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Anti-LGBT Rhetoric Undermines Rights in Lebanon. Online Harassment Against LGBT People Reported

Online Harassment Against LGBT People Reported

Anti-gay remarks made on Saturday by a Hezbollah leader in Lebanon who has recently [called for anti-gay violence](#) sparked panic and terror among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon, [described](#) same-sex relations as a “sexual perversion,” and [warned](#) that gay people’s existence is a “threat to society.”

Days before, on July 22, [Nasrallah explicitly incited violence against gay and lesbian people](#). He called for them to be killed, urged people to use derogatory terms to describe gay people and to “collectively face this phenomenon [homosexuality], by all means necessary, without any limits.”

LGBT people, who already face heightened risks in Lebanon, have reported online harassment and death threats following his July 22 speech.

A gay man residing in Beirut’s southern suburbs told me that, following Nasrallah’s remarks, he received a threat on Grindr, which said: “We will find you and expose you one by one. We have your pictures, chats, and numbers, you “faggots.” We have been monitoring this platform and all the data is ready. The zero hour is here.”

Jack Harrison-Quintana, director of Grindr for Equality, the dating app’s advocacy arm, told Human Rights Watch that Grindr took immediate measures to protect users in Lebanon from such threats.

In a [2023 report](#), Human Rights Watch reported on the far-reaching offline consequences of online targeting against LGBT people, including being blackmailed and outed, family violence, and arbitrary arrests by Lebanon’s Internal Security Forces.

Lebanon’s government effectively banned pro-LGBT events, due to an unlawful directive [issued](#) in June 2022 by Interior Minister Bassam al-Mawlawi. In November, following a court order to [suspend the directive](#), al-Mawlawi issued a [second directive](#) banning any “conference, activity, or demonstration

related to or addressing homosexuality.” Since 2017, Lebanese security forces have [regularly interfered](#) with human rights events related to gender and sexuality.

The Lebanese government’s failure to [reform laws and policies that discriminate against LGBT people](#), and the failure of security forces to [protect LGBT people from violence](#), contribute to fueling violence against LGBT people and quelling activism around LGBT rights.

Still, activism, including around the rights of LGBT people, will continue in Lebanon. Government and nongovernment actors should uphold freedom of expression and assembly for LGBT people and rights defenders, and not attempt to undermine their fundamental human rights.

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