

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1218
Land:	Iran
Kilde:	UK Home Office
Titel:	Country Policy and Information Note. Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
Udgivet:	December 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	15. juni 2026



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

Version 5.0

December 2025

Executive summary

The Islamic Penal Code criminalises all same-sex sexual activity. The penalties range from flogging to the death penalty, depending on the nature of the sexual activity.

There are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. The law does not recognise LGBT+ couples. A same-sex couple cannot legally marry, have a civil union, or adopt children unless one of the couple undergoes a legal sex change.

People engaging in consensual same-sex sexual acts, or who are known to belong to the LGBT+ community, are convicted on the pretext of more severe criminal charges. Reports indicate that convictions resulting in floggings, prison sentences, and death sentences in such cases continue.

The government permits, and may subsidise, gender reassignment surgery for people who are formally diagnosed as having a gender identity disorder. The process is invasive, and the surgery is often of a sub-standard quality. A trans person's identity is recognised only after undergoing surgery, sterilisation, and a lengthy legal process. Trans people post-surgery generally experience greater acceptance by both the state and society, including better access to services.

LGBT+ people form a PSG in Iran within the meaning of the Refugee Convention.

An LGBT+ person living openly in Iran, and who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery which has been legally recognised, is likely to be at risk of treatment from both state and non-state actors which is sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition, or by an accumulation of various measures, that it amounts to persecution or serious harm.

Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to obtain protection or internally relocate.

A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is unlikely to obtain protection from the state or internally relocate.

Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

[Back to Contents](#)

Contents

Executive summary	2
Assessment	5
About the assessment	5
1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals	5
1.1 Credibility	5
1.2 Exclusion	6
2. Convention reason(s)	6
3. Risk	7
3.1 Risk from the state	7
3.2 Risk from non-state actors	9
4. Protection	10
5. Internal relocation	10
6. Certification	11
Country information	12
About the country information	12
7. Legal context	12
7.1 Constitution and Islamic law (Sharia)	12
7.2 Same-sex sexual relations – penal code	13
7.3 Livat (penetrative sex between men)	15
7.4 Tafkhiz	15
7.5 Musaheqeh (sexual acts between women)	16
7.6 Other laws affecting LGBT+ people	17
7.7 Trans people	19
7.8 Military exemption	20
8. State attitudes and treatment	21
8.1 Government position and rhetoric	21
8.2 Discrimination and discriminatory policy	23
8.3 Threats, harassment and violence	26
8.4 Arrests and detention	27
8.5 Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty	31
8.6 ‘Corrective/conversion’ therapy	36
8.7 State protection	39
9. Access to, and treatment in, services	41
9.1 Education and employment	41
9.2 Healthcare	43

9.3 Gender reassignment surgery	44
10. Societal treatment.....	48
10.1 Societal attitudes	48
10.2 Threats, harassment and violence	50
10.3 Treatment by family members	51
11. LGBT+ groups and activity	53
11.1 Presence	53
11.2 Online community/activity	54
11.3 Meeting places	56
11.4 Civil society and NGOs.....	58
Research methodology.....	61
Terms of Reference.....	62
Bibliography	64
Sources cited	64
Sources consulted but not cited.....	70
Version control and feedback	72
Feedback to the Home Office	72
Independent Advisory Group on Country Information.....	72

Assessment

Section updated: 19 December 2025

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the country information, refugee / human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by state or non-state actors because of the person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is likely or not to be certified as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

This note provides an assessment of the situation of actual and perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans and people of other minority sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+).

The sources cited within this CPIN use varying terminology to refer to individuals whose sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is 'non-conforming'. For example, some sources refer collectively to 'LBTQI+ people', an abbreviation for the English terms 'Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer and Intersex'. The + represents other gender identities.¹ An [article published by BBC News on 19 April 2023](#), notes that queer is offensive to some, and for others it is their preferred way to describe their sexual orientation/ gender identity. While CPIT has quoted sources directly, using their own terminology, throughout this CPIN, when not directly quoting a source, CPIT has used the term 'LGBT+', an abbreviation for 'lesbian, gay, bi, trans', with the + representing all other gender identities.

Sources often refer to LGBT+ people collectively, but the experiences of each group may differ. Where information is available, the note will refer to and consider the treatment of each group discretely. It should also be noted that no information amongst the sources consulted referred specifically to intersex persons. Therefore, this note considers their circumstances as similar to that of the other groups.

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

For general guidance on considering claims made by LGBT+ persons, including the relevance of discretion, decision makers must refer to the Asylum Instructions on [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity](#)

¹ SRC, [Iran: Situation of Women ...](#) (footnote 142 on page 24), 18 November 2023

[issues in the asylum claim](#), and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed membership of a particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 This is because LGBT+ people in Iran share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed **and** have a distinct identity in

Iran because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.

- 2.1.3 Although LGBT+ form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3. Risk

3.1 Risk from the state

- 3.1.1 An LGBT+ person living openly in Iran, and who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery which has been legally recognised, is likely to be at risk of treatment from state actors which is sufficiently serious that it amounts to persecution or serious harm.
- 3.1.2 An LGBT+ person who is also a human rights activist, promoting either LGBT+ or other human rights in Iran, may be more likely to attract the adverse attention of the state.
- 3.1.3 If an LGBT+ person is not 'out' about, or conceals, their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, decision makers must consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum.
- 3.1.4 The Islamic Penal Code criminalises all same-sex sexual activity. Sexual acts between women are punishable by flogging, while for sexual acts between men, the penalties range from flogging to the death penalty, depending on the nature of the sexual activity. Where a person has undergone a flogging punishment three times for same-sex sexual activity, a fourth 'offence' is punishable by the death penalty. Other same-sex acts that are criminalised, which apply to both men and women, include same-sex 'kissing or touching as a result of lust' which are also punishable by flogging (not, however, the death penalty for repeat 'offences'). The penalties all also apply to children under the age of 18 as the age of criminal responsibility in Iran is 8.7 years (9 lunar years) for girls and 14.6 years (15 lunar years) for boys (see [Legal context](#)).
- 3.1.5 There are no laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics. The law also does not recognise LGBT+ couples or their families, meaning that a same-sex couple cannot legally marry, have a civil union, or adopt children without being criminalised unless one of the couple undergoes gender reassignment surgery (see [Discrimination and discriminatory policy](#)).
- 3.1.6 The law also provides for punishments, which may include flogging or imprisonment, of those deemed to have committed a harām (sinful) act. This may include women and men who do not dress or act in the expected or culturally accepted manner for their sex (see [Other laws affecting LGBT+ people](#) and [Arrests and detention](#)).
- 3.1.7 Homosexuality and other non-conforming gender identities, including being

trans, are seen as gender identity disorders that should be ‘treated’, ‘cured’, or ‘corrected’ either through ‘corrective/conversion’ therapies, or through gender reassignment surgery (GRS). Some medical practices specialise in conversion therapies which may take the form of talking and behavioural therapies, forced hormone injections, electroconvulsive therapies, or forced exposure to pornographic material while masturbating or taking certain drugs. A study by an Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network found that of 210 respondents, approximately 50% had been offered a corrective therapy, 39% of whom were under 18 years of age. Approximately 21% of all respondents had agreed or were forced to agree, and 61% of those who underwent reparative therapy claimed to have had no choice in the matter (see [Corrective/conversion therapy](#) and [Gender reassignment surgery](#)).

- 3.1.8 Public officials and state-affiliated media have consistently denounced same-sex relationships, describing them as deviant, inhuman and sick (see [Government position and rhetoric](#)). Iranian authorities have reportedly been known to monitor LGBT+ people or raid their homes. Various sources indicate that LGBT+ people who have not undergone gender reassignment surgery face arrest, detention, threats and humiliation, and physical or sexual violence, including rape, by the security forces and members of the judiciary on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation based on appearance and demeanour. Human rights groups state that abuses by state actors are underreported due to victims’ fear of further abuse (see [Threats, harassment and violence](#) and [Arrests and detention](#)).
- 3.1.9 Sources report that people engaging in consensual same-sex sexual acts, or who are known to belong to the LGBT+ community, are convicted on the pretext of more severe criminal charges such as rape, ‘corruption on earth’, or human trafficking. Reports indicate that convictions resulting in floggings, prison sentences, and death sentences in such cases continue, and that executions were carried out for ‘sodomy by force’ in January 2022 (see [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#)).
- 3.1.10 While Iran does not publish official statistics or information on executions, estimates suggest that more than 4,000 people have been executed for homosexual acts since the 1979 Islamic revolution. In respect of recent years, one source noted at least six men to have been executed for sodomy between 2015 and 2020, while another documented 10 instances of the death penalty being given for same-sex acts in 2020. It is noted by sources that there are no reliable statistics on the number of people prosecuted on charges relating to sexual orientation or gender identity, making it challenging to accurately quantify the scale and extent of prosecutions of LGBT+ people (see [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#)).
- 3.1.11 LGBT+ people experience discrimination and violence in educational, employment, social services, and healthcare settings on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity, including harassment, humiliation, and physical, sexual, and mental abuse. There are also reports of LGBT+ individuals feeling pressured to engage in unlawful sex work, with a 2023 study finding that 80 percent of transgender women in Tehran were doing so, making this population vulnerable to sex trafficking (see [Access to, and treatment in, services](#)).
- 3.1.12 The government permits, and may subsidise, gender reassignment surgery

for people who are formally diagnosed as having a gender identity disorder. The medical assessment procedures are invasive and conflate a variety of sexual and gender identities with trans-identity, and surgeries are often of a sub-standard quality. A transgender person's identity is recognised only after undergoing surgery, hormone therapy, sterilisation, and a lengthy legal process. Some LGBT+ people, including those not identifying as trans, feel pressured or forced to undergo gender reassignment surgery to avoid discrimination and/or being criminalised. While surgery is not a guarantee of acceptance or safety, transgender people generally experience greater acceptance by both the state and society, including better access to services post-surgery (see [Gender reassignment surgery](#), [Discrimination and discriminatory policy](#), [Access to, and treatment in, services](#) and [Societal attitudes](#)).

- 3.1.13 Gay men and trans people may apply for exemption from compulsory military service, or at least a combative role, as they are deemed to have a mental illness. However, the exemption process is lengthy and onerous. Obtaining an exemption on this basis also means revealing a person's sexuality or gender identity which has in some instances resulted in legal and/or familial consequences in the form of discrimination, arrest, or abuse. This may prevent some gay men and trans individuals from claiming a military exemption (see [Military exemption](#) and the [Country Policy and Information Note on Iran: Military service](#)).
- 3.1.14 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3.2 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.2.1 An LGBT+ person living openly in Iran, and who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery which has been legally recognised, is likely to be at risk of treatment from non-state actors which is sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition, or by an accumulation of various measures, that it amounts to persecution or serious harm.
- 3.2.2 If an LGBT+ person is not 'out' about, or conceals, their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, decision makers must consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum.
- 3.2.3 Societal attitudes continue to be generally homophobic, with stigma and shame cast upon people based upon their non-conforming sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Conservative and ethnic minority communities, such as in Iran's Kurdish region, are generally less accepting of the LGBT+ community; reports suggest that younger people, particularly in progressive parts of major cities, are becoming more tolerant. LGBT+ people face familial and societal discrimination, harassment, violence, and pressure to conform to cultural and religious norms, for example, in terms of appearance and behaviour, or being forced to enter a heterosexual marriage and to produce children (see [Societal treatment](#)).
- 3.2.4 A lack of comprehensive and up-to-date information makes it difficult to accurately quantify both the scale and severity of ill-treatment of LGBT+

individuals by societal actors but sources continue to report that they face threats, harassment, being forced into heterosexual marriage and to produce children (or threats of such), pressure to undergo gender reassignment surgery, violence, sexual violence including rape, and ‘honour’ killings by non-state actors, including family members, on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Military exemption cards indirectly disclose the person’s sexual orientation or gender identity and may put them at further risk of violence and discrimination for ‘outing’ them and/or because being gay or trans is classed as a mental illness (see [Societal treatment](#) and [Military exemption](#)).

- 3.2.5 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Protection

- 4.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to obtain protection.
- 4.1.2 A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is unlikely to obtain protection from the state. This is because, in general, the state is able but not willing to offer effective protection.
- 4.1.3 There are no laws to protect LGBT+ people against discrimination or hate crimes and LGBT+ individuals are excluded from the general protection of the law under the constitution. The Islamic Penal Code offers leniency towards perpetrators of crimes, including murder, against people they believed to have committed a ‘hadd’ crime, which includes homosexual acts. Sexual minorities are reluctant to report crimes against them for fear of revealing their sexual orientation and being criminalised (see [Legal context](#) and [State protection](#)).
- 4.1.4 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or rogue state actor, they are unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.3 Internal relocation is unlikely to be reasonable for LGBT+ people because openly LGBT+ people face hostility from both the state and society throughout the country and there is unlikely to be any place in Iran to which an LGBT+ person could reasonably relocate.
- 5.1.4 Internal relocation will not be an option if it depends on the person concealing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression in

the proposed new location, if the (or one of the) reason(s) for concealment is a fear of persecution. Each case must be considered on its facts.

- 5.1.5 For further guidance on internal relocation and factors to consider, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment which, as stated in the [About the assessment](#), is the guide to the current objective conditions.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **12 October 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Some country information quoted in this CPIN was originally published in languages other than English and has been translated using free online translation tools. Translated information is clearly signposted throughout.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

[Back to Contents](#)

7. Legal context

7.1 Constitution and Islamic law (Sharia)

- 7.1.1 An article published on 1 August 2015 by The Iran Primer, which provides a collection of essays by 50 of the world's top scholars on Iran², stated: 'The 1979 revolution erased six decades of modernization of Iran's judicial system. Theocrats moved swiftly to overhaul the legal system to incorporate Islamic Sharia law. Criminal and civil codes were modified; family laws ... faced the biggest changes. The new Islamic penal code included controversial articles ...'³
- 7.1.2 According to an entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, '[u]nder the 1979 constitution all judges must base their decisions on the sharia (Islamic law).'⁴
- 7.1.3 A report published in September 2023 by 6Rang, an Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network⁵ (September 2023 6Rang report), stated: 'Article 4 of the constitution of the Islamic Republic set out Sharia as the primary source of laws and regulations. This is fundamental to the core of the regime and in any revisions made to the Constitution.'⁶
- 7.1.4 In September 2023, a report published by All Human Rights for All in Iran, an Austrian non-governmental organisation (NGO)⁷, and submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee ahead of its 139th session and periodic review of Iran, stated:

² TWI, [The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and US Policy](#), 3 June 2013

³ The Iran Primer, [The Islamic Judiciary](#), 1 August 2015

⁴ Avery, P.W. and Afary, J., Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Justice of Iran](#), 22 October 2025

⁵ 6Rang, [About us](#), no date

⁶ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (page 15), September 2023

⁷ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (page 2), September 2023

‘Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran guarantees that all people enjoy equal rights, “whatever the ethnic group or tribe to which they belong” and that “color, race, language, and the like, do not bestow any privilege”. However, the Constitution lacks an explicit provision recognizing sexual orientation and/or gender identity as protected characteristics. Article 20 of the constitution states that “All citizens of the country, both men and women, equally enjoy the protection of the law and enjoy all human, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, in conformity with Islamic criteria”. The stipulation of “Islamic criteria” excludes lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans individuals from this legal guarantee and same-sex relations are penalized under the Iranian “Islamic Penal Code.”’⁸

- 7.1.5 On 24 July 2023, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for the Australian Government (DFAT) published its ‘Iran Country Information Report’, based on their ‘knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in Iran and elsewhere. It [also] takes into account relevant and credible open source reports’⁹. It stated: ‘The constitution protects freedom of belief for all Iranians at article 23, freedom for the media at article 24, freedom of association at Article 26 and freedom of assembly at Article 27. These freedoms are conditioned by the requirement that they are not “detrimental to the principles of Islam”. Topics deemed sensitive by the government include ... LGBTI rights ...’¹⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

7.2 Same-sex sexual relations – penal code

- 7.2.1 A report entitled ‘Silencing protests: Official hate speech against LGBT people as a tool of suppression’ was published by 6Rang, in March 2023 (March 2023 6Rang report). The report stated: ‘Iran’s Islamic Penal Code criminalizes same-sex sexual acts with penalties ranging from flogging to the death penalty (Articles 233-240). These penalties also apply to children under the age of 18 as the age of criminal responsibility in Iran is nine lunar years [8.7 years¹¹] for girls and 15 lunar years [14.6 years¹²] for boys (Article 147).’¹³
- 7.2.2 In February 2025, Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), a Norway-based ‘non-profit, human rights organization’¹⁴, and ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty), a French professional association that campaigns against the death penalty^{15 16}, jointly published an ‘Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024’. The report stated: ‘The current Islamic Penal Code (IPC) came into force in 2013. Section Two sets out four types of punishments ...’¹⁷
- 7.2.3 On 4 April 2014, the Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre (IHRDC), a non-profit organisation of human rights scholars and lawyers, which focuses

⁸ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (paragraph 43), September 2023

⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 1.4), 24 July 2023

¹⁰ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.103), 24 July 2023

¹¹ HRW, [Iran: Child Protection Law Positive, but Insufficient](#), 23 June 2020

¹² HRW, [Iran: Child Protection Law Positive, but Insufficient](#), 23 June 2020

¹³ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people as a tool of suppression](#) (page 7), March 2023

¹⁴ IHRNGO, [About Us](#), no date

¹⁵ ECPM, [Discover ECPM: About Us](#), no date

¹⁶ ECPM, [Discover ECPM: History](#), no date

¹⁷ IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#) (page 32), February 2025

on human rights in Iran¹⁸, published English translations of the ‘new’ Islamic Penal Code including Book One, which covers preliminary provisions and definitions, stating:

‘Article 14 – Punishments provided in this law are divided into four categories:

‘(a) Hadd

‘(b) Qisas

‘(c) Diya

‘(d) Ta’zir’¹⁹

- 7.2.4 On 26 August 2024, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) published a report on the legal and social situation of LGBTIQ people as of June 2024 (BAMF 2024 report). The report, which cited various sources, stated that ‘... homosexual acts ... are classified as sexual offences and fall under the so-called hadd punishments, which can include corporal punishment such as flogging up to the death penalty. The legislation distinguishes between different homosexual acts, and the respective sentence is determined accordingly ...’²⁰

N.B. the information quoted above, and all other COI quoted from this source throughout the rest of this CPIN was originally published in German. See [About the country information](#) for further information about the method of translation.

- 7.2.5 In June 2024, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) published a report entitled ‘Iran - Country Focus’. The report, which cited various sources, stated:

‘Hadd (plural hudud, fixed corporal punishments) is “a punishment fixed in the Quran and hadith for crimes considered to be against the rights of God”. The “measure, degree, and method” of hadd punishments are fixed in Sharia. Hadd punishments imply death penalty and other severe punishments ... As the nature of hadd crimes is determined by Sharia, these offences cannot be commuted or pardoned. Hadd punishments require strict application of evidence, including testimonies by eyewitnesses. Hadd crimes are covered in the Book Two of the Penal Code.

‘... [H]add punishments included ... sodomy and homosexual acts between men (levat, livat), lesbian relationship (mosaheqeh, mosahaqa) ... [and] false accusation of fornication/sodomy (qazf) ...’²¹

- 7.2.6 Freedom House published its 2024 and 2025 Freedom in the World reports, covering events of 2023 and 2024, on 29 February 2024 and 26 February 2025, respectively. Both reports stated: ‘The penal code criminalizes all sexual relations outside of traditional marriage, and Iran is among the few countries where individuals can be put to death for consensual same-sex conduct.’^{22 23} For more information about what constitutes a ‘traditional

¹⁸ IHRDC, [Mission](#), no date

¹⁹ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

²⁰ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 1.1), 26 August 2024

²¹ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 3.2.1.), June 2024

²² Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025](#) (section F4), 26 February 2025

²³ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2024](#) (section F4), 29 February 2024

marriage' in Iran, including information about temporary marriage, which is recognised in Iran, see Country Policy and Information Note, [Iran: Women - Early and forced marriage](#).

- 7.2.7 Amnesty International (AI) published its 2024 and 2025 annual human rights reports, covering events of 2023 and 2024, on 23 April 2024 and 28 April 2025, respectively. Both reports noted that consensual same-sex sexual relations remained criminalised in Iran, with penalties ranging from flogging to the death penalty^{24 25}.

[Back to Contents](#)

7.3 Livat (penetrative sex between men)

- 7.3.1 The IHRDC English translation of the Islamic Penal Code, published in 2014, states:

'Article 233 – Livat is defined as penetration of a man's sex organ (penis), up to the point of circumcision, into another male person's anus.

'Article 234 – The hadd punishment for livat shall be the death penalty for the insertive/active party if he has committed livat by using force, coercion, or in cases where he meets the conditions for ihsan; otherwise, he shall be sentenced to one hundred lashes. The hadd punishment for the receptive/passive party, in any case (whether or not he meets the conditions for ihsan) shall be the death penalty.

'Note 1 - If the insertive/active party is a non-Muslim and the receptive/passive party is a Muslim, the hadd punishment for the insertive/active party shall be the death penalty.

'Note 2 - Ihsan is defined as a status that a man is married to a permanent and pubescent wife and whilst he has been sane and pubescent has had a vaginal intercourse with the same wife while she was pubescent, and he can have an intercourse with her in the same way (vaginal) whenever he so wishes.'²⁶

- 7.3.2 The IHRNGO and ECPM 2024 report on the death penalty in Iran stated:

'Article 233 of the IPC defines lavat (sodomy) as male sexual intercourse and Article 234 sets out its punishments. In male homosexual relations, the law distinguishes between what it describes as the "active party" and "passive party." The death penalty is imposed on the "active party" if he is married or it is rape, but the "passive party" receives the death penalty regardless of their marital status. According to Note 1 to Article 234, a non-Muslim "active party" in a sexual act with a Muslim party shall also receive the death penalty.'²⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

7.4 Tafkhiz

- 7.4.1 The IHRDC English translation of the Islamic Penal Code, published in 2014, states:

²⁴ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2024](#) (page 204), 23 April 2024

²⁵ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2025](#) (page 204), 28 April 2025

²⁶ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

²⁷ IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#) (page 33), February 2025

‘Article 235 – Tafkhiz is defined as putting a man’s sex organ (penis) between the thighs or buttocks of another male person.

‘Note - A penetration (of a penis into another male person’s anus) that does not reach the point of circumcision shall be regarded as tafkhiz.

‘Article 236 – In the case of tafkhiz, the hadd punishment for the active and passive party shall be one hundred lashes and it shall make no difference whether or not the offender meets the conditions of ihsan (mentioned in note 2 of article 234), or whether or not (the offender) has resorted to coercion.

‘Note - If the active party is a non-Muslim and the passive party is a Muslim, the hadd punishment for the active party shall be the death penalty.’²⁸

- 7.4.2 The IHRNGO and ECPM 2024 report on the death penalty in Iran stated: ‘Tafkhiz (intercrural/thigh sex) is defined in Article 235 and according to Article 236, the punishment for both parties is 100 lashes. However, the Note to the Article stipulates that the “active party” shall receive the death penalty if he is non-Muslim and the “passive party” is Muslim.’²⁹

- 7.4.3 A report on the death penalty published by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), ‘an umbrella organization of human rights NGOs’³⁰, published in November 2023, stated: ‘Intercrural sex, i.e. sexual conduct between two men without penetration, is punished with 100 lashes for the first three convictions, and death for the fourth conviction (Article 136) [see [Other laws affecting LGBT+ people](#)].’³¹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.5 Musaheqeh (sexual acts between women)

- 7.5.1 The IHRDC English translation of the Islamic Penal Code, published in 2014, states:

‘Article 238 – Musaheqeh is defined as where a female person puts her sex organ on the sex organ of another person of the same sex.

‘Article 239 – The hadd punishment for musaheqeh shall be one hundred lashes.

‘Article 240 – Regarding the hadd punishment for musaheqeh, there is no difference between the active or passive parties or between Muslims and non-Muslims, or between a person that meets the conditions for ihsan and a person who does not, and also whether or not (the offender) has resorted to coercion.’³²

- 7.5.2 The IHRNGO and ECPM 2024 report on the death penalty in Iran stated: ‘Defined in Article 238, in cases of mosahegheh (lesbian sex), no distinction is made in punishments set for the “active” or “passive” parties, their religion, marital status or consent (Article 240). Article 239 sets out the punishment for mosahegheh as 100 lashes. However, as it is a hadd crime, it is punishable by death on the fourth occasion if “offenders” are sentenced and receive the lashing punishment on the first three occasions. This has not

²⁸ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

²⁹ IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#) (page 33), February 2025

³⁰ Eci.net, [Source description: International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\)](#), 16 July 2020

³¹ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [The Iran Notes ...](#) (page 2), November 2023

³² IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

been specifically stated in law but can be inferred from the provisions of Article 136 of the IPC on “Repeat Offences” [see [Other laws affecting LGBT+ people](#)] ...’³³

[Back to Contents](#)

7.6 Other laws affecting LGBT+ people

7.6.1 The IHRDC 2014 English translation of the Islamic Penal Code states:

‘Article 237 – Homosexual acts of a male person in cases other than livat and tafkhiz, such as kissing or touching as a result of lust, shall be punishable by thirty-one to seventy-four lashes of ta’zir punishment [crimes that do not have a pre-determined definition and punishment under Shari’a law³⁴] of the sixth grade [See Article 19 of the [IPC](#) for the 8 degrees (grades) of punishment].

‘Note 1- This article shall be equally applicable in the case of a female person.

‘Note 2- This article shall not be applicable in the cases punishable by a hadd punishment under Shari’a rules.’³⁵

7.6.2 From Book One of the Penal Code, the IHRDC English translation states:

‘Article 136 – Where anyone commits the same offense punishable by hadd three times, and each time the hadd punishment is executed upon him/her, the hadd punishment on the fourth occasion shall be the death penalty.’³⁶

7.6.3 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, noted that Article 136 ‘... does not apply to acts falling under Article 237.’³⁷

7.6.4 From Book Five of the Penal Code, the IHRDC English translation states:

‘Article 638 – Anyone in public places and roads who openly commits a harām (sinful) act, in addition to the punishment provided for the act, shall be sentenced to two months’ imprisonment or up to 74 lashes; and if they commit an act that is not punishable but violates public prudency, they shall only be sentenced to ten days to two months’ imprisonment or up to 74 lashes.

‘Note - Women, who appear in public places and roads without wearing an Islamic hijab, shall be sentenced to ten days to two months’ imprisonment or a fine of fifty thousand to five hundred [thousand] Rials [approximately £0.89 to £9³⁸].’³⁹

7.6.5 A public statement, published by Amnesty International on 17 May 2021, which noted Article 638 to fall under ta’zir crimes, stated:

‘... [The] note to Article 638 ... imposes compulsory veiling on women and girls over the age of nine, and makes women and girls who fail to cover their head and comply with a strict Islamic dress code in public liable to imprisonment and/or fines. These provisions put women who may wish to

³³ IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#) (page 33), February 2025

³⁴ AI, [Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man ...](#) (footnote 9 on page 4), 17 May 2021

³⁵ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

³⁶ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014

³⁷ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 3.1), 26 August 2024

³⁸ XE.com, [Currency Converter – Iranian Rials to British Pounds](#), 28 October 2025

³⁹ IHRDC, [Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book Five](#), 15 July 2013

wear items of clothing and accessories stereotypically regarded as “masculine” and men who wish to wear make-up and display expressions and behaviors stereotypically regarded as “feminine” at increased risk of discrimination, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other ill-treatment.’⁴⁰

7.6.6 The 2023 All Human Rights report stated:

‘Besides the criminalization of same-sex conduct, a number of other legal provisions directly impact on the rights of ... LGBTIQ+ individuals ... This is the case in particular of Iranian laws related to public decency ... Article 639 of the 2013 Islamic Penal Code criminalizes the facilitation or encouragement of “people to immorality or prostitution” ...

‘... Legal barriers to freedom of expression also impact persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity. Article 9 of the Iranian Press Law states that a publisher can only receive a publication license if they are deemed to be “free of moral corruption” and Article 6(2) prohibits the publication of “obscene” or “indecent” material. In practice, this prevents individuals from freely expressing their opinion or discussing issues related to gender, sexuality and bodily autonomy.’⁴¹

7.6.7 A report published by ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), a global federation of more than 2,000 organisations from over 170 countries campaigning for the human rights of LGBT+ people⁴², in December 2020 stated:

‘A violation of ... [Article 6 of the Press Law (1986)] is subject to punishments as determined in Article 698 of the Islamic Penal Code (imprisonment of between two months to two years and flogging of up to 74 lashes) and in the event of persistence, to an intensification of the punishments and the forfeiture of license.

‘... Article 640 of the Islamic Penal Code (2013) prohibits “displays and shows to the public, or produces or keeps any writing or design, gravure, painting, picture, newspapers, advertisements, signs, film, cinema movie, or basically anything, that violates public prudency and morality”.’⁴³

7.6.8 A report about arrests and prosecutions for consensual same-sex sexual acts, or for diverse gender expressions, published by ILGA World on 30 November 2023, stated: ‘Some commentators have suggested that the vague provision of efsad-e-fel-arz (“corruption on Earth”) [‘a sharia-law term that refers to anti-Islamic behaviour’⁴⁴] can also be used against non-heterosexual individuals and may carry the death penalty. Although the provision does not contain any explicit [sexual orientation and gender identity and expression] SOGIE reference, there have been reported instances of this provision being used against LGBTQ+ individuals.’⁴⁵

7.6.9 See also [State protection](#) for information about laws that limit the protection against crimes committed against LGBT+ individuals and, for information on

⁴⁰ AI, [Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man ...](#) (page 4), 17 May 2021

⁴¹ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (paragraph 57), September 2023

⁴² ILGA World, [About us](#), no date

⁴³ ILGA World, [State-sponsored Homophobia: Global Legislation ...](#) (page 154), December 2020

⁴⁴ BBC News, [‘I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran’](#), 11 September 2022

⁴⁵ ILGA World, [Our Identities under Arrest](#) (page 170), 30 November 2023

laws relating to the online content, see [Online community/activity](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

7.7 Trans people

- 7.7.1 An article published on 8 February 2022 by the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), a press association of human rights advocates in Iran for the daily reporting of human rights violations⁴⁶, stated:

‘Gender affirmation surgery has not been designated as legal or illegal under Iranian civil law. In 2013, however, [the] Family Protection Bill set out some rules about the sex change process. In 1982, in a Fatwa, Ruhollah Khomeini, authorized religiously the sex-change surgery. Nonetheless, uncertainties in the law regarding this process and official acceptance of new identity have confused many transgender citizens who are afraid of being deprived of their rights by the erratic attitude of legal authorities.’⁴⁷

- 7.7.2 An article published by HRANA on 26 June 2023 stated: ‘Recognition of transgender identity in Iran is solely contingent upon undergoing state-supported sex reassignment surgery.’⁴⁸

- 7.7.3 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘Transgender, intersex and gender diverse people are considered to be mentally ill by the government.’⁴⁹

- 7.7.4 The 2023 All Human Rights report also stated:

‘Although State recognition and support have given transgender individuals a certain level of legal legitimization, it also has reinforced the societal stigma due to the pathologisation of transgender identities: that trans persons suffer from a medical condition which requires treatment. Additionally, medical assessment in the Islamic Republic of Iran conflates a variety of sexual and gender identities with transidentity, resulting in those for whom surgery is neither appropriate nor necessary being ‘treated’ in line with the prevailing medical opinion: that any divergence from cisgendered heterosexuality can only be due to a person’s gender dysphoria and trans identity. Further, among these individuals, only those who are officially diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder and who obtained a permit to undergo sex reassignment surgery can have their gender legally recognized by the government.’⁵⁰

- 7.7.5 The Human Rights Watch (HRW) World Report for both 2024 and 2025, published on 11 January 2024 and 16 January 2025, and covering events of 2023 and 2024, respectively, stated: ‘Although Iran permits and subsidizes sex reassignment surgery for transgender people, no law prohibits discrimination against them.’^{51 52}

- 7.7.6 See also [Gender reassignment surgery](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

⁴⁶ HRANA, [About Us](#), no date

⁴⁷ HRANA, [Transgender Citizen Dies By Suicide ...](#), 8 February 2022

⁴⁸ HRANA, [Five Transgender Individuals Arrested and Coerced into Confession](#), 26 June 2023

⁴⁹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.150), 24 July 2023

⁵⁰ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (paragraph 48), September 2023

⁵¹ HRW, [World Report 2024 – Iran](#) (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), 11 January 2024

⁵² HRW, [World Report 2025 – Iran](#) (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), 16 January 2025

7.8 Military exemption

7.8.1 An article published by IHRNGO on 15 May 2021 stated:

‘A two-year military service is compulsory for all men in Iran unless they are exempted on one of the sanctioned grounds. Gay men may be exempted after going through a long and arduous process. According to the army’s 2020 Medical Exemption Regulations, “Article 33, Paragraph 8” will be written in the exemption section of their military cards. Article 33 Psychological exemptions are covered by Article 33, and Paragraph 8 refers to “behavioural disorders (neural and mental imbalances) and deviancies contrary to military etiquette, as well [as] moral and sexual deviancies such as transsexualism.”

‘... As homosexuality is also punishable by death under Iranian law, gay men who do pursue obtaining an exemption also have to worry about the legal consequences of having confessed to being gay.’⁵³

7.8.2 On 19 December 2022, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) published a query response which, citing an interview it conducted with an Adjunct Research Professor from Carleton University (in Ottawa, Canada⁵⁴), stated: ‘... to be exempt from military service, gay and transgender people have to prove they are “sick” through medical examination by a military, forensic and family doctor.’⁵⁵

7.8.3 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘Gay men and transgender people are exempt from military service, which activists claim can lead to societal discrimination and gender-based violence in the form of family violence against them, meaning that LGBTI men may not claim such an exemption. Such men are reportedly issued with a military exemption card stating the reason for their exemption which has led some gay men to be found out by their families and harmed as a consequence.’⁵⁶

7.8.4 On 23 April 2024, the USSD published its ‘2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices’ (USSD 2023 Country Report) which stated: ‘The law classified gay men and transgender women as having mental disorders and, on those grounds, exempted them from the otherwise mandatory military service for male citizens. Military identity cards listed the subsection of the law dictating the exemption. According to 6Rang, this practice identified gay or transgender individuals and put them at risk of physical abuse and discrimination in everyday life, including risk of arrest.’⁵⁷ The USSD published its 2024 Iran Country Report on 12 August 2025 but provided no coverage of LGBT+ people⁵⁸ therefore this, and all other COI quoted from the 2023 Country Report throughout the rest of this CPIN, is the most recent information provided by this source.

7.8.5 An article published by HRANA on 16 May 2024 stated:

‘In the realm of military service, discrimination persists with the “Nervous and Mental” classification in the medical exemption regulations. This

⁵³ IHRNGO, [... Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT Community](#), 15 May 2021

⁵⁴ Carleton University, [About Carleton](#), no date

⁵⁵ IRBC, Iran: The army, its organization ... (Exemptions from Mandatory Service), 19 December 2022

⁵⁶ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.155), 24 July 2023

⁵⁷ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 80), 23 April 2024

⁵⁸ USSD, [2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), 12 August 2025

classification, used to exempt transgender and homosexual individuals from mandatory military service, not only stigmatizes but also carries severe long-term repercussions. The label of a mental disorder is then recorded in their medical and military records, casting a long shadow over their lives, and impacting their ability to secure employment and access social services.

‘The military exemption, known as the “red card,” creates additional barriers to obtaining licenses or employment in public offices, reflecting a broader pattern of state-sanctioned discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals in Iran. This systematic marginalization, reinforced by both legal mandates and societal attitudes, impedes the full participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in society.

‘Although there have been some changes since the enactment of the Examination and Medical Exemption Regulation for Conscription in 2014, which shifted the review of exemptions for transgender and homosexual individuals to specific sections, colloquially known as the “Nervous and Mental” section, the stigma attached to these exemptions persists. Despite the World Health Organization’s reclassification of being transgender from mental and behavioral disorders and the removal of homosexuality from the list of mental disorders in 1990, the implications of these exemptions remain problematic in Iran, especially considering the criminalization of same-sex relations. This has led to increased caution and strictness in issuing exemptions, which some manage to obtain only after extended efforts, often limited to an exemption from combat rather than a complete waiver from military service.’⁵⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

8. State attitudes and treatment

8.1 Government position and rhetoric

8.1.1 The March 2023 6Rang report stated:

‘Same sex acts have long been represented as immoral and anti-Islamic by the Islamic Republic regime. The highest-ranking officials often take part in vilifying LGBTQ+ individuals publicly and without regard. One of the ways in which officials have instigated hate against this minority group is by using Islam and religion. In December 2022, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei gave a public speech in which he said:

“Banning hamjensbazi (faggotry) is not only a concern of Islam, but it is forbidden in all religions.” ...

‘... Mostafa Mahdavi, the Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Lorestan Province said, “when homosexuality is made legal in the West, it shows that their morality has fallen.”

‘... Officials of the Islamic Republic have often used derogatory language that likens homosexuality to animalistic behaviour and deviancy ... [H]ate speech ... has been directed at the [Woman, Life, Freedom] protests and uses homophobia to instil fear.

‘State-affiliated medial [sic] and journalists have had a hand in spreading hate against the LGBTQ+ community. The language often resonates with

⁵⁹ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

what is said by state officials. Derogatory language is also prevalent in articles about LGBTQ+ people.

'In November 2022, Hosein Shariatmandari, a fundamentalist journalist, said:

"One of the main goals of this riot is to break apart and break our country into pieces... One of the hopes of this situation is to legalise and spread hamjensbazi (faggotry) in a future without the Islamic Republic."

'... State officials and affiliated media continue to use hateful and derogatory language against the LGBTQ+ community in Iran. It has intensified and has been expressed in different forms following the participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in the protests in 2022-23. In their attempts to quash the efforts of the community in the protests, they have used such language to deter from the validity of their demands. Furthermore, officials have used the existing societal hatred and ignorance against the LGBTQ+ community to invalidate the protests.'⁶⁰

8.1.2 An article published by BBC News on 19 April 2023 stated:

'... [I]n response [to the increased visibility of the LGBTQ community], top officials of the Islamic Republic are intensifying their homophobic rhetoric.

'In a speech in Tehran on the anniversary of the revolution on 11 February [2023], President Ebrahim Raisi accused the West of "exploiting women" under the pretext of human rights.

'He said those countries were in no place to "set norms for the world, since they are pushing humanity towards the brink of extinction by promoting immoral behaviour like homosexuality".'⁶¹

8.1.3 An article published on 27 June 2023 by Rudaw, a global media outlet based in Erbil, the Kurdish region of Iraq⁶², stated: '... [E]ven though the rise of social media has brought more awareness to the LGBTQI+ community, any diversion from heteronormativity is still considered a form of "mental illness" by the state.'⁶³

8.1.4 An article published by Iran International, a privately-owned, London-based media outlet that provides news for Iranians both in and outside of Iran⁶⁴, on 11 September 2023 stated: 'Iranian authorities have resorted to derogatory labels and stigmatization when addressing LGBTQ citizens, referring to them as "deviant" and "sick" ...'⁶⁵

8.1.5 The September 2023 6Rang report stated:

'Hate speech [towards LGBT+ people] is used by all levels of government, including the president and the Supreme Leader ... As part of their catalogue of human rights abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity, the Iranian authorities consistently make hateful statements that demean and dehumanize people based on their sexual orientation. Homosexual people are regularly described in official statements and state media outlets as "immoral", "corrupt", "animalistic", "subhuman", "sick", and "diseased". They

⁶⁰ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (pages 8 to 10), March 2023

⁶¹ BBC News, [Iran protests: LGBTQ community rises up](#), 19 April 2023

⁶² Rudaw, [About Us](#), no date

⁶³ Rudaw, ['At war with my own body:' Iran's transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

⁶⁴ Iran International, [About Us](#), no date

⁶⁵ Iran International, [Iranian LGBTQ Activists Call For Protests ...](#), 11 September 2023

are also accused of collusion with Western-orchestrated Zionist conspiracies aimed at undermining the Islamic Revolution or corrupting the Muslim population.’⁶⁶

- 8.1.6 The UN Human Rights Committee concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Iran stated that the Committee ‘... is particularly concerned by multiple reports of hate speech by public officials, instigating prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons ... It is also concerned that the criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual relations between adults and of gender non-conformity fosters an environment for hate speech and hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals ...’⁶⁷
- 8.1.7 An article published by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty RFE/RL, an organisation which aims ‘to promote democratic values by providing accurate, uncensored news’⁶⁸, on 31 January 2024 stated: ‘... [S]enior officials often address ... [‘sexual minorities’] with derogatory terms, such as “inhuman” or “sick,” fanning homophobic sentiment.’⁶⁹
- 8.1.8 An article published by RFE/RL on 5 March 2024 stated: ‘Nadali [Alireza Nadali, the Tehran City Council spokesman] referred to transgender people as having “a special physical and psychological condition,” further underscoring the institutional challenges faced by the LGBT community in Iran.’⁷⁰
- 8.1.9 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated:
‘The Iranian regime’s propaganda machinery ... exacerbates the plight of LGBTQ+ individuals ... [A]ctions by the government serve to legitimize and intensify public hostility and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community ... Hate speech against the LGBTQ+ community is rampant among high-ranking officials and media outlets in Iran. Historical and ongoing rhetoric from figures such as Ebrahim Raisi [a former Iranian cleric, prosecutor, and politician, who was the President of Iran 2021 until 2024]⁷¹ underscores the institutional disdain and disregard for LGBTQ+ rights.’⁷²

[Back to Contents](#)

8.2 Discrimination and discriminatory policy

- 8.2.1 The May 2021 Amnesty International public statement stated:
‘... [I]f LGBTI individuals in Iran wish to adopt, without being criminalized, a gender presentation not matching the stereotypical expectations associated with their biological sex, their only option is to apply for a legal sex change. This would involve undergoing gender reassignment surgery, as well as sterilization, and obtaining identity documents matching their preferred gender identity, which then legally changes their sex. Non-binary and other

⁶⁶ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (pages 10 and 18), September 2023

⁶⁷ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding ...](#) (paragraphs 13 and 15), 23 November 2023

⁶⁸ RFE/RL, [About RFE/RL](#), no date

⁶⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

⁷⁰ RFE/RL, [Tehran Tells Transgender People To Avoid “Busy” Areas ...](#), 5 March 2024

⁷¹ Zeidan, Adam, Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Ebrahim Raisi](#), updated 29 November 2025

⁷² HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

gender non-conforming individuals who cannot or do not wish to undergo gender reassignment surgery, change their legal sex or choose between the binary gender categories of man and woman are at a constant risk of criminalization. They also experience discrimination in access to education, employment, health care and public services because the Islamic Republic system in Iran heavily enforces gender segregation across a wide range of institutions and public spaces, and imposes strict dress codes for men and women.’⁷³

8.2.2 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘Some clerics believed LGBTQI+ persons were trapped in a body of the wrong sex, and NGOs reported that authorities sometimes pressured LGBTQI+ persons to undergo gender reassignment surgery. Reports indicated these procedures disregarded psychological and physical health and some persons recommended for surgery did not identify as transgender but were forced to comply to avoid punishment for their LGBTQI+ identity.’⁷⁴ The source did not expand upon the scale or extent to which this happened.

8.2.3 The September 2023 6Rang report stated, in the context of the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests, that:

‘Confiscating mobile phones and other electronic devices of those arrested is a common practice for the Islamic Republic security forces. Detainees are usually forced to give the passwords of their devices without a warrant and whatever is discovered on these devices can be used as evidence against them in court. Those who are arrested during protests are no exception and the authorities may check their phones and make decisions on whether to hold or release them based on what they find in their messages, photos, social media accounts, etc. LGBTIQ+ persons are the most vulnerable group; many aspects of their private life are criminalised, and anything discovered by the authorities on their devices that proves they had same-sex relations is incriminating.’⁷⁵

8.2.4 The September 2023 6Rang report added:

‘Among protestors, LGBTIQ+ persons were more vulnerable because of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. It is also the case that within the LGBTIQ+ community some groups were more vulnerable than others for contesting the notions of “masculinity” and “femininity” in their roles, behaviour, and appearance.

‘... [T]hose who are perceived to transgress gender criteria that define “accepted” forms of gender expression in the queer community at large (with the broadest interpretation of being queer) are likely to be 1) more targeted in the crackdown, and 2) treated more brutally ... [I]t often did not matter if the targeted individual was really an LGBTIQ+ person - only their perception by authorities.’⁷⁶

8.2.5 On 28 March 2025, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) published a report which ‘... consolidates the findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to gross human

⁷³ AI, [Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man ...](#) (page 4), 17 May 2021

⁷⁴ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 81), 23 April 2024

⁷⁵ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (pages 22 to 23), September 2023

⁷⁶ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (pages 34 to 35), September 2023

rights violations and crimes against humanity committed in the context of the protests that began on 16 September 2022⁷⁷ (the HRC consolidated FFM report). The report stated:

‘... The Mission ... found that ... LGBTQ+ persons, were victims of crimes against humanity ... As part of the targeted civilian population, the Mission found that the authorities acted with aggravated discriminatory intent against ... LGBTQ+ persons for their participation and support for the protests. Considering the decades-long deep-rooted structural and institutional discrimination and marginalization of ... [this] group ... the State created a permissive environment for such criminal conduct.’⁷⁸

- 8.2.6 On 19 March 2024, Bertelsmann Stiftung, ‘a German non-profit think tank’⁷⁹, published its BTI 2024 Country Report Iran which stated: ‘The Islamic Republic actively discriminates against LGBTQ+ persons.’⁸⁰
- 8.2.7 On 21 March 2024, a joint statement was made to Member States of the HRC by HRW and numerous other Iranian and international human rights organisations, which stated: ‘Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Intersex people ... are ... subjected to systemic discrimination.’⁸¹ The statement did not expand upon what it meant by ‘systemic’.
- 8.2.8 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘The law did not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics and did not recognize LGBTQI+ individuals, couples, or their families.’⁸²
- 8.2.9 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘Lesbians and bisexual women were denied full rights as women, and for lesbians, these vulnerabilities could be greater and could include forced marriage. Although the government did not collect official data on discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals, NGOs reported that members of the LGBTQI+ community experienced widespread discrimination in education, employment, health care, personal safety, and within their own families.’⁸³ The report did not quantify what it meant by ‘widespread’.
- 8.2.10 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated:
- ‘The notorious, “Modesty and Hijab Bill,” though not fully ratified, has already been used by State broadcasters to actively promote homophobia. Article 8 paragraph 2 of this bill compels the Broadcasting Organization of Iran to produce content that counters homosexuality, effectively legislating hate and reinforcing societal prejudices against LGBTQ+ individuals. The bill also explicitly tasks the Broadcasting Organization of Iran with promoting content that vilifies homosexuality, contributing to the spread of hatred against homosexuals, sanctioned by state media. Despite awaiting confirmation by the Guardian Council, the police force has practically enforced the hijab law in numerous cities, further institutionalizing discrimination against the

⁷⁷ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission ...](#) (Summary), 28 March 2025

⁷⁸ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission ...](#) (paragraph 114), 28 March 2025

⁷⁹ Ecoi.net, [Source description: Bertelsmann Stiftung](#), 19 May 2020

⁸⁰ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2024 Country Report Iran](#) (page 13), 19 March 2024

⁸¹ HRW et al, [Joint NGO Statement on Iran to Member States of the ... \[HRC\]](#), 21 March 2024

⁸² USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 80), 23 April 2024

⁸³ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 80), 23 April 2024

LGBTQ+ community under the guise of upholding modesty and moral values.’⁸⁴

- 8.2.11 While the bill was passed by parliament and was due to be enacted on 13 December 2024^{85 86 87}, the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), ‘a twelve-member body tasked with ensuring Iran’s foreign and domestic security ...’⁸⁸ intervened to halt its enactment as law due to the risk of it leading to public unrest^{89 90 91}. The SNSC reportedly blocked the implementation of the law again in May 2025 ‘... amid ongoing tensions among hardline lawmakers over the controversial legislation.’⁹² However, CPIT was unable to find any more recent information about the status of the bill at the time of writing in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

8.3 Threats, harassment and violence

- 8.3.1 The March 2023 6Rang report stated: ‘Amidst the peak of the [Woman, Life, Freedom] protests in November 2022, a group of Basijis (a paramilitary group belonged to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)) set rainbow flags on fire in front of the British Embassy in Tehran. This was in direct protest of LGBTQ+ people being welcomed by protestors and being visible in protests ... [T]his ... state-sanctioned act was a reactionary outcry and attempt at instigating fear.’⁹³
- 8.3.2 A report on sexual violence committed by intelligence and security forces in their crackdown on the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests, published by Amnesty International in December 2023, stated: ‘Intelligence and security forces also committed sexual violence for reasons of discrimination, including based on gender identity or expression, and to punish people for not conforming to gender-based stereotypes of how men and women are expected to behave.’⁹⁴
- 8.3.3 In its November 2024 submission for the 48th session of the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR), 6Rang stated: ‘LGBTI+ individuals who participated in the 2022-23 nationwide protests were disproportionately targeted. Evidence collected by 6Rang confirms that they experienced aggravated violations of their fundamental human rights solely due to their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity during the nationwide protests. These individuals were targeted by security forces, prisons, and judicial authorities, facing brutal gender-based violence, including sexual abuse and rape ... with authorities acting with impunity ...’⁹⁵
- 8.3.4 The HRC consolidated FFM report stated: ‘The evidence suggests that the State’s actions constituted an intentional campaign to target and suppress

⁸⁴ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

⁸⁵ Newsweek, [Iran’s New ‘Chastity’ Law Explained](#), 5 December 2024

⁸⁶ Brandeis University, [The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Chastity and Hijab Law ...](#), December 2024

⁸⁷ Femena, [Iran’s New Hijab Law ...](#), 2 January 2025

⁸⁸ Brandeis University, [The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Chastity and Hijab Law ...](#), December 2024

⁸⁹ Brandeis University, [The Islamic Republic of Iran’s Chastity and Hijab Law ...](#), December 2024

⁹⁰ Femena, [Iran’s New Hijab Law ...](#), 2 January 2025

⁹¹ Rudaw, [Iran’s security council halts implementation of new hijab bill ...](#), 25 May 2025

⁹² Rudaw, [Iran’s security council halts implementation of new hijab bill ...](#), 25 May 2025

⁹³ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (pages 7 to 8), March 2023

⁹⁴ AI, [“They violently raped me”: Sexual violence weaponized ...](#) (page 67), December 2023

⁹⁵ 6Rang, [... 6Rang ... submission for the 48th session of the UN ... UPR ...](#), November 2024

LGBTQ+ persons through systematic violence and discrimination in the context of the protests ... This targeting was based on their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity, intersecting with their activism and political beliefs.’⁹⁶ The FFM report did not state what it meant exactly by ‘systematic’.

- 8.3.5 The same 6Rang report also stated that LGBT+ individuals ‘... are frequently subjected to harassment, discrimination, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and other ill-treatment, based on their gender expressions which are deemed to violate mandatory veiling, strict Islamic dress codes and stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity.’⁹⁷ CPIT noted that the report did not quantify what it meant by ‘frequently’.
- 8.3.6 The All Human Rights report stated: ‘LGBTIQ+ individuals have ... reported experiencing constant surveillance by the state’s intelligence service.’⁹⁸
- 8.3.7 The same All Human Rights report also noted that acts of abuse against LGBTIQ+ by state actors, including torture, beatings, and rape by police officers, ‘... remain largely underreported due to victims’ fear of persecution and further abuse by law enforcement.’⁹⁹
- 8.3.8 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘LGBTQI+ persons were often subjected to violence. Security forces harassed, arrested, and detained individuals they suspected or perceived as being LGBTQI+. In some cases, security forces raided houses and monitored internet sites for information on LGBTQI+ persons.’¹⁰⁰ The report did not define what it meant by ‘often’.
- 8.3.9 Both the 2024 and 2025 Amnesty International human rights reports stated: ‘LGBTI people suffered systemic discrimination and violence.’^{101 102} The reports did not explain what they meant by ‘systemic’, nor did they provide any further information about the scale or extent of the discrimination and violence.

[Back to Contents](#)

8.4 Arrests and detention

- 8.4.1 The All Human Rights report stated:

‘Governmental-mandated organizations set up to preserve “public morality”, notably the Basij militia, reportedly harassed, arrested, detained and abused LGBTIQ+ individuals on the basis of ... regulations. Similarly, law enforcement forces have been reportedly arresting and detaining trans individuals for appearing cross-dressed in public, an act considered haram (forbidden under Islamic law) until a “disorder” could be medically and legally established. Additionally, Article 638 of the 2013 Penal Code [see paragraphs 7.6.4 and 7.6.5] ... has been reportedly used against both transgender men [people assigned female at birth but living as men¹⁰³] pressured into wearing a hijab and transgender women [people assigned

⁹⁶ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding ...](#) (paragraph 77), 28 March 2025

⁹⁷ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (page 10), March 2023

⁹⁸ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (paragraph 56), September 2023

⁹⁹ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report ... (paragraph 46), September 2023

¹⁰⁰ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 79), 23 April 2024

¹⁰¹ AI, [The State of the World’s Human Rights 2024](#) (page 204), 23 April 2024

¹⁰² AI, [The State of the World’s Human Rights 2025](#) (page 204), 28 April 2025

¹⁰³ BBC News, [A guide to transgender terms](#) (Transgender man/transgender woman), 3 June 2015

male at birth but living as women^{104]} accused of “cross-dressing” in public, regardless of whether their change in gender has been legally recognised.

‘... [I]ndividuals of varying sexual and gender identities who cannot or will not pursue medical transition are not protected from abuses, including arrest, detention and prosecution.’¹⁰⁵

8.4.2 The same All Human Rights report also stated: ‘LGBTIQ+ Iranians continue to be arbitrarily arrested and detained based solely on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.’¹⁰⁶

8.4.3 On 18 November 2023, the Swiss Refugee Council (SRC), ‘an NGO umbrella organisation for refugee assisting and human rights organisations that, amongst other activities, provides country of origin information research services’¹⁰⁷, published a report on the situation of women since September 2022 which stated: ‘Advocating for LGBTQI+ rights or engaging in LGBTQI+ relationships is considered un-Islamic and can lead to repression, including arrests and charges of moral corruption.’¹⁰⁸

N.B. the information quoted above, and all other COI quoted from this source throughout the rest of this CPIN was originally published in German. See [About the country information](#) for further information about the method of translation.

8.4.4 On 23 November 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee published its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which stated: ‘It remains concerned that State actors frequently harass and detain lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals on the basis of public decency laws and subject such persons to torture and ill-treatment while they are in detention.’¹⁰⁹

8.4.5 The November 2023 ILGA World report stated: ‘Persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are often held arbitrarily for extended periods, or sentenced on minimal or circumstantial evidence ...’¹¹⁰ CPIT noted that the report did not quantify what it meant by ‘often’.

8.4.6 The same ILGA World report, citing an article published in 2021 by IranWire¹¹¹, an Iranian news website¹¹², stated: ‘Those who are imprisoned are reportedly subjected to torture or otherwise dire conditions, with most gay and trans detainees in the capital, Tehran, allegedly held in Ward 240 of Evin Prison. In Ward 240, which some prisoners have nicknamed “Tomb 240”, people are said to be held in isolation with only limited access to fresh air, light, food or phone-calls to family. This [is] in addition to regular beatings and other forms of physical abuse. In 2020 most of the prisoners at Evin

¹⁰⁴ BBC News, [A guide to transgender terms](#) (Transgender man/transgender woman), 3 June 2015

¹⁰⁵ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, *Alternative ...* (paragraphs 45 and 48), September 2023

¹⁰⁶ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 50), September 2023

¹⁰⁷ Ecol.net, [Source description: Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe \(SFH\)](#), 3 December 2021

¹⁰⁸ SRC, [Iran: Situation of Women, Policy Paper of the SFH ...](#) (page 24), 18 November 2023

¹⁰⁹ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations ...](#) (paragraph 15), 23 November 2023

¹¹⁰ ILGA World, [Our Identities under Arrest](#) (page 171), 30 November 2023

¹¹¹ IranWire, [... Gay and Trans Detainees on Life in Evin Prison](#), 9 June 2021

¹¹² IranWire, [About IranWire](#), no date

were apparently downgraded to even less hospital [sic] conditions in Ward 240's basement.'¹¹³

- 8.4.7 On 2 February 2024, the HRC published a summary report for its 2023/2024 fact-finding mission in which it stated:

'The mission established a pattern of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by the State authorities in places of detention. That included rape, including with an object, threats of rape, electrocution to the genitalia, forced nudity, groping, touching and other forms of sexual violence. The mission found that sexual and gender-based violence was carried out on women, men and children who had been detained, including LGBTQI+ persons arrested in connection with the [Woman, Life, Freedom] protests.'¹¹⁴

- 8.4.8 The joint statement to the HRC by HRW and other human rights organisations, made in March 2024, stated: '... [I]n the last year, thousands of people, including children, have faced increased levels of judicial harassment and arbitrary detention for peacefully exercising their human rights. Those impacted include ... Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and other gender diverse and Intersex (LGBTI) individuals ...'¹¹⁵

- 8.4.9 Citing information provided by an 'expert and professional working for the French authorities examining asylum applications'¹¹⁶, the EUAA Country Focus report stated: 'Men who are considered homosexual could face mistreatment in detention ...'¹¹⁷

- 8.4.10 Citing a lawyer and academic, with Iran expertise, the EUAA Country Focus report also stated: '... [A]ctivists and lawyers advocating for LGBTIQ rights face censorship, harassment, and arbitrary arrest by the Islamic Republic. Iranian authorities often refer to vague laws such as "morality" or "national security" to silence dissent and target individuals who promote LGBTIQ rights.'¹¹⁸

- 8.4.11 The HRC consolidated FFM report stated: 'In the context of the protests, LGBTQ+ persons were disproportionately affected by virtue of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. In detention, LGBTQ+ persons were subjected to dehumanizing insults, threats and treatment amounting to torture. To extract confessions, victims were also threatened with being outed to their families or communities.'¹¹⁹

- 8.4.12 CPIT was unable to find any up-to-date figures in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) to reflect the scale and extent to which LGBT+ individuals were arrested and detained. However, the All Human Rights report referred to '... the arrest of over 30 gay men in Iran based on their perceived sexual orientation in April 2017.'¹²⁰ Additionally, an IRBC query response published on 14 February 2025 noted that 'According to a [2020] report by 6Rang ... based on an online survey posted for 3 months starting in November 2019 that received 230 responses, 12.6 percent of the respondents reported being

¹¹³ ILGA World, [Our Identities under Arrest](#) (page 171), 30 November 2023

¹¹⁴ HRC, [Report of the ... International Fact-Finding Mission ...](#) (paragraph 46), 2 February 2024

¹¹⁵ HRW et al, [Joint NGO Statement on Iran to Member States of the ... \[HRC\]](#), 21 March 2024

¹¹⁶ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (footnote 1068 on page 99), June 2024

¹¹⁷ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 4.12.), June 2024

¹¹⁸ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 4.12.), June 2024

¹¹⁹ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding ...](#) (paragraph 76), 28 March 2025

¹²⁰ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 51), September 2023

arrested due to their gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation.’¹²¹

8.4.13 Some recent reports of the arrest and/ or detention of LGBT+ individuals include (Note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- page 22 of the [6Rang September 2023 report](#) about a 20-year-old, described by 6Rang as a ‘queer influencer’, whom it reported was arrested and detained in January 2023 for online posts in support of the 2022 protests before being released on bail. The report did not go into any further detail regarding whether the arrest led to charges and/or a trial and CPIT was unable to find any corroborating or further information about the arrest, or any further developments, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#))
- the [June 2023 HRANA article](#) about five transgender individuals who were reportedly arrested in the Afsariyeh district of Tehran ‘ following a quarrel with a religious vigilante who targeted them for their attire’.¹²² The article stated: ‘Consequently, legal action has been taken against them ... [and a] recently published video captures their forced confession, in which they express remorse for their behaviour and appearance. The identities of these individuals remain unknown at present.’¹²³ CPIT was unable to find any corroborating information in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) nor any further information regarding the nature of charges or whether the individuals faced prosecution resulting in criminal trials
- pages 67 to 68 of the [December 2023 Amnesty International report](#) about a bisexual man who was arrested during the Woman, Life Freedom protests by plainclothes agents from the Basij paramilitary force. He reported being taken to a detention centre of the Intelligence Organization of the Revolutionary Guards where agents demanded to know if he was transgender, saying that his ‘demeanour’ was that of a transgender person. He reported being stripped naked, beaten, given electric shocks, being threatened to be raped with a baton, and that he witnessed another detainee, who he perceived to be a trans woman, being held with male detainees and subjected to sexual violence by security agents. He was reportedly taken to a second, overcrowded, detention centre where he was beaten, tortured, given insufficient food, and forced to take pills that made him dizzy, sleepy and disorientated. It was noted that after 15 days detained he was released and required treatment in a psychiatric hospital for several weeks¹²⁴ CPIT was unable to find any corroborating information in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)), however, it is noted that Amnesty International used pseudonyms and removed identifying details for most individuals to protect the privacy and safety of sources¹²⁵

8.4.14 See also [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#).

¹²¹ IRBC, [... Dress codes, including legislation, enforcement and ...](#) (section 4.3.1), 14 February 2025

¹²² HRANA, [Five Transgender Individuals Arrested and Coerced into Confession](#), 26 June 2023

¹²³ HRANA, [Five Transgender Individuals Arrested and Coerced into Confession](#), 26 June 2023

¹²⁴ AI, [“They violently raped me”: Sexual violence weaponized ...](#) (pages 67 to 68), December 2023

¹²⁵ AI, [“They violently raped me”: Sexual violence weaponized ...](#) (page 19), December 2023

8.5 Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty

- 8.5.1 A September 2022 BBC News article stated: ‘The court has a reputation for approving the harshest sentences when it comes to charges which are considered as anti-Sharia law.’¹²⁶
- 8.5.2 The HRC consolidated FFM report stated: ‘[In the context of the Women, Life, Freedom protests] LGBTQ+ persons were ... prosecuted for various national security offences and threatened in the context of interrogations with prosecution for same-sex relations.’¹²⁷
- 8.5.3 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘The death penalty is carried out against men who have consensual sex with men.’¹²⁸ DFAT did not provide any details as to how many men have been executed for this reason.
- 8.5.4 The All Human Rights report stated: ‘Once individuals have been arrested ... they are then subjected to a criminal justice system that continues to violate their rights. Lesbians who have been arrested because of their sexual orientation explained that once detained, they are subject to interrogations under duress without access to their lawyers or being informed of their rights. Trial procedures failed to respect fair trial standards, with some individuals stating that their trials lasted only 30 minutes and resulted in harsh sentences.’¹²⁹ However, the same report went on to cite what it described as ‘one of the most recent examples of this behavior’, in relation to 30 gay men it noted were arrested in April 2017 on the basis of their perceived sexual orientation¹³⁰ and CPIT is therefore mindful of the age of the information provided.
- 8.5.5 While also citing older sources, published between 2010 and 2021, the November 2023 ILGA World report stated:
- ‘It is ... reportedly difficult for the accused to receive willing legal representation from lawyers who may not want to associate with their cases, while those that do are sometimes barred from their own clients’ trials. Judicial procedures remain opaque, with judges seemingly able to forego the traditional need for a confession or four male witnesses in a case of same-sex activity, and rely on their own “discretionary knowledge” to mete out the death penalty instead.’¹³¹
- 8.5.6 The UN Human Rights Committee concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Iran stated that ‘[t]he Committee remains concerned that ... persons who are convicted ... [for consensual same-sex relation between adults] are punished with severe criminal penalties, ranging from public lashing and flogging to death sentences, which are actively enforced by the State.’¹³²
- 8.5.7 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, stated:

¹²⁶ BBC News, [‘I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran’](#), 11 September 2022

¹²⁷ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding ...](#) (paragraph 76), 28 March 2025

¹²⁸ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.147), 24 July 2023

¹²⁹ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 50), September 2023

¹³⁰ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 51), September 2023

¹³¹ ILGA World, [Our Identities under Arrest](#) (page 171), 30 November 2023

¹³² UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations ...](#) (paragraph 15), 23 November 2023

‘The punishment for homosexual acts between men is usually more severe than that for lesbian women.

‘... [Also] the Penal Code does not recognise rape as an independent crime. It treats heterosexual and homosexual rape as forms of unlawful sexual intercourse. If a consensual homosexual relationship is discovered by law enforcement authorities, the passive partner then has a significant incentive to claim that they were raped, as this may be the only way to avoid a death sentence. On the other hand, actual victims of male-on-male rape face a considerable risk in reporting the crime. If the alleged rapist successfully claims that the act was consensual, the victim could in turn be sentenced to death as the passive partner in a homosexual act.’¹³³

- 8.5.8 The same BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, also stated that ‘... the requirements and hurdles regarding the provision of evidence for sexual offences between same-sex individuals are considered to be particularly high. For complete evidence in an Iranian court case and a corresponding verdict, four male witnesses or a confession made four times are necessary. If too few witness statements are available, an investigation ban is issued. In addition, severe penalties are imposed for false accusations.’¹³⁴
- 8.5.9 The HRC consolidated FFM report stated: ‘The Islamic Republic of Iran remains one of the few countries that imposes the death penalty for consensual same-sex relationships, while the criminalization of LGBTQ+ persons has long been considered discriminatory by United Nations human rights mechanisms.’¹³⁵
- 8.5.10 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, stated: ‘Iran does not publish official statistics or information on executions. Therefore, it is hardly possible to estimate how many people have been executed for same-sex acts and whether these acts were consensual ...’¹³⁶
- 8.5.11 The same BAMF report, translated into English, also stated:
‘The death penalty has in recent years been imposed only sporadically and mostly in connection with other crimes. According to a report by Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, on state persecution of sexual minorities, at least six men were executed in Iran between 2015 and 2020 for sodomy. Estimates suggest that since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, more than 4,000 people have been executed for homosexual acts. These figures have not been confirmed by the government. It remains unclear exactly how many executions have taken place in this context ... A frequently inconsistent approach by the judiciary of the Islamic Republic also makes it overall difficult to determine the extent of criminal prosecution, including in relation to LGBTIQ individuals.’¹³⁷
- 8.5.12 The November 2023 SRC report, translated into English, stated: ‘LGBTQI+ people risk the death penalty due to the criminalisation of certain same-sex acts. A joint report by the International Federation for Human Rights and the

¹³³ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 3.2), 26 August 2024

¹³⁴ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 1.1), 26 August 2024

¹³⁵ HRC, [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding ...](#) (paragraph 74), 28 March 2025

¹³⁶ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 3.2), 26 August 2024

¹³⁷ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 3.2), 26 August 2024

League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran in 2020 documented ten such cases.¹³⁸

8.5.13 Similarly, an article published on 2 February 2024 by a London-based international organisation called Article 19, which advocates for the right to freedom of expression globally¹³⁹, stated: ‘Due to the lack of transparency in the Islamic Republic’s judicial system, there are no reliable statistics on the number of people charged for alleged “crimes” related to their sexual orientation or gender identity.’¹⁴⁰

8.5.14 Additionally, the USSD 2023 Country Report noted that:

‘LGBTQI+ activists expressed concern that the government prosecuted LGBTQI+ individuals under the pretext of more severe, and possibly specious, criminal charges such as rape and incest. Those accused of sodomy often faced summary trials, and evidentiary standards were not always met. The Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network (6Rang) noted that individuals arrested under such conditions were traditionally subjected to forced anal examinations and other degrading treatment and sexual insults.’¹⁴¹

8.5.15 Some examples of sentences that were handed down to LGBT+ individuals, and/or carried out, between January 2022 and September 2025, include (Note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- 2 men who were executed in Maragheh Prison (East Azerbaijan province) at the end of January 2022 for ‘sodomy by force’, having been arrested and sentenced to death on the same charges 6 years earlier¹⁴²¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴. Citing an ‘informed source’, IHRNGO reported that “... they repeatedly said in court and in their defences that there was no force and [that the same-sex sexual act] was done with the consent of the complainant. But the boy said they had raped him.”¹⁴⁵. IranWire noted that ‘[s]ome human rights networks have alleged the pair were wrongfully convicted. The Islamic Republic has used the “sodomy” charge in the past to impose the death penalty on gay men.’¹⁴⁶ The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in its 2023 Annual Report, covering events of 2022, noted that two other gay men were hanged in July 2022 but did not provide any further details regarding the circumstances¹⁴⁷.
- the sentencing in July 2023 of a transgender woman from Tehran who was arrested in December 2022 having been previously briefly detained previously around October/November 2022, during the nationwide protests¹⁴⁸ ¹⁴⁹. She was reportedly sentenced to 2 years and 6 months

¹³⁸ SRC, [Iran: Situation of Women, Policy Paper of the SFH ...](#) (page 24), 18 November 2023

¹³⁹ Article 19, [About us](#), no date

¹⁴⁰ Article 19, [Iran: Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity ...](#), 2 February 2024

¹⁴¹ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (pages 78 to 79), 23 April 2024

¹⁴² IHRNGO, [... Executed on Charges of “Sodomy by Force”](#), 31 January 2022

¹⁴³ IranWire, [Two Men Executed on ‘Sodomy’ Charges](#), 31 January 2022

¹⁴⁴ HRANA, [Two Inmates Executed in Maragheh Central Prison](#), 3 February 2022

¹⁴⁵ IHRNGO, [... Executed on Charges of “Sodomy by Force”](#), 31 January 2022

¹⁴⁶ IranWire, [Two Men Executed on ‘Sodomy’ Charges](#), 31 January 2022

¹⁴⁷ USCIRF, [2023 Annual Report](#) (page 26), 1 May 2023

¹⁴⁸ HRANA, [Raha Ajoudani Sentenced to Travel Ban and Fine](#), 7 July 2023

¹⁴⁹ BAMF, [Briefing Notes Summary: Iran – July to December 2023](#) (page 2), 31 December 2023

imprisonment, plus a 6-month travel ban on charges of “propaganda against the regime”, “blasphemy”, and “incitement to subvert national security” after being released on bail in January 2023^{150 151}. The prison sentence was, however, reported to have been replaced with a fine^{152 153} due to a lack of appropriate holding facilities for a trans woman¹⁵⁴. Several sources reported that she was a teenager at the time of her arrest on 17 December 2022^{155 156 157}. BAMF noted that it was unclear whether she was prosecuted because of her sexual orientation and stated that, ‘[a]mong other things, she had published videos of herself criticising the Islamic dress code and the government.’¹⁵⁸

- 2 active female members of the LGBTQI+ community who were released on bail in March 2023 after the Supreme Court overturned death sentences that were handed down to them in September 2022 for a reported combination of ‘corruption on Earth’ through ‘promoting homosexuality’^{159 160} and ‘human trafficking’^{161 162 163 164}, or additionally, ‘communicating with anti-Islamic networks’ and ‘promoting Christianity’^{165 166}.
- At the time of the death sentences being handed down, a BBC News article published on 6 September 2022 stated: “This is the first time that a woman has been sentenced to death in Iran for her sexual orientation,” [6Rang] spokeswoman Shadi Amin told AFP news agency.¹⁶⁷ The USSD 2024 Trafficking in Persons report, published on 24 June 2024 and covering April 2023 to March 2024, noted that ‘... the government continued to pursue and secure spurious trafficking convictions against LGBTQI+ activists.’¹⁶⁸ The BBC News article published on 11 September 2022, before the death sentences were overturned, acknowledged that both women had the right to appeal to the Supreme Court but noted that ‘... prospects of overturning the sentence are slim.’¹⁶⁹
- Sources reported that one of the women, who had been outspoken in defence of LGBT+ rights on social media¹⁷⁰ and in a documentary^{171 172},

¹⁵⁰ HRANA, [Raha Ajoudani Sentenced to Travel Ban and Fine](#), 7 July 2023

¹⁵¹ BAMF, [Briefing Notes Summary: Iran – July to December 2023](#) (page 2), 31 December 2023

¹⁵² HRANA, [Raha Ajoudani Sentenced to Travel Ban and Fine](#), 7 July 2023

¹⁵³ BAMF, [Briefing Notes Summary: Iran – July to December 2023](#) (page 2), 31 December 2023

¹⁵⁴ HRANA, [Raha Ajoudani Sentenced to Travel Ban and Fine](#), 7 July 2023

¹⁵⁵ HRANA, [Iran Protests: Non-binary Teenager Raha Ajodani Arrested](#), 20 December 2022

¹⁵⁶ AIW, [Iran Protests: Non-binary Teenager Raha Ajodani Arrested](#), 12 January 2023

¹⁵⁷ ILGA World, [Our Identities under Arrest](#) (page 176), 30 November 2023

¹⁵⁸ BAMF, [Briefing Notes Summary: Iran – July to December 2023](#) (page 2), 31 December 2023

¹⁵⁹ Amnesty International, [... Sareh Sedighi-Hamadani's death sentence overturned](#), 16 May 2023

¹⁶⁰ USCIRF, [2024 Annual Report](#) (page 32), 5 May 2024

¹⁶¹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.149), 24 July 2023

¹⁶² USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 79), 23 April 2024

¹⁶³ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Prosecution), 24 June 2024

¹⁶⁴ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 3.2), 26 August 2024

¹⁶⁵ 6Rang, [Iranian LGBT+ activist Sareh arrives in a safe country ...](#), 1 December 2023

¹⁶⁶ Hengaw, [LGBTQ+ Community Activist Apprehended in Urmia](#), 28 February 2024

¹⁶⁷ BBC News, [Iran sentences two LGBT activists to death](#), 6 September 2022

¹⁶⁸ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Iran (Tier 3)), 24 June 2024

¹⁶⁹ BBC News, [‘I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran’](#), 11 September 2022

¹⁷⁰ 6Rang, [Iranian LGBT+ activist Sareh arrives in a safe country ...](#), 1 December 2023

¹⁷¹ Amnesty International, [... Sareh Sedighi-Hamadani's death sentence overturned](#), 16 May 2023

¹⁷² IHRNGO, [Human Rights Defenders in Iran 2023](#) (page 100), 15 December 2023

left Iran¹⁷³ in December 2023^{174 175}. The September 2022 BBC News article stated: ‘Amnesty [International] described [her] as a “gender-non-conforming human rights defender” who had been detained “solely in connection with her real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity as well as her social media posts and statements in defence of (LGBT) rights”.’¹⁷⁶

- Regarding the second of the women, sources reported that she was rearrested in February 2024 and was sentenced to 3 years in prison^{177 178 179}. As of the end of February 2024, she was serving her prison on the sentence women's ward of Urmia Central Prison¹⁸⁰. CPIT has been unable to find any more recent update on her status in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- page 89 of a [report published by IHRNGO on 15 December 2023](#) which reported the sentencing, in August 2023, to 6 months imprisonment for a primary school teacher and LGBTQIA+ activist. The report noted she was fired from her job during the nationwide protests in 2022 then subsequently arrested in May 2023 while attending a teachers’ protest against nationwide chemical attacks on school children. It reported that she began serving her prison sentence in November 2023. A report published by Front Line Defenders, an international human rights organisation¹⁸¹, though it did not reference her LGBT+ activism as being a contributing cause for her imprisonment, noted that she was released in January 2024¹⁸²
- the sentencing in December 2023 to 5 years in prison, on charges of “inciting people to war and against national security”, for an Iranian actor who actively supported women’s rights in relation to compulsory head-scarf laws during the nationwide protests^{183 184 185}. While some sources did not report on his sexual orientation or gender identity^{186 187 188}, the [6Rang September 2023 report](#), reporting his arrest (and published prior to his sentencing), stated he:

‘... was perceived as non-masculine by the Authorities [and] is an example of how the perceived sexual orientation and gender identity of a person can become an aggravated element in suppressing their right to freedom of expression ... [He] used to post photos of himself on Instagram that challenged gender norms and binaries. He also supported LGBTIQ+ persons who posed and took photos with the Rainbow flags in

¹⁷³ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Prosecution), 24 June 2024

¹⁷⁴ IHRNGO, [Human Rights Defenders in Iran 2023](#) (page 100), 15 December 2023

¹⁷⁵ USCIRF, [2024 Annual Report](#) (page 32), 5 May 2024

¹⁷⁶ BBC News, [‘I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran’](#), 11 September 2022

¹⁷⁷ Hengaw, [LGBTQ+ Community Activist Apprehended in Urmia](#), 28 February 2024

¹⁷⁸ IranWire, [Iranian LGBTQ Activist Arrested to Serve Prison Sentence](#), 29 February 2024

¹⁷⁹ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Prosecution), 24 June 2024

¹⁸⁰ Hengaw, [LGBTQ+ Community Activist Apprehended in Urmia](#), 28 February 2024

¹⁸¹ Front Line Defenders, [About Us](#), no date

¹⁸² Front Line Defenders, [Atekeh Rajabi](#), no date

¹⁸³ RFE/RL, [Iranian Actor Sadeghi Says He's Been Sentenced To Five Years ...](#), 11 December 2023

¹⁸⁴ IranWire, [Iranian Actor Sadeghi Handed Five-Year Prison Term](#), 11 December 2023

¹⁸⁵ HRANA, [Actor Mohammad Sadeghi Receives Five-Year Prison Sentence](#), 11 December 2023

¹⁸⁶ RFE/RL, [Iranian Actor Sadeghi Says He's Been Sentenced To Five Years ...](#), 11 December 2023

¹⁸⁷ IranWire, [Iranian Actor Sadeghi Handed Five-Year Prison Term](#), 11 December 2023

¹⁸⁸ HRANA, [Actor Mohammad Sadeghi Receives Five-Year Prison Sentence](#), 11 December 2023

streets. News agencies affiliated with the IRGC confirmed the news of his arrest and called him an actor who sought attention by wearing women's make-up, showed "abnormal behaviours", and advocated for homosexuality.¹⁸⁹ An [article published by IranWire on 23 January 2024](#) described the actor as having a 'non-binary gender expression', and reported threats, insults, and humiliation at the hands of the authorities as a result

- the sentencing to 100 lashes and exile (one and two years, respectively), in September 2025, for the former head of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Gilan province and another male after a video was leaked of them engaging in 'tafkhez' sexual activity together^{190 191}

[Back to Contents](#)

8.6 'Corrective/conversion' therapy

8.6.1 On 31 May 2023, 6Rang published a report on the use of 'reparative therapies' for LGBT+ individuals in Iran (the May 2023 6Rang report), which 6Rang noted to be an extension of its previous research, which included a voluntary survey made available on its social media in May 2022¹⁹². The survey attracted 240 responses, though 30 were dismissed as not eligible for the study due to them being provided by cisgender and heterosexual individuals¹⁹³. The report stated:

'Reparative therapy has become normalised in society due to lack of up-to-date teaching at universities, lack of independent media, governmental pressure, existing societal prejudice, [and] the misperception of queer people being diseased.

'... [H]omosexuality is often diagnosed as a mood disorder ... homosexuality has also been diagnosed as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and treated with medication and behavioural therapy ... [T]hey are often treated with electroconvulsive therapy or anti-psychotic drugs.

'Some medical practices in Iran specialise in conversion therapy. They believe that homosexuality is due to a lack of positive experiences with the opposite sex and low self-esteem. They encourage their patients to form relationships with people of the opposite sex as a way to convert their sexuality ... Treatments at these facilities include electric shock to the hands and genitals, ingestion of emetic drugs while watching pornographic material depicting same-sex intercourse, masturbation while watching pornographic material depicting heterosexual intercourse, and other inhumane treatments.

'Another school of thought adopted by some practitioners in Iran sees homosexuality as a fault in the subconscious due to early childhood trauma. This is often treated through hypnosis and psychoanalysis ...

'Other facilities use the patients' displeasure with themselves against them. They frequently use their religious beliefs and guilt, while stirring fear of the consequences for their families should they not choose a "desirable" sexual

¹⁸⁹ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (pages 21 to 22), September 2023

¹⁹⁰ Iran International, [Iran ex-hijab enforcer gets lashes in sex scandal ...](#), 17 September 2025

¹⁹¹ Cicero's, [Iranian Ex-Culture Official ... Faces Flogging in Same-Sex Scandal](#), 19 September 2025

¹⁹² 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 4), 31 May 2023

¹⁹³ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 4), 31 May 2023

orientation. These types of treatment include emphasis on prayer and a return from satanic influence.

‘... Talk therapy, behavioural therapy and pharmaceutical therapy were the most frequently reported methods. 20% of respondents [42] were subjected to electroconvulsive therapy, whilst the Islamic Republic of Iran has condemned the use of electroconvulsive therapy or electric shock against homosexual people, internationally.’¹⁹⁴

- 8.6.2 Regarding the prevalence of reparative therapies in general, the same 6Rang report stated that of the 210 eligible respondents:

‘105 participants, or 50%, were found to have undergone reparative therapy or were offered reparative therapy. 39% [41] of them were under the age of 18 at the time. These people lived in 20 different provinces at the time.

‘43% (45) of those who were offered reparative therapy agreed or were forced to agree, 33% [15] of whom were under 18. 60 participants were able to refuse reparative therapy ... 61% of those who underwent reparative therapy [the report did not make it clear how many respondents underwent reparative therapy, therefore CPIT is unable to provide the absolute number] claimed they had no choice in the matter.’¹⁹⁵

- 8.6.3 The following table was produced by CPIT using data provided in the 6Rang report on the sources and/ or institutions reported by respondents to have pressured them to uptake reparative therapy (the report noted that ‘many’ respondents reported being pressured by more than one source and/ or institution). The below figures show that family, followed by health institutions and services, were the most influential sources of pressure for respondents to uptake reparative therapy¹⁹⁶:

Source or institution	No. of respondents reported it as source of pressure to uptake reparative therapy	%age of respondents (of 210) reported as source of pressure to uptake therapy
Family	57	27
Health institutions and services	51	24
Friends and acquaintances	37	18
Educational institutions	18	9
Religious institutions	15	7
Romantic or sexual partners	11	5
Judicial or military institutions	10	5

¹⁹⁴ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (pages 4 and 7), 31 May 2023

¹⁹⁵ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 4), 31 May 2023

¹⁹⁶ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 4), 31 May 2023

Employers or colleagues	7	3
--------------------------------	----------	----------

- 8.6.4 The 6Rang report added that, ‘... due to the lack of financial, social and emotional independence from parents, young people are more susceptible to suggestions of reparative therapy. Furthermore, the effects of such treatments are often more pronounced and harmful on younger people and adolescents ...’¹⁹⁷
- 8.6.5 The 6Rang additionally stated:
‘Nearly 90% of the respondents who underwent reparative therapy reported experiencing verbal and psychological abuse during treatment, and more than 60% of them (22 people) were subjected to coercion and control. Over a third of participants also experienced violence and physical abuse. Other violations included disclosing clients’ sexual identity, sexual abuse, and deprivation of education.
‘In Iran, reparative therapy is performed with the approval and support of the government in public health centres ... [and i]t is clear that the practice of conversion therapy in Iran does not meet the minimum standards of healthcare as set by medical ethics.’¹⁹⁸
- 8.6.6 The January 2024 RFE/RL article stated: ‘In a report to the UN Human Rights Council, Javid Rahman, the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, criticized the use of “conversion therapy” for sexual minorities as torture. The report expressed concern about practices like “electroshock therapy” and “forced hormone injections or administration of strong medications” to homosexual, bisexual, and transgender children in Iran.’¹⁹⁹
- 8.6.7 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘A number of private and semigovernmental psychological and psychiatric clinics allegedly continued to engage in “corrective treatment” or reparative therapies of LGBTQI+ persons ... One such institution, the Anonymous Sex Addicts Association of Iran, had branches in 18 provinces. The prevalence of conversion therapy practices was also documented by Outright International and public health scholars.’²⁰⁰
- 8.6.8 The same USSD report also stated: ‘There were no known reports of corrective rape of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) persons.’²⁰¹
- 8.6.9 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated:
‘Conversion therapies, which are widely discredited by global health authorities, are still promoted and practiced, often under the guise of religious and psychological “treatment.” ... [One Doctor], for instance, advertises conversion therapies on his website, offering medication,

¹⁹⁷ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 4), 31 May 2023

¹⁹⁸ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (pages 8 and 9), 31 May 2023

¹⁹⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

²⁰⁰ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (pages 80 to 81), 23 April 2024

²⁰¹ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 62), 23 April 2024

hypnotism, and aversion therapy as methods to change an individual's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual. Similarly, the Mehr news agency [a 'conservative news agency affiliated with a state-run religious organisation'²⁰²] and the ISNA news agency [the Iranian Students News Agency, which 'is partially funded by University Jihad, a state-backed organisation'²⁰³] have published claims supporting the efficacy of conversion therapy, despite widespread international condemnation of such practices. These actions are indicative of a broader societal and governmental stance that views homosexuality and diverse gender identities as disorders that need to be "cured" or "corrected," further alienating and endangering the LGBTQ+ population.

'The Organization of Psychology and Counseling, as the overseeing body for psychologists [in Iran], does not take any action regarding the unscientific claims made by practitioners of conversion therapy. This is despite the fact that these so-called therapies have long-lasting or irreparable effects on individuals' mental health, particularly adolescents. Among the responsibilities of this organization are issuing licenses and permits for members of the organization (psychologists and counselors) and monitoring the quality of their professional work.'²⁰⁴

- 8.6.10 Both the 2024 and 2025 Amnesty International human rights reports noted that the use of state-endorsed 'conversion therapies' remained prevalent in 2023 and 2024, including against children^{205 206}.
- 8.6.11 A recent example of an LGBT+ individual having been subjected to corrective/conversion therapy was (Note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):
- a 17-year-old male-born child whose father subjected them to psychotherapy 'treatment' before subsequently killing them^{207 208 209} (see also paragraphs 8.7.9 and 10.3.12). An article published by HRANA on 22 May 2024 quoted the father as having stated that his child "... had feminine sexual inclinations, and we did everything we could to treat him, but none were effective because ... [his child] did not cooperate and kept running away from home. His behavior was completely uncontrollable."²¹⁰ (See also [Societal treatment](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

8.7 State protection

- 8.7.1 The December 2020 ILGA report noted there are no laws in Iran to protect LGBTQ+ people, either constitutionally or broadly, as well as in respect of

²⁰² BBC Monitoring, [Media Guide: Iran](#) (Main news agencies) (via subscription), 16 January 2025

²⁰³ BBC Monitoring, [Media Guide: Iran](#) (Main news agencies) (via subscription), 16 January 2025

²⁰⁴ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

²⁰⁵ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2024](#) (page 204), 23 April 2024

²⁰⁶ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2025](#) (page 204), 28 April 2025

²⁰⁷ 6Rang, [Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024

²⁰⁸ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

²⁰⁹ Article 19, [... Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity enabled teen's murder](#), 2 February 2024

²¹⁰ HRANA, [Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024

employment, hate crimes, incitement, or regarding banning ‘conversion’ therapies²¹¹.

- 8.7.2 The May 2021 IHRNGO article stated: ‘... Article 302 of the new IPC sets out a list of those that are mahdoor-ol-dam, one whose blood may be shed with immunity or deserving of death. Article 302(a) states that anyone charged with committing a crime against an individual who has committed a hadd crime punishable by death is considered mahdoor-ol-dam and the perpetrators of the murder against them will not be sentenced to qisas [‘retribution-in-kind for a physical harm caused, which includes both injuries and death (the concept of “an eye for an eye”)’²¹²] or have to pay diya (blood money).’²¹³
- 8.7.3 A submission to the UN Human Rights Committee ahead of its 139th session and periodic review of Iran by The Advocates for Human Rights, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that promotes human rights in the US and around the world²¹⁴, and other NGOs, dated 12 September 2023, which cited various sources, stated: ‘According to one NGO, “Article 313-10 (of the Islamic Criminal Code) provides that if ... it is proven in court that the deceased was indeed mahdoorddam, the offender will not face death by qesas and will only receive a penalty of imprisonment from 1 to 2 years.’²¹⁵
- 8.7.4 The May 2021 Amnesty International public statement stated:
‘Article 303 of the 2013 Islamic Penal Code provides that even when the murder victim is not proven to have committed a hadd crime, if the perpetrator establishes that he “falsely” killed the victim on the basis of a belief that the victim had committed a hadd crime, the perpetrator would still be exempt from “retribution-in-kind” (qesas) and would only be required to pay “blood money” (diah) and serve between three to 10 years in prison, as per Article 612 of the 1996 Islamic Penal Code.’²¹⁶
- 8.7.5 The same Amnesty International statement also stated:
‘Article 301 of the 2013 Islamic Penal Code exempts men who kill their children and grandchildren from “retribution-in-kind” (qesas), which is the punishment provided for murder under Iranian law. The 2013 Islamic Penal Code does not provide what alternative sentences the perpetrator shall receive in such circumstances, but it is possible for the prosecution authorities to rely on Article 612 of the 1996 Islamic Penal Code concerning ta’zir crimes to seek a prison sentence of between three and 10 years in prison on the basis that the perpetrator’s conduct caused “disruption in order and security” or stirred “fears” that he or others may commit it again.’²¹⁷
- 8.7.6 The March 2023 6Rang report stated: ‘Under international human rights law, everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, has the right to State protection from violence, discrimination

²¹¹ ILGA World, [State-sponsored Homophobia: Global Legislation ...](#) (page 327), December 2020

²¹² IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#) (page 35), February 2025

²¹³ IHRNGO, [... Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT Community](#), 15 May 2021

²¹⁴ The Advocates for Human Rights et al, [... submission ...](#) (page 1), 12 September 2023

²¹⁵ The Advocates for Human Rights et al, [... submission ...](#) (paragraph 11), 12 September 2023

²¹⁶ AI, [Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man ...](#) (page 5), 17 May 2021

²¹⁷ AI, [Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man ...](#) (page 5), 17 May 2021

and other harm, whether by government officials or by any individual or group. In Iran, LGBT people are denied this fundamental human right.’²¹⁸

- 8.7.7 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated: ‘The vulnerability of LGBTQ+ individuals to violence is pronounced, with minimal protection or recourse available through legal channels. Incidents of violence ... often go unaddressed by authorities, leaving victims without support or justice. The lack of a safe environment, even for welfare workers, places these individuals at greater risk, highlighting the systemic neglect and discrimination they face daily.’²¹⁹
- 8.7.8 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, stated: ‘In general, there are no legal mechanisms against hate crimes or discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.’²²⁰
- 8.7.9 A recent example of the Iranian state’s response to the murder of an LGBT+ individual was (Note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):
- the father who murdered his 17-year-old male-born child for displaying what reports described as ‘feminine sexual inclinations’²²¹ or ‘feminine appearance and behavior’^{222 223} (see also paragraphs 8.6.11 and 10.3.12), and, in February 2024, was sentenced by the Tabriz Criminal Court, citing Article 612 of the Fifth Book of the Islamic Penal Code, to 3 years in prison^{224 225}

[Back to Contents](#)

9. Access to, and treatment in, services

9.1 Education and employment

- 9.1.1 The All Human Rights report stated: ‘Students are reportedly physically and mentally abused by teachers and school administrators because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, pushing them in some cases to drop out from school.’²²⁶
- 9.1.2 The same All Human Rights report also stated that ‘... [the] openly hostile behavior [of the Iranian state] towards the lesbian, gay and bisexual community from government officials may further impair LGBTIQ+ persons’ access to employment, social services, health care and education as it creates a permissive environment for the exclusion and societal stigmatization against LGBTIQ+ individuals in Iran.’²²⁷
- 9.1.3 The 2024 and 2025 Amnesty International human rights reports (covering 2023 and 2024, respectively) noted that ‘gender non-conforming individuals’

²¹⁸ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (page 10), March 2023

²¹⁹ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

²²⁰ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 1.1), 26 August 2024

²²¹ HRANA, [Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024

²²² 6Rang, [Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024

²²³ Stop Honor Killings, [Father Who Dismembered His 30-Year-Old Daughter ...](#), 24 July 2024

²²⁴ HRANA, [Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024

²²⁵ Stop Honor Killings, [Father Who Dismembered His 30-Year-Old Daughter ...](#), 24 July 2024

²²⁶ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 53), September 2023

²²⁷ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 52), September 2023

risked (2024 report), or suffered (2025 report), denial of access to education and employment^{228 229}.

- 9.1.4 An article published on 16 May 2021 by Deutsche Welle (DW), a German independent, international, media outlet²³⁰, stated: 'Transgender individuals live and work with no legal barriers in the country.'²³¹ The article did not make it clear whether this statement was made in reference to pre- or post-surgery transgender individuals, or both.
- 9.1.5 The June 2023 Rudaw article, however, citing information provided by a transgender man, noted that '... it is very difficult for transgender people to find job opportunities because large portions of the community treat them as someone to be feared and disgusted by.'²³²
- 9.1.6 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article noted:
'... [T]hose who refuse or are unable to choose a binary gender and undergo the prescribed surgeries ... are often denied access to basic services and rights, such as employment and education. This denial extends to various aspects of public life, effectively marginalizing them and limiting their ability to participate fully and freely in society.'²³³
'... The exclusion from additional professional and social arenas is another facet of discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in Iran. Notable figures such as ... [the] former head of City Theater, and ... [the] head of the Evaluation and Supervision Council of the General Directorate of Performing Arts, have played significant roles in excluding transgender individuals from the arts ... Some transgender individuals are deprived of continuing their careers in their specialized fields after coming out.'²³⁴
- 9.1.7 The USSD 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report stated: 'Observers report LGBTQI+ persons increasingly feel pressure to engage in commercial sex [which is unlawful in Iran²³⁵] due to isolation from family, inability to find employment, and lack of legal protections. A September 2023 research study found 80 percent of transgender women in Tehran engaged in commercial sex, typically due to economic hardship and the collapse of family support networks; this population was vulnerable to sex trafficking.'²³⁶
- 9.1.8 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, stated: 'According to media reports, in individual cases, transgender people were unable to find housing and employment even after surgery and the official change of gender, while others had suffered permanent physical damage from surgical procedures. However, there were also reports from transgender people stating that they were able to live and work in the country without any restrictions or legal obstacles.'²³⁷

²²⁸ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2024](#) (page 204), 23 April 2024

²²⁹ AI, [The State of the World's Human Rights 2025](#) (page 204), 28 April 2025

²³⁰ DW, [Who We Are](#), no date

²³¹ DW, [How transgender people navigate Iran](#), 16 May 2021

²³² Rudaw, ['At war with my own body:' Iran's transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²³³ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

²³⁴ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

²³⁵ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Protection and Trafficking Profile), 24 June 2024

²³⁶ USSD, [2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#) (Trafficking Profile), 24 June 2024

²³⁷ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 2.2), 26 August 2024

- 9.1.9 See also [Discrimination and discriminatory policy](#) and, for information about the impact of military exemption for LGBT+ individuals on their access to employment, see paragraph 7.8.5.

[Back to Contents](#)

9.2 Healthcare

- 9.2.1 In January 2024, the Asylum Research Centre (ARC) published a response to a COI query about the situation for LGBTIQ+ people in Iran, which cited various sources and stated:

‘In July 2022, a letter by Amir Kabir [an independent researcher from Washington D.C.²³⁸] published in the Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry on medical professional bias against sexual minorities in Iran stated that “the country’s political authorities generally deny the existence of a sexual minority” and that “because of this denial and neglect, very little health-related research has been done on sexual minority. Therefore, health care providers know little about sexual minorities and sometimes look at them in a degrading way, which can lead to discrimination in receiving medical services”.²³⁹

- 9.2.2 The May 2023 6Rang report stated:

‘A fifth [42] of this study’s [210] participants were pathologized due to their “abnormal” sexual orientations or gender identities, and were subjected to abuse, harassment, humiliation and violence at the hands of medical professionals.

‘More than anything, the results highlight how LGBTI+ people are pathologized in a country where their feelings and identities are criminalised. Medical professionals, who are indicated as safe and trustworthy for LGBTI+ people, have become a source of violence and abuse in Iran.

‘... [T]he negligence and poor knowledge of healthcare professionals are due to several factors – most importantly, the lack of up-to-date educational materials in the field of gender and sexuality, restricted access to information, and the primacy of religious ideology over experimental knowledge in teaching psychology and psychiatry in Iran. Moreover, there are no independent, non-governmental scientific organizations in Iran to monitor and evaluate the performance of specialists working in this field, and the responsible institutions comply with the political aims and rules of the Islamic Republic.

‘... Although there are professionals who despite pressures both from the state and due to cultural intolerance adhere to professional and ethical standards and support the LGBTI+ community, a collective will is required to bring change in broader levels.’²⁴⁰

- 9.2.3 The All Human Rights report stated: ‘LGBTIQ+ individuals face barriers in accessing healthcare. Access to information about STDs/STIs and their appropriate targeted treatment, as well as general safe-sex advice is very limited in Iran, restricting significantly the access to sexual health for the

²³⁸ PubMed, [... special attention to men who have sex with men](#), January 2023

²³⁹ ARC, [... Query response on the situation ... of the LGBTIQ+ community](#) (page 103), January 2024

²⁴⁰ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (pages 10 and 11), 31 May 2023

heterosexual cisgender population, and almost entirely for the LGBT community.’²⁴¹

- 9.2.4 The BTI 2024 Country Report stated: ‘Transgender individuals encounter significant obstacles in accessing health care ...’²⁴²
- 9.2.5 The EUAA Country Focus report stated: ‘Despite Iranian authorities’ and clerics’ acceptance that Iranians conduct surgery to change their sex, and gender-affirming surgeries are officially recognised in the country, transgender people do not have equal access to mental health [services].’²⁴³
- 9.2.6 In September 2024, the Information Centre For Voluntary Return (English translation) (ZIRF, German abbreviation), ‘an institution within ... BAMF’²⁴⁴ published a ‘Country Fact Sheet 2024’ which stated:
- ‘Transgender individuals are one of the target groups of social emergency services. If you face domestic violence, call the social emergency number 123. The Welfare Organization (Behzisit) provides psychosocial services to transgender individuals. Since these individuals may face issues such as unemployment and lack of social and family support, social support is also provided by the Welfare Organization. Psychosocial support is implemented in crisis intervention centers and does not have a separate center.
- ‘Target Group: All transgender individuals who visit the intervention center along with their families.
- ‘Admission Method: These individuals can self-refer to the intervention centers or be referred by organizations, institutions, treatment centers, etc.
- ‘Specialized Staff: Social workers and psychologists ...’²⁴⁵
- 9.2.7 The ZIRF Fact Sheet also signposted readers to an archived website for information about the Iranian Association for the Support of Patients with Gender Identity Disorder, however, CPIT was unable to access the same²⁴⁶.
- 9.2.8 The UN General Assembly published a Summary of stakeholders’ submissions on 4 November 2024 in respect of the HRC’s forty-eighth session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, which included: ‘Medical practices often misdiagnosed and abused LGBTIQ+ individuals, including the use of harmful conversion therapies.’²⁴⁷
- 9.2.9 See also [Discrimination and discriminatory policy](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

9.3 Gender reassignment surgery

- 9.3.1 Iran is one of²⁴⁸, if not, the only²⁴⁹ Islamic country to recognise gender reassignment surgery.

²⁴¹ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 54 and 55), September 2023

²⁴² Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2024 Country Report Iran](#) (page 28), 19 March 2024

²⁴³ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 4.12.), June 2024

²⁴⁴ Ecol.net, [Source description ... ZIRF ...](#), 12 January 2021

²⁴⁵ ZIRF, [The Islamic Republic of Iran - Country Fact Sheet 2024](#) (Health Care), September 2024

²⁴⁶ ZIRF, [The Islamic Republic of Iran - Country Fact Sheet 2024](#) (Health Care), September 2024

²⁴⁷ UN General Assembly, [Summary of ... submissions ...](#) (paragraph 72), 4 November 2024

²⁴⁸ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁴⁹ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

- 9.3.2 The June 2023 Rudaw article went on to state that such surgeries are ‘... subsidized by the government ... [and] require parental approval in Iran ... Scores of cisgender homosexuals are reluctantly forced into gender-affirming surgeries in Iran, while many others opt to undergo the surgery in an attempt to save their own lives.’²⁵⁰
- 9.3.3 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘Transgender people may be able to receive subsidised gender reassignment surgery and lesbian, gay or bisexual people who are not transgender or intersex may be required to undergo sex reassignment surgery [‘to avoid legal and social discrimination.’²⁵¹]. Activists claim the process to be approved for surgery is invasive and does not respect the privacy of the individual. It may take several years of public court hearings, virginity tests and mandatory counselling in which attempts may be made to ‘convert’ the patient. According to 6rang ... who spoke to DW ... the procedure is often undertaken by underqualified doctors and the surgery is sometimes botched. Transgender people report severe social ostracism including exclusion in the workplace, shunning by families, gender-based violence (family violence and abuse in the street), particularly during the transition phase when the transgender person is less likely to be able to escape public scrutiny.’²⁵²
- 9.3.4 The All Human Rights report stated:
 ‘In 1986, then Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini, issued a fatwa (a ruling or a religious decree on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) permitting the acceptance of sex reassignment surgery for transgender people. Sex reassignment surgery is now codified in Article 4 of the Family Law (2013), which stipulates that those seeking medical intervention should obtain prior judicial and medical approval officially stating that they have been diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder. The Ministry of Health has overall responsibility for implementation of this law, by ensuring the provision of medical care to recognized transgender people. The State Welfare Office provides social and psychological support and a number of state institutions, such as the Ministry of Labor, are involved in supporting transgender individuals who pursue or have been through sex reassignment procedures ... [O]nly those who are officially diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder and who obtained a permit to undergo sex reassignment surgery can have their gender legally recognized by the government. Others cannot benefit from the State Welfare’s services including sex change procedures or counselling and as a result cannot receive a state-issued identity card which legally affirms their gender.’²⁵³
- 9.3.5 The UN Human Rights Committee concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Iran stated: ‘The Committee is ... concerned about reports of gay and lesbian Iranians being pressured into undergoing gender reassignment surgery without their free consent ...’²⁵⁴
- 9.3.6 The March 2024 RFE/RL article stated:

²⁵⁰ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁵¹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.147), 24 July 2023

²⁵² DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.150), 24 July 2023

²⁵³ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 48), September 2023

²⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations ...](#) (paragraph 15), 23 November 2023

'Despite the legality of sex-reassignment surgery in Iran ... the official stance towards transgender individuals remains fraught with contradictions. Authorities provide legal mechanisms for gender transition while simultaneously restricting the visibility and rights of transgender people in public life. Meanwhile, religious leaders in Iran have issued varying fatwas regarding gender reassignment surgery - while some clerics do not consider it haram, or forbidden - creating an even more complex landscape for transgender rights and acceptance in the country.'²⁵⁵

- 9.3.7 The February 2022 HRANA article reported that a 20-year-old transgender person committed suicide after being denied gender reassignment surgery by a Sunni cleric and being pressured to not disclose their identity²⁵⁶.
- 9.3.8 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: 'Individuals were able to change their gender identify markers on government-issued identification cards after gender-affirming surgery and by court permission.'²⁵⁷
- 9.3.9 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated:
'In addition to ... surgical requirements, transgender citizens must navigate a lengthy and arbitrary legal process to obtain identification documents that reflect their gender identity, often resulting in the removal of reproductive organs such as the uterus, ovaries, and testicles. These heavy and irreversible surgeries, coupled with the high costs and low quality of medical care available, further exacerbate the challenges faced by transgender Iranians. HRA has documented instances where local judges ... apply these requirements inconsistently, adding to the confusion and discrimination.'²⁵⁸
- 9.3.10 On 21 May 2024, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, a German foundation 'affiliated with the German Green Party and which aims to promote democracy, human rights, and other social values, in Germany and abroad'²⁵⁹ published an article, citing various sources. The article stated that '... there are still many religious authorities who are completely against gender-affirming procedures and hold the view that such a procedure should only be permitted for intersex people.'²⁶⁰
- 9.3.11 The 22 May 2024 HRANA article stated:
'Not all transgender individuals seek gender confirmation surgeries. However, under Iranian law, a transgender person's identity is recognized officially only after undergoing surgery and sterilization.

'No specific regulations have yet been established in Iranian law regarding the transition process for transgender individuals; however, a section was included in the 2013 Family Protection Bill. In 1983, Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa legitimizing gender reassignment surgery. The absence of uniform laws for changing documents and obtaining necessary surgical permits has created significant challenges for transgender citizens,

²⁵⁵ RFE/RL, [Tehran Tells Transgender People To Avoid "Busy" Areas ...](#), 5 March 2024

²⁵⁶ HRANA, [Transgender Citizen Dies By Suicide ...](#), 8 February 2022

²⁵⁷ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 80), 23 April 2024

²⁵⁸ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

²⁵⁹ Ecol.net, [Source description: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung](#), 25 February 2022

²⁶⁰ Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, [... The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Iran](#), 21 May 2024

navigating legal complexities and facing arbitrary and sometimes exploitative behaviors by certain legal authorities.’²⁶¹

9.3.12 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, noted that there is greater state tolerance towards transgender people post-gender reassignment surgery²⁶². However, this should be read in the context of the mixed experiences of transgender people and the challenges that can remain post-surgery, also reported by BAMF, see paragraph 9.1.8.

9.3.13 The ZIRF Country Fact Sheet stated:

‘Transgender individuals in Iran are recognized and the processes of gender reassignment and re-confirmation are permitted. It is worth noting that these individuals must pay for their gender reassignment surgery themselves.

‘According to Clause 18 of Article 4 of the Family Protection Law, the request for gender reassignment surgery for transgender individuals is accepted and falls under the jurisdiction of the family court. Typically, after approaching the court and submitting a petition for gender reassignment and name change in the birth certificate, the individual is referred to Legal Medicine Organization, undergoes psychotherapy sessions with a qualified psychologist, and performs hormone level and karyotype tests [tests which examine blood or bodily fluids for abnormal chromosomes²⁶³]. Finally, once the approval is received from the psychiatrist and the forensic medicine, the judge’s ruling for gender reassignment and name change in the birth certificate is issued. In Iran, there is no specific insurance coverage for transgender individuals and gender confirmation surgery. However, part of the general costs of medication and treatment can be reduced using insurance.’²⁶⁴

9.3.14 Both the 2024 and 2025 Amnesty International human rights reports noted that for the legal recognition of transgender people, hormone therapy and surgical procedures, including sterilisation, were mandatory^{265 266}.

9.3.15 On 10 October 2025, the New York Times published an article on gender reassignment surgeries in Iran for foreigners and locals, which stated:

‘For 40 years Iran has performed more gender transition surgeries than many other nations ... But transgender Iranians and experts say the government’s embrace of surgery in no way correlates to advocacy for trans people ... Surgery is not a guarantee of acceptance or safety. Transgender people in Iran face murder and other forms of violence and harassment ... [Also t]ransition surgeries are complex operations with a questionable record of safety in Iran. Some activists have likened the country’s gender clinics to “butcher” shops. Saghi Ghahraman, who led the Iranian Queer Organization, said that while they believed treatment standards had improved, the change had come at a cost, as many gay people felt forced into operations that were like “experiments.”’²⁶⁷ CPIT noted that it was not clear from the article whether the violence and harassment it stated transgender people in Iran face was in reference to pre- or post-surgery, or both.

²⁶¹ HRANA, [Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024

²⁶² BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 1.2), 26 August 2024

²⁶³ Cleveland Clinic, [Karyotype Test](#), last reviewed 6 March 2021

²⁶⁴ ZIRF, [The Islamic Republic of Iran - Country Fact Sheet 2024](#) (Health Care), September 2024

²⁶⁵ AI, [The State of the World’s Human Rights 2024](#) (page 204), 23 April 2024

²⁶⁶ AI, [The State of the World’s Human Rights 2025](#) (page 204), 28 April 2025

²⁶⁷ New York Times, [Iran Lures Transgender Foreigners for Surgery ...](#), 10 October 2025

- 9.3.16 The New York Times article provided an example of a transgender teenager who, after her arrest and sentencing to a fine and a travel ban in late 2022/early 2023, ‘... fled to Germany from Iran in 2024 to avoid a forced transition surgery and to escape state persecution for her activism ... “I never wanted to undergo gender reassignment surgery,” ... [she] said. “I’ve defined myself outside of this binary. I didn’t want to live according to the governmental definition of cultural expectations of being a woman or a man, nor did I submit to Khomeini’s fatwa.”’²⁶⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

10. Societal treatment

10.1 Societal attitudes

- 10.1.1 The September 2023 6Rang report stated that during the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests,
- ‘... members of the LGBTIQ+ community, particularly queer youth, were extremely visible in the protests. 6Rang’s observation and communication with its network inside Iran confirmed that LGBTIQ+ individuals were one of the most involved groups, as they were aware that they would never gain rights or dignity under the current government. Many have not only actively participated in street protests but have also come forward with the struggles they have faced due to their identities. Some showed the rainbow flag on the streets or posted photos kissing their same-sex partners. The community witnessed unprecedented support - for example, graffiti on university campuses signposting it as a safe space for LGBTIQ+ persons.’²⁶⁹
- 10.1.2 The same 6Rang report, however, also reported on the case of a 16-year-old girl who was allegedly killed by security forces during the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests, who was, after her death, identified publicly by the 6Rang Executive Director, Shadi Amin, as having been part of the LGBT+ community. Shadi Amin ‘... was heavily attacked on Twitter and Instagram for stating that Nika had been part of the LGBTIQ+ community, regardless of evidence that proved this. The situation escalated to rape and death threats ... Thousands ... attacked Amin for “dirtying” their hero ... Amin has been placed under German police protection ever since ... the general public did not want to admit that one of the faces of the protests was queer.’²⁷⁰
- 10.1.3 The September 2023 6Rang report also stated:
- ‘... [O]fficial statements reproduce misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic values. They reinforce attitudes, beliefs, and practices that perpetuate violence, discrimination, and other harm on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and constitute advocacy of hatred. In the context of Iran, this risk is particularly heightened considering that members of the public are not allowed to access and learn about affirmative materials on homosexuality and the human rights of persons belonging to diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.’²⁷¹ (See also [Government position and rhetoric](#)).

²⁶⁸ New York Times, [Iran Lures Transgender Foreigners for Surgery ...](#), 10 October 2025

²⁶⁹ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (page 9), September 2023

²⁷⁰ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (pages 11 and 12), September 2023

²⁷¹ 6Rang, [... Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors ...](#) (page 18), September 2023

- 10.1.4 In the context of testimonies from male survivors of rape, the December 2023 Amnesty International report referred to ‘... widespread homophobic attitudes within Iranian society where being homosexual or being perceived as homosexual is stigmatized ... As a result, male rape survivors who presented themselves for medical treatment did not disclose their rape and often did not return for diagnostic testing that was recommended by their doctors out of fear and shame.’²⁷²
- 10.1.5 The BTI 2024 Country Report stated: ‘LGBTQ+ individuals face discrimination, social stigma and harassment, compelling them to live in fear and hide their identities.’²⁷³
- 10.1.6 Citing the lawyer and academic with Iran expertise, the EUAA Country Focus report stated: ‘... LGBTIQ persons in Iran “often face social stigma, discrimination, and violence from their families, communities, and even healthcare providers”.’²⁷⁴
- 10.1.7 The June 2023 Rudaw article quoted a transgender man as having stated: “Compared to other trans people, I was accepted easier and sooner in the community, because I was a girl transitioning into a boy. Patriarchal customs are more accepting of such cases, but that does not mean I had no problems.”²⁷⁵
- 10.1.8 The June 2023 Rudaw article went on to state: ‘The conservative communities in Iran and Rojhelat [Iran’s western Kurdish region] tend to be much less accepting of transgender women.’²⁷⁶
- 10.1.9 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘Lesbians are largely invisible in society and there is not a lot of information about their experiences ... Lesbian identity is not widely recognised ... In-country sources told DFAT younger Iranians, particularly in more progressive parts of major cities, are increasingly more tolerant, but on balance, homosexuality is not openly discussed, and gay people face severe discrimination ...’²⁷⁷
- 10.1.10 Citing the employee examining asylum applications for the French authorities, the EUAA Country Focus report stated: ‘Homosexual women are “badly” perceived by the society and are targeted.’²⁷⁸
- 10.1.11 An article published on 30 January 2024 by 6Rang (the January 2024 6Rang article) stated:
- ‘Being a part of both the LGBT+ community and an ethnic minority simultaneously leads to a more intense and severe experience of discrimination. Reasons for this include the lack of access to educational content in the native language, dealing more with economic challenges, and a lack of investment in cultural and educational domains in these regions. Consequently, many people in Azerbaijan [province] view issues related to

²⁷² AI, [“They violently raped me”: Sexual violence weaponized ...](#) (page 79), December 2023

²⁷³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2024 Country Report Iran](#) (page 28), 19 March 2024

²⁷⁴ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 4.12.), June 2024

²⁷⁵ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁷⁶ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁷⁷ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraphs 2.148 and 2.152), 24 July 2023

²⁷⁸ EUAA, [Iran - Country Focus](#) (section 4.12.), June 2024

sexual and gender minorities, including the concept of “transgender,” as entirely foreign and perceive this gender identity as a form of illness.’²⁷⁹

- 10.1.12 The BAMF 2024 report, translated into English, noted that there is greater societal tolerance towards transgender people post-gender reassignment surgery²⁸⁰. However, this should be read in the context of the mixed experiences of transgender people and the challenges that can remain post-surgery, also reported by BAMF, see paragraph 9.1.8.

[Back to Contents](#)

10.2 Threats, harassment and violence

- 10.2.1 The March 2023 6Rang report stated: ‘... Iranian society is not particularly receptive ... [to the LGBTQ+] community – harassment, social isolation, forced marriage and honour killings are common experiences of LGBTQ+ people.’²⁸¹
- 10.2.2 The June 2023 Rudaw article stated: ‘Iran’s transgender community continues to battle discrimination and threats of physical and psychological abuse, despite being partially recognized by the Iranian government ... the state recognition does not shield the community from widespread prejudice and sexual violence.’²⁸²
- 10.2.3 With reference to transgender women specifically, the same Rudaw article stated: ‘Before transitioning, they are often subjected to rape and sexual abuse, and are constantly subjected to insults and mistreatment after transitioning.’²⁸³
- 10.2.4 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘... [M]any lesbians are, as a matter of culture and societal expectation, forced into non-consensual heterosexual marriages. The report also notes examples of lesbians being raped and bullied because of their gender identity ...’²⁸⁴
- 10.2.5 The report of the Special Rapporteur, published in July 2024, stated: ‘... [T]rans women in Iran continue to suffer life-threatening violence. A [2022] study of 127 Iranian trans women found that more than 50 per cent had attempted suicide.’²⁸⁵
- 10.2.6 The Freedom in the World 2025 report, as well as the 2024 report that was published on 29 February 2024, stated that ‘LGBT+ people face harassment and discrimination, though the problem is underreported due to the criminalized and hidden nature of this community in Iran.’^{286 287}
- 10.2.7 See also [Treatment by family members](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

²⁷⁹ 6Rang, [Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024

²⁸⁰ BAMF, [Country brief information Iran SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (section 1.2), 26 August 2024

²⁸¹ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (page 6), March 2023

²⁸² Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁸³ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁸⁴ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraphs 2.148), 24 July 2023

²⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, [Report of the Special Rapporteur ...](#) (paragraph 31), 17 July 2024

²⁸⁶ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025](#) (section F4), 26 February 2025

²⁸⁷ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2024](#) (section F4), 29 February 2024

10.3 Treatment by family members

- 10.3.1 The May 2023 6Rang report stated that ‘... conversion therapy is generally forced on individuals by their families or other social institutions ...’²⁸⁸
- 10.3.2 The June 2023 Rudaw article, citing a transgender man, stated:
“Transwoman who are assigned male at birth are seen as a source of shame by their families, and that is why, in addition to being beaten up, insulted, and not being socially accepted, they also encounter destructive loneliness,” ...
‘... “Some families even go as far as killing their trans children because of what the people say about them, while some other trans other people try to commit suicide.”’²⁸⁹
- 10.3.3 The July 2023 DFAT report stated: ‘Transgender people report severe social ostracism including ... shunning by families, gender-based violence (family violence and abuse in the street), particularly during the transition phase when the transgender person is less likely to be able to escape public scrutiny ... Ostracism from family is common, particularly in the case of conservative families.’²⁹⁰
- 10.3.4 The DFAT report also stated: ‘Gay men may ... face homophobic violence, including ... from family members and others ... Discrimination [towards gay people] can include harassment and violence and harassment from family members, work colleagues, religious figures, and school and community leaders ... DFAT understands gay men and lesbians face considerable societal pressure to enter a heterosexual marriage and produce children.’²⁹¹
CPIT noted that the report did not provide any further information about the scale or extent of the harassment and violence it stated LGBT+ individuals experience.
- 10.3.5 The All Human Rights report stated: ‘LGBTIQ+ Iranians report experiencing violence and discrimination at the hands of family members in the form of beatings, sexual assault and rape, as well as verbal abuse.’²⁹²
- 10.3.6 The January 2024 6Rang article stated: ‘The overall stronger stereotypes in ethnic cities like Tabriz contribute to intensified violence against members of the LGBT+ community in Iran.’²⁹³
- 10.3.7 CPIT was unable to find any up-to-date figures in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) to reflect the scale and extent to which LGBT+ individuals were subjected to violence by family members. However, the January 2024 RFE/RL article stated: ‘Violence against sexual minorities by family members is not uncommon in the Islamic republic ... According to a 2020 poll published by the 6rang advocacy group, 62 percent of LGBT members surveyed in Iran had said that they had experienced one or more forms of violence by their immediate family. Nearly 30 percent of them complained of

²⁸⁸ 6Rang, [Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy ...](#) (page 9), 31 May 2023

²⁸⁹ Rudaw, [‘At war with my own body:’ Iran’s transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023

²⁹⁰ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraphs 2.150 and 2.152), 24 July 2023

²⁹¹ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraphs 2.147 and 2.152), 24 July 2023

²⁹² All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative report ...](#) (paragraph 46), September 2023

²⁹³ 6Rang, [Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024

sexual violence, while 77 percent said they had been subjected to physical violence.’²⁹⁴

- 10.3.8 The February 2024 Article 19 report noted that ‘rights groups have extensively documented instances of queerphobic violence ... and transmisogyny ...’²⁹⁵ The article referenced 2 examples of LGBT+ individuals who were subjected to violence and killed by male family members for not conforming to gender norms between 2021 and January 2024.²⁹⁶
- 10.3.9 The BAMF 2024 report stated: ‘The discovery of homosexual acts can lead not only to criminal consequences but also to reprisals within the family environment ... Homosexual men can be exposed to homophobic violence, including from family members and others.’²⁹⁷
- 10.3.10 An article published on 14 August 2025 by HRW stated: ‘A transgender woman formerly held in the quarantine section of Evin told Human Rights Watch that many transgender prisoners “have nobody” and are estranged from families “who shun them.” She expressed concerns that, “even if they are hurt or dead, no one would know as their families might not even be aware that they were there.”’²⁹⁸
- 10.3.11 Social anthropology researcher Kameel Ahmady, in an article published in October 2025, stated:
- ‘Rather than accepting their [LGBT] child ... [families] can pursue a “cure.” This often manifests in two particularly cruel forms:
- ‘Forced Marriage: For both gay men and lesbian women, families may arrange a forced heterosexual marriage as a desperate attempt to enforce conformity and “correct” their sexual orientation. This is seen as a way to restore family honor and ensure the continuation of the family line, trapping the individual in a life of profound psychological distress and often leading to divorce or, in extreme cases, suicide.
 - ‘Violence Against Women: Lesbian and bisexual women face a compounded form of oppression. In a system that defines female value through male relatives, their sexuality is seen as an ultimate act of rebellion against male authority. They are often rendered invisible, their relationships dismissed as unserious friendships. When their orientation is discovered, however, the punishment is often swift and privatized within the family: domestic violence, house arrest, or, as seen in the tragic cases of [two] individuals ... honor killings designed to cleanse the family’s shame.’²⁹⁹
- 10.3.12 A recent example of an LGBT+ individual having been subjected to violence (in this case, killed) by a family member was (Note: this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

²⁹⁴ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

²⁹⁵ Article 19, [Iran: Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity ...](#), 2 February 2024

²⁹⁶ Article 19, [Iran: Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity ...](#), 2 February 2024

²⁹⁷ BAMF, [Country brief ... SOGI ...](#) (English translation) (sections 1.1 and 2.2), 26 August 2024

²⁹⁸ HRW, [Iran: Detainees Ill-Treated and Disappeared After Israeli Evin Prison Attack](#), 14 August 2025

²⁹⁹ Kameel Ahmady, [The Tragic Destiny of LGBT in Iran](#), 10 October 2025

- the 17-year-old male-born child who was murdered by their father for displaying what reports described as ‘feminine sexual inclinations’³⁰⁰ or ‘feminine appearance and behavior’^{301 302 303} RFE/RL articles, published in January and March 2024, noted that the father said that ‘... he felt publicly shamed and claimed, “everyone pointed fingers at us.”’^{304 305}. See also paragraphs 8.6.11, for information about the father having subjected his child firstly to a corrective therapy and 8.7.9, for information about the state’s treatment of the father after the murder

10.3.13 See also Societal treatment: [Threats, harassment and violence](#) and, for more information about forced marriage and honour-based violence, see Country Policy and Information Notes, [Iran: Women - Early and forced marriage](#) and [Iran: Women fearing ‘honour’ based violence](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

11. LGBT+ groups and activity

11.1 Presence

- 11.1.1 Kameel Ahmady, writing in 2019 and referencing his study on LGB persons in Iran, published in 2018, in the cities of Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan, found that: ‘LGB are in abundance in these three selected cities as they have come out, as much as one can openly come out in Iran, within certain like-minded circles and talk openly about their sexual orientation.’³⁰⁶ According to the study, ‘... interviewees gave the idea of a specific number of LGBs who has [sic] come out and are experiencing a significant amount of problems in their daily lives.’³⁰⁷ From this, the study indicated the number, shown in parentheses, of ‘come out’ LGB persons in the 3 cities: Tehran (4,274), Mashhad (2,466) and Isfahan (2,171)³⁰⁸. These figures should be treated with caution due to the research method used - Grounded Theory³⁰⁹ - which is largely based on qualitative, rather than quantitative, data.
- 11.1.2 A qualitative research study on young transgender individuals’ lived experiences in Iran was carried out by 5 medical professionals and academics, and peer reviewed by 3 more. A report of the findings was published by research publishers³¹⁰, Frontiers, on 15 June 2023, which stated: ‘There is a lack of accurate statistics on transgender people in Iran, but it is estimated that ~4,000 transgender people are currently living in this country.’³¹¹

³⁰⁰ HRANA, [Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024

³⁰¹ 6Rang, [Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024

³⁰² Article 19, [... Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity enabled teen’s murder](#), 2 February 2024

³⁰³ Stop Honor Killings, [Father Who Dismembered His 30-Year-Old Daughter ...](#), 24 July 2024

³⁰⁴ RFE/RL, [Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son ...](#), 31 January 2024

³⁰⁵ RFE/RL, [Tehran Tells Transgender People To Avoid “Busy” Areas ...](#), 5 March 2024

³⁰⁶ Ahmady K, [LGB in Iran -The Homophobic Law and Social System](#) (page 5), 10 July 2019

³⁰⁷ Ahmady K, [LGB in Iran -The Homophobic Law and Social System](#) (page 5), 10 July 2019

³⁰⁸ Ahmady K, [LGB in Iran -The Homophobic Law and Social System](#) (page 12), 10 July 2019

³⁰⁹ Ahmady K, [LGB in Iran -The Homophobic Law and Social System](#) (pages 1 and 5), 10 July 2019

³¹⁰ Frontiers, [About Frontiers](#), no date

³¹¹ Mohammadi, Fateme et al, [Young transgender ...](#) (published by Frontiers), 15 June 2023

- 11.1.3 An article published by the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), a self-described ‘nonprofit organization dedicated to give [sic] voice to the Iranian American community in civic life’³¹², on 27 June 2023 referred to an ‘... estimated five million LGBTQIA+ individuals existing within the Iranian population ...’³¹³ With an estimated population in 2024 of a little under 88.5 million people³¹⁴, this would represent approximately 5.5% of the Iranian population. The article did not provide any further information about how the 5 million estimate was reached.
- 11.1.4 CPIT was unable to find any further information in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) about the estimated size of the LGBT+ community, living either openly or in secrecy, in Iran.

[Back to Contents](#)

11.2 Online community/activity

- 11.2.1 The December 2020 ILGA report stated: ‘Article 14 of Law on Computer Crimes (Law No. 71063) (2009) punishes with imprisonment and fines “the use of computer systems, telecommunications systems or data carriers to publish or distribute immoral content, or their storage with the intention of corrupting society”. Article 15 explicitly includes acts of “sexual perversion”.’³¹⁵
- 11.2.2 The July 2023 DFAT report stated ‘LGBTI people may use social networking apps like Grindr, Bumble and Tinder to communicate. These services are accessed illegally through virtual private networks.’³¹⁶ The LGBTQ Nation article also referred to an app called Badoo, which it referred to as being ‘widely used’ among Iran’s gay community³¹⁷.
- 11.2.3 The All Human Rights report stated that:
- ‘... Article 14 of Law on Computer Crimes criminalizes the distribution of “immoral content”.
- ‘... LGBTIQ+ persons are also targeted with abuse online. In a 2018 survey of 727 LGBTIQ+ Iranians conducted by Small Media [an organisation with a focus on upholding freedom of expression and access to information in the Middle East and Africa³¹⁸], 11% of respondents reported that they had been entrapped on dating apps – either by state actors, or other individuals with malicious intent. In light of the legislative restrictions on LGBTIQ+ citizens, there is no avenue for such threats of blackmail to be reported. Online threats have also been reportedly perpetuated by the State.
- ‘... The 2009 Computer Crimes Law radically expanded state powers for surveillance and online content censorship and has had a chilling effect upon freedom of expression online, with LGBTIQ+ citizens particularly adversely affected.’³¹⁹

³¹² NIAC, [About Us: What We Do](#), no date

³¹³ NIAC, [Invisible Victims: A Deep Look at Iran's LGBTQI+ Human Rights Crisis](#), 27 June 2023

³¹⁴ CIA World Factbook, [Iran](#) (People and Society), updated 1 October 2025

³¹⁵ ILGA World, [State-sponsored Homophobia: Global Legislation ...](#) (page 154), December 2020

³¹⁶ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.151), 24 July 2023

³¹⁷ LGBTQ Nation, [The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022

³¹⁸ Small Media, [Homepage](#), no date

³¹⁹ All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, [Alternative ...](#) (paragraphs 45, 47 and 56), September 2023

11.2.1 CPIT has not been able to find information in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) of a more recent study on the entrapment of LGBT+ people on dating apps. However, a BBC News article, published on 11 September 2022, stated that ‘... there have been reports of people being arrested for using LGBT dating apps’³²⁰, though the article did not expand further upon this statement.

11.2.2 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated: ‘The government censored all materials related to LGBTQI+ status or conduct. Authorities blocked websites or content within sites that discussed LGBTQI+ topics, including Wikipedia pages defining LGBTQI+ and other related topics.’³²¹

11.2.3 The May 2024 Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung article stated that the development of the LGBTQ+ movement in Iran:

‘... is connected to the possibilities offered by the internet ... For a long time, the visible presence and self-presentation of LGBTQ+ individuals were limited mainly due to restricted communication possibilities ... The increasing proliferation of the internet played a central role in providing platforms for the exchange and networking of LGBTQ+ individuals. The ability to communicate and organise online not only facilitated the growth of the movement but also marked a significant turning point in the history of LGBTQ+ activism in Iran.

‘... Over time, technological progress, such as the emergence of smartphones, also played a significant role in the development of LGBTQ+ activism, as it also offered new opportunities for queer dating in Iran. Social media encouraged LGBTQ+ individuals in Iran to post content on platforms like Instagram and Telegram, either individually or collectively. This fuelled a persistent struggle between LGBTQ+ individuals and security forces such as the Revolutionary Guards intelligence service and the Ministry of Intelligence, who were and are intent on identifying and suppressing public expressions of LGBTQ+ individuals.

‘... A notable example of queer activism among ethnic minorities took place in the Kurdish regions of Iran. Here, people began creating content in their mother tongue, which had previously been neglected in their curriculum. Particularly worth mentioning is the Pelkezerine initiative, which promotes both queer and Kurdish identity. It can be found on Instagram ...

‘In the course of the protests in Iran from September 2022 (Women, Life, Freedom movement), queer people actively participated in activism both on the streets and on social media, significantly increasing the visibility of LGBTQ+ people in public discourse ... [T]hey demanded equal rights by visibly carrying rainbow flags, through graffiti, or simply by showing affection to their partners in public and sharing these images – actions that clearly violate the law ...’³²²

For information about the treatment of LGBT+ people carrying out such activities, see [State attitudes and treatment](#).

³²⁰ BBC News, [‘I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran’](#), 11 September 2022

³²¹ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 81), 23 April 2024

³²² Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, [... The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Iran](#), 21 May 2024

- 11.2.4 Freedom House published a report entitled ‘Freedom on the Net 2024’ on 16 October 2024 (Freedom on the Net report). The report, which covered the period from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024 and cited various sources, covered Iran’s Internet User Protection Bill (IUPB), Article 3 of which ‘... gives the Supreme Regulatory Commission (SRC), a body within the [Supreme Council for Cyberspace] SCC, the power to set bandwidth limits and manage access to the international and domestic internet.’³²³ Regarding its impact on LGBT+ individuals, the Freedom on the Net report stated: ‘Rights organizations, such as Article 19, have expressed concern about the disproportionate impact the bill could have on marginalized populations like LGBT+ people, who heavily rely on the international internet to access information and connect with their community.’³²⁴
- 11.2.5 The Freedom on the Net report also stated: ‘Authorities restrict access to thousands of websites, particularly ... sites that address ... LGBT+ rights ... The LGBT+ community has been a primary target of persecution both offline and online. According to ongoing research by Article 19 and the researcher Afsaneh Rigot, LGBT+ individuals are frequently targeted and entrapped on dating apps and social media platforms by state and nonstate actors.’³²⁵
- 11.2.6 On 24 December 2024, the Information, Documentation and Research Division (English translation) (DIDR), a department of the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA), the French government office responsible for processing asylum applications³²⁶, published a report entitled ‘Iran: Opposition media, 1980-2024’ (English translation). The report, which cited various sources, noted 2 Iranian online magazines, MAHA Magazine and Cheraq, which both focus on LGBT+ issues in Iran³²⁷.
- N.B. the information cited above was originally published in French. See [About the country information](#) for further information about the method of translation.
- 11.2.7 For further information on social media restrictions, see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Iran: Social media, surveillance and sur place activities](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

11.3 Meeting places

- 11.3.1 An article entitled ‘The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran’, published on 30 November 2022, by LGBTQ Nation, a pro-LGBTQ+ online news magazine³²⁸, referred to Tarasht, a neighbourhood of Tehran, as ‘... a backward, conservative town full of homophobes, [that] was also filled with gay men craving sex.’³²⁹
- 11.3.2 The same LGBTQ Nation article stated: ‘The diaries of an American ... detail his endeavors on Pahlavi avenue – a common hook-up spot – and famous parks and bars that were, at the time [though the article did not state when],

³²³ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2024](#) (section A3), 16 October 2024

³²⁴ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2024](#) (section A3), 16 October 2024

³²⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom on the Net 2024](#) (sections B1 and C7), 16 October 2024

³²⁶ Ecol.net, [Source description ... OFPRA ...](#), 3 February 2020

³²⁷ DIDR, OFPRA, [... Opposition media ...](#) (English transl.) (pages 54 and 56), 24 December 2024

³²⁸ LGBTQ Nation, [About Us](#), no date

³²⁹ LGBTQ Nation, [The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022

considered havens for gay men – especially a park called Daneshjoo ... Tarasht, next to Pahlavi avenue, wasn't the center of ... [his] attention. However, as time went on and the public appearance of gay people became more taboo, small neighborhoods seemed much safer to those who craved same-sex companionship.'³³⁰

- 11.3.3 The LGBTQ Nation article also went on to quote a gay man who spoke to LGBTQ Nation: "Pahlavi Park (now known as Daneshjoo Park) has historically been the most well-known gay area of Tehran, but as far as I know, the police raided there once. Tarasht isn't even on their radar."³³¹ The article continued,

'It's hard to get legitimate information on the park since most reports are from the conservatives who claim that Daneshjoo Park is the source of chaos and insecurity in the area because of LGBTQ people.

'... Over the past few weeks, LGBTQ people and many others have been fighting against the Islamic Republic both in Tarasht and Daneshjoo Park for their rights, hoping to make places like Tarasht unnecessary and the whole country a haven for gay people.

'A new tactic of combating the regime's anti-LGBTQ+ laws is that young gay, lesbian, and bisexual Iranians take pictures of themselves kissing in the public.'³³²

- 11.3.4 The March 2023 6Rang report stated: 'One of the largest minority groups that made themselves visible during the protests [that began in September 2022] was the LGBTQ+ community. As such, issues related to individuals in this minority group have come to light in the face of the Iranian general public. We have witnessed immense support, for example graffiti on university campuses signposting it as a safe space for LGBTQ+ people.'³³³

- 11.3.5 The July 2023 DFAT report stated, 'There are no public gathering places for LGBTI people, for example gay bars, in Iran.'³³⁴

- 11.3.6 The March 2024 RFE/RL article stated:

'The Tehran City Council spokesman said that transgender people should congregate in only certain parts of Iran's capital, highlighting how many in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community are shunned.

'Speaking at a press briefing on March 4 [2024], Alireza Nadali [the Tehran City Council spokesman] said transgender people should avoid areas such as the bustling Valiasr Intersection - a focal point in Tehran for both its cultural significance and as a site of major public gatherings, including protests - and instead meet up in "inclusive" areas.

"We're not sweeping the issue under the rug. There should be an inclusive space for them, just not in this busy area," Nadali said.

³³⁰ LGBTQ Nation, [The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022

³³¹ LGBTQ Nation, [The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022

³³² LGBTQ Nation, [The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022

³³³ 6Rang, [... Official hate speech against LGBT people ...](#) (page 3), March 2023

³³⁴ DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Iran](#) (paragraph 2.151), 24 July 2023

‘... The Tehran City Council's moves to push transgender people to find certain areas to meet up aligns with broader efforts by the city and other government bodies to regulate public spaces and control social conduct.

‘Tehran recently erected barriers around the City Theater - one of the areas transgender people should avoid, according to the City Council - and has increased patrols by hijab enforcement officers in the area after more than a year of unrest sparked by Iranians' anger over a lack of freedoms and rights.’³³⁵

- 11.3.7 The 16 May 2024 HRANA article stated: ‘Alireza Nadali, the spokesperson for the Islamic Council of Tehran City, has publicly criticized the presence of transgender citizens in Daneshjoo Park, suggesting that their presence in public spaces should be regulated and not be allowed in cultural spots of the city. This type of rhetoric contributes to the stigmatization and marginalization of transgender individuals, limiting their ability to participate in public life.’³³⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

11.4 Civil society and NGOs

- 11.4.1 The December 2020 ILGA report stated: ‘Article 8 of the Executive Regulations Concerning the Formation and Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (2005) provides that the organisation’s constitution and activities must not be in violation of the Constitution.’³³⁷
- 11.4.2 A September 2023 report by Outright International, an organisation that works with partners globally to ‘strengthen the capacity of the LGBTIQ human rights movement’³³⁸, described Iran as one of the countries where ‘LGBTIQ CSOs [civil society organisations] exist, but registration as openly LGBTIQ is prohibited or generally impossible.’³³⁹
- 11.4.3 The September 2023 Iran International article made reference to several LGBT+ activist groups - Simorgh, Six Colors, the Iranian Rainbow Coalition, and the Queer Rights Group – in the context of them having made a joint call to political and social groups, both within and outside of Iran, to join Woman, Life, Freedom protests³⁴⁰.
- 11.4.4 On an undated webpage, 6Rang, stated that it ‘is a member of The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA). Its mission is to raise awareness on LGBTI+ human rights, and eradicate homophobia, transphobia, and violence against lesbian and transgender people in particular, as well as the LGBTI community in general.’³⁴¹ It also noted that ‘... [i]ts network and contacts span across more than 200 LGBTI+ individuals, the majority of whom are based in Iran.’³⁴²

³³⁵ RFE/RL, [Tehran Tells Transgender People To Avoid “Busy” Areas ...](#), 5 March 2024

³³⁶ HRANA, [Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024

³³⁷ ILGA World, [State-sponsored Homophobia: Global Legislation ...](#) (page 177), December 2020

³³⁸ Outright International, [The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing ...](#) (page 2), September 2023

³³⁹ Outright International, [The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing ...](#) (page 75), September 2023

³⁴⁰ Iran International, [Iranian LGBTQ Activists Call For Protests ...](#), 11 September 2023

³⁴¹ 6Rang, [About us](#), no date

³⁴² 6Rang, [About us](#), no date

- 11.4.5 The UN Human Rights Committee concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Iran stated: 'The Committee is ... concerned by the prosecution of human rights defenders who advocate on behalf of sexual or gender minorities, and that some defenders ... had been sentenced to death.'³⁴³
- 11.4.6 The May 2024 Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung article stated:
- 'In 2007, Maryam Khatoon Molkara, with the support of psychiatrists, psychologists and civil rights activists, founded the Iranian Association for Supporting Individuals with Gender Identity Disorders. The association articulated its goals on its website, emphasising the need to raise public awareness of this disorder as a form of mental illness that requires action and treatment. In addition, the association also offers seminars and corresponding workshops to impart knowledge and provide support to affected individuals. This represents the formal stance on transgender issues.
- 'Molkara, as a pioneer, is primarily seen as a respected figure, but her organisation's approach to transgender issues remains problematic to this day. There is no evidence that the organisation ever intended to address LGBTQ+ concerns as a political issue or to confront the government. Over time, the trans community has found its own way, and attention to the association and its mindset has rapidly declined.'³⁴⁴
- 11.4.7 The same Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung article also stated: 'An outstanding, yet rare example of solidarity under the repressive conditions of civil rights activism in Iran took place during the Woman, Life, Freedom protests, when twenty civil rights and trade union organisations issued a charter for the recognition of a minimum level of civil rights, including recognition of the LGBTQ+ community and the decriminalisation of same-sex relationships.'³⁴⁵
- 11.4.8 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated:
- 'The government restricted the operations of, and did not cooperate with, local or international NGOs monitoring or investigating alleged violations of human rights. The government restricted the work of domestic activists and often responded to their inquiries and reports with harassment, arrests, online hacking, and monitoring of individual activists and organization workplaces.
- 'By law, NGOs had to register with the Ministry of Interior and apply for permission to receive foreign grants. Independent human rights groups and other NGOs faced harassment because of their activism, as well as the threat of closure by government officials, following prolonged and often arbitrary delays in obtaining official registration.
- 'According to NGOs, including HRW and Amnesty International, the government's human rights record and its level of cooperation with international rights institutions was poor. The government denied requests from international human rights NGOs to establish offices in or conduct regular investigative visits to the country.'³⁴⁶ As with LGBT+ issues, the

³⁴³ UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations ...](#) (paragraph 15), 23 November 2023

³⁴⁴ Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, [... The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Iran](#), 21 May 2024

³⁴⁵ Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, [... The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Iran](#), 21 May 2024

³⁴⁶ USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#) (page 60), 23 April 2024

USSD 2024 Country Report provided no coverage of governmental posture towards international and nongovernmental monitoring and investigation of alleged abuses of human rights, therefore this is the most recent information on this subject from this source³⁴⁷.

- 11.4.9 Both the 2024 and 2025 Freedom in the World reports stated: 'Nongovernmental organizations that seek to address human rights violations are generally suppressed by the state.'³⁴⁸ ³⁴⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

³⁴⁷ USSD, [2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), 12 August 2025

³⁴⁸ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025](#) (section E2), 26 February 2025

³⁴⁹ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2024](#) (section E2), 29 February 2024

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal context - considering laws that protect and/or discriminate (enforcement of the law is covered in the state attitudes and treatment section) - constitution, criminal, penal and civil codes, Sharia and caselaw - applicable to
 - general anti-discrimination provisions (and inclusion or absence of reference to LGBT+ people)
 - (being) an LGBT+ person
 - same-sex sexual behaviour
 - same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
 - gender reassignment/transition, and recognition of gender identity of trans persons
 - LGBT+ organisations
 - relevant significant court cases and caselaw

NB where there is absence of law, this must be noted

- State attitudes and treatment
 - statements made by government figures and public officials
 - government policies/programmes that assist or discriminate against LGBT+ people
 - how the law is applied (including discriminatory application non-LGBT+ specific laws). Numbers:
 - arrests and detentions
 - prosecutions, convictions, acquittals
 - restrictions/enforcement of law against LGBT+ organisations
 - other state treatment, such as
 - harassment
 - blackmail and bribery
 - corrective therapy
 - access to public services
 - education
 - healthcare
 - employment
 - justice
 - state protection

- description of security forces and their capabilities, including any specific units with remit to protect LGBT+ people
 - response and assistance provided, including arrests and prosecutions of persecutors, witness protection, assistance in relocation
 - oversight mechanisms and organisations, complaints process, investigations, outcomes and penalties
- geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- **Societal attitudes and treatment**
 - public opinion/views/surveys, including anti-LGBTI movements and public demonstrations
 - prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour
 - religious group attitudes, statements and actions
 - media representation, language and discourse
 - treatment by the public, including family members
 - shunning and stigma
 - harassment and violence, including mob attacks and gender-specific forms such as corrective rape
 - accessing accommodation, education, employment and healthcare
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- **LGBT+ communities and groups**
 - size and location of LGBT+ population
 - presence, projection and location of openly LGBT+ persons and communities into public life
 - numbers, aims and location of openly LGBT+ communities
 - services, meeting places and events, such as bars, restaurants and Gay Pride
 - operation, activities and restrictions of LGBT+ civil society and other supportive groups or associations, including websites
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting behaviour of individuals and groups.
- **Freedom of movement**
 - legal freedoms/restrictions, including documentation
 - safety of movement
 - vulnerabilities of different groups

[Back to Contents](#)

Bibliography

Sources cited

Ahmady K,

[LGB in Iran -The Homophobic Law and Social System](#), 10 July 2019.
Accessed: 30 October 2025

[The Tragic Destiny of LGBT in Iran](#), 10 October 2025. Accessed: 19 December 2025

All Human Rights for All in Iran et al, Alternative report to the Human Rights Committee. For the periodic review of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Discrimination and violence based on religion or belief, ethnicity and language, sexual orientation and gender identity, Human Rights Committee, 139th session (Geneva), 9 October – 3 November 2023, September 2023. Accessed: 23 October 2025

Alliance of Iranian Women (AIW), [Iran Protests: Non-binary Teenager Raha Ajodani Arrested](#), 12 January 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025

Amnesty International (AI),

[Good news: Sareh Sedighi-Hamadani's death sentence overturned](#), 16 May 2023. Accessed: 4 November 2025

[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights urgent need to protect LGBTI rights](#), 17 May 2021. Accessed: 21 October 2025

[The State of the World's Human Rights 2024](#), 23 April 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[The State of the World's Human Rights 2025](#), 28 April 2025. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[“They violently raped me”: Sexual violence weaponized to crush Iran's “Women Life Freedom” uprising \[13/7480/2023\]](#), December 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

Article 19,

[About us](#), no date. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Iran: Gender apartheid and a culture of impunity enabled teen's murder](#), 2 February 2024. Accessed: 17 October 2025

Asylum Research Centre (ARC), [Iran: Query response on the situation and treatment of the LGBTQI+ community](#), January 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Iran Country Information Report, 24 July 2023. Accessed: 24 October 2025

Avery, Peter William and Afary, Janet, Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Justice of Iran](#), updated 22 October 2025. Accessed: 24 October 2025

BBC Monitoring, [Media Guide: Iran](#) (subscription only, copy on request), 16 January 2025. Accessed: 28 October 2025

BBC News,

[A guide to transgender terms](#) (Transgender man/transgender woman), 3 June 2015. Accessed: 29 October 2025

[Iran protests: LGBTQ community rises up](#), 19 April 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Iran sentences two LGBT activists to death](#), 6 September 2022. Accessed: 4 November 2025

['I want to see the rainbow flag raised in Iran'](#), 11 September 2022. Accessed: 17 October 2025

Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2024 Country Report Iran](#), 19 March 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

Brandeis University, [The Islamic Republic of Iran's Chastity and Hijab Law and the Weaponization of Women's Economic Vulnerabilities](#), December 2024. Accessed 28 October 2025

Carleton University, [About Carleton](#), no date. Accessed: 23 October 2025

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, [Iran](#), updated 1 October 2025. Accessed: 30 October 2025

Cicero's, [Iranian Ex-Culture Official Escapes Death Penalty but Faces Flogging in Same-Sex Scandal](#), 19 September 2025. Accessed: 31 October 2025

Cleveland Clinic, [Karyotype Test](#), last reviewed 6 March 2021. Accessed: 29 October 2025

Deutsche Welle (DW),

[How transgender people navigate Iran](#), 16 May 2021. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Who We Are](#), no date. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Ecoi.net,

[Source description: Bertelsmann Stiftung](#), 19 May 2020. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Source description: Center for Human Rights in Iran \(formerly: International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran\) \(CHRI\)](#), 16 April 2020. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Source description: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung](#), 25 February 2022. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Source description: International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\)](#), 16 July 2020. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Source description: Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides \(OFPRA\)](#), 3 February 2020. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Source description: Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe \(SFH\)](#), 3 December 2021. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Source description: Zentralstelle für Informationsvermittlung zur Rückkehrförderung \(ZIRF\)](#), 12 January 2021. Accessed: 15 October 2025

ECPM (Together Against the Death Penalty),

[Discover ECPM: About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 14 October 2025

[Discover ECPM: History](#), no date. Accessed: 14 October 2025

European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), [Iran - Country Focus](#), June 2024.

Accessed: 16 October 2025

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany) (BAMF),

[Briefing Notes Summary: Iran – July to December 2023](#), 31 December 2023.

Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Country brief information Iran SOGI \(Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity\):](#)

[Situation of LGBTIQ people Status: 06/2024](#) (English translation), 26 August

2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Femena, [Iran's New Hijab Law: Controlling Women's Bodies through Surveillance, Fines and Punitive Measures](#), 2 January 2025. Accessed: 28 October 2025

Freedom House,

[Freedom in the World 2024](#), 29 February 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Freedom in the World 2025](#), 26 February 2025. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[Freedom on the Net 2024](#), 16 October 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Frontiers, [About Frontiers](#), no date. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Front Line Defenders,

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Atekeh Rajabi](#), no date. Accessed: 9 December 2025

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, [Suppressed voices, growing movement: The fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Iran](#), 21 May 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

Hengaw Organization for Human Rights (Hengaw), [LGBTQ+ Community Activist Apprehended in Urmia](#), 28 February 2024. Accessed: 4 November 2025

Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA),

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[Actor Mohammad Sadeghi Receives Five-Year Prison Sentence](#), 11 December 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Criminalized Identity: Highlighting LGBTQ+ Rights Abuses In Iran](#), 16 May 2024. Accessed: 27 October 2025

[Father Sentenced to Three Years for Murder of Transgender Son](#), 22 May 2024. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[Five Transgender Individuals Arrested and Coerced into Confession](#), 26 June 2023. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Iran Protests: Non-binary Teenager Raha Ajodani Arrested](#), 20 December 2022. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Raha Ajoudani Sentenced to Travel Ban and Fine](#), 7 July 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Transgender Citizen Dies By Suicide After Disallowance of Gender Affirming Surgery](#), 8 February 2022. Accessed: 21 October 2025

[Two Inmates Executed in Maragheh Central Prison](#), 3 February 2022. Accessed: 31 October 2025

Human Rights Watch (HRW),

[Iran: Child Protection Law Positive, but Insufficient](#), 23 June 2020. Accessed: 18 December 2025

[Iran: Detainees Ill-Treated and Disappeared After Israeli Evin Prison Attack](#), 14 August 2025. Accessed: 30 October 2025

[World Report 2024 – Iran](#), 11 January 2024. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[World Report 2025 – Iran](#), 16 January 2025. Accessed: 14 October 2025

HRW et al, [Joint NGO Statement on Iran to Member States of the United Nations Human Rights Council](#), 21 March 2024. Accessed: 14 October 2025

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC),

Iran: Dress codes, including legislation, enforcement and criminal penalties; treatment of individuals who do not conform to dress codes by society and authorities (2023–February 2025), 14 February 2025. Accessed: 13 October 2025

Iran: The army, its organization, including the different branches and their roles and responsibilities; the different military ranks, how they are determined, the roles and duties associated with each, and the criteria for promotion; types and terms of service (2019–December 2022), 19 December 2022. Accessed: 23 October 2025

Information Centre For Voluntary Return (English translation) (ZIRF, German abbreviation), [The Islamic Republic of Iran - Country Fact Sheet 2024](#), September 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Information, Documentation and Research Division (English translation) (DIDR), of the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (OFPRA), [Iran: Opposition media, 1980-2024](#) (English translation), 24 December 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), [The Iran Notes on death penalty: A state killing machine](#), November 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) World, [About us](#), no date. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Our Identities under Arrest](#), 30 November 2023. Accessed: 21 October 2025

[State-sponsored Homophobia: Global Legislation Overview Update](#), December 2020. Accessed: 8 December 2025

Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO),

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 14 October 2025

[Farid Mohammadi and Mehrdad Karimpour Executed on Charges of “Sodomy by Force”](#), 31 January 2022. Accessed: 31 October 2025

[Human Rights Defenders in Iran 2023](#), 15 December 2023. Accessed: 4 November 2025

[Iran: The Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT Community](#), 15 May 2021. Accessed: 21 October 2025

IHRNGO and ECPM, [Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran – 2024](#), February 2025. Accessed: 14 October 2025

Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre (IHRDC),

[Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book One and Book Two](#), 4 April 2014. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran - Book Five](#), 15 July 2013. Accessed: 27 October 2025

[Mission](#), no date. Accessed: 16 October 2025

Iran International,

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 14 October 2025

[Iran ex-hijab enforcer gets lashes in sex scandal, escapes execution on legal twist](#), 17 September 2025. Accessed: 31 October 2025

[Iranian LGBTQ Activists Call For Protests On Amini Anniversary](#), 11 September 2023. Accessed: 14 October 2025

IranWire,

[About IranWire](#), no date. Accessed: 21 October 2025

[Iranian Actor Sadeghi Handed Five-Year Prison Term](#), 11 December 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Iranian LGBTQ Activist Arrested to Serve Prison Sentence](#), 29 February 2024. Accessed: 4 November 2025

[Non-Binary Iranian Recounts the Threats, Insults from Authorities](#), 23 January 2024. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Two Men Executed on 'Sodomy' Charges](#), 31 January 2022. Accessed: 31 October 2025

[Voices From the Basement: Gay and Trans Detainees on Life in Evin Prison](#), 9 June 2021. Accessed: 21 October 2025

LGBTQ Nation,

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 30 October 2025

[The secret gay neighborhood inside Tehran](#), 30 November 2022. Accessed: 30 October 2025

Mohammadi, Fateme, Masoumi, Seyedeh Zahra, Tehranineshat, Banafsheh, Oshvandi, Khodayar, and Bijani, Mostafa, [Young transgender individuals' lived experiences of facing life's challenges: a qualitative study in Iran](#) (published by Frontiers), 15 June 2023. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Newsweek, [Iran's New 'Chastity' Law Explained](#), 5 December 2024. Accessed: 28 October 2025

New York Times, [Iran Lures Transgender Foreigners for Surgery but Forces Operations on Locals](#), 10 October 2025. Accessed: 29 October 2025

National Iranian American Council (NIAC),

[About Us: What We Do](#), no date. Accessed: 30 October 2025

[Invisible Victims: A Deep Look at Iran's LGBTQI+ Human Rights Crisis](#), 27 June 2023. Accessed: 30 October 2025

Outright International, [The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing: The Right to Register](#)

[and the Freedom to Operate, 2023](#), September 2023. Accessed: 24 October 2024

PubMed, [Action to prevent monkeypox in Iran: special attention to men who have sex with men](#), January 2023. Accessed: 29 October 2025

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL),

[About RFE/RL](#), no date. Accessed: 16 October 2025

[Iranian Actor Sadeghi Says He's Been Sentenced To Five Years For His Activism](#), 11 December 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025

[Iranian Father Arrested For Murdering Teenage Son Over 'Feminine' Behavior and Makeup](#), 31 January 2024. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Tehran Tells Transgender People To Avoid "Busy" Areas, Highlighting Difficulties Faced By LGBT Community](#), 5 March 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

Rudaw,

[About Us](#), no date. Accessed: 15 October 2025

['At war with my own body:' Iran's transgender community still at risk](#), 27 June 2023. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Iran's security council halts implementation of new hijab bill: Parliament speaker](#), 25 May 2025. Accessed: 28 October 2025

Small Media, [Homepage](#), no date. Accessed: 24 October 2025

Stop Honor Killings, [Father Who Dismembered His 30-Year-Old Daughter Released from Tabriz Central Prison After 8 Months](#), 24 July 2024. Accessed: 28 October 2025

Swiss Refugee Council (SRC), [Iran: Situation of Women, Policy Paper of the SFH Country Analysis](#), 18 November 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

The Advocates for Human Rights et al, [Islamic Republic of Iran's Compliance with International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Treaty, submission for the 139th Session of the Human Rights Committee 9 October – 3 November 2023](#), 12 September 2023. Accessed: 24 October 2025

The Iran Primer, [The Islamic Judiciary](#), 1 August 2015. Accessed: 24 October 2025

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (TWI), [The Iran Primer: Power, Politics, and US Policy](#), 3 June 2013. Accessed: 24 October 2025

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. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Summary of stakeholders' submissions on the Islamic Republic of Iran, Human Rights Council, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Forty-eighth session, Geneva, 20–31 January 2025 \[A/HRC/WG.6/48/IRN/3\]](#), 4 November 2024. Accessed: 29 October 2025

UN Human Rights Committee,

[Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran \[CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4\]](#), 23 November 2023. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran](#), 2 February 2024. Accessed: 28 October 2025

UN Human Rights Council (HRC), [Report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran](#), 28 March 2025. Accessed: 13 October 2025

US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF),
[2023 Annual Report](#), 1 May 2023. Accessed: 9 December 2025
[2024 Annual Report](#), 5 May 2024. Accessed: 16 October 2025

US State Department (USSD),
[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), 23 April 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025
[2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), 12 August 2025. Accessed: 15 October 2025
[2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Iran](#), 24 June 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

XE.com, [Currency Converter – Iranian Rials to British Pounds](#), no date. Accessed: 28 October 2025

Zeidan, Adam, Encyclopaedia Britannica, [Ebrahim Raisi](#), updated 29 November 2025. Accessed: 1 December 2025

6Rang,

[About us](#), no date. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[Human Rights Abuses Against LGBTI+ Persons in Iran: 6Rang \(Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network\) submission for the 48th session of the UN Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#), November 2024. Accessed: 28 October 2025

[Iranian LGBT+ activist Sareh arrives in a safe country following her release on bail](#), 1 December 2023. Accessed: 4 November 2025

[Silencing protests: Official hate speech against LGBT people as a tool of suppression](#), March 2023. Accessed: 14 October 2025

[Straitjacketed Identities: Reparative Therapy in Systematic Medical Abuse of Iran's LGBT+ People](#), 31 May 2023. Accessed: 28 October 2025

[Tragic Murder of Transgender Teen in Tabriz at the Hands of His Father](#), 30 January 2024. Accessed: 13 October 2025

[War on Bodies and Minds: Gender Persecution of LGBTIQ+ Protestors in the Context of the 2022-2023 Iran Uprising](#), September 2023. Accessed: 23 October 2025

[Back to Contents](#)

Sources consulted but not cited

Amnesty International (AI), [Iran: All-out attack on human rights: Submission to the 48th Session of the UPR Working Group, January – February 2025 \[MDE 13/8032/2024\]](#), July 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI),

[The Death Penalty in the Republic of Iran](#), December 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

[Translation of the Islamic Republic of Iran's "Law to Support the Family Through Promotion of Culture of Chastity and Hijab"](#), December 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany) (BAMF), [Briefing Notes Summary](#), 31 December 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

Gay.IT, [Iran: save Raha Ajudani, minor transgender girl arrested](#) (translated into English), 23 December 2022. Accessed: 28 October 2025

GlobalSecurity.org, [Military: Iran – Military Conscription](#), no date. Accessed: 27 October 2025

Hamshahri Online, [Homeless trans individuals; a new welfare issue | There are no statistics on their numbers | Welfare assistance for trans surgeries in special cases](#) (English translation), 25 January 2023. Accessed: 17 October 2025

Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), [Iranian LGBTQIA Activists Asked for Ending Discrimination against Gender Minorities in Medical Centers](#), 1 April 2022. Accessed: 16 October 2025

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) World, [ILGA World Database](#), no date. Accessed: 4 November 2025

OutRight Action International, Citizen Lab & OONI, [No Access: LGBTIQ Website Censorship in Six Countries](#), 31 August 2021. Accessed: 23 October 2025

UK Parliament, [Research Briefing: LGBT+ rights and issues in the Middle East](#), 9 February 2022. Accessed: 23 October 2025

UN Human Rights Council (HRC), [Islamic Republic of Iran; Compilation of information prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights \[A/HRC/WG.6/48/IRN/2\]](#), 11 November 2024. Accessed: 15 October 2025

[Back to Contents](#)

Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **5.0**
- valid from **23 December 2025**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI and assessment.

[Back to Contents](#)

Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

[Back to Contents](#)

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration
3rd Floor
28 Kirby Street
London
EC1N 8TE
Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

[Back to Contents](#)