, advertising, literature, and cinema."

  USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April 2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

In November 2023 Human Rights Watch reported on Russia's Supreme Court ruling, describing it as a "rejection of universal human rights".

- "With Russian LGBT rights organizations and activists already in jeopardy and the risk of prosecution exacerbated by the Supreme Court's 'extremism' ruling, countries around the world should provide safe haven to those forced to flee Russia in the face of criminal

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prosecution or other grave threats, Human Rights Watch said.

Other countries, and the European Union member states in particular, given their geographic proximity, should also enable activists who continue LGBT rights work in Russia to obtain long-term visas in case of emergency or to attend international events and meetings with colleagues, along with providing other support to Russian LGBT rights activists working inside Russia or from abroad.

'The assault on LGBT rights has become a symbol of Russia's rejection of universal human rights, as the government positions Russia as the defender of so-called traditional values in opposition to "the collective West,"' Lokshina [associate Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch] said. 'Russian LGBT people need support now more than ever.'"

Human Rights Watch, "Russia: Supreme Court Bans "LGBT Movement" as "Extremist"", 30 November 2023, last accessed: 29 November 2024

Surveillance, arrests, prosecutions and convictions of LGBTQI+ people

In March 2025, Amnesty International reported on the sentencing of Mark Kislitsyn, a transgender anti-war activist.

- "Reacting to the Russian Supreme Court decision to uphold the 12-year prison sentence of Russian transgender anti-war activist Mark Kislitsyn, Amnesty International's Russia Researcher, Natalia Prilutskaya, said: 'Imprisoning Mark Kislitsyn in a penal colony on 'treason' charges for sending US$ 10 to an account in Ukraine defies common sense. The real aim of this prosecution is not protecting state security but punishing a committed human rights activist for his anti-war position. His relentless persecution and ill-treatment, including denial of the medical care he needs as a transgender man and prolonged arbitrary periods in a punishment cell – mostly in solitary confinement -, proves this. We demand Mark Kislitsyn's immediate release and an end to the persecution of all anti-war activists in Russia." In a letter from prison, Mark Kislitsyn said: 'Those who are trying to intimidate me… can do me a little harm, but no matter what they do, they cannot make me renounce my beliefs, lose my sense of belonging to my country or even ruin my mood,' adding that he wants Russia 'to be a home – a home, not a prison.' Background: Mark Kislitsyn, an LGBTI activist in Moscow, protested against the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and criticized it on social media. On 28 February 2022, he was arrested and fined for his anti-war picket. He was arrested again on 12 July 2023 on charges of 'high treason' (Article 275 of the Russian Criminal Code). Russian authorities allege that, hours after the invasion, he sent 865 roubles (then approximately US$ 10) to a Ukrainian bank account, which they say was collecting 'donations for the needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.' On 23 December 2023, the Moscow City Court sentenced Mark Kislitsyn to 12 years in a penal colony. Mark Kislitsyn, a transgender man, was placed in the women's penal colony IK-9 in Novosibirsk (Western Siberia) and is forced to wear women's clothing. He is being denied access to gender-

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affirming hormonal treatment, putting his health at serious risk. Since November 2024, Mark Kislitsyn has repeatedly been arbitrarily placed in a punishment cell (so-called SHIZO) on spurious grounds. By the time his current punishment term expires on 17 March, he will have spent over 70 days in SHIZO. He is held in inhuman and degrading conditions including prolonged solitary confinement and numbing cold."

Amnesty International, "Russia: Lengthy prison term for transgender activist a punishment for anti-war stance", 12 March 2025, last accessed 3 April 2025

In March 2025, Al Jazeera reported on the detention and interrogation of a drag performer from Ufa in Russia.

- "In his early 20s, Mikhail* (not his real name), a gay man from the city of Ufa in Russia, was doing what he loved: drag performances. 'I was going on tour, to competitions; I met new artists and planned that drag would be the grandfather to my life,' he told Al Jazeera. At this point, Mikhail said, he lived his life openly and had not experienced much overt hostility from the day-to-day public. But in the last few years, things began to change. 'Concerns arose in the club industry,' he said. 'Restrictions were placed on the numbers of Ukrainian performers, a ban was placed on mentioning topics related to LGBT. In everyday life, there was simply eternal anxiety.' The final straw came when police targeted the venue Mikhail worked in for a raid. 'I was caught up in raids more than once, but my last raid was the roughest and most terrible,' he recalled. 'Afterwards followed two interrogations lasting eight or nine hours each, applying psychological pressure on me non-stop. After that, I was forced to leave the country in order to preserve my freedom.' Russia is not only waging war on Ukraine but also on what it sees as enemies within. The persecution of LGBTQ individuals, organisations and communities has intensified in the past few years as the Kremlin seeks to uphold 'traditional values'. The monitoring programme coordinator of the Russian LGBTQ organisation Sphere, who asked to remain anonymous, told Al Jazeera that prior to 2022, the majority of abuses targeted at LGBTQ individuals, 'concerned everyday and institutional discrimination, rather than direct repression'. Since amendments to the ban on 'gay propaganda' in 2022, followed by the ban on gender transition and designation of the 'international LGBT movement' as an 'extremist organisation' in 2023, now at least two-thirds of abuses take place at the hands of the authorities. President Vladimir Putin's government has portrayed the movement for LGBTQ rights as a foreign agenda to undermine Russia's traditional family values."

Al-Jazeera, "In Wartime Focus on Traditional Values Imperils Russian LGBTQ Community", 3 March 2025, last accessed 31 March 2025

In February 2025, The Moscow Times reported on the first ever prison sentence handed down under the ban on the "international LGBT movement".

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- “A court in Siberia handed down Russia’s first-ever prison sentence under the country’s ban on the so-called ‘international LGBT movement,’ the independent news website Mediazona reported Wednesday.

  Russia’s Supreme Court outlawed the ‘international LGBT movement’ as an ‘extremist’ organization in November 2023, adding it to the country’s lists of terrorist and banned organizations.

  On Jan. 30, the Yaysky District Court in the Kemerovo region convicted an unnamed individual of ‘LGBT extremism,’ sentencing them to six years in a maximum-security prison, according to Mediazona.

  The individual was already serving an 18-year sentence for child sex abuse, and the court combined the penalties into a total sentence of 15 years.

  ‘While serving the sentence, the resident of the town of Guryevsk… involved Russian citizens in the activities of the ‘international LGBT movement’ extremist organization,’ state media quoted the regional Federal Security Service (FSB) office as saying Wednesday.

  LGBTQ+ rights in Russia have steadily eroded since President Vladimir Putin signed a law banning ‘LGBT propaganda’ toward minors in 2013.”

  The Moscow Times, “Russia Issues First Prison Sentence for ‘LGBT Extremism’”, 19 February 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

Meduza published an article in January 2025 detailing a crackdown on the LGBTQ+ community in Russia following the Supreme Court's designation of the so-called "international LGBT social movement" as an "extremist organization" in November 2023.

- “[…] Conservative politicians like State Duma deputy Vitaly Milonov and United Russia party functionary Dmitry Chukraev have orchestrated their own operations against LGBTQ+ people. In early January 2025, Milonov bragged on social media about assisting the authorities in a raid on a ‘bordello.’ In a video shared on Telegram, he postured outside an apartment guarded by four large men, their faces blurred. Two weeks later, Chukraev joined the police on a similar raid in Yekaterinburg. The victim, a transgender sex worker from Uzbekistan, was later deported. ‘I want to say to those people, if I may put it this way, who remain here,’ Chukreev said after the raid, ‘you still have time to leave [Russia] voluntarily.’

  Activists like Yaroslav Mantsevich, deputy chairman of the Sverdlovsk ‘Union of Veterans,’ carry out similar work, assisting law enforcement in sting operations against Russia’s ‘extremist’ queer community. Mantsevich told Meduza that his group has ‘infiltrated closed chats and clubs’ that are popular among Yekaterinburg’s ‘non-traditional’ crowd.

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‘We have someone on the inside there. He’s our guy, leaking information so we can conduct a raid with the police,’ Mantsevich explained. ‘We’ve embedded two agents, and there are another six in the pipeline. These guys create social media profiles and Telegram nicknames. They gain trust, find out where the actual meetings happen, and try to get an invitation. The idea is to win their trust so they vouch for you.’ Mantsevich says his group is committed to shutting down LGBTQ+ parties entirely: ‘We need to make them understand they’re being watched, so they don’t even think of organizing them. To destroy this at the root.’

Faced with such pressure, some LGBTQ+ party organizers have resorted to sharing guest lists with law enforcement. A swing party organizer in eastern Russia told Meduza that he allows plainclothes officers to attend his events. He said he also granted the police access to his group’s private Telegram chat, where participants share their photographs, telephone numbers, and STI test results (a condition for attending the parties). ‘Staff from three different agencies are in the chat, but I won’t tell you which ones. If any guest catches their interest, I provide all the information I have: when they attended, what they did, what they like and prefer,’ the organizer added […]

Attorney Maxim Olenichev, who consults on ‘LGBT extremism’ cases, says the authorities likely have enough ‘evidence’ collected during raids on nightclubs to launch a sweeping campaign against staff and clientele alike. Human rights lawyer Ekaterina Dikovskaya told Meduza that she and her colleagues believe a large-scale felony investigation is underway.

If the ‘state’s war on sex,’ as one human rights activist described it, leads to mass arrests, it could have repercussions for Russia’s establishment. Event organizers and activists told Meduza that the police primarily target LGBTQ+ individuals who work for the government, especially in high-ranking positions. During raids, officers order public officials to identify themselves. They even look for officials’ family members. ‘Anybody’s mom work there? Anyone got a relative in uniform?’ police asked staff at a club in Tula. When the authorities threatened a private party organizer in Karelia with prison, they were especially interested in any ‘well-known figures’ on the guest list, including employees of the Internal Affairs Ministry, tax police, and Federal Penitentiary Service. Afterward, the region’s media outlets started smearing a local sports star.

[…] So far, few in Russia’s political establishment have suffered in the LGBTQ+ crackdown, but repressions will inevitably expand within government structures, says human rights activist Evi Chayka. ‘Because, now, all it takes to ruin someone is the word “fag,” and the person is removed, fired, their children are taken away, they’re sent to the front, institutionalized, or imprisoned,’ Chayka told Meduza. ‘Our organization has already heard [pleas for help] from people working in state propaganda, legislative assemblies, the Defense Ministry, and the Federal Security Service. [The crackdown] is also affecting many people in the prosecutor’s office and the presidential administration. And their numbers

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will only grow because their peers are so lost in hatred and corruption that they're all too happy to use these methods.'

How does Chayka react when she hears from panicking state officials? 'Coldly,' she admitted. 'Let's watch from the sidelines and hope they eat each other.'"

> Meduza, "'How do you even f—?' In Russia's anti-queer crackdown, police have spent years raiding nightclubs, private parties, and medical institutions. Now, the authorities have the data for another Great Terror.", 29 January 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

Another article published by Meduza in January 2025 reported on raids on gay clubs and parties and surveillance operations since the Russian Supreme Court declared a so-called "international LGBT public movement" to be an "extremist organization".

- "After the Russian Supreme Court declared the non-existent 'international LGBT public movement' an 'extremist organization' in November 2023, the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a real hunt for queer people. Gay club and party goers are being raided across the country. Homosexuals are being placed under surveillance by local police officers. Provocateurs are trying to identify members of the community who hide their identity. Total pressure is accompanied by the collection of personal data of queer people; at the same time, as Meduza special correspondent Liliya Yapparova found out, the authorities are discussing the possibility of launching a single electronic registry to monitor LGBT+ people. The emergence of such a database would create unlimited opportunities for blackmail and persecution of queer people. […] The security forces learn the details of those who stop attending public meetings through provocations. Operatives in Stavropol began inviting young men on 'fake dates,' Yaroslav Rasputin from the project 'Parni Plus' told Meduza, 'already on the third day after LGBTQ were recognized as 'extremists' ('fake dates' are not an innovation; read more in an old Meduza article). Thus, two dozen people were interrogated through dating apps: the police were primarily interested in 'their male acquaintances who live in couples.'

  Another of Meduza's interlocutors was detained in a similar manner in Dagestan. Having seen his chats on Hornet (a queer dating app), Center E agents asked him if he would like to continue these correspondences under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. 'LGBTQ people know you, they trust you," the young man recounts the words of the E-men. 'You'll invite them to your apartment, and there will already be officers waiting for you.'

  State Duma deputy Vitaly Milonov also arranges such provocations (according to his own statements): on January 2, 2025, he told how he 'came to visit' an LGBT person who, according to the parliamentarian, was engaged in sex work. While the police, called by Milonov, were driving to the 'brothel', that is, to the address of the victim of the raid, the deputy 'with his comrades' — four men whose faces he blurred — were waiting outside the

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door of her apartment.

Two weeks later, a similar raid took place in Yekaterinburg, this time involving another United Russia member, Dmitry Chukreev. A transgender sex worker, a citizen of Uzbekistan, who had been detained by police in a rented apartment, was expelled from the country. 'I want to tell those people, so to speak, who remained here,' Chukreev said after the raid. 'You have time to leave [Russia] voluntarily.'

With the recognition of LGBTQ people as 'extremists,' queer parties have gone underground, but the police manage to keep an eye on such events, including with the help of right-wing and patriotic activists. At least, this is what one of them told Meduza: Yaroslav Mantsevich, deputy chairman of the Sverdlovsk 'Union of Veterans,' who, according to him, organized the work of 'infiltrating closed chats and clubs' of Yekaterinburg supporters of 'non-traditional relationships.'

'We have a man sitting there. Our man. And he leaks information so that we and the police can carry out a raid,' Mantsevich tells Meduza. 'We have two such agents embedded, and six more are working in this direction. The guys register pages on social networks, nicknames on Telegram. They gain people's trust — they find out where the meetings are actually taking place — and they try to get an invitation. The processing should be such that they believe in you and vouch for you.'

Dmitry Chukreev, a member of the Sverdlovsk political council of United Russia, also told Meduza that he 'managed to penetrate the LGBT underground.' According to him, he helped the Ministry of Internal Affairs prepare for a raid on the Yekaterinburg gay club Fame — and then went there with the police and took a photo in front of a sign saying 'Master of Spanking' with a spanker in his hands. 'Now they gather in cottages. But the faggots will ruin any establishment,' Chukreev told Meduza. 'We monitor social networks; we have specially trained people to infiltrate closed chats.'

'Our task is to eliminate these parties altogether,' adds Mantsevich. 'So that they understand that they are being watched and do not even think about holding them. To nip it in the bud.'

[…] So far, only a few have suffered, but repressions against the LGBT community will inevitably grow within state structures, human rights activist Evi Chaika is convinced. 'Because now, to deal with someone, the word "faggot" is enough — and they will be removed, fired, have their children taken away, sent to the front, sent to a mental hospital, locked up,' says Chaika. 'People from big propaganda teams, from legislative assemblies, from the Ministry of Defense, from the FSB have already contacted our organization. Many in the prosecutor's office and the Presidential Administration are also falling under the article. Their number will only increase, because their colleagues, who have long been buried in hatred and theft, are actively using such tools.'

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Chaika is 'cold' about complaints from government employees, she admits to Meduza: 'Let's look at this from the outside and hope that they will swallow themselves up.'"

Meduza, "We Know You All Now Russian security forces are collecting data on LGBTQ people across the country. This could have very bad consequences. Meduza investigates", 27 January 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

A January 2025 Meduza article reported on the arrest and death in custody of a Russian businessman accused of operating a travel agency catering to LGBTQI+ tourists.

- "Andrey Kotov, a Russian businessman accused of running a travel agency catering to LGBTQ+ tourists, died in a Moscow jail days before the New Year. His arrest came amid a broader crackdown on queer people in Russia. The exact circumstances of his death, however, remain unclear."

Meduza, "A Russian travel agent accused of organizing LGBTQ tours died in a Moscow jail. Officials say it was suicide, but advocates aren't convinced.", 3 January 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

Citing various sources, the EUAA report of November 2024 reported on raids on LGBTQI+ friendly clubs across multiple cities and imposition of punishments under Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses on propaganda or public demonstration of symbols of extremist organisations, as well as relating to "membership of an extremist organisation".

- "On 30 November 2023, the Russian Supreme Court, in a closed hearing, ruled in favour of the MoJ lawsuit and recognised the 'international public LGBT movement' as an extremist organisation,[214] effectively banning it. The MoJ accused the movement 'of inciting social and religious discord',[215] even though no such organisation existed. The ruling of the Supreme Court raised concerns regarding the risk of arbitrary targeting of LGBTIQ persons and activists, as it could serve as a basis for administrative and criminal charges.[216] In the aftermath of the ruling, several LGBTIQ organisations and activists either stopped their activities or left Russia. Shortly after the Supreme Court's ruling, police conducted raids on LGBTIQ-friendly clubs across multiple cities, taking photos of owners' documents and intimidating them.[217] On 1 March 2024, the MoJ 'included the 'international public LGBT movement' and its structural divisions in the list of extremist organisations'.[218]

In mid-December 2023, authorities started imposing punishments under Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses on propaganda or public demonstration of symbols of extremist organisations for the display of rainbow-decorated objects as symbols of LGBT identity.[219] The first convictions on administrative charges were recorded in the first months of 2024 and included a punishment with a fine of 1 000 roubles [approximately 10 euros] for a man who displayed an LGBTIQ flag in a social media post by a court in Volgograd city and five-day administrative detention for a woman wearing earrings with an image of a rainbow

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in Nizhny Novgorod.[220] In the period between 31 January 2023 and 8 November 2024, Sova Research Center recorded 32 cases, in which people were prosecuted under Article 20.3 for the display of LGBTIQ symbols. In the cases described by the source, penalties varied from fines of 1 000 to 2 000 roubles [approximately 10 – 19 euros] to up to 15 days of arrest, with most of the described cases involving posts in social media and Telegram.[221] Furthermore, as noted by IStories, around 200 cases related to 'LGBT propaganda' (Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses[222]) were brought before the courts in 2023 and in the first half of 2024.[223]

The first use of criminal charges for 'membership in an extremist organisation' against people related to LGBTIQ activities was reported in March 2024 in Orenburg,[224] where the owner[225] and two employees of an LGBTIQ club were arrested and placed in pre-trial detention in a closed hearing.[226] No information on the outcome of the court trial was found within the time constraints of this query. In October 2024, a 22-old female owner of a gay club in Chita was charged with extremism and placed under house arrest, following a police raid at the club.[227] Two oral sources contacted by EUAA in November 2024 noted that at least five criminal cases for participation in an extremist organisation were initiated against LGBTIQ people: next to the cases described above, the criminal proceedings were reported in the cities of Ulyanovsk, Samara, and Kirov.[228] As of 1 August 2024, 25 persons and organisations providing LGBTIQ support were included to the list of 'foreign agents'.[229] Among the organisations designated as 'foreign agents' was Centre T, which focuses on the rights and welfare of transgender people[230] and the Rainbow Association, an LBGTIQ human rights organisation.[231]"

214 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319; AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319; SOVA, Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-Extremist Legislation in Russia in 2023, 2 May 2024, url

215 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url

216 USDOS, Russia 2023 Human Rights Report, 22 April 2024, url, p. 89

217 AI, The State of World Human Rights, April 2024, url, p. 319

218 SOVA, Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-Extremist Legislation in Russia in 2023, 2 May 2024, url

219 SOVA, Inappropriate Enforcement of Anti-Extremist Legislation in Russia in 2023, 2 May 2024, url

220 Reuters, Russia makes first convictions for 'LGBT extremism' following ban, 1 February 2024, url; HRW, Russia: First Convictions Under LGBT 'Extremist' Ruling, 15 February 2024, url

221 SOVA, Преследование по ч. 1 ст. 20.3 КоАП за символику ЛГБТ-движения. 2024 год [Prosecution under Article 20.3, Part 1 of the Administrative Code for symbols of the LGBT movement. 2024], 8 November 2024, url

222 OVD-Info, "An ideology for War": Why Putin Needs Queerphobia Today, 30 November 2023, url

223 IStories, The Traitors, the spies, the terrorists, 18 October 2024, url

224 France 24, Russia adds 'LGBT movement' to 'terrorist and extremist' blacklist, 22 March 2024, url; Conversation (The), Putin's Russia: first arrest under new anti-LGBT laws mark new era of repression, 8 April 2024, url

225 Conversation (The), Putin's Russia: first arrest under new anti-LGBT laws mark new era of repression, 8 April 2024, url

226 BBC News, Two arrested in Russia's first LGBTIQ+ extremism case, 20 March 2024, url

227 Novaya Gazeta Europe, Owner of Siberian gay club charged with 'extremism' and placed under house arrest, 28 October

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2024, url

228 Human rights lawyer, Email correspondence, 14 November 2024; Pavlov, I., Email correspondence, 15 November 2024

229 RFS, Russia: Independent media are the primary targets of Kremlin laws against "foreign agents" and "undesirable organisations", n.d., url

230 Human Rights Watch, Russia – Events of 2023, 11 January 2024, url

231 USDOS, Russia 2023 Human Rights Report, 22 April 2024, url, p. 90

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

A September 2024 report to the UN Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation reported on the arrest of a woman for sporting earrings displaying a rainbow.

- "A woman was sentenced to five days' administrative detention for wearing frog-shaped earrings displaying a rainbow."

UN HRC, "Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova [A/HRC/57/59]", 13 September 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024

Violations against LGBTQI+ people by state actors

A January 2025 Meduza article reported on the arrest and death in custody of a Russian businessman accused of operating a travel agency catering for LGBTQI+ tourists. While initial reports suggested he died by suicide, the article reports that human rights activists have raised questions surrounding the circumstances of his death.

- "Andrey Kotov, a Russian businessman accused of running a travel agency catering to LGBTQ+ tourists, died in a Moscow jail days before the New Year. His arrest came amid a broader crackdown on queer people in Russia. The exact circumstances of his death, however, remain unclear. While initial reports suggested suicide, human rights advocates and friends have contested this narrative, alleging that Kotov could have been either tortured to death or deliberately killed by the authorities. Here's what we know so far about the events surrounding Kotov's death.

  Andrey Kotov, a 48-year-old Moscow businessman and head of the travel agency Men Travel, was found dead in a Moscow pre-trial detention center on December 29. Russian prosecutors had charged Kotov with 'extremism,' accusing him of organizing tours for LGBTQ+ people.

  Initial reports from Moskovsky Komsomolets and the Telegram channels Baza and Mash, both of which have ties to law enforcement, claimed that Kotov died by suicide. A law

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enforcement source told RIA Novosti that 'cuts were found' on Kotov's body. The anonymous Telegram channel VChK-OGPU reported that a razor blade was recovered in his cell, but no suicide note was found.

Kotov's lawyer told the human rights group OVD-Info that investigators said Kotov took his own life around 4:00 a.m. local time. Moskovsky Komsomolets wrote that a cellmate discovered his body at that time. However, Eva Merkacheva, a member of Russia's Presidential Council for Human Rights, told TASS that Kotov was found dead at around 2:00 a.m.

Russia's Investigative Committee, the Federal Penitentiary Service, and the Prosecutor's Office have launched inquiries into Kotov's death. According to Kommersant, investigators are considering whether to bring charges against the remand prison's staff for negligence or abetting suicide.

However, the human rights project Gulagu.net challenged the suicide claims, asserting that as of yet, no evidence has been produced to support them. A source told the project that Kotov had been subjected to sexual violence, placed in a lower-status prisoner category, and extorted for money. According to Gulagu.net, guards 'intentionally created conditions to pressure Kotov,' spreading rumors among prisoners about his sexual orientation and his involvement in organizing LGBTQ+ tours. These claims have not been independently verified.

Journalist Alex Moor, a friend of Kotov, went even further, describing his death as a political 'murder.' Moor speculated that Kotov either died due to torture or was deliberately killed under Kremlin orders. Kotov was arrested on November 30 and charged with organizing and participating in an 'extremist organization.' Investigators alleged that his travel club, Men Travel, organized trips that involved 'LGBT propaganda.' Kotov denied the charges, stating his company focused solely on tourism. He claimed that during his detention, he was tortured with electric shocks to extract testimony. Kotov was remanded in custody on December 2 and placed in solitary confinement almost immediately. The detention center reportedly refused to accept packages with his daily medications.

A week before his death, investigators allegedly brought additional charges against Kotov, accusing him of producing child pornography. According to Moskovsky Komsomolets, these accusations were based on claims that Kotov had secretly filmed minors in locker rooms. These allegations remain unverified, and Kotov's defense team has not confirmed the existence of a second case."

Meduza, 3 January 2025, "A Russian travel agent accused of organizing LGBTQ tours died in a Moscow jail. Officials say it was suicide, but advocates aren't convinced.", 3 January 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025

Citing other sources, a November 2024 report by the EUAA noted that arbitrary detentions of LGBTQI+ people were a form of intimidation deployed by Russian state actors.

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- “Sources noted intimidation faced by LGBTIQ people by state actors in Russia, such as arbitrary detentions and ‘false accusations of criminal activity’.”

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

A July 2024 report to the UN General Assembly mentioned the case of A.A. v. Russia, in which it was alleged that Grozny police executed a number of men on the grounds of homosexuality in 2017.

- “In A.A. v. Russia, 29 it was alleged that in 2017 Grozny police executed between 27 and 56 men suspected of involvement in terrorism or of being homosexual. Relatives complained to the Chechen Investigative Committee that law enforcement agencies had not investigated, requesting that a criminal case be opened. Criminal cases were opened against some of the abducted men. In 2021, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed that there had been a breach of the right to life: when State agents were allegedly responsible, there must be a fully fledged investigation.”

UN General Assembly, "Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Morris Tidball-Binz; Investigating and preventing unlawful deaths of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender-diverse and intersex persons [A/79/172]", 17 July 2024, last accessed: 29 October 2024

In a joint submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Coming Out & North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group suggested that gay men have been targeted for forced military conscription in the context of Russia’s war with Ukraine.

- “A new form of extrajudicial execution, specific for gay men or men whom the authorities targeted for having sexual relations with other men, is forced military conscription within the framework of Russia’s war in Ukraine.”

Authors: Coming Out & North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group, Publisher: UN OHCHR, “Input on Killing of LGBTIQ+ persons in Russia”, June 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The USDOS report on human rights practices published in 2024 reported on violence, attacks, threats and harassment of LGBTQI+ people by Russian state actors.

- “There were reports state actors committed violence against LGBTQI+ individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity [...] There were reports government agents attacked, harassed, and threatened LGBTQI+ activists. There were instances of nonstate actor violence targeting LGBTQI+ persons and of police often failing to respond adequately

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to such incidents. For example, media reported that on February 15, Moscow airport police arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared Idris Arsamikov as he returned to the Netherlands after attending his father's funeral in Chechnya. In 2018, Arsamikov fled Russia following his detention and torture by Chechen police in connection with his presumed homosexuality. According to media, Shelkovsky District police in Chechnya refused to disclose his whereabouts, and the Investigative Committee in Chechnya refused to investigate his disappearance [...]

The Sphere Foundation claimed law enforcement authorities did not always protect the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and were sometimes the source of violence themselves. As a result, LGBTQI+ individuals had extremely low levels of trust in courts and police."

USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April 2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

2. Non-state actor treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Russia

The sources consulted indicate that LGBTQI+ people in Russia face negative attitudes and multiple forms of discrimination and violence at the hands of non-state actors, including subjection to conversion therapy, discrimination in the workplace and education, and barriers to accessing healthcare. The sources consulted report that LGBTQI+ people have been subject to various hate crimes, including murder, physical violence, extortion, and threats of physical violence by non-state actors.

Societal attitudes towards the LGBTQI+ community

Russian Newspaper "Rossiyskaya Gazeta"* published an article discussing the perceived global backlash against the proliferation of gender identities beyond male and female. It frames this as a return to "traditional values" and "common sense," with several commentators offering their perspectives.

**See the Sources Consulted list for further information regarding the difficulty in verifying the independence of this source.*

- "Thousands of compatriots want to return to Russia, and foreigners are asking to do so. The reasons are unbearable - their children are offered a sex change, and adults are offered experiments with their human nature and 18 (52, 70) sexes to choose from. They are asking to come to us as a country of traditional values, which in many other places have to be protected by law. Prime Minister of Slovakia Robert Fico said that he is ready to introduce a rule about only two sexes into the Constitution of his country: 'We cannot allow a man, a woman and someone who thinks that he is a helicopter, a dog or a cat to be next to each

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other.' But will certain minorities begin to revise the common sense that has returned to humanity? This is what our conversation with experts from 'RG' is about […]

[…] Natalia Narotchnitskaya, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Member of the Council of the Foundation for Fundamental Research: I believed that sooner or later someone in the West would return to the rehabilitation of Christian values. Because the delusion of 18 genders, gender reassignment and other rampant 'equality' of entities (the existence of which is beyond the comprehension of a normal person) put an end to human civilization. After all, what is the ideological essence of the LGBT agenda (*a movement banned in the Russian Federation)? Together with the actual abolition of the Old Testament, it abolished human nature. The Old Testament says: 'If a man lies with a male, as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.' That is, they committed an abomination before the face of God. And if the founders of LGBT activity (banned in the Russian Federation) spoke about 'freedom of choice', like, let the individual decide for himself who to be with, and answer to God, then their ideological successors went further. They started talking and established in some countries the equality of legislative rights of all genders, of which in particularly advanced countries there are already up to 70. And it was dangerous to discuss this. The absolutely totalitarian approach won, when not only a refusal, but also cautious criticism of LGBT values (banned in the Russian Federation) deprived people of the right to citizenship and freedom. The fact that their employment contracts were broken, they were forbidden to teach or convey their point of view through the media space became the 'new normal', which was not discussed.

Ilya Slobodchikov, psychologist, PhD: I think the decision to recognize two genders as legitimate is absolutely sound. After all, no matter how anyone entertains themselves with the topic of multiple genders, whether we want it or not, from a biological, medical point of view we have two genders - male and female. And this is a very smart move - to normalize the understanding of gender. The starting point must be extremely specific, and it has been chosen - this is a biological, medical view of gender […]

[…] Anatoly Bublik, leader of the 'Put' Dombym' movement: My wife and I took our four daughters from Germany to escape Russophobia and the LGBT agenda (* the movement is banned in Russia). It was easier for us than for those who are moving today. Sometimes they are released without means of support. In half of the EU countries, if you even hint that you are moving to Russia, you are immediately labeled an 'enemy'. In Canada and the US, such immigrants are prosecuted legally, in Germany, Sweden and Norway their rights are partially deprived. They hit the vulnerable - they take away children and block bank accounts. Thank God, in Italy, Spain and Greece the dogma of the family as the main institution of society has still survived. It is easier to move from there, but the number of obstacles is growing there too. It's simple - competition for people begins. And foreigners will continue to move to Russia. Another question is whether it will be able to accept everyone. This is a challenge. And Russia has a chance to respond to this challenge by gathering the people. The one who

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left in the 90s for the American dream or sausage, but is leaving the dream country because of the substitution or cancellation of those values that remained here in Russia."

Original text in Russian:

"В Россию хотят вернуться тысячи соотечественников и просятся иностранцы. Причины из серии невыносимых - их детям предлагают перемену пола, а взрослым - эксперименты со своей человеческой природой и 18 (52, 70) полов на выбор. К нам просятся как в страну традиционных ценностей, которые во многих других местах приходится защищать законом. Премьер-министр Словакии Роберт Фицо заявил, что готов внести в Конституцию своей страны норму только о двух полах: "Мы не можем допустить, чтобы рядом были мужчина, женщина и кто-то, кто думает, что он вертолет, собака или кошка". Но не начнут ли известные меньшинства ревизию вернувшегося к человечеству здравомыслия? Об этом наш разговор с экспертами "РГ" […]

[…] Наталия Нарочницкая, доктор исторических наук, член Совета фонда фундаментальных исследований: Я верила, что рано или поздно кто-то на Западе вернется к реабилитации христианских ценностей. Потому как морок 18 гендеров, смены полов и прочего разгула "равенства" сущностей (существование которых не укладывается в голове нормального человека) ставили крест на человеческой цивилизации. Ведь в чем идейная суть ЛГБТ-повестки (*движение, запрещенное в РФ)? Вместе с фактической отменой Ветхого Завета она отменяла природу человека. В Ветхом Завете сказано: "Если кто ляжет с мужчиною, как с женщиною, то оба они сделали мерзость: да будут преданы смерти, кровь их на них". То есть они совершали мерзость перед лицом Бога. И если родоначальники ЛГБТ-активности (запрещена в РФ) говорили о "свободе выбора", мол, пусть личность сама решает, с кем ей быть, ей же отвечать перед Богом, то их идейные продолжатели пошли дальше. Они заговорили и утвердили в части стран равенство законодательных прав всех гендеров, которых в особо продвинутых странах уже начитывается до 70. И дискутировать по этому поводу было опасно. Победил абсолютно тоталитарный подход, когда не то что отказ - осторожная критика ЛГБТ-ценностей (запрещены в РФ) лишала людей права на гражданство и свободы. То же, что с ними разрывали трудовые контракты, запрещали преподавать или доносить свою точку зрения через медийное пространство, стало "новой нормальностью", которая не обсуждалась.

Илья Слободчиков, психолог, доктор наук: Я думаю, решение признать законными два пола абсолютно здраво. Ведь как бы кто ни развлекался на тему множества полов, хотим мы этого или не хотим, с биологической, медицинской точки зрения у нас два пола -

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мужской и женский. И это очень умный ход - нормативизировать понимание пола. Точка отсчета должна быть предельно конкретной, и она выбрана - это биологический, медицинский взгляд на пол.

[…] Анатолий Бублик, лидер движения "Путь домой": Мы с женой увозили из ФРГ от русофобии и ЛГБТ-повестки (* движение запрещено в РФ) четырех дочерей. Нам было проще, чем тем, кто сегодня переезжает. Их порой выпускают без средств к существованию. В половине стран ЕС стоит заикнуться, что ты переезжаешь в Россию, лейбл "врага" клеится сразу. В Канаде и США такие переселенцы преследуются юридически, в ФРГ, Швеции и Норвегии частично поражаются в правах. Бьют по уязвимому - отнимают детей и блокируют счета в банках. Слава богу, в Италии, Испании, Греции догма семьи как главного института общества еще сохранилась. Оттуда легче переехать, но и там растет число преград. Все просто - начинается конкуренция за людей. И иностранцы продолжат перебираться в Россию. Другое дело, сможет ли она всех принять. Это вызов. И у России есть шанс на этот вызов ответить собиранием народа. Того, который в 90-е уезжал за американской мечтой или колбасой, а покидает страну-мечту из-за подмены или отмены тех ценностей, что остались здесь, в России.

Rossiyskaya Gazeta, “He and she. There is no third option” [original title in Russian: “Он и она. Третьего не дано”], 9 February 2025, last accessed: 23 April 2025 [This is an in-house translation by a Russian speaker]

An academic paper published in the February 2023 addressed public attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Russia.

- “The introduction of the discriminatory legislation and the discourse surrounding it potentially affected public opinion on LGBTQ. After 2013 the attitudes toward homosexual people became significantly more negative. In 2021 Levada Center published a report on ‘The attitude of Russians to the LGBT Community.’ The most common attitude among the population is ‘disgust or fear’ (38% in 2021 compared to 21% before 2013), at the same time the proportion of people who are indifferent almost halved (26% in 2015 compared to 45% before 2013). The majority of people deny the right to enter same-sex relationships (68% in 2021). This is a representation of a hostile environment that is partially created by the introduction of the ‘gay propaganda law’ (‘The attitude of Russians to the LGBT community,’ Citation, no date).”

Katsuba, S., “The decade of violence: A comprehensive analysis of hate crimes against LGBTQ in Russia in the era of the “Gay Propaganda Law”” *Victims & Offenders*, *19*(3), 395–418., February 2023, last accessed: 29 November 2024

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Discrimination and violations against LGBTQI+ people by non-state actors

In March 2025, Human Right Watch reported rising xenophobic harassment and violence against migrants and other individuals, including LGBTQI+ persons in Russia.

- "Human Rights Watch received access to the NVMP's [Nazi Video Monitoring Project] database of more than 1,400 videos of hate-motivated physical attacks downloaded from various Telegram channels maintained by xenophobic and neo-Nazi groups. In the database the videos were categorized by the type of victims, type of attack, place of attack (where geolocation was possible), date of publication, and channel of publication. While Human Rights Watch could not independently confirm the dates of the attacks, the date of publication of the videos by the xenophobic and neo-Nazi groups on Telegram corresponds to the uptick of violence against Central Asian migrants and contributing to an environment of fear for the migrants. The victims were tagged by the NVMP's analytical team as Central Asians, alcohol and drug users, migrants, people from the Caucasus, Roma people, non-Russians, Asians, Muslims, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer (LGBTIQ), homeless people, couriers, street cleaners, antifa, children, regular citizens, and non-conformists. Each of the 1,400 videos also had a description of what can be seen, as well as the original text that accompanied these videos when posted on the Telegram channels. Of these 426 were clearly tagged as targeting Central Asians and migrants, with incidents ranging from coordinated physical assaults to property damage."

  Human Rights Watch, "Living in fear and humiliation: Rising Xenophobic Harassment and Violence towards Central Asian Migrants in Russia", 17 March 2025, last accessed: 8 April 2025

Citing a number of sources, the EUAA report of November 2024 stated that LGBTQI+ people in Russia were subjected to conversion therapy.

- "Sources noted that LGBTIQ people in Russia were subjected to so-called conversion therapy,[209] including through deceit and abduction organised by parents[210] and relatives.[211] In March 2024, independent media Current Time reported that at least 12 institutions and private practices located in Moscow, Moscow region, Rostov region, the North Caucasus and other regions in Russia were offering LGBTIQ conversion therapy services.[212]

  209 Reuters, Russian sexologists to target homosexuality, other 'disorders' under new rules , 29 June 2023, url; Moscow Times (The), Conversion Therapy Is a Symptom of Russia's Crisis. I Know, I Survived It, 4 March 2024, url

  210 Washington Post (The), In Russia, parents are having gay children abducted to be 'cured', 22 December 2023, url

  211 BBC News, Tricked into conversion therapy in Russia for being trans, 28 July 2024, url

  212 Current Time, Журналистское расследование впервые запечатлело сеансы конверсионной терапии ЛГБТК-

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персон в России. Главное из фильма проекта "Система" [Investigative journalism captures for the first time the conversion therapy sessions of LGBTQ persons in Russia. Highlights from the film of the Sistema project], 4 March 2024, url

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The USDOS report on human rights practices published in 2024 indicated that there was "significant" stigma and discrimination against LGBTQI+ people in Russian society.

- "LGBTQI+ persons reported significant societal stigma and discrimination, which some attributed to official promotion of homophobia, including campaigns on state-controlled media that derided LGBTQI+ persons as 'perverts' and conflated homosexuality with pedophilia."

USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April 2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

The same report referred to the experiences of LGBTQI+ people in the workplace, education and healthcare settings.

- "Activists asserted most LGBTQI+ persons hid their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace due to fear of losing their jobs or homes, as well as the risk of violence. LGBTQI+ students reported discrimination at schools and universities. Medical practitioners reportedly continued to limit or deny LGBTQI+ persons health services due to intolerance and prejudice; the Russian LGBT Network reported LGBTQI+ individuals seeking health care often encountered strong negative reactions and the presumption they were mentally ill. There were reports LGBTQI+ persons faced discrimination in parental rights. According to the 2022 Coming Out/Sphere report, LGBTQI+ individuals reported experiencing an increase in discrimination following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine."

USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April 2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

A February 2024 report by ILGA Europe referred to hate crimes including murder, physical violence and extortion perpetrated against LGBTQI+ people in Russia in 2023.

- "Hate crimes against LGBTI people, including murder, physical violence and extortion were committed again this year [...]. UCD Dublin published 'A decade of violence: monitoring antiLGBTQ hate crimes in Russia', documenting over 1000 attacks between 2010-2020. Coming Out published its 2022 annual report finding unprecedented crackdowns on civil society and human rights and highlighting the impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Russian LGBT people. Several people became victims of fake dates again this year. One such victim told Coming Out privately that a group of young men had assaulted him on a fake date

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and also accused him of paedophilia."

ILGA Europe, "ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, AND INTERSEX PEOPLE COVERING THE PERIOD OF JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023", February 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The same report addressed the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on LGBTQI+ people.

- "In May, Coming Out and Sphere published a joint report on the situation of the LGBT+ community in Russia, showing that the Russian invasion of Ukraine and mobilisation had a strong negative impact on the psychological state of Russian LGBTQ+ people, their economic situation, and access to medication (mainly gender affirmative hormone therapy and antidepressants). Almost every LGBT respondent has noticed an increase in homophobia and transphobia in the public sphere. One in five respondents (21%) faced threats of physical violence because of their sexual orientation or trans identity in 2022. 15% had experienced domestic violence. 14% have experienced online harassment. LGBTQ+ people encounter diverse violence most frequently in the North Caucasus, the Urals, the Far East, and Siberia. Everyday homophobia and transphobia (discrimination in the workplace/study, conflicts with others, denial of services) are common in the Southern Federal District. Trans persons are the most vulnerable of all respondents. They experience almost all types of violence and discrimination more often than others; war and mobilisation have also affected them more than others."

ILGA Europe, "ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, AND INTERSEX PEOPLE COVERING THE PERIOD OF JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023", February 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

An academic paper published in February 2023 described developments in Russia since the early 2000s that have led to an increase in the level of violence against LGBTQI+ people.

- "First, the verbal rejection of the LGBTQ was described by Healey (2017) and Eremin and Petrovich-Belkin (2022) who analyzed the formation of the negative public discourse on LGBTQ in Russia in the early 2000s and an increasing number of legal initiatives concerning the 'protection of morals' between 2004 and 2010 as well as Sleptcov (2018) who described the discourse of political homophobia as a state strategy in Russia. Second, discrimination through legal means began with a number of regional laws that preceded and made it easier to enact the federal/national "gay propaganda law" (Johnson, 2011). The rise of violence followed immediately after, it was recorded in the following year (Kondakov, 2019, p. 952). Finally, the increase in the level of violence led to consequences such as the infamous 'gay purges' in Chechnya in 2017 – systematic authorized persecution of LGBTQ in the region that resulted in around 100 people being detained on suspicion of being gay and at least 3 dying (Novaya Gazeta, 2017). Another wave of 'gay purges' happened in late 2018 when 40 people

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were detained and 2 killed (Russian LGBT Network, 2019)."

> Katsuba, S., "The decade of violence: A comprehensive analysis of hate crimes against LGBTQ in Russia in the era of the "Gay Propaganda Law"" *Victims & Offenders*, *19*(3), 395–418., February 2023, last accessed: 29 November 2024

Drawing on analysis of court rulings of criminal cases relating to violence against LGBTQI+ people, the same academic paper discussed hate crime trends between 2010 - 2020.

- "By applying the criteria of hate crimes from legal literature, the research was able to investigate such documents over the course of 11 years – from 2010 to 2020. The following main figures were identified: 1056 crimes committed were committed against 853 victims with 365 cases resulting in fatalities. The data is broken down further, it shows an increasing trend in the number of hate crimes against LGBTQ. Besides that, the number of crimes after 2013 (the year when the 'gay propaganda law' entered into force) is higher and remains at a higher level until the end of the decade. In 2014 for example, the number is three times higher than in 2010. [...] The number of crimes is the number of times a criminal offense was recognized by the courts. It is possible that several different crimes were committed against one individual, which will bring a number of qualifications into the case with one victim only (a very common example is a murder (Article 105) combined with theft (Article 158) – in that case, the perpetrator will be accused of committing two crimes). Conversely, in a single case there might be several victims. Therefore, the number of victims can be considered as a proxy for the number of cases while the number of crimes represents the number of convictions. All three numbers (crimes, victims, and fatalities) show a similar trend and are consistent throughout 11 years which illustrates the credibility of this categorization."

> Katsuba, S., "The decade of violence: A comprehensive analysis of hate crimes against LGBTQ in Russia in the era of the "Gay Propaganda Law"" *Victims & Offenders*, *19*(3), 395–418., February 2023, last accessed: 29 November 2024

3. Access to protection for LGBTQI+ people in Russia

Multiple sources point to significant shortcomings in the investigation and punishment of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people in Russia, and the "hate" element of the crime is often dismissed in court, or unacknowledged in investigations. Sources suggest that members of the LGBTQI+ community have little trust in the authorities to provide protection or accountability for the hate crimes they are subjected to.

Citing a number of sources, the November 2024 EUAA report noted failures in investigating and punishing hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.

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- "As noted by USDOS, the police failed to investigate instances of extrajudicial violence towards LBGTIQ people in Russia.[234] While no recent data on violence towards LGBTIQ people was found within the time constraints of this query, a 2022 article from the independent outlet Bumaga quoted lawyer Sergey Golubok stating that he was unaware of any hate-motivated crimes against LGBTIQ people being effectively investigated.[235] In June 2024, NGOs Coming out and SOS North Caucasus noted that hate crimes in Russia were not 'effectively investigated and punished', with the police refusing to include the hate motive in the investigations of murders of LGBTIQ people.[236]"

234 USDOS, Russia 2023 Human Rights Report, 22 April 2024, url, p. 86

235 Bumaga, How hate crimes are committed against LGBT people in St Petersburg and how investigations into these crimes conclude, 13 May 2022, url

236 Coming out and SOS North Caucasus, Input on Killing of LGBTIQ+ persons in Russia, June 2024, url, pp. 2-3

EUAA, "The Russian Federation: Major developments regarding human rights and military service [Q82-2024]", 21 November 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

In a joint submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Coming Out & North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group reported on the failure of Russian law enforcement to effectively investigate and punish hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.

- "Russia has a serious problem with hate crimes, which are not effectively investigated and punished. Currently, there is no specific action plan in Russia aimed at combating hate crimes. A characteristic element of a hate crime is the motive: the perpetrator chooses the object of the crime precisely because of his or her membership or perceived membership in a certain social group. However, the motive of hate is not taken into account in the majority of cases. Failure to recognize the hate motive contributes to the sense of impunity that remains with the perpetrators and encourages them to commit new crimes. [...] LGBTQ+ people have little trust for Russian law enforcement, Coming Out' surveys have been reporting a consistently low level of credibility two years in a row. Among those who have been victims of hate crimes in 2023, as little as 14% reported to the police. Last year, the proportion was 20%, which can speak to the fact that victims of hate crimes are reporting to the police even less frequently. Out of those who reported to the police, 44% were pressured by the police. More than a third (34%) of those who have reached out to the police stated that their case was denied, 29% noted that they are not aware of the status of their case since it had been filed. Among those who have been victims of hate crimes but did not report to the police, the most common reason for doing so was doubt that reporting to the police will be effective (78%). Fear of police officers was another common (73%) reason among our respondents, which is rather valid, judging by their experience with law enforcement. Approximately 50% of those who refused to go to the police, explained that they decided to do so in fear of being outed which could have happened along their filing a case; 23% mentioned fearing that their offender could have found out about them having reported to the police. Police inaction on hate crimes, their aggression towards LGBTIQ+ people and low levels of trust in them contribute

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significantly to the failure to respect and protect the right to life of LGBTIQ+ people."

Authors: Coming Out & North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group, Publisher: UN OHCHR, "Input on Killing of LGBTIQ+ persons in Russia", June 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The same report referred to the fact that the hate motive is not acknowledged in investigations and convictions for murders of LGBTQI+ people.

- "The Russian practice of investigations and convictions for confirmed murders of LGBTQ+ people demonstrates a condoning attitude towards this type of crime and a refusal to take into account the hate motive. *In January 2020, a transgender woman who was a sex worker and a migrant from Tajikistan was killed in St. Petersburg. A former client, Yanovsky, sawed her body into pieces and threw it into the Mga River. The criminal case was opened as an ordinary murder case without a hate motive. The Vasileostrovsky District Court of St. Petersburg sentenced Yanovsky to one year and ten months in a general regime colony. 3 The court found Yanovsky guilty of murder committed while exceeding the limits of necessary self-defense (Part 1 of Article 108 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). As a result, Yanovsky was released in the courtroom: the time spent in custody was deducted from his sentence.*"

Authors: Coming Out & North Caucasus SOS Crisis Group, Publisher: UN OHCHR, "Input on Killing of LGBTIQ+ persons in Russia", June 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The USDOS report on human rights practices published in 2024 reported that police often failed to adequately respond to instances of non-state actor violence against LGBTQI+ people and were sometimes the source of violence.

- "There were instances of nonstate actor violence targeting LGBTQI+ persons and of police often failing to respond adequately to such incidents. For example, media reported that on February 15, Moscow airport police arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared Idris Arsamikov as he returned to the Netherlands after attending his father's funeral in Chechnya. In 2018, Arsamikov fled Russia following his detention and torture by Chechen police in connection with his presumed homosexuality. According to media, Shelkovsky District police in Chechnya refused to disclose his whereabouts, and the Investigative Committee in Chechnya refused to investigate his disappearance [...]

The Sphere Foundation claimed law enforcement authorities did not always protect the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and were sometimes the source of violence themselves. As a result, LGBTQI+ individuals had extremely low levels of trust in courts and police."

USDOS, "2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia", 23 April

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2024, last accessed: 28 October 2024

ILGA Europe reported on challenges in the effective investigation of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people in Russia, noting that the authorities failed to classify them as hate crimes.

- "Hate crimes against LGBTI people, including murder, physical violence and extortion were committed again this year [...]. The authorities failed to classify them as anti-LGBTI hate crimes. [...] Coming Out filed a case at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concerning the failure of the authorities to investigate the death of Yelena Grigoryeva, a well-known LGBT activist who was murdered in St. Petersburg in 2019. The case was rejected. In August 2023, the media reported that Yelena's murderer had been buried with honours in St Petersburg, after dying in the war with Ukraine. Russia recognised the view of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as binding for the first time. In 2016, a homophobic attack was committed against two women in St. Petersburg. It was not investigated. CEDAW recognised this as a violation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Russia paid 30,000 rubles each to the two women, recognising the view of CEDAW."

ILGA Europe, "ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, AND INTERSEX PEOPLE COVERING THE PERIOD OF JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023", February 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

The same report referred to recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to strengthen protection for LGBTQI+ people in Russia.

- "In December, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe reviewed Russia's implementation of ECHR decisions against Russia on violations of the rights of LGBT people. It noted deterioration of LGBTI rights in Russia, stressed further the need to change legislation, notably by making discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation a circumstance aggravating a crime, and repealing the 'antipropaganda' laws; to organise awareness-raising activities promoting protection of the human rights of LGBTI persons; to facilitate issuance of the Supreme Court's guidance to the judges and instructions from the relevant executive bodies' to their staff aimed at such protection; and to ensure effective policing and security of the LGBTI public events."

ILGA Europe, "ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS, AND INTERSEX PEOPLE COVERING THE PERIOD OF JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023", February 2024, last accessed: 29 November 2024

In October 2023, Parni PLUS reported on the situation of a transgender person who was charged with "LGBT propaganda" after going to the police to file a report after they had been assaulted and

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robbed.

- "Back in 2019, Eva underwent a transgender transition and changed the gender marker on her documents. Recently, she has been earning money by providing sex services. 'In August, a client came to me who wanted to use my sexual services. We did everything, and then he started demanding my money back. Of course, I refused. In response, he started beating me and stole two of my phones. I filed a report with the police, they found him and now he is being tried for robbery. Several more hearings are planned,' Eva said in an interview with 'Beware, News.' Two months later, the police summoned Eva, but no longer as a victim, but as an accused. She was charged with 'LGBT propaganda' and disseminating information about 'gender reassignment' among minors on the Internet (6.21, part 4), as well as engaging in 'prostitution' (6.11). As a result, an administrative protocol was drawn up. The document states that information about the provision of intimate services by the girl is available to Internet users, including minors. 'This data is provocative and violates the norms and traditional values of the family,' the case materials say."

  Parni PLUS, "In Krasnodar, a client a client beat up a transgender sex worker", October 2023, last accessed: 23 April 2025

In an NBC article covering the murder of LGBTQI+ activist Yelena Grigoryeva, a board member of the Russian LGBT Network pointed to the reluctance of the police to investigate hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.

- "A Russian LGBTQ activist, Yelena Grigoryeva, was fatally stabbed in St. Petersburg Sunday night after her name was listed on a website that encourages people to 'hunt' LGBTQ activists, inspired by the torture-themed film 'Saw.' [...]

  Police in St. Petersburg confirmed she had reported being threatened repeatedly, but said the threats had not seemed a risk to her life and were related to domestic conflicts with people she knew, the RBC media portal reported. [...]

  Asked whether the police would investigate, Zakharova [communications manager and a board member of the Russian LGBT Network] said, 'Unfortunately, I don't think so, and I'm sure that even if it is a homophobic hate crime, the hate motive is not going to be taken into account. We have this situation in Russia — even when you go to police to file cases, police can refuse to register the case,' Zakharova added. 'Yes, people are very worried — well I would say that the fact that this website exists for so long with out any reaction from the authorities is very telling; it tells a lot about homophobia in Russians' institutional levels.' Even as the Russian government, led by President Vladimir Putin, criminalizes LGBTQ activism and cracks down on 'homosexual propaganda,' a recent survey suggests that average Russians are much less united against the LGBTQ community than the state. A May poll showed that 43 percent of respondents said 'gays and lesbians should enjoy the same rights as other citizens,' according to The Moscow Times, an independent

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English-language daily. Russia faces little international blowback for its regression on LGBTQ rights. This month the European Court of Human Rights ordered the country to pay just 42,500 euros ($47,400) in damages to LGBTQ groups whose registration the state had refused."

NBC News, "Russian LGBTQ activist is killed after being listed on gay-hunting website", July 2019, last accessed: 23 April 2025

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Asylos is a network of volunteers providing research assistance to lawyers who represent refugees. Founded in 2010, it was created to respond to a dysfunctional asylum system in Europe that fails to live up to its own legal and ethical standards. Asylos provides case-related information to lawyers in countries where legal aid is non-existent or does not cover the cost of researching up-to-date evidence documenting rights violations or persecution in specific cases. The research concerns conditions in the claimant's country of origin or other facts pertinent to an individual case. For more information, please visit our website www.asylos.org.

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About this Report

This document has been produced by Asylos in response to specific questions posed by an asylum lawyer working on a claim. It is based on publicly accessible written sources as well as consultations with relevant experts. All translations provided in the research report are written by Asylos researchers, unless specified otherwise. This document does not pretend to be exhaustive. Asylum lawyers may use the information in this report to support their clients in asylum and international protection procedures, however neither this document nor excerpts of it may be published online without authorisation from Asylos.

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