

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	440
Land:	Georgien
Kilde:	Asylos – Research for asylum
Titel:	Georgia: The situation for LGBTQI+ people
Udgivet:	30. september 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. januar 2025



Georgia: The situation of LGBTQI+ people

September 2024

Georgia: The situation of LGBTQI+ people

September 2024

Copyright information

This publication is covered by the Creative Commons License BY-NC 4.0 allowing for limited use provided the work is properly credited to Asylos, and that it is for non-commercial use.



Asylos does not hold the copyright to the content of third-party material included in this report. Reproduction or any use of the images/maps/infographics included in this report is prohibited and permission must be sought directly from the copyright holder(s).

Feedback and comments

Please help us to improve and to measure the impact of our publications. We would be extremely grateful for any comments and feedback as to how the reports have been used in the refugee status and statelessness determination process, or beyond. If you would like to provide feedback, please contact: info@asylos.eu

Who we are

Asylos is a global network of volunteers providing free-of-charge Country of Origin Information (COI) research for lawyers helping people seeking international protection with their claim. Asylos works to ensure that people seeking international protection and their legal counsel have access to crucial sources and data to substantiate their claim. Asylos volunteers and staff use their research and language skills to access detailed information. More information can be found on [Asylos' website](#).

Contents

Purpose	4
Section 1. State treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	5
The legal framework concerning LGBTQI+ people in Georgia.....	5
Civil Rights and Equality.....	5
Criminal Code	6
Law on Agents of Foreign Influence.....	7
Legislation on the 'Protection of Family Values and Minors'	7
State attitudes toward the LGBTQI+ people and anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric by public officials in Georgia	10
Reports of abuse by the Georgian authorities against LGBTQI+ people	13
Section 2. Societal treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	14
Societal attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	14
Attitudes towards Lesbians in Georgia	16
Violations against LGBTQI+ people by non-state actors in Georgia	18
Violence in the context of Pride events in Georgia	18
Violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia - general.....	20
Section 3. Access to protection for LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	24
State responses to violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	24
Accountability for violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia.....	26
LGBTQI+ trust in law enforcement in Georgia.....	29
Protection from honour crimes against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia	31
Sources consulted	34
1. International organisations	34
2. (Inter)governmental sources	34
3. (I)NGOS and think tanks.....	34
4. Media	35
5. Academic sources	36

Purpose

Purpose of Asylos' Country of Origin Information on the situation of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

This compilation of Country of Origin Information derives from research conducted by Asylos' case-specific research team. This research is being published in response to demand for up-to-date information on the conditions for the LGBTQI+ community in Georgia..

Disclaimer

This Country of Origin Information (COI) report is intended as background reference material for legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers. The COI report should be used as a tool to help identify relevant COI. Legal representatives are welcome to submit relevant excerpts cited in this document to decision makers (including judges) to assist an asylum seeker's case. We are COI research experts and adhere to strict research principles in order to provide relevant, transparent, timely and reliable research. We therefore strive to include discoverable relevant information, whether or not supportive of any individual case. It is imperative that legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers read the whole COI report and consider whether, having done so, the report is on balance likely to support the specific case in which it is proposed to rely upon it. Please also note that it may be appropriate for legal representatives to seek additional individualised information.

The information cited in this document is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain. It is not determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. Submissions should always be complemented by case-specific COI research. While we strive to be as comprehensive as possible, no amount of research can ever provide an exhaustive picture of the situation. It is therefore important to note that the absence of information should not be taken as evidence that an issue, incident or violation does not exist.

Timeframe

The earliest source dates from 1997 and the most recent source dates from September 2024. All sources were consulted in August and September 2024. Where dated sources are used, this is because they are pertinent to topics explored in this research.

Acknowledgements

This report was researched and written by Anita Pant, Carol Bohmer and Fabio Cescon. It was edited by Fabio Cescon and Emily Wilbourn.

Findings are presented in reverse chronological order under each section.

Section 1. State treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

The legal framework concerning LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

Civil Rights and Equality

*For information on the protection of the civil rights of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia, see section 3. Access to protection for LGBTQI+ people in Georgia.)

The US Department of State report on human rights practices covering 2023 observed that the right of surrogacy was restricted to heterosexual couples who had been married or living together for one year. Some civil society organisations considered this to be an infringement of the rights of single women and LGBTQI+ people to have a child by.

“Authorities regulated the use of surrogacy services. A Ministry of Justice decree regulating civil acts restricted the right to surrogacy to heterosexual couples who had been married or living together for more than one year. Women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) rights organizations considered it a restriction on the ability of single women and LGBTQI+ persons to have a child.”

(Source: US Department of State, "[2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)", 23 April 2024)

According to a 2023 report by the Council of Europe, there is no possibility to legally register same-sex partnerships in Georgia.

“As concerns LGBTI persons, there is no legal possibility to register same-sex partnerships in Georgia and the authorities have so far not reviewed existing legislation in order to assess where same-sex couples face other problems of equal access to rights in their day-to-day life.”

(Source: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and Council of Europe, "[ECRI report on Georgia \(sixth monitoring cycle\)](#)", 22 June 2023)

A December 2022 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights observed the ‘imprecision’ of the current legislation on gender reassignment, and noted the consequences of this for applications for legal gender recognition.

“The imprecision of the current legislation undermines, in its turn, the availability of legal gender recognition in practice and, as was illustrated by the three applicants’ individual situations, the lack of a clear legal framework leaves the gatekeepers – the competent domestic authorities – with excessive discretionary powers, which can lead to arbitrary decisions in the examination of applications for legal gender recognition. Such a situation is fundamentally at odds with the respondent State’s positive obligation to provide quick, transparent and accessible procedures for legal gender recognition [...].”

(Source: European Court of Human Rights, "[CASE OF A.D. AND OTHERS v. GEORGIA, \(Application nos. 57864/17, 79087/17 and 55353/19\)](#)", 1 December 2022)

In its 2020 report on state-sponsored homophobia, ILGA observed that there is no legal provision for joint adoption.

(Source: ILGA, "[State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020: Global Legislation...](#)", p.328, 15 December 2020)

OC Media reported that in July 2017, Georgia’s Constitutional Court declared a ban on men who have sex with men donating blood to be unconstitutional and set a deadline of November 2017 for the government to overturn the ban.

“On 12 July 2017, Georgia's Constitutional Court declared the country's ban on men who have sex with men donating blood unconstitutional. Georgia's Health Minister banned blood donation for gay men in 2000.

On 24 March 2017, human rights activists Gocha Gabodze and Levan Berianidze appealed to the court demanding that the ban be overturned.

In its ruling, the court pointed out that ban was absolute, and did not even indicate a particular period of time after having sex where there may be a higher risk in donations.

The claimants had argued that the ban contradicted Article 14 and 16 of the Constitution, which states that every citizen of Georgia is equal in spite of ethnic, religious, sexual, or racial differences.

The court pointed out that modern technologies allow for the detection of HIV/AIDs in donations, making a ban unnecessary. Noting that the immediate abolition of the ban could come with certain risks, the court set a deadline of 1 November 2017 for the government to overturn it.”

(Source: OC Media, “[Georgia's Constitutional Court lifts ban on gay blood donation](#)”, 18 July 2017)

The 2014 Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination prohibits any form of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression.

“The present law aims to eliminate any form of discrimination and to ensure equal enjoyment of the rights set forth by the legislation of Georgia for all natural and legal persons regardless of race, color, language, sex, age, nationality, origin, place of birth, residence, property or title, religion or faith, national, ethnic or social belonging, profession, marital status, health condition, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, political or other beliefs or other basis.”

(Source: Parliament of Georgia, “[Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination](#)”, 7 May 2014)

The Georgian Civil Code defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman for the purpose of creating a family.

“Article 1106 - Concept of marriage

Marriage is a voluntary union of a woman and a man for the purpose of creating a family, which is registered with a territorial office of the Legal Entity under Public Law (LEPL) - Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia ('a territorial office of the Agency').”

(Source: Author: Georgia, Publisher: Refworld, “[Georgia: Civil Code](#)”, 1 January 1997)

Criminal Code

According to Human Dignity Trust, Georgia decriminalised same-sex activity in 2000.

“To join the Council of Europe, new member-states must undertake certain commitments, including conforming their criminal laws to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). [...] the ECHR right to privacy prohibits the criminalisation of same-sex activity. By the time candidate states from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc applied for membership of the Council of Europe, it was a condition of their accession to decriminalise.

By way of example, the following countries decriminalised at or around the time they joined: [...] Georgia ([...] 2000) [...]”

(Source: Human Dignity Trust, “[A History of LGBT Criminalisation](#)”, last updated 27 August 2024)

Following an amendment in 2014, the Criminal Code includes violation of human equality on the grounds of sexual orientation as a crime against human rights and freedoms.

“Violation of human equality on the grounds of language, sex, age, nationality, origin, birthplace, place of residence, material or rank status, religion or belief, social belonging, profession, marital status, health status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, political or other views or of any other signs that have substantially breached human rights, shall be punished by a fine or corrective labour for up to one year and/or by imprisonment for up to two years.”

(Source: Parliament of Georgia, "[Criminal Code of Georgia](#)" Article 142, 27 June 2024)

Following an amendment in 2012, the Criminal Code includes commission of a crime on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating circumstance for all crimes under the code.

"Commission of a crime on the grounds of race, colour, language, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, political or other beliefs, disability, citizenship, national, ethnic or social origin, material status or rank, place of residence or other discriminatory grounds shall constitute an aggravating circumstance for all the relevant crimes provided for by this Code."

(Source: Parliament of Georgia, "[Criminal Code of Georgia](#)", Article 53, 27 June 2024)

Law on Agents of Foreign Influence

In May 2024, the Georgian parliament passed a Law on Agents of Foreign Influence, placing restrictions on foreign-funded organisations. While the law does not directly concern LGBTQI+ people, according to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, quoted in an article by Context, the LGBTQI+ community in Georgia have expressed concerns that the law will be detrimental to them.

"Legislation on 'foreign agents' including a divisive bill passed by Georgia's parliament this week is an urgent issue for LGBTQ+ groups, who fear they will be among the first to be targeted, Europe's top human rights watchdog has warned. The bill approved by lawmakers on Tuesday would require organisations receiving more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as agents of foreign influence, imposing onerous disclosure requirements and fines for violations. 'The LGBTQ community are telling us that they are going to be the first victims of foreign funding laws,' Michael O'Flaherty, the new human rights commissioner at the Council of Europe, told Context, adding that such bills present a 'very imminent and urgent issue' for LGBTQ+ groups."

(Source: Author: Joanna Gill, Publisher: Context, "[Georgia's 'foreign agents bill' puts LGBTQ+ groups on high alert](#)", 17 May 2024)

Citing a number of Georgian language media sources, ILGA Europe notes how the adoption of the foreign agents law was justified using anti-LGBT+ rhetoric.

"The Prime Minister and other high officials justified the adoption of the foreign agents law using LGBTI-phobic arguments. Preceding the Tbilisi Pride Week, held in July, government representatives, religious leaders, and far-right extremists of the Alt-Info made countless anti-LGBT statements."

(Source: ILGA Europe, "[Annual review of the human rights situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people covering the period of January to December 2023](#)", February 2024)

Legislation on the 'Protection of Family Values and Minors'

In September 2024, Civil.ge reported that the Georgian parliament had adopted the legislative package on 'Protection of Family Values and Minors'.

"On September 17, the Georgian Parliament adopted the anti-LBQT+ legislative package in its third hearing with 84 votes in favor, 0 votes against. The package consists of a core bill 'On Protection of Family Values and Minors' and 18 related amendments to various laws of Georgia. The majority of opposition MPs did not attend the plenary session as they are boycotting parliamentary work following the adoption of the foreign agents law."

Civil.ge, "[Parliament Adopts Anti-LGBT Legislation in Third Hearing](#)", 17 September 2024

Reporting on a statement by the British Embassy in Georgia, Interpress News stated that:

“The legislative package on ‘family values and protection of minors’ undermines fundamental stigmatization and discrimination of part of the Georgian population, the British Embassy in Georgia has announced.

The embassy expressed its regret that the legislative package was adopted in disregard of the advice of the Venice Commission that it should be completely revised and its adoption should be suspended.

Great Britain expresses serious concern about the adoption of the legislative package on ‘family values and protection of minors’ by the Parliament of Georgia in the third reading. This legislative package undermines fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression and assembly, and creates the risk of further stigmatization and discrimination of part of the Georgian population. This legislative package will affect all citizens of Georgia. We regret that the legislative package was adopted in disregard of the Venice Commission's advice that it ‘must be completely revised and its adoption suspended. We call on the Georgian authorities to review the legislative package "On Family Values and Protection of Minors", which, together with the "Transparency of Foreign Influence" law, restricts the rights of both civil society and individual Georgian citizens and calls into question the long-standing relations between Britain and Georgia’, the statement said.”

Interpress News, [“British Embassy: 'Family Values and Minors Protection' package undermines fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression and assembly”](#), 17 September 2024

In March 2024, the ruling Georgian Dream party proposed a new law on the ‘Protection of Family Values and Minors’, that if passed, would see bans on same-sex marriage, gender reassignment surgery, adoption of children by non-heterosexual people, events that promote same-sex relationships and a prohibition on sharing of information in schools and in the media that could be construed as ‘propaganda of same-sex relationships’.

In August 2024, Agenda.ge reported that Georgian Dream had publicly emphasised that the party would need a constitutional majority in order to pass the bill on Family Values and Protection of Minors.

“The party [Georgian Dream] also stressed that securing a constitutional majority – at least 113 votes in the 150-member Parliament – would allow it to pass the [bill On Family Values and Protection of Minors](#), which has already been introduced in the legislative body. GD [Georgian Dream] claimed the spread of alleged ‘pseudo-liberal ideology’ posed a ‘growing threat worldwide, as evidenced by the recent Paris Olympics’ opening ceremony’, which they claimed had included elements that ‘insulted Christian beliefs and promoted LGBT propaganda’.

‘This ideology seeks to erode human dignity, morality, and identity, turning individuals into easily manipulated subjects devoid of national, religious, or personal identity. A constitutional majority will empower the GD to pass this bill, ensuring the protection of family values and minors at the highest constitutional level’, it said.

Once adopted, the party claimed the law would prevent recognition of same-sex marriage, legalisation of civil partnerships, adoption by same-sex couples, gender reassignment surgeries, and ‘propagation of pseudo-liberal ideologies’ in educational institutions and the media, which it said had already caused ‘severe consequences in other countries’.

(Source: Agenda.ge, [“Ruling party urges voter election participation to ‘ensure protection of peace, national values’”](#), 20 August 2024)

A number of sources reported that the draft law passed its first reading on 27 June 2024.

“[...] On Thursday, June 27, the Tbilisi parliament passed its first reading of a draft law on the ‘Protection of Family Values and Minors,’ as well as amendments to 18 laws designed to deprive sexual minorities of their rights. [...] The new law bans same-sex marriage, the adoption of children by non-heterosexuals and by ‘those who identify themselves as different from their sex,’ as well as gender reassignment surgery. It also bans public gatherings ‘aimed at promoting homosexual relations and the identification of a person with a different gender,’ the dissemination of information on the subject, likened to ‘LGBT propaganda,’ and any reference to or positive image of same-sex relations in the media, films and schools. Offenders will be fined up to 5,000 laris (around €1,660), a colossal sum in this Caucasus country, where the average monthly wage is 1,300 laris. Repeated violations will result in criminal prosecution.”

(Source: Le Monde, [“In Georgia, LGBT people are the government's new scapegoat: 'It's persecution on a massive scale'”](#), 29 June 2024)

“Georgia's parliament on Thursday [27 June 2024] gave its initial approval to a set of bills containing sweeping curbs on LGBT

rights, including bans on the ‘propaganda’ of same-sex relationships and gender reassignment surgery. The package, which was proposed by the ruling Georgian Dream party and which could outlaw Pride events and public displays of the LGBT rainbow flag, was approved by a majority of deputies. It must pass two more readings before becoming law.

Parliamentary speaker Shalva Papuashvili said earlier this month that lawmakers would only vote on the bills' second and third readings during the autumn parliamentary session, in the immediate run-up to a general election scheduled for Oct. 26. He has said the bills are necessary to control ‘LGBT propaganda’ which he said was ‘altering traditional relations’.

The legislation would also ban non-heterosexual people from adopting children and prevent people from changing their gender on ID documents. Public gatherings promoting same-sex relationships would not be allowed either.

If approved, ‘LGBT propaganda’ in the education system would be outlawed and broadcasters banned from showing intimate scenes involving same-sex relationships.”

(Source: Reuters, “[Georgian parliament gives initial approval to sweeping curbs on LGBT rights](#)”, 28 June 2024)

In June 2024, the Council of Europe published an opinion on the bill by the Venice Commission, which recommended that Georgia not proceed with the adoption of the proposed legislation.

“[...] 102. In the first place, the Venice Commission regrets that a legislative initiative aimed at integrating the Georgian Constitution and touching upon highly sensitive issues is launched in a period of time characterised by vigorous and prolonged mass protests and strong political and societal tensions, all the more so in circumstances where this is happening only a matter of months before the elections, disregarding the concerns raised by several international observers.

103. The Venice Commission, further, recommends carrying out a thorough and well-substantiated analysis of the impact of the new provisions on the national system, prior to their adoption, involving all segments of society and especially the representatives of sexual and gender minorities, as well as experts and professionals in the relevant sectors (law, health, education, social care, etc.). Such analysis should be made public and be carried out in a period of time that is propitious for a genuine and unbiased consultation, allowing for an honest and impartial assessment of the issues at stake.

104. As to the legal assessment of the draft Constitutional Law, in light of the well-established ECtHR case-law on the matter and previous Venice Commission opinions, the Commission considers that the compliance of the provisions at stake with European and international standards cannot be established for the reasons set out above and the mere proposal of adopting this text risks to (further) fuel a hostile and stigmatising atmosphere against LGBTI people in Georgia. The Commission thus recommends the Georgian authorities to reconsider this legislative proposal entirely and to not proceed with its adoption. [...]

(Source: Council of Europe, “[GEORGIA OPINION ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTIONAL LAW ON PROTECTING FAMILY VALUES AND MINORS Adopted by the Venice Commission at its 139th Plenary Session \(Venice, 21-22 June 2024\)](#)” 25 June 2024)

In March 2024, following the announcement of the proposed law, Amnesty International raised concern at the impacts that the law would have on LGBTQI+ Georgians.

“[...] Georgia’s ruling party has proposed a discriminatory constitutional bill that, among other restrictions, bans any public expression of opinion or public gatherings that could be regarded as ‘promoting same-sex relationships,’ [...] On 25 March, a senior member of Georgia’s ruling party announced a plan to pass the bill to counter what they describe as ‘LGBT propaganda.’ The bill envisages a long list of homophobic and transphobic measures, including an explicit ban on sharing information or holding public gatherings that can be regarded as ‘promoting same-sex relationships,’ prohibition of adoption by same-sex couples, prohibition of sex change and of recognition of any non-binary gender, among others.”

(Source: Amnesty International, “[Georgia: Halt legislative assault on LGBTI rights](#)”, 26 March 2024)

State attitudes toward the LGBTQI+ people and anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric by public officials in Georgia

A number of sources report on hate speech and homophobic remarks by public figures including politicians, which target the LGBTQI+ community in Georgia. An August 2024 article in JAM news quoted a statement by the ruling Georgian Dream party, which framed acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities as a ‘pseudo-liberal ideology’, with the aim of creating a ‘a low-ranking slave who can be easily manipulated.’ The statement by Georgian Dream was also reported to criticise the opening of the 2024 Paris Olympics for, amongst other things, displaying ‘LGBT propaganda’.

“The Political Council of the ruling party, [Georgian Dream](#), issued a statement urging voters to turn out en masse on October 26 to create a ‘solid foundation’ for protecting [Georgia’s](#) national identity. [...] Georgian Dream also claims that achieving a constitutional majority will significantly strengthen ‘family values and the protection of minors.’ [...]

The ruling party ‘Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia’ stated that obtaining a constitutional majority would enable them to pass a constitutional bill on ‘Family Values and the Protection of Minors.’ This law aims to strengthen the protection of family values and the rights of minors at the highest constitutional level. The party explained why securing a constitutional majority in the upcoming elections is crucial:

‘Once the constitutional law is adopted, no one will be able to impose the legalization of so-called civil partnerships for same-sex couples, adoption by same-sex couples, gender reassignment surgeries, or the legal recognition of other so-called genders beyond male and female. Additionally, it will prevent the promotion of pseudo-liberal ideology in educational institutions and the media, along with other harmful practices that have already led many countries to very serious consequences.’

According to ‘Georgian Dream,’ this ideology has nothing to do with protecting human rights; its sole purpose is to completely strip individuals of dignity, morality, and any form of identity.

‘A person shouldn’t even know for sure whether they are a man or a woman. They shouldn’t know their roots, the history of their country, and they shouldn’t have any national, religious, or personal identity. The goal of pseudo-liberal ideology is to create a low-ranking slave who can be easily manipulated.’

The statement also mentioned that a constitutional bill on ‘Family Values and the Protection of Minors’ has already been initiated in the Georgian Parliament:

‘The opening ceremony of the Paris Olympics, which included very crude and outrageous elements of blasphemy, insults to Christian religious sentiments, and LGBT propaganda, once again reminded us of the scale of the danger associated with the spread of pseudo-liberal ideology.’”

(Source: JAM news, “[“Elections in Georgia should be a “Nuremberg trial” for the National Movement” – Ruling party](#)”, 20 August 2024)

An April 2024 article published by RFE/RL, reported on a statement by People’s Power party, a grouping which broke away from the Georgian Dream party in 2022, but still works closely with it. The statement by People’s Power party is also reported to link ‘pseudo-liberal ideology’ and ‘LGBT propaganda’.

“In February [2024], Georgian Dream and an affiliated political party, People’s Power, began rolling out the idea of a law restricting what they called ‘LGBT propaganda.’ In a Facebook post, People’s Power listed a litany of recent episodes that painted the picture of a West that had lost its moral bearings. They included a memo by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in which he encouraged State Department staffers to use ‘gender-neutral’ language and be attentive to gender pronouns, and a Pride parade in Spain, in which children participated. Georgia’s opposition and NGOs, it said, were working to import these same practices here.

‘For quite some time now, pseudo-liberal ideology and LGBT propaganda have been gaining strength and reaching new heights internationally,’ went the statement by People’s Power, which was founded by a group of Georgian Dream parliamentary deputies who broke away in 2022 but continue to work closely with the ruling party. ‘Processes that originate in the United States and Europe will definitely be embraced by the Georgian pseudo-liberal minority, to which the radical political opposition and associated NGOs and media belong.’ [...] Georgian Dream [Georgia’s ruling party] has in recent years been dabbling increasingly in socially conservative rhetoric, with a focus on queer Georgians in particular. After far-right mobs attacked a 2021 Pride parade in Tbilisi, injuring dozens, then-Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili effectively blamed the victims. ‘When 95 percent of our population is against holding these types of propagandistic parades in a demonstrative manner, we shall all obey that,’ he said. ‘The times when the minority decided the fate of the majority are gone.’ [...]

(Source: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “[How Georgia’s Ruling Party Is Using Laws On ‘Foreign Agents’ And ‘Gay Propaganda’ To Maintain Its Grip On Power](#)”, 18 April 2024)

A 2024 statement by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, noted the Commissioner's concern about the political discourse in Georgia and its negative impact on the rights and safety of LGBTQI+ people and defenders.

"I am concerned about the present political discourse in Georgia, as illustrated by the announcement made by the Georgian Dream Party of their initiative to amend the Constitution and to adopt a new constitutional law on 'Protection of Family Values and Underaged Persons'. It is reflective of entrenched harmful stereotypes and prejudice against LGBTI people which still prevail in segments of Georgian society, including some politicians, and is capable of having a strong, negative impact on the human rights, safety and well-being of LGBTI people and defenders of their rights."

(Source: Council of Europe, "[Commissioner for Human Rights statement: Georgia : political manipulation and harassment of LGBTI people and human rights defenders have no place in a democratic society](#)", 27 March 2024)

A 2024 report of the of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders noted with concern the omission from the Georgian State's human rights strategy any reference to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and LGBTQI rights defenders. The report also suggests that derogatory statements by high-ranking officials is reflective of a lack of political will to address impunity for human rights violations against LGBTQI+ people.

"15. A further serious concern related to the human rights strategy is the decision by the State to exclude any reference to the rights of LGBTQI persons, discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and LGBTQI rights defenders. [...] 35. [...] Despite the affirmation by the State of its support for human rights defenders in meetings with the Special Rapporteur, other clear examples of attempts to stigmatize and delegitimize human rights defenders raise further questions regarding this stated commitment. [...]"

49. The continuing impunity for attacks against human rights defenders, and for human rights violations more broadly, is demonstrative of a lack of political will to address the issue. In the above case, this lack of will is reflected in the damning failure to mention LGBTQI issues in the country's human rights strategy or action plan, as well as statements by high-ranking Government officials, including the Prime Minister, painting the promotion of equality and non-discrimination against the LGBTQI community as 'false freedoms' and 'propaganda'.²⁷

²⁷ See <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2023/1769>."

(Source: UN Human Rights Committee, "[Visit to Georgia; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders \[A/HRC/55/50/Add.2\]](#)", 19 March 2024)

A 2024 report by Democracy Research Institute, a 'public policy think tank', founded in 2018 by a former Public Defender of Georgia and his team, describes the instrumentalisation of homophobic and anti-gender discourse for political gain, particularly by the far-right group 'Conservative Movement/Alt-Info.

"[...] by leveraging political homophobia, both the authorities and far-right groups seek to consolidate their power and suppress LGBTI+ individuals. This agenda aims to bolster their privileged positions by presenting a distorted reality. The political instrumentalization of homophobia, together with the government, is also outlined in the agenda of the far-right violent group 'Conservative Movement/Alt-Info'.³ The representatives of the mentioned group are attempting to weaponize irrational societal fears and transform sexism and homophobia into catalysts for polarization. In Georgia, the anti-gender discourse has legal, cultural, and religious characteristics, and in the political sphere, homophobia is often combined with anti-Western sentiments, creating fertile ground for mobilizing supporters for far-right, pro-Russian forces, as well as for the government. This factor helps explain the authorities' total shift towards the ultra-conservative orbit in recent years.

3 'Conservative Movement/Alt-Info' was registered as a party on December 7, 2021, however, on April 12, 2024, according to the decision of the Public Registry, the party's registration was declared invalid. Nevertheless, the violent group does not intend on ceasing political activity and plans to participate in the [sic.] elections using the name of another party: 'The Alliance of Patriots.'"

(Source: Democracy Research Institute, "[Anti-gender rhetoric and gender stereotypes in social media](#)", p.9, 2024)

A July 2023 article published by Politico, drew a link between anti-LGBTQI+ statements made by the Georgian Prime Minister in May 2023, and the instrumentalisation of the same rhetoric by ultra- and far-right groups to mobilise the hundreds of people that took part in violent disruption of the Tbilisi Pride festival in July 2023.

“Garibashvili, [Georgia’s Prime Minister] during a speech at a conservative conference in Budapest in May, asserted that LGBTQ+ ‘propaganda’ was destroying traditional family values. He vowed in that speech to ‘not allow the violence of the minority against the majority.’

Speaking at the parliament on June 30, Garibashvili said, referring to sexual minorities: ‘It is publicly known what’s happening in Europe, in America ... This is a catastrophe!’ He proposed to open discussions in the parliament about regulating ‘gay propaganda’ by law. Ultra-conservative and far-right groups used this very rhetoric to mobilize hundreds of supporters to protest and storm Georgia’s annual Tbilisi Pride Festival last Saturday. The protest groups were organized by the far-right Alt-Info group, which beat journalists during Pride month two years ago without consequences.”

(Source: Politico, “[Georgia’s crackdown on queer rights contradicts its EU ambitions](#)”, 25 July 2023)

The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights’ 2022 report notes that public statements made by some politicians during the events of July 2021 served to exacerbate the ‘passive’ attitude of some competent authorities, and provided legitimacy to ultra-conservative groups seeking to prevent LGBTQI+ people from expressing themselves publicly.

“Since 2012, LGBTI activists, their supporters, and the defenders of their rights have been repeatedly denied their right to peaceful assembly, largely due to the passive attitude adopted by the competent authorities. Furthermore, the Commissioner considers that some public statements made by certain politicians and government officials during the events of July 2021 served only to exacerbate this problem and to provide some legitimacy for attempts by ultra-conservative groups to prevent LGBTI people from expressing themselves in the public space.”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)”, para 25, 15 July 2022)

A report by the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia suggested that the Georgian authorities ignore stigma and prejudice towards LGBTQI+ people, propagate hate speech and use ‘derogatory’ language, which has ‘legitimised’ and ‘increased’ violence towards LGBTQI+ people.

“According to studies conducted in Georgia in recent years, homophobic attitudes persist in society, aided by the state’s ignorance about stigma and prejudice against LGBT+ people, hate speech propagated by politicians, and a lack of public acknowledgement of the group’s challenges. Relevant state agencies ignore public attitudes toward the LGBT+ community and the underlying causes of discrimination. As a result, only NGOs and other research organizations identify and analyze the legal status and negative attitudes toward the LGBT+ community. [...]

Hate speech propagated by politicians and public officials is particularly problematic in Georgia, where it has a significant negative impact on social acceptance and the scope of violence against the LGBT+ community. In recent years, politicians’ hate speech and their use of derogatory language toward the LGBT+ community have had dire consequences for society, legitimizing violence and increasing violence against the LGBT+ community.”

(Source: Public Defender’s Office of Georgia, “[THE RIGHTS OF LGBT+ PEOPLE IN GEORGIA](#)”, pp. 10, 15, 2021)

Reports of abuse by the Georgian authorities against LGBTQI+ people

The US Department of State report on human rights practices covering 2023 observed that there were instances of violence and harassment against LGBTQI+ people by state actors.

“There were instances of violence and harassment by state [...] actors against LGBTQI+ persons and those reporting such abuse [...]”

(Source: US Department of State, "[2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)", 23 April 2024)

A report by Reuters describing the events of Pride 2023, states that organisers accused the authorities of collusion with the counter-demonstrators who sought to disrupt the Pride Festival.

“Up to 2,000 anti-LGBT protesters broke up a Gay Pride festival in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on Saturday, scuffling with police and destroying props including rainbow flags and placards, though there were no reports of injuries.

Organisers accused the authorities of actively colluding with the demonstrators to disrupt the festival, but a government minister said it was a difficult event to police as it was held in an open area, near a lake.”

(Source: Reuters, "[Anti-LGBT protesters break up Pride festival in Georgia](#)", July 8 2023)

The US State Department in its annual report on human rights practices covering 2021 described the violence that took place during Pride 2021. The report noted that activists alleged that they were found by far-right groups due to government assistance.

“[...] on July 5, police failed to take appropriate action to protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly for individuals who had planned to participate in a Pride event. Approximately 3,000 far-right demonstrators violently rioted through Tbilisi, destroying an opposition protest site at parliament, attacking NGO offices, and assaulting more than 50 journalists and others following statements from Prime Minister Garibashvili that called the planned Tbilisi Pride event, March for Dignity, inappropriate and described it as a plot by “Saakashvili and the radical opposition” aimed at sparking tension and destabilization in the country. [...]

LGBTQI+ activists described feeling hunted as the locations where they sought refuge were discovered by far-right groups. Activists expressed concern that they were found due to government assistance.”

(Source: US Department of State, "[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)", 12 April 2022)

A 2022 report by the Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI people to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe also highlights instances of abuse and brutality by the police against LGBT+ people.

“Instances of abuse and brutality meted out by the police against LGBTI persons, especially transgender persons, have been reported to the United Nations Independent Expert.”

(Source: Council of Europe – Parliamentary Assembly, "[Alleged violations of the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus](#)", Doc. 15429, 10 January 2022)

Section 2. Societal treatment of LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

Societal attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

David Rypel is a sociologist and PhD candidate at University College London, with a focus on security and belonging with respect to LGBTQIA+ people in Georgia. In email correspondence with Asylos, they referred to their research with LGBTQI Georgians (fieldwork was conducted during the following time periods: September-December 2019, April-December 2022, June-August 2023), describing how research participants felt the need to shield their families from societal discrimination.

“[...] I should [...] mention that several of my LGBTQI participants felt that they had to shield their parents from societal discrimination. Especially those whose families live in smaller villages and communities said they were reluctant to come out or be ‘visible’ in their hometowns to protect their families from peer pressure and shaming. In some cases, this was their parents’ request, and at least one of my participants was discouraged by their mother from reporting their victimisation to the police out of fear that she might become the target of her neighbours’ abuse. Therefore, LGBTQI people must sometimes assume the role of shielding their families from societal discrimination at their own expense.”

(Source: David Rypel, Email correspondence with Asylos, 29 August 2024)

Responding to a question about societal attitudes toward lesbians via email correspondence with Asylos, the same interlocutor further stated [see also "[Attitudes towards Lesbians in Georgia](#)"]:

“The general impression among the participants of my qualitative research was that gay cis men and trans women have a higher chance of being assaulted on the street, making them more visible victims of anti-queer violence.”

(Source: David Rypel, Email correspondence with Asylos, 29 August 2024)

Human Rights Centre – ‘a non-profit, non-governmental organisation in Tbilisi, Georgia, which aims to protect and promote human rights, rule of law and peace in Georgia’¹ – commented on the fact that representatives of the LGBTQI+ community continued to be victims of discrimination and stigma.

“Although Georgia has a law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, [...] [LGBT+] community representatives continued to be victims of discrimination [...] stigma [...]”

(Source: Human Rights Centre, "[State of human rights in Georgia, 2023](#)", 2024)

The 2022 report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe notes a persisting stigma towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgian society, which is linked to beliefs about traditional values and the family.

“There is a persisting stigma among Georgian society associated with LGBTI people that is closely associated with deeply rooted perceptions about the need to maintain ‘traditional’ values and family units.”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, "[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)", para 31, 15 July 2022)

The same report also highlights the high level of hate speech against LGBTQI+ people in the public sphere, and it notes that this is in part due to the rise of ultra-conservative and far right groups and their influence on the media.

“The Commissioner learned that while hate speech against LGBTI people used to intensify at election time in the past, it has now become part of everyday discourse. This is in part due to ultra-conservative and far-right groups placing increasing claims on the public space, increasing their access not only to privately owned, but also to public broadcaster media.”

¹ See source description by ecoi.net: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/source/11199.html>

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)”, para 22, 15 July 2022)

A report published by the Council of Europe in 2022 highlights some positive changes in public attitudes towards LGBT rights between 2018 and 2021, based on a repeat survey of the population alongside focus groups and key informant interviews. However, it also notes that negative attitudes about the protection of LGBTQI+ people as compared to other minority groups remained consistent.

“While the public’s attitudes generally moved towards increased recognition of the importance of the protection of minority rights, the change in attitudes towards LGBT people is notable. While in 2018 42 percent of the public thought the protection of LGBT rights was unimportant, only 29 percent did in 2021. Similarly, there was a rise in the share thinking it was important from 33 percent in 2018 to 47 percent in 2021. [...] The share of the public reporting that ethnic minorities, religious minorities, women, people with disabilities, and LGBT people face no problems declined substantially between 2018 and 2021, reflecting a rising awareness of the issues minorities face

[...] the focus group data [...] found that Georgians mostly talk about ethnic and religious minorities and try to avoid talking about other minority groups such as LGBT people and people with disabilities. [...]

Notably, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs felt that attitudes towards LGBT people were changing as well. This respondent felt that through protest LGBT people have changed the public’s attitudes and ways of thinking for the better. Notably, this view coincided with the view provided by a homosexual person in a qualitative interview. [...]

The data indicate that the share of the public which reported they would not want to live next to an LGBT person above and beyond all of the above groups decreased by seven percentage points [54% in 2018 to 47% in 2021].

As in 2018, the data suggest that people are most positive about the protection of the rights of people with disabilities and least positive about the protection of the rights of LGBT people in 2021. At the same time, the data suggest a number of shifts in attitudes. People became more likely to think that the protection of the rights of LGBT people (by 14 percentage points) [...] was important [...]

The study also examined who people thought were most likely to be victims of hate speech. The data indicates that responses are relatively stable between 2021 and 2018, with LGBT people facing the most hate speech in the public’s view. [...]

An official from the Ministry of Interior highlighted that transgender people in particular face high levels of hate speech, relative to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, even though these groups also all face high levels of hate speech. [...]

People were most likely to believe that LGBT people faced hate crime most often.”

(Source: Council of Europe, “[Hate Crime, Hate Speech and Discrimination in Georgia: Attitudes and Awareness](#)”, pp. 8, 15, 20, 21, 24, 33, 35, 36, February 2022)

In 2021, the General Rapporteur on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people conducted a fact-finding visit to Georgia, during which he had the opportunity to exchange with members of the government, parliament and civil society. A report to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe published in 2022 observes that civil society organisations confirmed widespread ‘hostile feelings’ towards LGBTQI+ people.

“Civil society organisations presented me with a rather bleak picture of the situation. Hostile feelings towards LGBTI persons are widespread in Georgian society, they confirmed. LGBTI youth often lack support from their families and face the risk of marginalisation.”

(Source: Council of Europe – Parliamentary Assembly, “[Alleged violations of the rights of LGBTI people in the Southern Caucasus](#)”, 10 January 2022)

In 2022, the Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group published a comparison of studies conducted in 2016 and 2021 exploring attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgia, which indicated that there is a dominant social perception in Georgia that the LGBTQI+ community is imposing their lifestyle on others.

“More than half of the respondents still perceive the LGBT(Q)I community’s fight for legal equality/self-expression as “imposing one’s lifestyle on others” and/or propaganda. The statement “LGBT(Q)I people should be protected, but gays/lesbians should not impose their lifestyle on others” is fully or partially shared by 55.9% of respondents.¹⁹”

(Source: WISG/Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, Natalia Mchedlishvili and Tamar Laperadze, “[Study on Public Knowledge, Awareness and Attitudes Towards LGBT\(Q\)I Community and Legal Equality](#)”, pp.17-18, 2022)

¹⁹ In all, 18.7% of respondents partially or completely disagree with the statement, while 14.7% take a neutral position.

The same report also highlighted how certain rights, namely the right to adopt and the right to marry, are perceived by society as a privilege rather than a matter of equality.

“[...] The right to adopt for lesbian and gay people, as well as the right to marry, is equated with ‘privilege’ and not with equality. Respondents who largely or completely agree with the view that ‘LGBT(Q)I people are fighting for privileges and not for equality’ is extremely negative about the right to adopt.”

(Source: WISG/Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, Natalia Mchedlishvili and Tamar Laperadze, “[Study on Public Knowledge, Awareness and Attitudes Towards LGBT\(Q\)I Community and Legal Equality](#)”, p.91, 2022)

An article by OC Media in 2021 reported on a survey conducted by the International Social Survey programme. The survey posed questions to respondents in 33 countries, mainly in Europe, and findings showed that respondents from Georgia formed the highest proportion of those indicating that same-sex sexual relations were always wrong (84%).

“The ISSP survey asked respondents in 33 countries, mainly in Europe, whether sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are always wrong. In Georgia, 84% said it was always wrong, compared with an average of only 37% among all countries.”

(Source: OC Media, “[Datablog: Georgia may be the most homophobic country in Europe](#)”, 27 July 2021)

A qualitative study was published in 2021 based on eight interviews, which explores how lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people experience the ‘constraining’ influences of living in a society that conforms to ‘conservative or traditional norms’ (Georgia). The report sets out respondents’ descriptions of how their families relate to them.

“Only one respondent reports of a positive influence, and only in one instance:

Respondent 3: [My father] told me that I can always have, how can I say, I can always rely on him. And he also told me that if I had any problems, I would always be able to tell him about this problem and he would always help me. With money, or with some-

thing. Everything. But my mother does not speak to me.” All the other respondents had negative responses. “The range of active influences stretches from expectations of social conformity to physical violence:

Respondent 3: ... she [mother] only wants me to get married, to have children, to have husband, and so on.

Respondent 6: And then, the next morning, I had very big fight with my father. Like, the normal situation in Georgia, they beat and stuff...”

(Source: Jesper Ahlin Marceta, “[Individualism Under Constraining Social Norms: Conceptualizing the Lived Experiences of LGBT persons](#)” AVANT, Vol. XII, No. 1, p.9 2021)

Attitudes towards Lesbians in Georgia

David Rypel, is a sociologist and PhD candidate at University College London, with a focus on security and belonging with respect to LGBTQIA+ people in Georgia. Responding to a question about societal attitudes toward lesbians via email correspondence with Asylos, they stated:

“In terms of homophobia, some of the most recent data (WISG, From Prejudice to Equality vol. 2, 2022) suggest that there might be a small degree of gender asymmetry: homophobic sentiments are expressed less strongly towards lesbian cis women than gay cis men, but the difference is very small and was not present in the 2016 findings of the same research group. Lesbian cis women (and trans men) are subjected to general patriarchal expectations about the behaviour and role of women in

society. As the authors of the 2016 WISG report (From Prejudice to Equality vol. 1) note, ‘the high level of aggression towards lesbian women may be attributed to the iconic role, function and understanding of sexuality prescribed to women in Georgian culture – it is this asexual archetype of the Georgian mother that lesbianism essentially violates, and, it is likely that this precipitates a high degree of aggression towards this group.’”

(Source: David Rypel, Email correspondence with Asylos, 29 August 2024)

The same interlocutor further stated:

“Lesbian cis women face less visible forms of oppression, such as domestic abuse, or gender-based sexual harassment, such as slut-shaming, and violence that might not always be recognised as ‘anti-queer.’”

(Source: David Rypel, Email correspondence with Asylos, 29 August 2024)

In 2022, the Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group published a comparison of studies conducted in 2016 and 2021 exploring attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgia. The report indicated that lesbian women are perceived by society to be violating cultural norms relating to the family and the role of women.

“[...] the attitude toward lesbians is strongly influenced by the factor of family asymmetry and double standards regarding women/ man’s sexuality, which remain strong in society. There is no statically [sic] significant difference in attitudes regarding the right of adoption by gay/lesbian couples. Such attitude supports the point of view expressed in the previous study that primarily a lesbian violates the asexual image of a Georgian mother in culture. Lesbian identity is perceived as a woman who is naming her sexual desire and manifests it in her behavior. The refusal of heteronormative relationships separates her from the narrow space of the traditional family where society can control female sexuality through men.”

(Source: WISG/Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, Natalia Mchedlishvili and Tamar Laperadze, “[Study on Public Knowledge, Awareness and Attitudes Towards LGBT\(Q\)I Community and Legal Equality](#)”, p.17, 2022)

The same report highlights that social acceptance of lesbians increased more than that of gays compared to 2016 results, however, it also noted an ‘unusually’ high level of aggression towards lesbians in Georgia compared with other countries.

“Compared to 2016, homophobic attitudes have also decreased significantly. The change in attitudes towards gays/lesbians is also asymmetric (acceptance of lesbians increased more than that of gays) [...] Despite the change, the tendency in the study conducted in 2016 showed and distinguishes it from the results of studies conducted in other countries, aggression towards lesbians is unusually high.”

(Source: WISG/Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, Natalia Mchedlishvili and Tamar Laperadze, “[Study on Public Knowledge, Awareness and Attitudes Towards LGBT\(Q\)I Community and Legal Equality](#)”, pp.16-17, 2022)

An interview with a lesbian woman from Georgia published by a Hungarian magazine in 2020 highlights the ‘double oppression’ faced by LGBTQ women in Georgia. Although the source dates from four years ago, it has been included as it is the only English language source found that directly quotes a member of the lesbian community in Georgia.

“LBTQ women are the victims of double oppression in Georgia. Gender inequality is huge in the country. We have extremely high rates of femicide and domestic violence. Women's lives, sexuality, behaviors are strictly controlled by their families and patriarchal society. Therefore, being a lesbian in Georgia means being twice oppressed. Masculine lesbians are often the victims of verbal attacks and sometimes even physical attacks in public spaces.”

(Source: qLit, “[Is the Grass Always Greener on the Other Side? – Interview about Living as a Lesbian in Georgia](#)”, 16 August 2020)

A 2020 JAM news article explores issues relating to parental acceptance of a child ‘coming out’, and also compares experiences of homophobia in Georgia and the United States. The article quotes a Georgian lesbian who moved to the United States and her mother.

“Nana Pantsulaia no longer remembers when her daughter Mariam said she was a lesbian. She says she immediately accepted her daughter.

‘I just don’t understand why you need to control and limit a person if you love them. Mariam has her own life, I respect everything that she does, how she does it and in general, how she lives.’

Nana not only accepts her daughter’s homosexuality, but also actively fights for LGBT rights in Georgia. Mariam recalls that on May 17, 2013, she stood next to her daughter when a crowd led by priests attacked people who had come out for a demonstration against homophobia. [...]

‘[...] She is probably one of the first parents among activists of my generation who decided to openly support us, who came to the rally and who herself faced the problems that have become the daily reality of members of our community’, says Mariam. Mariam has been living in the USA for several years now, but her mother still goes to all LGBT demonstrations.

‘I really like this phrase, don’t remember where I got it from: “With the birth of every queer child, a queer parent is born”’, says Nana. ‘I advise all parents to think seriously about this.’

Mariam Gagoshashvili, the daughter of Nana, lives in cities with fairly low levels of homophobia — New York and San Francisco. Mariam says she has heard homophobic remarks in the United States, but this cannot be compared with Georgia.

‘Nobody has thrown stones at me on the street, nobody has torn my hair out in public transport, didn’t give me slaps in nightclubs, didn’t splash my face with drinks in bars, nobody has tried to rape me because of my sexual orientation. Nor has anyone refused me as a tenant or kicked me out of an office or apartment, and no one tried to kill me because I’ve participated in a peaceful demonstration. And all this really happened to me in Georgia, I experienced all this the hard way, and more than once.’”

(Source: JAM news, “[Living surrounded by hate. LGBT individuals and their parents in Georgia](#)”, 24 June 2020)

Violations against LGBTQI+ people by non-state actors in Georgia

Violence in the context of Pride events in Georgia

*The following section focuses on Pride 2024 and Pride 2023. Readers should consult Accountability for violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia for further information about violence occurring at earlier Pride events.

In a statement published in Georgian and English on Facebook in June 2024, Tbilisi Pride explained that it had cancelled physical events in 2024 due to anticipated physical violence ‘encouraged’ by the government and hateful and hostile rhetoric.

“In June, democratic and free countries celebrate Pride Month. This month is dedicated to the dignity, equality, and visibility of queer people.

Last fall, the Tbilisi Pride team decided not to plan physical events for this summer. We anticipated that the summer before the 2024 parliamentary elections would be filled with physical violence encouraged by the government and rhetoric filled with hate and hostility.

Now, after ‘Georgian Dream’ adopted the Russian-style law on ‘foreign agents’ and announced a hate-based anti-LGBTQ legislative package alongside constitutional changes, we are even more confident in our decision. We are demonstrating the highest civic responsibility and recognize that the fight for queer rights today is inseparable from the broader people's struggle against the Russian-style regime. This fight will inevitably end in favor of the people on October 26!

We will use the coming months to bring the message of queer people to more hearts than ever before! We will explain to everyone that homophobia is a Russian political weapon against Georgian society, against the statehood of Georgia!”

(Source: Tbilisi Pride, [Facebook post](#), posted on 14 June 2024)

Multiple sources indicate that violent disruption occurred in the context of Pride 2023. Citing Georgian language sources, a report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders to the UN Human Rights Committee described the mobilisation of people by far-right group Alt-Info to protest against an open-air LGBTQI festival in July 2023. The group of counter-demonstrators

marched to the site of the planned festival, broke through a police cordon, and proceeded to burn Pride flags, destroy installations and raid equipment.

“45. Pride Week events were generally able to go ahead peacefully in 2022, when they were organized in private locations. In 2023, however, there was a further serious attack against LGBTQI defenders in Georgia; on the 8 July 2023 an open-air festival was violently disrupted by an organized far-right group.

46. In advance of the event, the far-right group, Alt-Info, as was the case in 2021, began to mobilize people against the festival, publicly calling for people to assemble on 8 July. Announcing that they were raising money to provide transport for people to the venue,²² representatives of the group stated that the counter-demonstration would not ‘fall short’ of the events of 5 July 2021 and would be the ‘last nail in the coffin’ of what was started in the past.²³ In response to those calls, counter-demonstrators began to gather at a preannounced location on midday on 8 July, where leaders of the group made further public statements of their intention to disrupt the LGBTQI festival. The group then proceeded to march 4 kilometres to the festival site, unopposed by police, who merely followed them. Upon reaching the area of the festival, where LGBTQI organizers and journalists had been present before being evacuated by police, the group proceeded to break through the police cordon that had been put in place and to destroy the site, pulling down installations, burning Pride flags and raiding equipment and supplies for the festival. Several members of the Georgian Orthodox Church were present in the group. [...]”

²² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYYMZpjQhjo> (in Georgian).

²³ See <https://fortuna.ge/fortuna/post/video-8-ivlisi-iqneba-5-ivliss-dadgmul-kuboze-bolo-lurmnis-dachedeba-morgoshia> (in Georgian)

(Source: UN Human Rights Committee, “[Visit to Georgia; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders \[A/HRC/55/50/Add.2\]](#)”, 19 March 2024.)

Drawing on a number of media sources, Human Rights Watch stated in its annual World Report on Georgia that the Tbilisi Pride Festival was cancelled following the ‘violent’ storming of the venue on 8 July 2023.

“The Tbilisi Pride Festival, planned for July 8 [2023], was abruptly **canceled** after far right-wing hate groups violently stormed the venue. They **looted and vandalized festival property** in the presence of police and journalists.”

(Source: HRW, “[World Report 2024 – Georgia](#)”, 11 January 2024)

Drawing on a Georgian language statement by Civil Society organisations and an article by RFE/RL about the events of 8 July 2023, the Human Rights Centre – ‘a non-profit, non-governmental organisation in Tbilisi, Georgia, which aims to protect and promote human rights, rule of law and peace in Georgia’² – reported that ‘hate groups’ broke the police cordon and ransacked the area.

“On July 8, 2023, the Pride Festival was planned to be held in the closed event format near the Lisi Lake. On July 7, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a statement regarding the announced event, that the relevant police units would maintain law and order and security at this event. However, on July 8, hate groups broke through the police cordon and ransacked the surrounding area.”¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Statement of civil organizations – the Ministry of Internal Affairs continues to have a tolerant policy towards hate groups, 07.08.2023 (last seen: 22.12.2023); see: <https://www.hrc.ge/526/geo/>; Also, Radio Liberty – Possible Damages as a result of ransacking the Pride Festival.... 09.07.2023 (last seen: 22.12.2023)”

(Source: Human Rights Centre, “[State of human rights in Georgia, 2023](#)”, 2024)

A contemporary report by the BBC indicated that Orthodox Christian clergy were part of the group of counter-demonstrators on 8 July 2023, who reportedly ‘scuffled’ with police.

“The right-wing protesters, who included Orthodox Christian clergy, scuffled with police, rushed the stage and burned rainbow flags.

The organisers and Georgia's president blamed anti-LGBT hate speech that preceded the event, and said the police had failed to protect festival-goers.

Homophobia remains rife in Georgia.

President Salome Zurbishvili said the ruling Georgian Dream party had failed to condemn its followers who had openly incited aggression towards LGBT activists.

Interior Minister Alexander Darakhvelidze, however, argued that the large area had been difficult to police.”

(Source: BBC, “[Up to 2,000 anti-LGBT protesters stormed a gay pride festival in Georgia's capital Tbilisi on Saturday, forcing its cancellation.](#)”, 8 July 2023)

Another contemporary media report by Reuters indicated that the counter-demonstrators numbered up to 2000 people, and that despite some physical ‘scuffling’ with the police there had been no reports of injuries. The report also states that organisers accused the authorities of collusion with the counter-demonstrators who sought to disrupt the Pride Festival.

“Up to 2,000 anti-LGBT protesters broke up a Gay Pride festival in the Georgian capital Tbilisi on Saturday, scuffling with police and destroying props including rainbow flags and placards, though there were no reports of injuries.

Organisers accused the authorities of actively colluding with the demonstrators to disrupt the festival, but a government minister said it was a difficult event to police as it was held in an open area, near a lake.”

(Source: Reuters, “[Anti-LGBT protesters break up Pride festival in Georgia](#)”, July 8 2023)

Violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia - general

Multiple sources report societal violence, harassment and discrimination towards LGBTQI+ people. The US Department of State report on human rights practices covering 2023 observed that there were instances of violence and harassment against LGBTQI+ people by non-state actors.

“There were instances of violence and harassment by [...] nonstate actors against LGBTQI+ persons and those reporting such abuse [...]”

(Source: US Department of State, “[2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)”, 23 April 2024)

A 2024 statement by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, noted that LGBTQI+ people continue to be subject to hate crimes and ‘pervasive’ discrimination.

“Having noted once again that LGBTI people continue to be the target of hate crimes and pervasive discrimination in Georgia, as well as the regular occurrence of LGBTI people being denied their right to peaceful assembly, I have repeatedly called on the Georgian authorities to commit to a zero-tolerance policy and practice towards all forms of discrimination, and incitement to discrimination and violence, against LGBTI people.”

(Source: Council of Europe, “[Commissioner for Human Rights statement: Georgia : political manipulation and harassment of LGBTI people and human rights defenders have no place in a democratic society](#)”, 27 March 2024)

A 2024 report by the Public Defender’s Office of Georgia indicated that ‘violence, discrimination and harassment’ against LGBTQI+ people is ongoing.

“Members of the LGBT+ community still face violence, discrimination, and harassment, and this is caused by homophobic attitudes, hate crimes, and other discriminatory attitudes in society.

Persons with far-right ideology, by their actions and statements, contribute to the spread of homophobic sentiments, incite discrimination and, at the same time, commit actions that are often manifested in serious violations of the rights of LGBT+ people.”

(Source: Public Defender’s Office of Georgia, “[Combating and preventing discrimination and the situation of equality](#)”, p.11, 2024)

² See source description by ecoinet: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/source/11199.html>

Human Rights Centre – ‘a non-profit, non-governmental organisation in Tbilisi, Georgia, which aims to protect and promote human rights, rule of law and peace in Georgia’³ – commented on the fact that representatives of the LGBTQI+ community continued to be victims of violence, discrimination and stigma.

“Although Georgia has a law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, [...] [LGBT+] community representatives continued to be victims of discrimination, violence and stigma [...]”

(Source: Human Rights Centre, "[State of human rights in Georgia, 2023](#)", 2024)

The US Department of State report on human rights practices covering 2022 reported on several attacks against transgender women in Tbilisi, including one which resulted in the killing of a foreign transgender woman.

“In May [2022] a mob of approximately 30 men attacked five transgender women at their home in Chugureti District, Tbilisi. Tbilisi Pride, a local NGO, stated that the attackers, armed with stones and bricks, assaulted the women as well as their landlord, damaged their house, and made death threats. The Ministry of Internal Affairs launched an investigation, and Tbilisi Pride called on the Prosecutor’s Office to consider aggravating circumstance for the alleged hate crime. Similarly in June, approximately 20 men attacked several transgender women on Tamar Mepe Avenue in Tbilisi, and two persons were injured. The Ministry of Internal Affairs launched an investigation. In October [2022], one person killed a foreign transgender woman in Tbilisi and injured another transgender woman. Police detained the accused and launched a murder investigation.”

(Source: US Department of State, "[2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)", 20 March 2023)

A 2023 article by the BBC profiled several members of the LGBTQI+ community in Tbilisi and their various experiences. One of those profiled mentioned that a public art installation that they created was attacked by a far-right activist within a few hours.

“Nata Talikishvili never wanted to be a comedian. With a career that ranges from sex worker to club bouncer, Talikishvili uses her acerbic humour to expose society’s hypocrisy, telling true stories that make light of her own difficult experiences as a trans woman in the transphobic culture of Georgia [...]

Tevdorashvili and others wanted to get involved in more than just clubs, so they set up Fungus, where they recently put on Resilience, a group exhibition of photography and multimedia art dedicated to trans women [...] Though the reception from the locals was initially awkward, things have warmed up a lot recently, with one man coming recently to tell them ‘respect from the neighbourhood!’.

For Tevdorashvili, this need for safe spaces is all too real. A few years ago she put an art installation up in a public park days before the annual church-organised ‘day for family purity’. The installation was a rainbow-coloured box entitled ‘Closet’, with handwritten notes from the LGBTQI+ community, which played a speech and then the Diana Ross song Coming Out. She had only told a few trusted blogs about it in advance, but it was attacked by a far-right activist within just a few hours of being up.”

(Source: BBC Culture, "[Georgia’s surprising LGBTQ+ scene](#)", 25 January 2023)

Human Rights Watch reported on an attack against transgender women in Tbilisi its annual World Report on Georgia covering 2022.

“Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Georgia continue to face harassment, discrimination, and violence. In May, a group of some 30 men attacked five transgender women in their home in Tbilisi. The attackers, armed with stones and bricks, assaulted the women and their landlord, damaged their house, and made death threats. An investigation was pending at time of writing.”

(Source: HRW, "[World Report 2023 - Georgia](#)", 12 January 2023)

A 2020 JAM news article quoted a Georgian lesbian who moved to the United States, comparing her experiences in Georgia and the United States.

³ See source description by ecoi.net: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/source/11199.html>

“Nobody has thrown stones at me on the street, nobody has torn my hair out in public transport, didn’t give me slaps in nightclubs, didn’t splash my face with drinks in bars, nobody has tried to rape me because of my sexual orientation. Nor has anyone refused me as a tenant or kicked me out of an office or apartment, and no one tried to kill me because I’ve participated in a peaceful demonstration. And all this really happened to me in Georgia, I experienced all this the hard way, and more than once.”

(Source: JAM news, “[Living surrounded by hate. LGBT individuals and their parents in Georgia](#)”, 24 June 2020)

The Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC) – ‘a human rights organization that aims to promote the development of a free, equal, and cohesive society’⁴ – conducted a qualitative study based on 320 interviews carried out in 2019 with individuals identifying as ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or any other gender’.⁵ Given the qualitative nature of the research, the findings are not generalisable to the wider LGBTQI+ population in Georgia, however, they are illustrative of the experiences of those in the study sample. The study, published in 2020, reported that over half of respondents had been subject to violence at some point in their lifetime, while almost a third had experienced violence in the two years prior to the study.

[...] 52% of respondents have been victims of violence at least once in their lives, in whole or in part, because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. [...] 29.4% of respondents (n = 91) have experienced physical violence in the last 2 years. [...]

(Source: Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC), “[Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis](#)”, pp.74, 76, 2020)

The same report provided descriptive statistics relating to barriers to education experienced by respondents in the sample.

- “- 57% of respondents believe that the quality of education in Georgia is low.
- The notion that “teenagers with non-normative sexual identities have less access to the right of education than others” is fully or partially agreed with by 48% of respondents.
- 32.2% of respondents (N=292) named homophobic discrimination by teachers and/or school administration while 41.9% named homophobic bullying by classmates/schoolmates as a barrier to receiving general education.
- Of the respondents who have had barriers to receiving general education due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (N=136), 44.1% have missed a day at school.”

(Source: Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC), “[Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis](#)”, p.95, 2020)

The EMC report also outlined barriers to accessing healthcare.

- “- As a SOGI-based barrier to healthcare services, 36.5% of respondents (N=285) indicated low level of sensitivity from medical staff, 39.6% indicated the risk of spreading personal information (N=293), and 37.6% – the inability to provide healthcare providers with comprehensive information due to risks of discrimination.
- 51.0% of respondents are open with their doctors about their sexual orientation/gender identity when it comes to certain health issues, while 21.6% are not open, 7.2% found it difficult to answer the question, and 20.3% refused to answer.
- Among the reasons for not being open, 34% of respondents named the risk of breaching confidentiality, while 30.2% said they did not consider it necessary to provide this information to a doctor. The fear of expected lack of acceptance was also named by 28.3% and the expected threat of refusal of service was named by 7.5% (N=53).
- 14.4% of respondents (N=46) stated that they have become victims of discrimination while receiving health care services within the last two years (70.6% answered negatively, and 15.0% refrained from answering the question).”

(Source: Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC), “[Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis](#)”, p.95, 2020)

⁴ EMC, ‘[Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis](#)’, 2020

⁵ EMC, ‘[Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis](#)’, p.39, 2020

A report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in a report to the Human Rights Council in 2019 stated:

“[...] 31. Virtually all the conversations he had during the visit led the Independent Expert to conclude that violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are pervasive in Georgia: beatings are commonplace, harassment and bullying constant, and exclusion from education, work and health settings appear be the norm.[...]”

(Source: UN Human Rights Council, “[Visit to Georgia Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity \[A/HRC/41/45/Add.1\]](#)”, 15 May 2019)

Section 3. Access to protection for LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

State responses to violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

Multiple sources highlight issues regarding the protection of the rights of LGBTQI+ and enforcement of anti-discrimination law.

The US Department of State report on human rights practices covering 2023 indicated that the police or other government officials did not always respond adequately to violence and harassment against LGBTQI+ people, and that according to NGOs laws relating to anti-discrimination against LGBTQI+ people were rarely enforced.

“Violence and harassment: Occasionally, police or other government agents failed to adequately respond to instances of violence or harassment against LGBTQI+ individuals. [...]”

Discrimination: The law made prejudice based on a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity an aggravating factor for all crimes. According to NGOs, however, the government rarely enforced the law.”

(Source: US Department of State, “[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)”, 22 April 2024)

The same report also references the incident during Pride 2023, in which the police failed to prevent the violent disruption despite far-right groups announcing it in advance, and observes that the right of assembly for LGBTQI+ is ‘limited’.

“The ability of LGBTQI+ individuals to assemble in public or private or to form associations – as well as the ability of LGBTQI+ organizations to legally register or convene events – was limited. On July 8, opponents of the Pride Festival in Tbilisi broke through a police cordon and entered the territory of Lisi Lake, where the event was to be held. Violent groups had announced the disruption of the event in advance; however, authorities did not take necessary measures to prevent the disruption and looting that ensued. LGBTQI+ persons and their supporters had to leave the site with the help of police.”

(Source: US Department of State, “[2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)”, 22 April 2024)

Amnesty International’s 2024 global report, observes that law enforcement agencies failed to protect LGBTQI+ people’s right to peaceful assembly at the 2023 Tbilisi Pride event.

“Anti-LGBTI propaganda by government officials and their supporters intensified, and police failed to adequately protect LGBTI rallies from violent protesters. On 8 July, approximately 2,000 anti-LGBTI protesters stormed a private Pride event in Tbilisi, destroying and looting property, vandalizing the stage and setting fire to rainbow flags and placards. The police present at the scene failed to take action to prevent these violent disruptions”

(Source: Amnesty International, “[The State of the World’s Human Rights: Georgia 2023](#)”, 24 April 2024)

A statement published on social media by the Georgian NGO Tbilisi Pride in July 2023 details the failure of the state to protect LGBTQI+ people against an attack by far-right groups at the 2023 Tbilisi Pride Festival, despite assurances from the government that the festival would be protected.

“The police financed with the taxes we pay, who were ‘protecting’ the festival territory, were assuring us that the far-right groups would not even come close to the site. Nevertheless, video footages spread across media and social media channels show how the police and the violent groups proceed to the festival area in an unhindered and agreed manner. Alt-info members surrounded us, and the police, instead of dispersing them, compelled us to leave the area with a transport that had been prepared previously. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Deputy Minister thereof, Aleksandre Darakhvelidze, have been giving us protection guarantees for weeks preceding the festival and even on the festival day. Instead, the police allowed Alt-Info members to trespass into private and enclosed festival territory, to attack peaceful citizens, and to inflict irreparable emotional trauma on them. The police did not close down the route leading to the festival site in order to prevent violent groups from reaching the area; The police did not use proportional force and measures against the attackers”

(Source: Tbilisi Pride, [Instagram post](#), 8 July 2023)

The US State Department report on human rights practices covering 2022 highlighted criticism of the Georgian government for shortcomings in protecting LGBTQI+ people.

“In November the Social Justice Center submitted a report on the legal status of LGBTQI+ persons to the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. The report criticized the government’s response to recent violent acts against such individuals. In particular, the report noted ineffective investigations of hate crimes committed by ultra-right groups, and institutional gaps that hindered the protection of the rights of LGBTQI+ persons.”

(Source: US Department of State, [“2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia”](#), 20 March 2023)

The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights’ 2022 report indicated that the implementation of the legal and institutional framework in Georgia remained ‘problematic’, and had consequences for the lives of LGBTQI+ people.

“Despite [...] efforts to bring the legal and institutional framework in line with international standards, its implementation remains problematic. This has a noticeable impact on the everyday lives of LGBTI people, who continue to be subjected to pervasive discrimination and who face significant barriers in accessing education, work, healthcare, and social services.”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, [“Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022”](#), para 11, p.10, 15 July 2022)

In a joint submission to the UN Human Rights Committee, ECOM (Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity), Equality Movement and Tbilisi Pride highlight gaps in the implementation and enforcement of the law protecting LGBTQI+ people, particularly regarding hate crimes.

“Georgian LGBT+ NGOs also state that LGBT+ are frequently subjected to domestic violence, yet the State rarely investigates these crimes as hate crimes based on SOGIGE [...]”

Although the Anti-Discrimination Law is in place, its implementation and enforcement are still ineffective. [...]

On 27 March 2012, Parliament passed amendments to the Criminal Code that added ‘homophobia’ to the list of aggravating factors for crimes. At the same time, many police officers, prosecutors, and judges do not fully understand the meaning of the concept of a hate-motivated crime and the legislation does not make clear what evidence shows that a hate crime occurred. Law enforcement bodies rarely link article 53 or article 142 of the Criminal Code to cases of violence against LGBT+, and courts have never applied the law regarding aggravating circumstances in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity.

Authorities generally agree that the main problem lies in the incorrect qualification of hate-motivated crimes as ordinary crimes, which results from a lack of awareness and prejudice permeating the entire justice system.”

(Source: ECOM, Equality Movement and Tbilisi Pride, [“Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Georgia: An “alternative report” as a commentary for the 135th Session of Human Rights Committee Review of the third periodic report by Georgia”](#), paras 20, 35, 37, May 2022)

The US State Department in its annual report on human rights practices covering 2021 described the violence that took place during Pride 2021, and observed that police failed to arrest far-right actors who assaulted police, journalists and others. The report also noted that weeks before the event, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had pressured organisers to cancel the march, on the grounds that they could not protect the right to assembly due to the number of expected counter-demonstrators.

“[...] on July 5, police failed to take appropriate action to protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly for individuals who had planned to participate in a Pride event. Approximately 3,000 far-right demonstrators violently rioted through Tbilisi, destroying an opposition protest site at parliament, attacking NGO offices, and assaulting more than 50 journalists and others following statements from Prime Minister Garibashvili that called the planned Tbilisi Pride event, March for Dignity, inappropriate and described it as a plot by “Saakashvili and the radical opposition” aimed at sparking tension and destabilization in the country. [...]

Reports and videos showed that police failed to arrest far-right actors as they assaulted police, journalists, and others seen to be associated with the pride march or Western values. The group attempted to storm parliament but was unable to do so and

tore down the EU flag flying in front of parliament. One Polish tourist was stabbed, allegedly for appearing to be associated with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) community. LGBTQI+ activists described feeling hunted as the locations where they sought refuge were discovered by far-right groups. Activists expressed concern that they were found due to government assistance. Throughout the day the Ministry of Internal Affairs failed to deploy riot control measures. Weeks in advance, ministry officials pressured organizers to cancel the March for Dignity, stating they could not protect the right to assembly because they expected between 20,000 and 50,000 counterdemonstrators.”

(Source: US Department of State, “[2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Georgia](#)”, 12 April 2022)

In 2022, the Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group published a comparison of studies conducted in 2016 and 2021 exploring attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people in Georgia. The report observes shortcomings in the state response to hate crimes against LGBTQ people.

“Participants in the focus group also talk about some problems within the system when it comes to responding to hate crimes: ‘according to some prosecutors, the motive of hate is excluded from investigative and court proceedings, which prevents the proportional punishment of the perpetrator.’”

(Source: WISG/Ekaterine Aghdgomelashvili, Natalia Mchedlishvili and Tamar Laperadze, “[Study on Public Knowledge, Awareness and Attitudes Towards LGBT\(Q\)I Community and Legal Equality](#)”, p.18, 2022)

Accountability for violations against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

A March 2024 report to the UN Human Rights Committee following a visit to Georgia by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights, observed that there was continuing impunity for human rights violations that occurred during Pride events in 2021 and 2023. The report indicates that failure to protect freedom of assembly for the LGBTQI+ community in Georgia, and lack of accountability for violations against them, is a ‘historical problem’.

“[...] 1. LGBTQI Rights Defenders”

40. In July 2021 and July 2023, there were major disruptions at events organized in Tbilisi to celebrate the country’s LGBTQI community. In both instances, events planned by LGBTQI rights defenders were attacked by far-right and ultraconservative groups exercising extreme violence and well-organized aggression. There has been total impunity for the instigators of these attacks, which, while not being the sole incidents involving retaliation against LGBTQI rights defenders, merit attention in detail. [...]

43. In response to the events of 5 July 2021, an investigation was launched by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with 56 individuals granted victim status, including 47 journalists and camera operators, but not the Tbilisi Pride or the Shame Movement. While 31 persons were arrested and some individuals prosecuted for their participation in the violence committed on the day, including attacks against journalists, none of the organizers or leaders of the violence, most notably leaders of far-right groups, have been brought to justice.

44. This impunity has played a key role in continued attacks against LGBTQI defenders and has greatly contributed to the climate of insecurity they face in the country. [...]

49. The continuing impunity for attacks against human rights defenders, and for human rights violations more broadly, is demonstrative of a lack of political will to address the issue. [...]

50. Compounding the issue is that the failure to protect the LGBTQI community when exercising their right to freedom of assembly, as well as impunity for attacks against them, is a historical problem for the Georgian authorities [...]

(Source: UN Human Rights Committee, “[Visit to Georgia; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders \[A/HRC/55/50/Add.2\]](#)”, 19 March 2024)

A report by Eurasianet covering the violence at Tbilisi Pride in 2023 highlights how the investigation following the violent disruption was narrow in scope did not address ‘infringement of fundamental rights’.

“The government launched an investigation, but its scope was limited from the outset to examining instances of theft and destruction of property. Investigators have not addressed the issue of infringement of fundamental rights. To leaders of the LGBTQ organization Tbilisi Pride, the event’s organizer, the ongoing official inquiry is missing the point. ‘It was not just theft [that] happened there,’ Mariam Kvaratskhelia, the co-director of Tbilisi Pride, told Eurasianet in an interview. ‘It was organized violence, it was breaking into someone’s property, it was persecution, it was a hate crime, and so on.’”

(Source: Eurasianet, “[Georgia: Government all talk, little action on promoting EU values – rights activists](#)”, 28 February 2024)

According to the Human Rights Watch annual report, in July 2022 the state responded to an attack on the offices of an LGBT rights group in 2021 with fines and acquitted defendants on more serious charges.

“In July, the Tbilisi City Court fined three people for raiding the offices of Tbilisi Pride, an LGBT rights group, during mass anti-LGBT attacks in July 2021 that led to dozens of injuries and cancellation of the Pride March. The court acquitted the defendants on more serious charges of persecution and organized group violence. In total, police detained 31 people over the violence. Courts handed prison sentences to 26 people for violence against journalists covering the events. But they failed to identify and prosecute the organizers of the mass violence.”

(Source: Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2022: Georgia](#), 12 January 2023)

The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights’ 2022 report notes the failure by authorities at all levels to ensure accountability for hate crimes perpetrated against LGBTQI+ people.

“16. Failure to ensure accountability for serious human rights violations against LGBTI people and activists has become a recurrent human rights concern in Georgia. According to information provided to the Commissioner by civil society organisations, there is a significant gap between the number of hate crimes and incidents documented by the Prosecutor’s Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the number of cases documented by the organisations advocating for the rights of LGBTI people. [...]

17. One of the challenges identified in relation to the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes in Georgia relates to the failure by the authorities to identify and correctly qualify hate motives. Furthermore, the Code of Administrative Offences does not provide for discriminatory motives which impedes the proper categorisation of administrative offences. [...]

35. The Commissioner stresses that the failure of the police, prosecutors, and courts to apply the provisions of the Criminal Code relating to incitement to violence on the ground of sexual orientation and gender identity as aggravating circumstance results in impunity for serious human rights violations.”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)”, paras 16, 17, 35, p.10, 15 July 2022)

The same source referenced a judgment by the European Court of Human Rights [Identoba and Others v Georgia](#), which ruled that the Georgian authorities had fallen short of ‘positive obligations under Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) taken in conjunction with Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights’ in relation to events during a Pride march in 2012. The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights drew parallels between what happened in 2012 and later events in 2019 and 2021, and observed that impunity for earlier incitement of violence towards LGBTQI+ people was a contributing factor in the attacks in 2021.

“[...] in its 2015 judgment in the case of *Identoba and Others v. Georgia*, the Court found that the domestic authorities did not ensure that the Pride March organised in May 2012 could take place peacefully by failing to sufficiently contain homophobic and violent counter-demonstrators, thereby falling short of their positive obligations under Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) taken in conjunction with Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court also established a violation of Article 3 (prohibition of torture and ill-treatment) [...]

Events in many ways similar to those in 2012 and 2013 also occurred in 2019 and 2021 [...] The failure by the authorities to punish those who were inciting hatred and calling for violence against the LGBTI activists and supporters involved in the organisation of the 2019 Pride March reportedly contributed to a perception of impunity and resulted in vicious attacks and

other acts of violence carried out by ultra-conservative and far-right groups in July 2021. 55 people, including 53 journalists and camera operators working for various media outlets who gathered to cover the events, were injured. One of them was found dead several days later, reportedly due to unrelated causes. While the police arrested and charged 27 persons for their participation in these acts in the aftermath of these events, the Commissioner understands that the organisers of these acts were never prosecuted.”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)”, paras 14, 15, 15 July 2022)

The same report attributed the failure to protect the right to peaceful assembly for LGBTQI+ people to the passive attitude of some competent authorities.

“Since 2012, LGBTI activists, their supporters, and the defenders of their rights have been repeatedly denied their right to peaceful assembly, largely due to the passive attitude adopted by the competent authorities. Furthermore, the Commissioner considers that some public statements made by certain politicians and government officials during the events of July 2021 served only to exacerbate this problem and to provide some legitimacy for attempts by ultra-conservative groups to prevent LGBTI people from expressing themselves in the public space”

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, “[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)”, para 25, 15 July 2022)

In a joint submission to the UN Human Rights Committee, ECOM (Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity), Equality Movement and Tbilisi Pride set out multiple factors that hinder effective investigation of violations against LGBTQI+ people.

“While private persons commit the majority of violations, the State stays inactive and does not fulfil its positive obligations. Even when the victim has contacted the authorities and a formal investigation has begun, the fact that, in most cases, presenting evidence is controversial, gives rise to a fear of retaliation, and that there is a lack of trust in law enforcement bodies, witnesses and victims fear testifying. In most cases witnesses are pressured or otherwise abused during the process of interrogation, thus the attendance of a lawyer is very important at the initial stage. The problems hindering the access of victims to justice also include obstacles in representing their interests on the part of human rights defenders and LGBT+ activists, and the unwillingness of the authorities to cooperate with civil society organizations. [...]

Conducting investigation in a timely manner has remained problematic. Investigations initiated by investigative authorities are usually protracted without an outcome for years. The prompt appeal of the victim to law enforcement agencies plays a key role in identifying and catching criminals. It is also necessary to highlight the problem of the adequacy and proportionality of punishments, there are examples when attackers get off with a small fine.”

(Source: ECOM, Equality Movement, Tbilisi Pride, “[Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Georgia An “alternative report” as a commentary for the 135th Session of Human Rights Committee Review of the third periodic report by Georgia](#)”, pp. 27, 28, May 2022)

In 2020, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the case of Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia, relating to a 2009 police raid on an NGO during which NGO staff and members of the LGBTQI+ community who were present were ill-treated by the police. The Court ruled on the alleged inadequacy of the subsequent investigation.

“B. Merits [...]

(b) Alleged inadequacy of the investigation [...]

39. The Court observes that on 9 January 2010 the applicants lodged a criminal complaint concerning the police abuse and, a month later, explicitly asked the authorities to take into consideration the allegedly discriminatory aspects of the police behaviour (see paragraphs 18 and 20 above). However, the Government have not shown that a single investigative act was ever undertaken. In any event, to date, the investigation into the police abuse has not produced any conclusive findings. Such a prohibitive delay is in itself incompatible with the State’s obligation under Article 3 of the Convention to carry out an effective investigation, especially since the task of identifying the perpetrators of the applicants’ alleged ill-treatment was far from

arduous (compare, for instance, M.C. and A.C., cited above, §§ 121-2, and Members of the Gldani Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses and Others, cited above, §§ 118-124). Nor have the applicants been involved in the criminal investigation in any meaningful way, as they have not even been declared victims, despite their numerous requests to that end (see paragraphs 21 and 22 above, and compare, for instance, Identoba and Others, cited above, § 75, and Begheluri v. Georgia, no. [28490/02](#), § 140, 7 October 2014).

40. More importantly, the Court considers that the protraction of the investigation exposed the domestic authorities' long-standing inability – which can also be read as unwillingness – to examine the role played by homophobic and/or transphobic motives in the alleged police abuse. There was a pressing need to conduct a meaningful inquiry into the possibility that discrimination had been the motivating factor behind the police officers' conduct, given the well-documented hostility against the LGBT community in the country at the material time (see paragraph 46 below), and in the light of the applicants' complaints about the police officers' hate speech during the incident (compare with Identoba and Others, cited above, § 77, and M.C. and A.C., cited above, § 124).

41. The Court thus finds that the domestic investigation into the applicants' allegations of ill-treatment with discriminatory intent by the police has been ineffective, since the Government has not demonstrated that a single investigative measure has ever been undertaken in practice. There has accordingly been a violation of Article 3 under its procedural limb read together with Article 14 of the Convention."

(Source: European Court of Human Rights, "[Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia \(\(Application no. 7224/11\)\)](#)", 8 January 2021)

In a comment to the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre on the 2020 ruling in the case of [Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia](#), a representative of the Women's Initiatives Supporting Group stated:

"This judgment is very important for Georgia. The LGBT+ community still faces discriminatory and abusive treatment from law enforcement agencies. WISG has documented cases of the unlawful detention of trans women, the disclosure of sensitive personal information by police officers, and a lack of investigation of homophobic and transphobic hate crimes. I hope that this judgement will cause the Georgian Government to amend its laws. We will be involved in the implementation process before the Committee of Ministers."

(Source: European Human Rights Advocacy Centre, [Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v Georgia](#), undated)

LGBTQI+ trust in law enforcement in Georgia

The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights' 2022 report highlights a lack of trust in law enforcement bodies among LGBTQI+ people, which hinders access to justice for victims of hate crimes.

"17. [...] This state of play is exacerbated by the reluctance of the victims of LGBTI-related hate crimes to report them due to a lack of trust in the police and in the justice system as a whole, and to a fear of forcible outing or secondary victimisation"

(Source: Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, "[Report following her visit to Georgia from 21 to 24 February 2022](#)", P.10, 15 July 2022)

In a joint submission to the UN Human Rights Committee, ECOM (Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity), Equality Movement and Tbilisi Pride also point to homophobic attitudes from police officers as a contributing factor to the under-reporting of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.

"[...] 20. [...] The fear of having to disclose the identity (forced outing), re-victimisation, the lack of trust in the law enforcement institutions, and homophobic attitudes coming from police officers cause underreporting of the hate crimes. The lack of legal prospects, the low awareness of the anti-discrimination legislation and redress mechanisms, as well as poor access to justice, also contribute to an unwillingness to report [...]"

27. [...] Even when the victim has contacted the authorities and a formal investigation has begun, the fact that, in most cases,

presenting evidence is controversial, gives rise to a fear of retaliation, and that there is a lack of trust in law enforcement bodies, witnesses and victims fear testifying. In most cases witnesses are pressured or otherwise abused during the process of interrogation, thus the attendance of a lawyer is very important at the initial stage. The problems hindering the access of victims to justice also include obstacles in representing their interests on the part of human rights defenders and LGBT+ activists, and the unwillingness of the authorities to cooperate with civil society organizations.”

(Source: ECOM, Equality Movement and Tbilisi Pride, [“Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Georgia: An “alternative report” as a commentary for the 135th Session of Human Rights Committee Review of the third periodic report by Georgia”](#), paras 20, 27, May 2022)

Quoting a lawyer from Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group, a 2022 article by the magazine Gomag also highlights issues affecting the willingness of LGBTQI+ to report abuses against them to the authorities.

“Ketі Bakhtadze, a strategic litigation lawyer with the advocacy organization, Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG), says that although there has been an increase in reports of anti-LGBTQ+ incidents in Georgia since the founding of the Human Rights Department, most victims are still reluctant to report their abuse to authorities. In 2018 she recalls how she worked on only one formal case at WISG involving a victim of sexual violence who subsequently had information about her sexuality leaked to her family by an attending police officer. Bakhtadze had provided consultation on 10 additional cases that had similar factual evidence, but which were never formally filed. [...]

‘We strongly believe that still we have a problem in our law enforcement agencies and that’s why the LGBTI community members when they are victims of violence ... they are not applying for support, are not cooperating with law enforcement agencies,’ she says.”

(Source: Gomag, [“LGBTQ+ Individuals Are Under Attack in Georgia. So Is Democracy”](#), 26 January 2022)

The Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC) – ‘a human rights organization that aims to promote the development of a free, equal, and cohesive society’⁶ – conducted a qualitative study based on 320 interviews carried out in 2019 with individuals identifying as ‘lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or any other gender’.⁷ The study, published in 2020 observed that trust in state institutions was low among respondents.

“- Confidence in state institutions by members of the LGBTQ group is substantially low. 4 82% of respondents do not trust the Georgian Executive Government.

- 79% of respondents do not trust the Parliament of Georgia.
- 68% of respondents do not trust the Court.
- 74% of respondents do not trust the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia, and 66% do not trust the Ministry of Internal Affairs/ Police. Only 5% and 6% of the respondents trust these structures.
- The highest levels of trust are enjoyed by LGBTQ community human rights organizations (65%) and human rights NGOs (60%).
- The Public Defender of Georgia enjoys an average level of trust, 39% of the respondents trust him/her.”

(Source: Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC), [“Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis”](#), p.95, 2020)

⁶ EMC, [‘Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis’](#), 2020

⁷ EMC, [‘Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia: Quantitative research Analysis’](#), p.39, 2020

Protection from honour crimes against LGBTQI+ people in Georgia

Among the sources consulted and within the time constraints in which this research was conducted, no information could be found on honour crimes perpetrated specifically against LGBTQI+ people (see Sources Consulted list). Please note that the fact that no information was found on the issue of honour crimes perpetrated specifically against LGBTQI+ Georgians does not necessarily mean that such events do not occur. Some information related to the concept of honour crimes in Georgia, the notion of “family shame” and an example of an honour crime committed against a woman suspected of adultery was found. This information has been included since they may be of general relevance.

David Rypel is a sociologist and PhD candidate at University College London, with a focus on security and belonging with respect to LGBTQIA+ people in Georgia. Responding to a question about the prevalence of honour crimes perpetrated against LGBTQI+ people via email correspondence with Asylos, they reflected on the concept of “honour crimes” in Georgia.

“To my knowledge, the terms ‘honour crime’ (ghirsebis danashauli, ღირსების დანაშაული) or ‘honour murder’ (ghirsebis mkvleoba, ღირსების მკვლელობა) are used relatively rarely in Georgia (an exception would be, for instance, the case of the killing of Khanum Jeiranova in 2014) and difficult to distinguish from other cases of gender-based, domestic, and intimate-partner violence as it is not always possible to establish the motive. For instance, a 2023 RFE/RL article on the topic cites women’s rights defenders as saying that ‘most of the 300 women killed in the last decade were killed so-called in the name of honour,’ but investigators do not use this term, so it does not appear in statistics, and the motivation is not always clearly established. This complicates answering this question.

In a 2020 survey by Lika Jalaghnia (‘Social Exclusion of LGBTQ Group in Georgia’), out of 91 respondents who experienced physical victimisation in the last two years, 10 stated that the perpetrator was a family member or legal guardian, and 9 mentioned a partner as the perpetrator. Additionally, out of 63 participants who experienced homelessness, 41.90% attributed violence by family members, and 43.50% cited coming out to family members (presumably resulting in being thrown out) as reasons for their situations. However, it is unclear whether ‘honour’ motivated these assaults.”

Referring to fieldwork that they conducted during the following time periods: September-December 2019, April-December 2022, June-August 2023, the same interlocutor further considered the role of “family shame” in violations against LGBTQI+ people.

“Nonetheless, my qualitative data suggest that ‘family shame’ does play a role. For instance, one participant, a gay man in his forties, recently had to flee the country together with his male partner because his partner’s cousin learned about their relationship and HIV status and decided to kill them. He said they contacted the police, which apparently dismissed the case as ‘a family case, and if someone has a gay son, the family must protect themselves and deal with the family shame.’ They first tried living out of the family’s reach in a small village in Georgia. However, they eventually had to flee the country as his partner’s family member found them and physically assaulted them. They received an asylum in a Western European country. Another participant, also a gay man in his forties, mentioned being physically assaulted together with his male partner by his partner’s brother and his friends at a metro station in Tbilisi. Several of my participants or their friends and acquaintances were thrown out of their homes by their parents upon their coming out, potentially to prevent bringing ‘shame’ to the household.”

(Source: David Rypel, Email correspondence with Asylos, 29 August 2024.)

The European Human Rights Advocacy Centre provided a summary of the killing of Khanum Jeiranova, which occurred in 2014.

“K, an ethnic Azerbaijani women who lived in a rural community in Georgia. In September 2014, K was seen in the car of another man, as a result of which K was dragged out of the car by up to 15 men including her husband’s relatives, who then viciously beat her and paraded her around the village while insulting her for bringing ‘shame’ on the family. Her children witnessed the beating. She was taken back to the house of the village governor and then to her parents’ house, where her relatives encouraged her to swallow rat poison. She was found dead the next day, hanging in the shed on her parent’s property.”

(Source: European Human Rights Advocacy Centre, “[Georgian gender-based violence cases](#)”, undated)

The European Human Rights Advocacy Centre described how, along with partners, it brought a complaint to the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) on behalf of Khanum Jeiranova's family.

"On 24 September 2014, [Khanum Jeiranova's] parents wrote to the Georgian authorities outlining the violence she had suffered leading up to her death, and requesting a criminal investigation.

An investigation was opened but terminated within days, with the prosecutors concluding that Khanum had taken her own life on the basis of her "shameful" behaviour and unfaithfulness.

Media interest in the case caused it to be re-opened, but despite **repeated calls** from Khanum's family the investigation remained pending and no one was charged for eight years.

In 2018, EHRAC and our partners Union Sapari and Human Rights Centre brought a complaint to the CEDAW on behalf of Khanum's children.

In the complaint, we argued that Khanum's treatment by her relatives, community and law enforcement evidenced discrimination based on her gender and ethnicity, in breach of the anti-discrimination provisions of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (the 'CEDAW Convention')

We argued that Khanum's beating was an honour crime punishing her as a woman for "inappropriate" behaviour deemed to bring disgrace on her family, and as such it was gender-based violence; that the police and village governor had been on notice of the threat to her life; that they took no legal protective measures; and that there was no effective investigation into her death.

We also argued that entrenched attitudes of gender-bias within the community and law enforcement and as evidenced in wider Georgian society caused and/or contributed to her death. In support of our submissions, we obtained an expert opinion on the nature and context of honour-based violence from Professor Aisha Gill, a global expert in this field."

(Source: European Human Rights Advocacy Centre, "**UN decides first 'honour' crimes case, on death of mother of two in Georgia**", 19 April 2023)

In November 2021, the CEDAW published its views on the complaint that was brought to them, concluding that the Georgian authorities failed to protect the right to life of Khanum Jeiranova.

"[...] 7.4 The Committee notes the State party's contention that its authorities had no knowledge of Ms. Jeiranova's relatives' plotting against her, but that they nevertheless removed her to the village governor's house on 16 September 2014, from where, having spoken with her mother, she returned to her parents' house, on the written condition that she would not be harmed. Police officers also came to check on her. The Committee notes that, according to the file, Ms. Jeiranova's mother testified that the governor did not translate Ms. Jeiranova's question to the police as to why they had not arrested those who had beaten her. Furthermore, the governor testified that Ms. Jeiranova had said to him that her relatives had told her to take rat poison and kill herself. She had asked him to get her out so that she would not be killed. Having been brought to his residence, she and her mother had a 'major argument'. The governor then instructed the police to return Ms. Jeiranova to her relatives, on the condition that she would not be harmed, because of calls from the same relatives. The Committee considers that the facts disclose a situation of extreme danger to Ms. Jeiranova, which was maintained by the authorities' decision to have her returned to her relatives, who were known to have told her to take her own life the previous night. In that regard, the Committee notes that 'warning letters', such as the one issued in the present case, are devoid of legal value and do not provide protection for victims. [...] The Committee further notes the authors' contention of the operation of an 'honour'-based system in the present case. Thus, the Committee considers that the State party's authorities failed to offer effective protection against, and to take all appropriate measures to eliminate, discrimination against Ms. Jeiranova as a woman. It deplores the reliance by the State party's authorities on 'honour'-based considerations and considers that they failed to protect her right to life. [...] Accordingly, the Committee finds that the State party violated her rights under article 2 (c) and (e), read in conjunction with article 3, of the Convention."

(Source: CEDAW, "**Views adopted by the Committee under article 7 (3) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No. 140/2019**"** [CEDAW/C/80/D/140/2019], 13 December 2021)

In January 2023, it was reported that four people had been found guilty of Khanum Jeiranova's 2014 honour killing.

"The Prosecutor's Office of Georgi announced on January 10 that the Tbilisi City Court found four persons guilty of honor crimes against Khanum Jeiranova, an ethnic Azeri woman who died in 2014 shortly after enduring public humiliation and violence in her community, and sentenced them to five years and six months in prison."

(Source: Civil Georgia, "[Court Finds Four Guilty of 2014 Honor Crime](#)", 10 January 2023)

Sources consulted

All (web) sources were consulted in August and September 2024.

1. International organisations

[Amnesty International](#)

[Human Rights Watch](#)

[Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](#)

2. (Inter)governmental sources

[Council of Europe](#)

[Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

[Council of Europe European Commission against Racism and Intolerance](#)

[Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly](#)

[European Court of Human Rights](#)

[Parliament of Georgia](#)

[The Public Defender's \(Ombudsman\) Office of Georgia](#)

The Public Defender's (Ombudsman) Office of Georgia states "The Public Defender of Georgia is a constitutional institution, which supervises the protection of human rights and freedoms within its jurisdiction on the territory of Georgia. It identifies the violations of human rights and contributes to the restoration of the violated rights and freedoms."

[United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#)

[United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#)

[US Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#)

3. (I)NGOS and think tanks

[Amnesty International](#)

[Democracy Research Institute](#)

Democracy Research Institute describes itself as a "a public policy think tank" that was "founded on February 7, 2018 by Ucha Nanuashvili the former Public Defender of Georgia (2012-2017) and his team." Further information about its vision and mission can be found on the Democracy Research Institute website at: <https://www.democracyresearch.org/eng/6/>

[Equality Movement](#)

Equality Movement states that its mission is "to support women and the LGBTQ community to ensure their proper integration in the society, and, at the same time, to facilitate the eradication of sexism and homophobia in the society."

[European Human Rights Advocacy Centre, School of Law at Middlesex University](#)

European Human Rights Advocacy Centre states that it works "...with human rights defenders in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine, to identify systemic abuses and urgent threats to civil society and marginalised communities. Together, we undertake strategic litigation to secure justice and accountability.

[Freedom House](#)

Human Dignity Trust

Human Dignity Trust states that it “works in countries spanning all regions of the world with LGBT activists, lawyers, parliamentarians and government officials, to challenge or reform discriminatory laws that often date back to the colonial era.”

Human Rights Centre

Human Rights Centre states “The Human Rights Center, formerly Human Rights Information and Documentation Center (HRIDC) was founded on December 10, 1996 in Tbilisi, Georgia...The Human Rights Center is dedicated to protection and promotion of human rights, rule of law and peace in Georgia.”

Human Rights and Education Monitoring Centre (EMC)

The [European Human Rights Advocacy Centre](#) describes EMC as “a Tbilisi-based organisation working on human rights causes and aiming to support the creation of a free and equal society based on solidarity. To enact social transformations, EMC creates and supports a solidarity platform, which strives to integrate the different groups, activists, and organisations that are working on emancipatory policy. The organisation aims to reveal the structural causes of social and political inequality as well as oppression in order to conduct critical analysis and change existing policy by using human rights instruments and activist fighting methods.”

ILGA World

ILGA states that it is a “worldwide federation of 1919 member organisations from 169 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights.”

ILGA-Europe

ILGA-Europe is the European region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. It is an advocacy group promoting the interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people, at the European level.

Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM)

Eurasian Coalition for Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity is an international non-governmental association based in Tallinn, Estonia. It is a membership association open to non-profit organizations and activists working in the field of rights and health of LGBT communities in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region.

Tbilisi Pride

Tbilisi Pride is a NGO in Georgia that advocates for LGBTQ+ rights and visibility.

Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG)

[European Human Rights Advocacy Centre](#) describes the Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) as follows: “Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG) is a feminist organisation which works on women’s issues. WISG was founded by 8 women from different professions in 2000. The main goal of the organisation is to support the formation of a harmonious society based on principles of social justice by empowering women and ensuring their full involvement and equal participation in social, political, cultural, and economic life.”

4. Media

Agenda.ge

Agenda.ge describes itself as follows: “Agenda.ge is an English-language news platform, created for people who don’t speak Georgian but want to know the country of Georgia better. The platform was launched by the Administration of the Government of Georgia in December 2013. The list of our readers and followers on social media channels includes top officials and devotees of Georgia’s European future all over the globe.”

BBC

Civil Georgia

Civil Georgia states that “Civil.ge is a project by the UN Association of Georgia, delivering news and analysis since 2001.”

Context

Context is a media platform supported by the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Its website states that it aims “to provide news and analysis that contextualises how critical issues and events affect ordinary people, society and the environment.”

Eurasianet

Eurasianet is an independent news organisation based at Columbia University's Harriman Institute, the United States, that provides news, information and analysis on countries in Central Asia, the Caucasus region, Russia and Southwest Asia. More information about Eurasianet can be found on the Eurasianet website at: <https://eurasianet.org/about>

Go Magazine

Go Magazine describes itself as "the nation's most widely read free lesbian publication. GO is distributed in 25 cities across the United States."

Interpress News

Its website states that "[t]he "Interpress News" news agency offers its readers comprehensive and unbiased information on events in Georgia and abroad."

JAM News

JAM News states that it is a "media platform that brings together professional journalists from around the Caucasus, as well as the authors and experts, who aim at providing the readers and viewers with diverse and many-sided information." Jam News states that its current major donor is the European Endowment for Democracy.

Le Monde

Le Monde states "Le Monde in English, the English version of France's leading newspaper, was launched in April 2022."

OC Media

OC Media states "Open Caucasus Media brings you news, commentary, multimedia, and investigations from the North and South Caucasus, with in-depth analysis of the issues, movements, conflicts, and people shaping the region." OC Media indicates that it receives the majority of its revenue from international donors, which are listed on its website.

Politico**QLit**

QLit describes itself as a "[m]agazine and community building primarily for lesbians* living in Hungary."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty**Reuters****5. Academic sources****David Rypel, August 2024**

David Rypel a sociologist specialising in the topics of security and belonging, with a particular focus on LGBTQIA+ people and Georgia (Sakartvelo). David Rypel is currently a PhD candidate at University College London.

Jesper Ahlin Marceta, "Individualism Under Constraining Social Norms: Conceptualizing the Lived Experiences of LGBT persons" AVANT, Vol. XII, No. 1(2021)

Zuzana FišEROVÁ, "LGBTIQ Activism in Georgia" Master's Thesis. PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC Faculty of Science, Department of Development and Environmental Studies. 2023



Asylos

We stand for
asylum decisions
based on evidence.



info@asylos.eu
www.asylos.eu