



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Iran: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

Version 4.0

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

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

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

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

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

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

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

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

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

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

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

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

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

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

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Assessment

Updated: 15 June 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by state or non-state actors because of the person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression.

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1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 This note provides an assessment of the general situation of persons who are known to be, or are likely known to be, gay men, lesbian, bisexual, trans or intersex – that is those who are open, or are likely to be compelled to be open, about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression (SOGIE) – as well as those perceived as such because of their appearance, attitudes and/or behaviour. They are referred hereafter collectively as 'LGBTI persons', although the experiences of each group may differ. However, no specific information amongst the sources consulted referred to intersex persons. Therefore, this note considers their circumstances as similar to that of the other groups.
- 1.2.2 Decision makers should note that a person cannot be expected to behave discreetly or conceal their SOGIE if this is to avoid persecution or serious harm. However there may be circumstances where a person chooses to be discreet about their SOGIE for reasons other than a fear of persecution, for example because of cultural or religious reasons. Where a LGBTI person indicates that they have or will behave discreetly, decision makers will need to explore the reasons why.
- 1.2.3 For general guidance on considering claims made by LGBTI persons, including the relevance of discretion, decision makers must refer to the Asylum Instructions on [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

- 2.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

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

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 LGBTI persons in Iran form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it and have a distinct identity in Iran because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.3.2 Although LGBTI persons form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their actual or imputed convention reason.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. From the state

- 2.4.1 In general, a person living openly as LGBTI, who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery (GRS), is likely to be at risk of treatment from state actors which is sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition, or by an

accumulation of various measures, that it amounts to persecution or serious harm. Each case must be considered on its facts.

- 2.4.2 The Penal Code criminalises consensual and non-consensual same-sex sexual activity. The penalties range from flogging to the death penalty, depending on the nature of the sexual activity. In general, punishments for gay men are more severe for consensual passive partners than for consensual active partners. For sexual acts between women, both passive and active parties face the same punishment, which is one hundred lashes. Other same-sex acts that are criminalised, which apply to both men and women, include same-sex 'kissing or touching as a result of lust' and are punishable by flogging. These penalties also apply to children under the age of 18 as the age of criminal responsibility in Iran is 9 lunar years for girls and 15 lunar years for boys (see [Legal context](#)).
- 2.4.3 There are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, same-sex civil unions or marriages are prohibited and same-sex couples cannot adopt children (see [Legal context](#)).
- 2.4.4 There are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity (see Legal context – [Trans persons](#)).
- 2.4.5 Being trans is recognised as a medical condition known as Gender Identity Disorder (GID) that is 'curable' through gender reassignment surgery (GRS). The government permits and subsidises GRS, which is reported to be a lengthy process involving humiliating procedures and low quality surgery. Some LGBTI persons, including those not identifying as trans, feel compelled to undergo GRS to avoid being criminalised (see [Discriminatory policy](#) and [Gender reassignment surgery \(GRS\)](#)).
- 2.4.6 The law also provides for punishments of those deemed to have committed a harām (sinful) act, which may include women and men who do not dress or act in the expected or culturally accepted manner for their sex (see [Threats, harassment and violence](#)).
- 2.4.7 Public officials have consistently denounced same-sex relationships, describing them as deviant, subhuman and diseased (see [Government position and rhetoric](#)). LGBTI persons, who have not undergone GRS, face arrest, detention, threats and humiliation, and physical or sexual abuse by the security forces and members of the judiciary on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation based on appearance and demeanor, according to the UK-based non-governmental organisation, 6Rang (Iranian Lesbian & Transgender Network) (see [Discriminatory policy](#), [Threats, harassment and violence](#) and [Arrests and detention](#)).
- 2.4.8 6Rang stated that 45 (19.6%) of 230 participants, in its 2020 study on violence against LGBTI in Iran, consistently reported humiliating conduct or physical violence by the ordinary police, security forces, and patrol police (moral police) for reasons such as different gender expression, breaching binary dress-code norms, insufficient hijab (Islamic veil) or participating in house parties (see [Threats, harassment and violence](#)).
- 2.4.9 LGBTI activists report that persons engaging in consensual same-sex sexual acts are convicted and executed on the pretext of more severe criminal charges such as rape (see [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#)).

- 2.4.10 According to a 2008 British WikiLeaks dispatch, cited by media sources, between 4,000 and 6,000 gay men and lesbians had been executed since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Far fewer figures were cited in a report published by Eleos Justice and Capital Punishment Justice Project, which identified 251 executions for same-sex sexual activity between 1979 and 2020, although noted the actual number of executions for same-sex sexual activity may not be accurate as Iran used this and other capital offences as a cover to execute political opponents (see [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#)).
- 2.4.11 Of the 79 executions identified for same-sex sexual activity between 2004 and 2020, the offenders were all men. No instances of a woman being judicially executed for a same-sex sexual offence could be found since at least 2004. Although there have been fewer executions in recent years, at least 2 men were executed for 'sodomy by force' in 2021 and 2 more were executed for the same offence in January 2022 (see [Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty](#)).
- 2.4.12 Conversion therapy, in both private and public clinics, is said to be prevalent and more common in adolescents than adults and involves practices such as electric shock treatment, administration of hormones and strong psychoactive medications (see [Corrective/conversion therapy](#)).
- 2.4.13 Discrimination and violence occurs in educational and healthcare settings on account of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, including harassment, physical, sexual and verbal abuse (see [Treatment in, and access to, services](#)).
- 2.4.14 Gay men and trans persons may apply for exemption from military service as they are deemed to have a mental illness. However, in seeking exemption, they may be forced to undergo degrading physical and psychological tests, including anal examinations and interrogations about their sexual activity (see [Military exemption](#) and the [Country Policy and Information Note on Iran: Military service](#)).
- 2.4.15 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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b. [From non-state actors](#)

- 2.4.16 In general, a person living openly as LGBTI, who has not undergone gender-reassignment surgery (GRS), is likely to be at risk of treatment from non-state actors which is sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition, or by an accumulation of various measures, that it amounts to persecution or serious harm. Each case must be considered on its facts.
- 2.4.17 Iran is a conservative Muslim society in which anti-LGBTI attitudes persist and are widespread. LGBTI persons face societal harassment, discrimination and stigma as well as family and societal pressure to conform to cultural and religious norms, for example, in terms of appearance and behaviour (see [Societal views in general](#)).

- 2.4.18 LGBTI persons face threats, blackmail and extortion, harassment, forced marriage (or threats of such), pressure to undergo GRS, violence and 'honour' killings by non-state actors, including family members, on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Military exemption cards, an accepted form of identification issued to gay and trans individuals, indirectly disclose the persons sexual orientation or gender identity and may put them at further risk of violence and discrimination for 'outing' them and / or because being gay or trans is classed as a mental illness (see [Military exemption](#), [Gender reassignment surgery](#), [Threats, harassment and violence](#) and [Treatment by family members](#)).
- 2.4.19 Reasons for not being open about their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression may be because the person wishes to conform to societal norms but may also be due to fear of discrimination and/or violence.
- 2.4.20 For further guidance on assessing risk, including considering the circumstances where someone might conceal their SOGIE and the reasons for this, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection from the authorities.
- 2.5.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from non-state actors, including 'rogue' state actors, decision makers must assess whether the state can provide effective protection.
- 2.5.3 In general, the state may be able, but is not willing, to offer effective protection to LGBTI persons.
- 2.5.4 There are no laws to protect LGBTI persons against discrimination or hate crimes and sexual minorities are reluctant to report crimes against them for fear of revealing their sexual orientation and being criminalised (see [Legal context](#) and [State protection](#)).
- 2.5.5 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Iran: Actors of protection](#), the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 Openly LGBTI persons face hostility from both the state and society throughout the country and there is unlikely to be any place in Iran to which an LGBTI person could reasonably relocate.
- 2.6.3 Internal relocation will not be an option if it depends on the person concealing their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in the proposed

new location if the reason (or one of the reasons) is a fear of persecution. Each case must be considered on its facts.

- 2.6.4 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account, including considering the circumstances where someone might conceal their SOGIE and the reasons for this, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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2.7 Certification

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

- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 16 May 2022

3. Legal context

3.1 Constitution and Islamic law (Sharia)

3.1.1 As referred to in the 1979 Constitution, Iran's judicial system is based upon Islamic law (Sharia)^{1 2}. As such, the Iranian Penal Code (IPC) consists of the crimes and punishments of hadd, qisas, diya and ta'zir³.

See [Penal code punishments](#).

3.1.2 There are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, there is no legal recognition of same-sex civil unions or marriages, and same-sex couples cannot adopt children⁴.

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3.2 Penal code in regard to same-sex sexual relations

3.2.1 A 2018 report, developed in partnership with a number of Iranian LGBTQ organisations and authored by Small Media, a London-based digital rights organisation, noted that the IPC, adopted in 1991 and amended in 2013, '... continues to explicitly forbid sexual relations between same-sex partners, whether such relations are consensual or coerced.'⁵

3.2.2 The same report added that the IPC:

'... is the primary body of law related to the administration of justice in Iran. Contained within its five books are the collection of articles forbidding same-sex sexual relations and mandating severe punishments for citizens who violate the law.

'The IPC distinguishes between a number of different types of sexual acts, which are each prescribed different punishments. Punishments for passive partners are more severe than for active partners, although active partners can also face the death penalty if they are a non-Muslim caught having sex with a Muslim.'⁶

3.2.3 The UK-based non-governmental organisation (NGO), 6Rang (Iranian Lesbian & Transgender Network), stated in a 2017 report that, 'Iran's Islamic Penal Code criminalizes same-sex sexual conducts with penalties ranging from flogging to the death penalty (Articles 233-240). These penalties also apply to children under the age of 18 as the age of criminal responsibility in Iran is nine lunar years for girls and 15 lunar years for boys (Article 147).'⁷

3.2.4 The US Department of State (USSD) noted in its 2021 human rights report:

¹ [Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran](#), 24 October 1979

² The Iran Primer, '[The Islamic Judiciary](#)', 1 August 2015

³ IHRDC, '[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)' (part 2, chapter 1), 4 April 2014

⁴ ILGA, '[State-sponsored Homophobia 2020](#)' (page 327), December 2020

⁵ Small Media, '[Breaking the Silence: Digital Media and LGBTQ Rights in Iran](#)' (page 15), 2018

⁶ Small Media, '[Breaking the Silence: Digital Media and LGBTQ Rights in Iran](#)' (page 16), 2018

⁷ 6Rang, '["It's a great honor to violate homosexuals' rights"...](#)' (page 12), December 2017

'The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, which is punishable by death, flogging, or a lesser punishment. The law does not distinguish between consensual and nonconsensual same-sex intercourse, and NGOs reported this lack of clarity led to both the victim and the perpetrator being held criminally liable under the law in cases of assault. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.'⁸

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3.3 Penal code punishments

3.3.1 The Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC), an independent non-profit organization based in the USA that seeks to promote accountability and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Iran⁹, provided a translation of Books 1 and 2 of the IPC¹⁰. Book One defines the main punishments as prescribed under Islamic law:

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

'(a) Hadd

'(b) Qisas

'(c) Diya

'(d) Ta'zir

'Article 15 – Hadd is a punishment for which the grounds for, type, amount and conditions of execution are specified in holy Shari'a.

'Article 16 – Qisas is the main punishment for intentional bodily crimes against life, limbs, and abilities which shall be applied in accordance with Book One of this law.

'Article 17 – Diya, whether fixed or unfixed, is monetary amount under holy Shari'a which is determined by law and shall be paid for unintentional bodily crimes against life, limbs and abilities or for intentional crimes when for whatever reason qisas is not applicable.

'Article 18 – Ta'zir is a punishment which does not fall under the categories of hadd, qisas, or diya and is determined by law for commission of prohibited acts under Shari'a or violation of state rules. The type, amount, conditions of execution as well as mitigation, suspension, cancellation and other relevant rules of ta'zir crimes shall be determined by law. In making decisions in ta'zir crimes, while complying with legal rules, the court shall consider the following issues:

'(a) The offender's motivation and his/her mental and psychological conditions when committed [sic] the crime

'(b) Method of committing the crime, extent of a breach of duty and its harmful consequences

⁸ USSD, '[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)' (section 6), 12 April 2022

⁹ IHRDC, '[Mission](#)', no date

¹⁰ IHRDC, '[English Translation of Books I & II of the New Islamic Penal Code](#)', 4 April 2014

‘(c) Conduct of the offender after committing the crime

‘(d) The offender’s personal, family, and social background and the effect of the ta’zir punishment on him/her.’¹¹

3.3.2 Ta’zir punishments are divided into 8 degrees, as described at Article 19 of the [IPC](#)¹².

3.3.3 Article 136 refers to reoffending and states, ‘Where anyone commits the same offense punishable by hadd three times, and each time the hadd punishment is executed upon him/her, the hadd punishment on the fourth occasion shall be the death penalty.’¹³

3.3.4 Book 2 defines offences liable to hadd punishment¹⁴, which in terms of same-sex sexual relationships are livat, tafkhiz and musaheqeh¹⁵.

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3.4 Livat (penetrative sex between men)

3.4.1 Article 233 of the IPC defines livat as ‘penetration of a man’s sex organ (penis), up to the point of circumcision, into another male person’s anus.’¹⁶

3.4.2 Article 234 prescribes the punishment for livat and highlights the differences in treatment for the active and passive partner:

‘The hadd punishment for livat shall be the death penalty for the insertive/active party if he has committed livat by using force, coercion, or in cases where he meets the conditions for ihsan [see Note 2 for definition]; otherwise, he shall be sentenced to one hundred lashes. The hadd punishment for the receptive/passive party, in any case (whether or not he meets the conditions for ihsan) shall be the death penalty.

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

‘Note 2- Ihsan is defined as a status that a man is married to a permanent and pubescent wife and whilst he has been sane and pubescent has had a vaginal intercourse with the same wife while she was pubescent, and he can have an intercourse with her in the same way [vaginal] whenever he so wishes.’¹⁷

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3.5 Tafkhiz

3.5.1 Article 235 of the IPC defines tafkhiz as ‘putting a man’s sex organ (penis) between the thighs or buttocks of another male person’. Article 235

¹¹ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Articles 14 to 18), 4 April 2014

¹² IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Article 19), 4 April 2014

¹³ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Article 136), 4 April 2014

¹⁴ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Book 2, Part 2), 4 April 2014

¹⁵ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Articles 233, 235 and 238), 4 April 2014

¹⁶ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Article 233), 4 April 2014

¹⁷ IHRDC, [‘English Translation of Books I & II...’](#) (Article 234), 4 April 2014

stipulates that, ‘A penetration [of a penis into another male person’s anus] that does not reach the point of circumcision shall be regarded as tafkhiz.’¹⁸

3.5.2 Article 236 prescribes the punishment for tafkhiz:

‘In the case of tafkhiz, the hadd punishment for the active and passive party shall be one hundred lashes and it shall make no difference whether or not the offender meets the conditions of ihsan [see note 2 of article 234], or whether or not [the offender] has resorted to coercion.

‘Note – If the active party is a non-Muslim and the passive party is a Muslim, the hadd punishment for the active party shall be the death penalty.’¹⁹

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3.6 Musaheqeh (sexual acts between women)

3.6.1 Article 238 of the IPC defines musaheqeh as ‘where a female person puts her sex organ on the sex organ of another person of the same sex.’²⁰

3.6.2 Article 239 states the hadd punishment for musaheqeh ‘shall be one hundred lashes.’²¹ In regard to the prescribed punishment for musaheqeh, Article 240 states ‘... there is no difference between the active or passive parties or between Muslims and non-Muslims, or between a person that meets the conditions for ihsan and a person who does not, and also whether or not [the offender] has resorted to coercion.’²²

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3.7 Other laws affecting LGBTI persons

3.7.1 Section 237 of the IPC refers to other acts that apply to both males and females, including ‘kissing or touching as a result of lust’, which are ‘punishable by thirty-one to seventy-four lashes of ta’zir punishment of the sixth grade.’²³ See Article 19 of the [IPC](#) for the degrees (grades) of punishment²⁴.

3.7.2 Article 638 in Book 5 of the IPC, translated by the IHRDC, states:

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

‘Note- Women, who appear in public places and roads without wearing an Islamic hijab, shall be sentenced to ten days to two months’ imprisonment or a fine of fifty thousand to five hundred Rials.’²⁵

3.7.3 According to Amnesty International, ‘These provisions put women who may wish to wear items of clothing and accessories stereotypically regarded as

¹⁸ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 235), 4 April 2014

¹⁹ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 236), 4 April 2014

²⁰ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 238), 4 April 2014

²¹ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 239), 4 April 2014

²² IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 240), 4 April 2014

²³ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 237), 4 April 2014

²⁴ IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 19), 4 April 2014

²⁵ IHRDC, ‘[Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Book Five](#)’ (Article 638), 15 July 2015

“masculine” and men who wish to wear make-up and display expressions and behaviors stereotypically regarded as “feminine” at increased risk of discrimination, harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and other ill-treatment.’²⁶

See also [Online community/activity](#) for information on laws relating to online content.

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3.8 Trans persons

3.8.1 A 2016 paper by Zara Saeidzadeh, researcher and senior lecturer in gender studies at Örebro University, Sweden, noted:

‘Ayatollah Khomeini (Iran’s supreme leader between 1979 and 1989) sanctioned sex changes in his book Tahrir-al Wasila... in the late 1960s while he was living in Turkey as an exile. His fatwa was translated from Arabic into Persian, and the English translation of it reads:

“To change one’s sex from a man to a woman and from a woman to a man through surgery is not hindered in Islam. And if a woman feels she is masculine or if a person feels they have desires of opposite sex, and can change their sex, but are biologically man or woman, it is not obligatory for them to change and become the opposite sex”.²⁷

3.8.2 The fatwa was adopted following the 1979 revolution and in 1982 Ayatollah Khomeini issued another fatwa, which stressed the legality of gender reassignment relied upon medical approval and stated, ‘There is no Islamic obstacle to sex change surgery, if it is approved by a reliable doctor.’²⁸

3.8.3 Saeidzadeh’s paper noted that although the fatwa permits sex change surgery ‘... it does not recognize trans people’s status either in the law or in society... except on matters relating to the practical processes of transition and regulation for compulsory military service.’²⁹

3.8.4 In a letter to the Dutch government, dated February 2020, regarding its asylum policy for Iranian LGBTI persons, 6Rang stated that, ‘The Iranian legal framework does not make being a trans person a crime. However, being transsexual is recognised as a medical condition known as Gender Identity Disorder (GID) that is curable through sex reassignment surgeries (SRS).’³⁰

3.8.5 Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted in its 2022 World Report, covering 2021 events, that, ‘Although Iran permits and subsidizes sex reassignment surgery for transgender people, no law prohibits discrimination against them.’³¹

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²⁶ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)’ (page 4), 17 May 2021

²⁷ Saeidzadeh Z, ‘[Transsexuality in Contemporary Iran: Legal and Social Misrecognition](#)’, 2016

²⁸ Saeidzadeh Z, ‘[Transsexuality in Contemporary Iran: Legal and Social Misrecognition](#)’, 2016

²⁹ Saeidzadeh Z, ‘[Transsexuality in Contemporary Iran: Legal and Social Misrecognition](#)’, 2016

³⁰ 6Rang, ‘[6Rang letter to Dutch government regarding its asylum policy for Iranian...](#)’, February 2020

³¹ HRW, ‘[World Report 2022 – Iran](#)’, 13 January 2022

3.9 Military exemption

- 3.9.1 Both the 2014 and the 2020 regulations on medical exemption from military service were referenced by sources. CPIT was unable to locate copies of these regulations in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 3.9.2 In its 2016 report on being transgender in Iran, OutRight Action International, an LGBTI rights group, cited the 2014 ‘Regulations on Medical Exemption from the Draft’, adding:
- ‘Under these regulations, the exemption of trans individuals from military service is mentioned under “Chapter 5: Psychiatric Diseases,” which covers mental and psychological conditions such as schizoaffective disorder, delusional disorder, or schizophrenia, and certain intellectual and developmental disabilities. Section 12 of Chapter 5 stipulates: “Gender Identity Disorder (TS131) that is certified by the LMO [Legal Medical Organization] and confirmed by the Armed Service’s medical centers [is grounds for] for permanent exemption”.’³²
- 3.9.3 The same source noted that Article 7 of the regulations, which addresses the issue of exemption for gay men, states, “perversions that violate the social and military code of conduct (such as sexual perversion and homosexuality) [warrant] a six-month deferment.” Under Article 7, “after six-months’ deferment, and upon confirmation by the Armed Service’s medical centers, [the applicant is eligible] for a permanent exemption”.’³³
- 3.9.4 Iran Human Rights (IHRNGO), a Norway-based NGO, referred to the 2020 Medical Exemption Regulations, and noted ‘Psychological exemptions are covered by Article 33, and Paragraph 8 refers to “behavioural disorders (neural and mental imbalances) and deviancies contrary to military etiquette, as well moral and sexual deviancies such as transsexualism”.’³⁴
- 3.9.5 Referring to regulations defining LGBTI persons under the category of mental illness, Amnesty International reported in May 2021 that,
- ‘While this provision is discriminatory and degrading towards gay, transgender and other gender non-conforming persons, and treats homosexuality as a form of mental illness or psychopathology in spite of clear statements to the contrary from various psychiatry bodies across the world and the World Health Organization, it is commonly used by gay, transgender and gender non-conforming persons in Iran to seek an exemption from compulsory military service to protect themselves from homophobic and transphobic abuses prevalent in military settings.’³⁵
- 3.9.6 In its annual report for 2021, Amnesty International noted that, ‘Military exemption cards issued to gay and transgender individuals indirectly disclosed their sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent, putting them at risk of violence.’³⁶

³² Outright Action International, ‘[Being Transgender in Iran](#)’ (page 29), 28 January 2016

³³ Outright Action International, ‘[Being Transgender in Iran](#)’ (page 29), 28 January 2016

³⁴ IHRNGO, ‘[Iran: The Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT...](#)’, 15 May 2021

³⁵ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)’ (page 3), 17 May 2021

³⁶ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran 2021](#)’ (Discrimination – LGBTI people), 29 March 2022

- 3.9.7 Amnesty International referred to clause 5(7) of the 2014 regulations for medical exemption, which is referenced on the exemption card ‘... revealing to anyone who views the card and is aware of the relevant provisions in Iran’s military regulations that the individual has been exempted on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.’³⁷ IHRNGO indicated that it was Article 33, Paragraph 8 of the 2020 exemption regulations that was written in the exemption section of military cards³⁸.
- 3.9.8 Referring to Ali Fazeli Monfareda, known as Alireza, a gay man killed in May 2021, 6Rang stated that the murder ‘... took place following the revelation of Alireza’s sexual orientation. This event took place when his half-brother opened an envelope containing Alireza’s military exemption card. These exemption cards are issued through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Alireza received one by indicating that he was gay, which is permissible under Paragraph 5, Article 7 of the military exemption laws.’³⁹
- See also [Treatment by family members](#).
- 3.9.9 Amnesty International noted in May 2021:
- ‘According to information received from Iranian gay men and reports by human rights groups, in seeking exemption from military service on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, gay, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are generally forced to undergo humiliating and degrading physical and psychological tests, including anal examinations, which amount to torture, as well as interrogations by officials during which they are forced to answer intimate questions about their gender and sexuality such as their preferences for sexual positions.’⁴⁰
- 3.9.10 An undated article by 6Rang noted it had interviewed 6 individuals who had received military service exemption on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In one case the process for permanent exemption took 2 years. 6Rang noted ‘These interviews indicate that the timeline for processing each application has been prolonged and the amount of data collected about every individual has gradually increased. Many applicants at different stages of the police inquiry receive a form in which they have to declare their sexual desires, gender preferences and even the name and number of people whom they had been sexually involved with.’⁴¹
- 3.9.11 IHRNGO noted ‘... gay men who do pursue obtaining an exemption also have to worry about the legal consequences of having confessed to being gay.’⁴²
- 3.9.12 6Rang stated that the exemption regulation ‘... allows gay individuals to be identified by the police, judicial authorities, employers and those responsible for educational centres who can simply look at their military exemption cards, which functions as one of the few forms of acceptable IDs in Iran.’⁴³

³⁷ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)’ (page 3), 17 May 2021

³⁸ IHRNGO, ‘[Iran: The Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT...](#)’, 15 May 2021

³⁹ 6Rang, ‘[Murder of a young Ahwazi gay man after the revelation of his sexual...](#)’, 7 May 2021

⁴⁰ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)’ (page 3), 17 May 2021

⁴¹ 6Rang, ‘[Confessing to having same-sex relations is the new norm for military service...](#)’, no date

⁴² IHRNGO, ‘[Iran: The Islamic Penal Code Promotes Violence Against the LGBT...](#)’, 15 May 2021

⁴³ 6Rang, ‘[Confessing to having same-sex relations is the new norm for military service...](#)’, no date

See also [Treatment in, and access to, services](#).

- 3.9.13 For further information on military service exemption due to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity and expression see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Iran: Military service](#).

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Section 4 updated: 16 May 2022

4. State attitudes and treatment

4.1 Terminology

- 4.1.1 In a 2017 article published in the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research, researcher Simon Forbes wrote:

'The most commonly used term in official circles and in the press in Iran relating to homosexuality is hamjensbāzy or hamjensbāz when referring to the person. The term hamjensbāz is also used as an abusive epithet. According to Arsham Parsi, who is an advocate for sexual minorities from Iran seeking asylum, the term is very rarely a term of self-description except among some of the older generation. They literally mean "same sex play" or "player". They are terms hard to translate and some suggest that the terms are linked to "predatory" stereotypes or confined to the passive partner. However, hamjensbāz appears to be derived from the Anglo-American phrase and concept 'practising homosexual'. This English phrase also has highly negative and pejorative overtones... Hamjensbāzy is, therefore, a broad term relating to actions, rather than feelings or desires.'⁴⁴

- 4.1.2 The same source noted:

'Almost the reverse is true of a somewhat different term, hamjensgerāy... The word hamjensgerā refers to people in the singular, while hamjensgaryan in the plural and can refer to men or women. It is often used as a term of self-description, by contrast to the more negative term hamjensbāz. Literally when employed it means "same sex orientation", or "oriented" in the case of an individual. It refers to feelings and desires rather than actual actions. Therefore, in their original meanings, hamjensgerāy seems to be related primarily to the mind, whereas hamjensbāzy to the actions of the body. Curiously though, in the new penal code they now use the term hamjensgerāy in place of hamjensbāzy to describe all same sex acts including sexual kissing and touching.'⁴⁵

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4.2 Government position and rhetoric

- 4.2.1 According to 6Rang, 'Since the establishment [of] the Islamic Republic in 1979, state officials in Iran have consistently portrayed homosexuality as a "deviant" sexual proclivity that has a corrupting effect on society.'⁴⁶ The 6Rang report cited comments made by public officials denouncing same-sex

⁴⁴ Forbes S, '[The reconstruction of homosexuality and its consequences in...](#)' (pages 28 to 29), 2017

⁴⁵ Forbes S, '[The reconstruction of homosexuality and its consequences in...](#)' (page 29), 2017

⁴⁶ 6Rang, '["It's a great honor to violate homosexuals' rights"...](#)' (page 15), December 2017

sexual relationships, describing them, amongst other derogatory words, as 'subhuman' and 'diseased'⁴⁷.

4.2.2 Simon Forbes wrote in his 2017 article that:

'Typically, it is the term hamjensbāzy that is used in public speeches and the legal media in Iran. However, the term hamjensgerāy is also sometimes used. As one example, the former President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinezhad, in response to questions about "homosexuals" or "gays" in the USA most notoriously stated "we do not have the hamjensbāz (translated to audience as "homosexuals") like you have in your country" and that "absolutely such a thing does not exist as a phenomenon" in Iran. In a subsequent interview the following year he attempted to clarify his remarks suggesting that it was the open practice of hamjensbāzy that was prohibited. Curiously he switched to hamjensgerā when denying the possibility of their execution other than for murder, rape or drug offences and that otherwise they were "not known to be hanged". In other words, Ahmadinezhad implied a distinction between hamjensbāzan, who express and act upon their desires in some kind of public way as in the USA, and another type of hamjensgerā, who keep their actions private and secret.'⁴⁸

4.2.3 Citing a range of sources, a November 2021 response on LGBT persons in Iran by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), formerly the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), stated:

'In 2019, the then Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif "endorsed the execution of gay people" at a press conference in Tehran. According to the records, "during 2015-2020, Iran hanged at least 6 men for "livat". In 2021, the election of Ebrahim Raisi in Iran's presidency has raised more fears at [sic] the LGBTQ community as Raisi is known for his radical religious views. A media source points out that Ebrahim Raisi has characterized "same-sex relations as 'nothing but savagery'" "during an anti-gay tirade" in 2014.'⁴⁹

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

4.2.4 A UK parliamentary research briefing published in February 2022 noted that:

'In 2019 the UN human rights council undertook its third periodic review of human rights in Iran. Iran received 10 recommendations relating to the LGBT community. The majority related to the death penalty for same-sex sexual relations and reflected calls to repeal the penal code. Several countries urged Iran to decriminalise consensual same-sex activities and introduce anti-discrimination legislation...

'Iran rejected the majority of those recommendations, with the exception of those relating to anti-discrimination laws which it "partially supported". In its supporting statement Iran noted:

"Although this specific right is not stipulated in the international human rights instruments, which Iran has accepted, it should be noted that under Iran's laws, all individuals are equal before the law and are entitled to equal rights.

⁴⁷ 6Rang, "[It's a great honor to violate homosexuals' rights'...](#)" (pages 15 to 18), December 2017

⁴⁸ Forbes S, "[The reconstruction of homosexuality and its consequences in...](#)" (page 30), 2017

⁴⁹ EUAA/EASO, "[Iran, Islamic Republic of: LGBT persons in Iran](#)" (page 4), 3 November 2021

Regarding the transgender people, a special support-oriented approach has been adopted by the government which tries to offer counseling, financial and insurance services to them through relevant laws, competent authorities and social institutes. According to the law, transgender people can apply for gender identity redetermination surgery through competent courts”.⁵⁰

- 4.2.5 On 5 January 2022, ReportOUT, a UK-based organisation for LGBTI rights, published a blog by an anonymous Iranian activist, which stated that a new trend – instigated by the state-supported organisation called Halalzadeha, whose goal was to promote family values – aimed to provoke hatred of LGBTI persons. The blog noted that:

‘A new phenomenon that has recently arisen in order to extend the hate is putting the rainbow flag on the ground of the streets during special events like the anniversary of the Revolution. The aim is to firstly raise awareness that this is the flag of “Sodomians” and putting gay men and women in potential dangers of getting reported if they are in anyway using this sign for social purposes (In Iran a large number of gay people use the flag sign in order to find each other and socialize). Secondly, for people that participate in these events to trample on the flag is seen as a sign of disrespect. An organisation named “Halalzadeha” is behind this new movement.’⁵¹

- 4.2.6 The same source continued:

‘The first time that this organisation took action on this was on February 12th 2020, the Revolution anniversary day, and was reported by 6Rang, a non-governmental organization of lesbians and transgenders of Iran (6Rang, 2020), stating “The rainbow flag has also been added to the list of the state’s enemies.” The Islamic Republic of Iran has a history of burning, and trampling, on the flags of opposing countries such as USA’s flag and Israel’s flag to provoke hate and aggression in people towards these countries. Now the rainbow flag is being targeted.

‘The most recent activity took place on October 16th 2021. Halalzadeha had made an official announcement of this event taking place both on their official website and social media pages including twitter and Telegram (Halalzadeha, 2021). It was specifically organized on the death anniversary of prophet Lut (The story of Lut is mentioned in Quran as the prophet who fought against the act of sodomy). This time, the families including children have participated in this event and were holding signs such as “Two people of the same sex do not make a couple”, “We are the defenders of prophet Lut” and “homosexuality, the modern barbarism”, as well as trampling the flag (Halalzadeha, 2021).’⁵²

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4.3 Discriminatory policy

- 4.3.1 As noted by Amnesty International in May 2021:

‘... if LGBTI individuals in Iran wish to adopt, without being criminalized, a gender presentation not matching the stereotypical expectations associated

⁵⁰ House of Commons Library, ‘[LGBT+ rights and issues in the Middle...](#)’ (page 9), 9 February 2022

⁵¹ RightOUT, ‘[A New Crackdown? What is Currently Happening in Iran...](#)’, 5 January 2022

⁵² RightOUT, ‘[A New Crackdown? What is Currently Happening in Iran...](#)’, 5 January 2022

with their biological sex, their only option is to apply for a legal sex change. This would involve undergoing gender reassignment surgery, as well as sterilization, and obtaining identity documents matching their preferred gender identity, which then legally changes their sex. Non-binary and other gender non-conforming individuals who cannot or do not wish to undergo gender reassignment surgery, change their legal sex or choose between the binary gender categories of man and woman are at a constant risk of criminalization. They also experience discrimination in access to education, employment, health care and public services because the Islamic Republic system in Iran heavily enforces gender segregation across a wide range of institutions and public spaces, and imposes strict dress codes for men and women.⁵³

4.3.2 The USSD human rights report for 2021 noted:

'While LGBTQI+ status and conduct are criminalized, many clerics believed that LGBTQI+ persons were trapped in a body of the wrong sex, and NGOs reported that authorities pressured LGBTQI+ persons to undergo gender reassignment surgery. Reports indicated these procedures disregarded psychological and physical health and that many persons recommended for surgery did not identify as transgender but were forced to comply to avoid punishment for their LGBTQI+ identity.'⁵⁴

See also [Corrective/conversion therapy](#) and [LGBTI groups and activity – Presence](#).

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4.4 Threats, harassment and violence

4.4.1 The September 2020 6Rang report cited the criminal sanctions imposed by the IPC and noted:

'In order to enforce these laws, the national police and paramilitary militia, known as Basij, regularly arrest, detain, and violently abuse LGBTI individuals. These actions are not based on sexual behavior, but on a mere perception of sexual orientation based on appearance and demeanor. It is noteworthy that this includes lesbian and transgender women who disregard the mandatory veiling and other restrictive dress codes imposed on women.'⁵⁵

4.4.2 The 6Rang report noted that 45 (19.6%) of the 230 participants in its study reported, '... violence committed by officials in the police and security forces as well as the judiciary i.e. judges and prosecutors. They consistently reported humiliating conduct or physical violence by the ordinary police, security forces, and patrol police (moral police) for reasons such as different gender expression, breaching binary dress-code norms, insufficient hijab (Islamic veil) or participating in house parties.'⁵⁶ Furthermore, '30 participants (17.3%) also gave accounts of the police or judges asking for sexual favors

⁵³ Amnesty International, '[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)' (page 4), 17 May 2021

⁵⁴ USSD, '[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)' (section 6), 12 April 2022

⁵⁵ 6Rang, '[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)' (page 12), September 2020

⁵⁶ 6Rang, '[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)' (page 10), September 2020

as a bribe or hush money. A considerable number of participants experience physical and/or sexual violence in the legal system.⁵⁷

4.4.3 The same report added, ‘Narratives and personal testimonies of participants show that the real number of those who have experienced violence in a legal setting is probably more than what has been reported. Several participants stated they are afraid of answering this question. Many participants, even those who have not experienced police persecution, reported being in constant fear of being arrested by the police.’⁵⁸ The report provided some personal accounts, provided by survey participants, of violence experienced in the legal system, which included arrest and detention, threats and intimidation of a sexual nature, humiliation and physical violence⁵⁹.

4.4.4 The 6Rang report also noted: ‘Legal prohibition on the free expression of sexual orientation and gender identity goes beyond the public spaces and controls behavior also in private spaces. These laws provide the police and state actors with the excuse to raid private gatherings and parties where LGBTI people are reported to be gathering. They arrest the people present in the absence of any proof of illegal activity and merely on the basis of appearance and behavior.’⁶⁰

See also [Meeting places](#).

4.4.5 According to Amnesty International, writing in 2021 following the murder of Alireza Fazeli Monfared, a gay man, ‘LGBTI people in Iran face pervasive discrimination, live in the constant fear of harassment, arrest and criminal prosecution, and remain vulnerable to violence and persecution based on their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.’⁶¹

4.4.6 In January 2021 the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran similarly stated that, ‘... individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender experience human rights violations and widespread discrimination...

‘The criminalization of same-sex consensual acts legitimizes violence by State actors and private individuals, including the use of torture, beatings and rape by law enforcement and vigilantes... Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons face regular harassment and, if arrested, are denied the right to a fair trial... These acts remain largely underreported due to the victims’ fear of persecution.’⁶²

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4.5 Arrests and detention

4.5.1 In a letter to the Dutch government, dated February 2020, regarding its asylum policy for Iranian LGBTI persons, 6Rang stated that, ‘Iranian officials continue to systematically persecute and harass these groups by... penalising them on the basis of specific provisions of the penal code or by

⁵⁷ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 10), September 2020

⁵⁸ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 10), September 2020

⁵⁹ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 11), September 2020

⁶⁰ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 12), September 2020

⁶¹ Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of gay man highlights dangers...](#)’, 17 May 2021

⁶² UNHRC, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic...](#)’ (paragraph 27, 28), 11 January 2021

bringing broad and vaguely defined national security charges and inciting hatred against them.... Moreover, such cases are heard and decided with complete disregard of internationally recognised due process and fair trial standards...⁶³

- 4.5.2 The USSD noted in its 2021 human rights report that ‘Security forces harassed, arrested, and detained individuals they suspected of being LGBTQI+. In some cases security forces raided houses and monitored internet sites for information on LGBTQI+ persons.’⁶⁴
- 4.5.3 According to a September 2020 report by 6Rang, based on a study of 230 persons identifying as LGBTI, 29 (12.6%) reported they were arrested by the police due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression⁶⁵.
- 4.5.4 A UK parliamentary research briefing published in February 2022 noted that, ‘Iranian security forces frequently harass, arrest, and detain individuals they suspect of being LGBT+. House raids and surveillance on individuals and internet sites are common in efforts to identify LGBT individuals. Those that are arrested are commonly subjected to torture and ill treatment in order to extract confessions and are denied the right to a fair trial.’⁶⁶

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4.6 Prosecutions, convictions and the death penalty

- 4.6.1 In December 2019, civil and LGBTI rights activist, Rezvaneh Mohammadi, was sentenced to 5 years in prison by Tehran’s Revolutionary Court. Mohammadi, who was arrested in 2018⁶⁷, was accused of: ‘1- Assembly and collusion against national security to decriminalize homosexuality (Normalizing homosexuality), 2- Eliminating the ugliness and infamy of homosexuality, 3- Making homosexuality acceptable, especially in collaboration with religious and conscience organizations, 4- Making the Islamic Republic of Iran responsible for extensive human rights abuses (Lack of recognition of homosexuality).’⁶⁸ The USSD human rights report for 2021 noted that Mohammadi was reportedly freed on bail⁶⁹. A Voice of America (VOA) article dated April 2021 indicated that Mohammadi was based in Turkey⁷⁰.
- 4.6.2 The USSD stated in its 2020 human rights report that ‘While few details were available for specific cases, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) activists expressed concern that the government executed LGBTI individuals under the pretext of more severe, and possibly specious, criminal charges such as rape.’ The USSD’s 2021 human rights report repeated this assessment⁷¹.

⁶³ 6Rang, ‘[6Rang letter to Dutch government regarding its asylum policy for Iranian...](#)’, February 2020

⁶⁴ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

⁶⁵ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 10), September 2020

⁶⁶ House of Commons Library, ‘[LGBT+ rights and issues in the Middle...](#)’ (page 7), 9 February 2022

⁶⁷ Radio Farda, ‘[Two Iran Activists Convicted To Five-Year Prison Terms Each](#)’, 13 December 2019

⁶⁸ Iran Prison Atlas, ‘[Rezvaneh Mohammadi – Timeline](#)’, no date

⁶⁹ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

⁷⁰ VOA, ‘[Iranians at Home, in Diaspora See Growing Need for Referendum but...](#)’, 3 April 2022

⁷¹ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

4.6.3 Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) April 2020 report on Iran, informed by DFAT's on-the-ground knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in Iran, as well as relevant and credible open source reports, including those produced by: the United Nations and its agencies, the US Department of State, the UK Home Office, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, leading human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House, and reputable news sources, noted that:

'Iran does not publish official statistics or details relating to executions. This makes it difficult to estimate how many individuals have been executed for same-sex acts, and whether those acts were consensual. Numerous media reports relate to the execution of men who have engaged in same-sex acts. DFAT is not aware of any such executions involving women. However, in many cases, the media has reported that these acts involved non-consensual sexual encounters, including against minors. The issue is further complicated as the Penal Code does not recognise rape as a separate crime: it treats heterosexual and homosexual rape as forms of adultery and sodomy, respectively. As a result, if a consensual homosexual relationship is discovered by law enforcement, the passive partner has a significant incentive to claim that he has been raped as this may be the only way to enable him to escape a death sentence. Moreover, in an actual male-on-male rape case, the victim faces substantial risk in filing a complaint, as if the alleged rapist succeeds in arguing that the act was consensual, the victim could be executed for being the passive partner to an act of sodomy...

'It is difficult to find evidence of recent cases involving the execution of adults who have indisputably engaged in consensual same-sex relations. International organisations report that authorities are aware of the negative international reactions large-scale persecution and severe punishment of homosexual individuals creates. Where courts find offenders guilty in same-sex relations cases, reporters observe that, in most cases, they generally refrain from imposing the death penalty and instead order floggings.'⁷²

4.6.4 The USSD 2020 report noted, 'In June 2019 the foreign minister appeared to defend executions of LGBTI persons for their status or conduct. After being asked by a journalist in Germany why the country executes "homosexuals," the foreign minister stated, "Our society has moral principles. And we live according to these principles. These are moral principles concerning the behavior of people in general. And that means that the law is respected and the law is obeyed."⁷³

See also [Government position and rhetoric](#).

4.6.5 The Jerusalem Post stated 'According to a 2008 British WikiLeaks dispatch, Iran's mullah regime executed "between 4,000 and 6,000 gays and lesbians" since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.'⁷⁴ LGBTI news site, Out News Global, cited the same figure, as claimed by human rights activists in Iran⁷⁵.

⁷² DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraphs 3.148 and 3.149), 14 April 2020

⁷³ USSD, '[2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)' (Section 6), 30 March 2021

⁷⁴ Jerusalem Post, '[Iran publicly hangs man on homosexuality charges](#)', 12 April 2020

⁷⁵ Out News Global, '[Iran: shocking persecution of LGBTQ+ people continues](#)', 18 September 2020

- 4.6.6 A report on state-sanctioned killings of sexual minorities, based on a review of academic literature, reports by NGOs, governments, and international organisations, news articles published between 2015 and 2020, and interviews with individuals and organisations working in the field, which included lawyers, academics and advocates for LGBTI rights⁷⁶, published in February 2021 by Eleos Justice and Capital Punishment Justice Project and authored by Mai Sato, director of Eleos Justice at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, and research fellow, Christopher Alexander, stated:
- ‘Judges have the power to sentence defendants accused of same-sex sexual acts to death with little evidence. The evidentiary requirements for proving *livat* (penetrative sex between men) are varied, and may include the confession of the offender, the testimony of four male witnesses who claim to have witnessed the sexual act, or the “knowledge of the judge”... The latter is particularly concerning, insofar as it “enables judges to rely on vague circumstantial evidence to determine whether a crime has occurred even in the absence of other evidence or in the presence of exculpatory evidence”.’⁷⁷
- See also [State protection](#).
- 4.6.7 The Sato and Alexander report also identified, from the sources consulted, 251 executions for same-sex sexual conduct (172 of which were recorded as consensual sex) between 1979 and 2020⁷⁸. The report noted that the comparatively high levels of executions recorded for same-sex sexual acts in the years immediately following the revolution (144 in total between 1979 and 1982⁷⁹) ‘... may not represent the actual number of executions, as the Iranian authorities used homosexual and other capital offences as a cover to execute opponents.’⁸⁰
- 4.6.8 The same source noted, ‘Since 2004 [up to end of 2020], 79⁸¹ executions for same-sex sexual offences have been identified... In all 79 cases, the “offender” was male; in fact, we have been unable to identify a single instance of a woman being judicially executed (even prior to 2004), despite Iran being one of the few countries in which same-sex intimacy between women carries the death penalty [on the fourth conviction⁸²].’⁸³ Executions for same-sex sexual activity have decreased in recent years – 5 were recorded by Sato and Alexander between 2015 and 2020⁸⁴.
- 4.6.9 IHRNGO reported on 31 January 2022 on the execution of Farid Mohammadi and Mehrdad Karimpour, 2 men who were sentenced to death. IHRNGO stated that, according to an informed source, the men were ‘... sentenced to death on charges of the sodomy (by force) of a 16 year old boy over six years ago. But they repeatedly said in court and in their defences

⁷⁶ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (pages 21 and 81), February 2021

⁷⁷ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 40), February 2021

⁷⁸ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 45, Figure 2), February 2021

⁷⁹ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 45, Figure 2), February 2021

⁸⁰ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 42), February 2021

⁸¹ Figure 2 of the report records a total of 83 executions between 2004 and 2020

⁸² IHRDC, ‘[English Translation of Books I & II...](#)’ (Article 136), 4 April 2014

⁸³ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 42), February 2021

⁸⁴ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 45, Figure 2), February 2021

that there was no force and was done with the consent of the complainant. But the boy said they had raped him.⁸⁵

4.6.10 The USSD human rights report for 2021 noted that ‘Those accused of “sodomy” often faced summary trials, and evidentiary standards were not always met. The Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network (6Rang) noted that individuals arrested under such conditions were traditionally subjected to forced anal or sodomy examinations – which the United Nations and World Health Organization stated may constitute torture – and other degrading treatment and sexual insults.’⁸⁶

4.6.11 When reporting on the execution of 2 men in July 2021, after they were arrested 3 years earlier for the alleged rape of a man, IHRNGO stated ‘In cases involving rape, the likelihood of defendants being tortured to force a confession is very high.’⁸⁷

4.6.12 The Sato and Alexander report referred to convictions for alleged same-sex rape and noted:

‘... it is widely believed that such convictions often stem from consensual acts. By imposing the death penalty only on the passive/receptive sexual partner in consensual same-sex intercourse, the 2013 Penal Code creates a legal imbalance between sexual partners. Once arrested, the Penal Code has a perverse effect of encouraging false accusations of rape: it incentivises persons alleged to have engaged in consensual acts to “accuse their partner of rape to save their [own] lives”... In addition to avoiding the death penalty, a false rape accusation may also be motivated by a desire to avoid the stigma associated with being gay... The Penal Code could also discourage genuine accusations of rape: victims face the risk of being disbelieved about the coercive nature of the sexual act, which could result in an execution. This is because the disclosure of same-sex sexual interactions to the authorities – even where such acts were non-consensual – constitutes a “confession” of having engaged in such acts, and could be used as evidence to prosecute the victim.’⁸⁸

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4.7 Corrective/conversion therapy

4.7.1 In May 2018, a study by 6Rang found an increase in the number of private and semi-governmental psychological and psychiatric institutions and clinics treating LGBTI persons. 6Rang also found that the use of many methods – such as electric shock therapy, psychoactive medication, hypnosis, masturbatory reconditioning – had increased⁸⁹.

4.7.2 The 6Rang report noted:

‘6Rang’s field study on the polyclinics, institutions and private clinics, that have listed counselling to LGBTI people as one of the areas of their expertise, show that these centres consider homosexuality to be a disease

⁸⁵ IHRNGO, ‘[Farid Mohammadi and Mehrdad Karimpour Executed on Charges...](#)’, 31 January 2022

⁸⁶ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

⁸⁷ IHRNGO, ‘[Farhad Najafi and Ali Ahmadi Executed on Rape Charges in Maragheh](#)’, 8 July 2021

⁸⁸ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 42), February 2021

⁸⁹ 6Rang, ‘[Reparative Therapies on Gays and Lesbians through Cruel, Inhumane...](#)’, 17 May 2018

or sexual deviation, and have made a business by alleging in their advertisements that they can cure this disease. Some of them believe that homosexuality is a form of addiction and treat homosexual clients with the same methods used to cure drug addicted patients of addiction. This study includes a total number of 11 medical centres, counselling clinics and private clinics, five of which are in Tehran, the rest in cities across Iran.

‘An institution called “The Anonymous Sex Addicts Association of Iran” with branches in 18 Iranian provinces, has listed curing homosexuality among its treatment programs. The institution’s website claims that participation in these sessions can result in transforming same-sex sexual feelings into brotherly feelings towards the person of the same-sex.’⁹⁰

4.7.3 In January 2021, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran expressed concern at reports that ‘... lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children were subjected to electric shocks and the administration of hormones and strong psychoactive medications.’⁹¹

4.7.4 In May 2021, Amnesty International expressed concern at’:

‘... the practices of “conversion therapy” aimed at eliminating homosexuality and gender non-conformity. These have involved, among other abusive practices, the administration of electric shocks, hormones and strong psychoactive medications, including against children experiencing gender non-conformity and same-sex attraction. Official bans on comprehensive, accurate and age-appropriate information regarding human sexuality, coupled with the promotion of hate speech from public officials, has resulted in a lack of knowledge about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity, including among health-care professionals, and the prevalence of “conversion therapies” in medical and counselling settings in Iran...’⁹²

4.7.5 An article by Amir Kabir (AK – Tehran) and Irwin Nazareth (University College London), published in The Lancet on 1 April 2022, noted:

‘Under the control of religious institutions, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology, and the Psychology and Counseling Organization of Iran have condemned homosexuality. The attitude of Iranian health professionals poses a threat to the health of sexual minorities. Based on AK’s clinical experiences, the coordinated activities of therapists, physicians, religious institutions, and parents have commonly promoted conversion therapy to change the sexual orientation of gay men. This situation is more common in adolescents, who cannot make legal decisions independently.

‘... in Iran, therapists and religious institutions continue to believe that attraction towards the same sex is harmful and should be changed. The prevalence of the practice of conversion therapy in Iran is unknown. AK’s clinical observations suggest that this type of therapy has reinforced the belief that sexual orientation is changeable; therefore, gay men refusing treatment pose a threat to their own lives by resisting cure. Additionally, AK

⁹⁰ 6Rang, ‘[Reparative Therapies on Gays and Lesbians through Cruel, Inhumane...](#)’, 17 May 2018

⁹¹ UNHRC, ‘[Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic...](#)’ (paragraph 29), 11 January 2021

⁹² Amnesty International, ‘[Iran: Murder of 20-year-old gay man highlights...](#)’ (page 5), 17 May 2021

has observed that this belief is one of the main reasons why family members kill their own gay relatives.⁹³

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4.8 State protection

4.8.1 The September 2020 6Rang report noted that 68% of the 230 survey participants said that ‘... they never or rarely took legal action when they faced violence, which possibly reflects their distrust in, and the unreliability of, the judiciary system.’⁹⁴ Victims of hate crimes, including rape, were reluctant to go to the police for fear of being prosecuted themselves^{95 96}.

4.8.2 The February 2021 report by Sato and Alexander noted:

‘As same-sex intimacy is criminalised in Iran, the victims of same-sex rape, as well as persons blackmailed on the basis of their sexual orientation, have little means of recourse – whether to the police, the Pasdaran (the “Revolutionary Guards”, a branch of the Iranian Armed Forces), or the Basij, a paramilitary volunteer militia acting as a “morality police”, who have free rein to commit acts of homophobic violence in a veritable “Guerrilla War” against sexual minorities (Iranian Railroad for Queer Refugees, 2018). In 2017, the police on several occasions arrested individuals perceived to belong to sexual minorities and detained them for almost seven months without charge... Prolonged detention and the threat of execution were used to extract names of other queer persons in exchange for freedom: “you’re faggots, you’re homosexuals, you should be killed, your execution sentences were already issued, you’re being taken to the death row soon”.’⁹⁷

4.8.3 The same source also noted, ‘When prosecuted for same-sex sexual conduct, defendants often struggle to find a lawyer.’⁹⁸ The report cited a human rights lawyer who used to practice in Iran:

‘One of our biggest challenges in Iran is to find a legal representative... No one would like to do it. We had just a couple of lawyers who take LGBT case several years ago, and they had to escape Iran and claim asylum... And the reason is that homosexuality is punishable by death in Iran according to Islamic punishment code. If anyone wants to challenge that rule, [they are deemed to be] against this rule, therefore you are against Islamic rule, therefore you are against Islam, and therefore you are against God. That person [the lawyer] can be executed or killed for being immoral or infidel... A lot of lawyers are reluctant to take those cases because they don’t want to lose their license, they don’t want to be accused that they’re supporting LGBT causes.’⁹⁹

⁹³ Kabir A, Nazareth I, ‘[Conversion therapy: a violation of human rights in Iranian gay...](#)’, 1 April 2022

⁹⁴ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 10), September 2020

⁹⁵ Ahmady K, ‘[Iranian laws](#)’, no date

⁹⁶ IranWire, ‘[Iranian Gay Man: “I Couldn’t Tell Police About My Rape”](#)’, 24 September 2021

⁹⁷ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 39), February 2021

⁹⁸ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 39), February 2021

⁹⁹ Sato M and Alexander C, ‘[State-Sanctioned Killing of Sexual...](#)’ (page 40), February 2021

- 4.8.4 According to the USSD’s 2021 human rights report, ‘Hate-crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms do not exist to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes.’¹⁰⁰

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Section 5 updated: 16 May 2022

5. Treatment in, and access to, services

5.1 Education

- 5.1.1 The September 2020 6Rang report noted that 107, just under half of its 230 survey participants, had experienced violence in their educational environments and that 18% of the participants reported they had been constantly insulted and humiliated by the school administration¹⁰¹. The report cited personal testimonies of violence experienced in the education system, which included expulsion and suspension, verbal abuse and sexual bribery to pass grades¹⁰². The same report made a comparison to earlier findings in a 2014 report on human rights violations against LGBTI persons, by Justice for Iran (JFI) and 6Rang¹⁰³, and stated:

‘These statistics and personal testimonies add nuance to our previous general findings. Our prior interviews gave evidence that in educational institutions, such as schools, the criminalization of sexual orientation and gender identity together with the segregation of schools by gender has a deeply negative impact on access to education. LGBTI people frequently suffer harassment and [being] beaten up by school administrators as well as raped and experienced violence perpetrated by other pupils. For some LGBTI people, harassment and abuse happen so often and so severely that they are left with no choice but abandon their education and drop out of school.

‘The harassment and abuse in education is not limited to trans persons where their identity is apparent. Students who are perceived to be LGBTI or have non-conforming gender expression also suffer extensive violence and harassment including bullying and rape by classmates. School authorities rarely take any action to address these issues.’¹⁰⁴

- 5.1.2 An undated article by 6Rang, regarding military exemption on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity, noted that ‘... gay and trans people face many difficulties in finding jobs and seeking education’, as being gay or trans is classed as having a mental disorder¹⁰⁵.

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5.2 Healthcare

- 5.2.1 The September 2020 6Rang report recorded that 18.7% of survey participants had experienced violence committed by healthcare professionals, and 66% reported they never or rarely sought help from

¹⁰⁰ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

¹⁰¹ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds; A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 13), September 2020

¹⁰² 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds; A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 13), September 2020

¹⁰³ JFI and 6Rang, ‘[Diagnosing Identities, Wounding-Bodies](#)’, 24 June 2014

¹⁰⁴ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds; A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 14), September 2020

¹⁰⁵ 6Rang, ‘[Confessing to having same-sex relations is the new norm for military service...](#)’, no date

mental health professionals in case of being subjected to violence¹⁰⁶. The same source added:

‘The LGBTI community in Iran experience discrimination in healthcare system because of staff unawareness and insensitivity, homophobia and transphobia, heteronormative discourse, stigmatization, negative comments, harassment, refusal of treatment, and verbal or sexual assault. Reparative or conversion therapy is a common practice among mental health professionals in Iran, which has also been supported systematically by the Islamic Republic’s education system. In such conditions, widespread mistreatment threatens the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people. Transsexual people are more vulnerable as they need routine medical care such as hormone therapy.’¹⁰⁷

- 5.2.2 6Rang noted that findings in its current study matched those of its 2014 report, confirming the continued existence of human rights abuses against LGBTI persons in the health sector¹⁰⁸.

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5.3 Gender reassignment surgery

- 5.3.1 Gender reassignment surgery (GRS) is legal in Iran¹⁰⁹ and treatment is subsidised by the government¹¹⁰, although according to a 2020 article in Germany’s international broadcaster, Deutsche Welle (DW), ‘... the path to getting legal approval to transition is fraught with humiliating procedures, including virginity tests, court trials, extensive questioning and mandatory counseling’, and that ‘sex change surgeries are often conducted by unqualified doctors’ resulting in ‘botched surgeries.’¹¹¹
- 5.3.2 The number of trans persons in Iran was estimated to be 50,000¹¹², and there were around 4,000 sex reassignment surgeries every year¹¹³. According to Dr Abbas Masjedi Arani, the director of the Iranian Legal Medicine Organization, ‘We reviewed 580 gender dysphoria (GD) cases last year [2019], of which 400 were women who had filed for sex reassignment surgery. We approved 103 of those applications. We also approved 56 applications of the remaining 180 filed by men. Gender reassignment surgery (GRS) has increased among women.’
- 5.3.3 However, while there appeared to be a rise in GRS, an estimated 45% of people who had the surgery in Iran were gay, not trans, according to a 2014 BBC News article¹¹⁴. A blog in the London School of Economics (LSE), dated 12 April 2021, which cited a range of sources, indicated that some gay individuals, who identified as cisgender, felt compelled to undergo surgery:

¹⁰⁶ 6Rang, [‘Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...’](#) (page 14), September 2020

¹⁰⁷ 6Rang, [‘Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...’](#) (page 14), September 2020

¹⁰⁸ 6Rang, [‘Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...’](#) (page 15), September 2020

¹⁰⁹ DW, [‘How Iran’s anti-LGBT policies put transgender people at risk’](#), 28 April 2020

¹¹⁰ IranWire, [‘Government Loans for Gender Reassignment Surgery Betray Lack...’](#), 4 March 2021

¹¹¹ DW, [‘How Iran’s anti-LGBT policies put transgender people at risk’](#), 28 April 2020

¹¹² The New Arab, [‘Transgender people in Iran face discrimination despite fatwa’](#), 21 May 2018

¹¹³ Kayhan Life, [‘More and More Iranian Women Undergo Sex Reassignment...’](#), 27 June 2020

¹¹⁴ BBC News, [‘The gay people pushed to change their gender’](#), 5 November 2014

'Gay Iranians also face the pressure to change their sex, even if they are cis-gendered, with the justification that their same-sex desires is not because they are gay, but because they are born in a non-conforming stature (James, 2019). Shadi Amin, an Iranian activist who runs the Lesbian and Transgender Network (6Rang), accounts that "[the regime] would rather carry out mass surgeries than executions because they know that the world is watching them" (Hodge, 2020).'¹¹⁵

5.3.4 Reporting on GRS, Deutsche Welle (DW) noted in April 2020 that, 'For many, going through the transition is the only way that they can legally live with their partner without fearing for their lives.'¹¹⁶

5.3.5 Reporting on GRS, IranWire, a collaborative news website run by professional Iranian journalists in the diaspora and citizen journalists inside Iran¹¹⁷, stated in March 2021 that:

'Obtaining a permit [for surgery] is itself a very long and unpredictable process that has become more so in recent years, partly due to the caprices of judges, physicians, and medical psychiatrists. Even if a trans person is able to overcome barriers such as family opposition, community stigma and the legal labyrinth in order to do this, the next challenge is to find a specialist physician and meet the high cost of surgery.

'In addition to the generally low quality of these surgeries in Iran, the high costs, which vary from city to city and doctor to doctor, also fluctuate greatly depending on whether they are performed in a private or public hospital. Many trans people are not financially supported by their families, and it is often impossible for them to find work. They are therefore often unable to pay for counseling sessions, let alone the court fees, hormone therapy or surgery they need.'¹¹⁸

5.3.6 The DFAT April 2020 report noted that:

'Despite the financial assistance provided by the government, the cost of GRS and hormone therapy is still beyond the means of many people. Those who undergo GRS report mixed rates of satisfaction, and cite ingrained social stigma against gay people (often including from the medical professionals performing the surgery), lack of follow up medical treatment, and insufficient funds to subsidise the procedure. Those who do not undergo GRS are often abandoned by their families, and many resort to prostitution to survive. In addition to leaving them further vulnerable to abuse and harassment, transgender women who have not undergone GRS and engage in sex work are at risk of arrest and prosecution as homosexuals as they are deemed to be men.'¹¹⁹

See also [Treatment by family members](#) and [Arrests and detention](#).

5.3.7 The same source noted:

¹¹⁵ LSE, '[How Iran Persecutes Some LGBTQ+ Members While Subsidizing Others](#)', 12 April 2021

¹¹⁶ DW, '[How Iran's anti-LGBT policies put transgender people at risk](#)', 28 April 2020

¹¹⁷ IranWire, '[About](#)', no date

¹¹⁸ IranWire, '[Government Loans for Gender Reassignment Surgery Betray Lack...](#)', 4 March 2021

¹¹⁹ DFAT, '[Country Information Report Iran](#)' (paragraph 3.157), 14 April 2020

‘After GRS has been completed and their legal documents (including identity card, birth certificate and passport) adjusted, one is legally allowed to dress according to the opposite sex and to move into the spaces reserved for this sex (but not before). Authorities do not generally permit cross-dressing because men or women dressing as the opposite sex is considered disruptive to the social order. However, once an individual is diagnosed as suffering from gender dysphoria and agrees to undergo GRS, local authorities may issue them a permit to allow them to appear in public dressed as the opposite sex prior to the actual surgery. Post-surgery, transgender persons are advised to maintain discretion about their past due to stigma associated with being transgender.’¹²⁰

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Section 6 updated: 16 May 2022

6. Societal treatment and attitudes

6.1 Societal views in general

- 6.1.1 Social anthropology researcher Kameel Ahmady, writing in 2019 and referencing his study on LGB persons in Iran, published in 2018, noted in regard to LGB persons in predominantly Muslim societies that:

‘Muslim societies are steeped in a patriarchal culture that values family, stability, passing on the bloodline and rejection of homosexuality. Consequently in these highly patriarchal societies, the high value on conformity is sacrosanct and expressions of individuality are unacceptable.

‘Simply put, there is a strong emphasis on upholding social “norms” and keeping up appearances – in public if not necessarily in private. The patriarchal system plays a major part with strongly defined roles for men and women.

‘Gay men, especially those who exhibit what is perceived as feminine attributes are regarded as those who are challenging the social order. Ironically, “masculine” men who have sex with other men are a slightly different matter.’¹²¹

- 6.1.2 The same source added:

‘Iran is a traditional society that operates on a basic premise that homosexuality is an abnormality... An extract from the work of Mehrangiz Kar concludes that “Members of the LGBT community in Iran are viewed as the ones who depart significantly from mainstream religious values or social expectations. LGBT rights activists thus face huge obstacles in their efforts towards accommodating their identity in the current context of Iranian society”.’¹²²

- 6.1.3 Furthermore, Ahmady stated, ‘Due to lack of legal protections, LGB individuals face widespread social dishonour that are heavily influenced by

¹²⁰ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.156), 14 April 2020

¹²¹ Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

¹²² Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

conservative and religious values. In essence, their identity is negated in daily life.¹²³

- 6.1.4 Referring to persons identifying as bisexual, Ahmady noted the lack of research in this area, whilst adding there was an ‘... overriding rationale that bisexuality in Iran is a sin,’ and ‘Even homosexuals consider bisexuality is not only an insult to heterosexuality, but is not even categorized in the Lesbian-Gay binary. In many respects, bisexuals are viewed as the “unacceptable” within an already unacceptable group.’¹²⁴
- 6.1.5 After finding that bisexual people faced discrimination from within the LGBTI community, rights activist Soudeh Rad, a bisexual Iranian living in Paris, together with Zeynab Peyqambarzadeh, an Iranian based in Britain, ‘... set up the website Dojensgara – meaning bisexual in Farsi, or Persian... to educate people in their mother tongue about sex, gender and sexual orientation’, reported Reuters in July 2019. According to Rad, “There was huge bi-erasure and biphobia amongst LGBT+ activists in the Iranian diaspora... They would absolutely promote bisexuality as a thing with all the stigmas that everyone can imagine ... like they’re greedy ones, those who are here to abuse us homosexual community, or those who don’t know what they want.”¹²⁵
- 6.1.6 In regard to lesbians, Ahmady noted, ‘Women are already marginalized in Iranian society as the demands of their patriarchal society and draconian policies define their existence.... They are even more so marginalized if they are lesbian. Frequently familiar and none at all surprising is that there is a heightened level of discrimination towards women even within the category of sexual minorities.’¹²⁶
- 6.1.7 The World Values Survey (WVS), an international research program devoted to the scientific and academic study of social, political, economic, religious and cultural values of people in the world¹²⁷, surveyed 1,499 people in Iran in 2020, 82.5% of whom indicated that same-sex relationships were ‘never justifiable.’¹²⁸
- 6.1.8 DFAT noted in its April 2020 report on Iran, that ‘Local sources told DFAT that younger Iranians, particularly in more progressive parts of major cities, are increasingly more tolerant, but that, on balance, homosexuality is not openly discussed...’¹²⁹
- 6.1.9 DFAT further noted with regard to the situation of lesbians in Iran that: ‘...human rights observers report that their social and economic situation is significantly more restrictive than that of gay men. The restrictions already imposed on lesbians as women in Iranian society are compounded by the discrimination they face because of their sexual orientation. Financial and social survival for lesbians depends on their ability to repress or hide their

¹²³ Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

¹²⁴ Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

¹²⁵ Reuters, ‘[Greedy? Confused? Bisexual Iranians go online to fight prejudice](#)’, 3 July 2019

¹²⁶ Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

¹²⁷ WVS, ‘[Who we are](#)’, no date

¹²⁸ WVS, ‘[World Values Survey Wave 7 \(2017-2020\) Iran v3.0](#)’ (page 59, Q182), 2020

¹²⁹ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.152), 14 April 2020

sexual identity, particularly from family members. “Honour killings” of lesbians by male kin reportedly occur... as do beatings and other physical and psychological abuse. Most often, lesbians find themselves abandoned by their families, a situation that can compel them to engage in sex work in order to survive. This leaves them further vulnerable to abuse, harassment and possible arrest.’¹³⁰

See also [Threats, harassment and violence](#) and [Treatment by family members](#).

6.1.10 According to a February 2021 report by DW, the ‘level of social “ostracism” gays face in Iran is enormous’, and their ‘only recourse is often political asylum.’¹³¹

6.1.11 A 2021 report on LGBTI online censorship by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI), OutRight Action International and Citizen Lab, noted:

‘The absence of education about gender and sexuality in Iran results in a gap in people’s knowledge regarding sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression. According to one interviewee, the lack of credible sources for researching LGBTIQ issues and the circulation of misinformation have led some people to think that they are transgender when they are likely to be gay. Additionally, families often do not have sufficient information or resources to support their LGBTIQ loved ones, which can lead to bullying and violence, while healthcare professionals may also be misinformed or misleading on how to appropriately care for LGBTIQ people.’¹³²

6.1.12 Sources indicate that LGBTI people were negatively represented in the Iranian media. The 6Rang 2017 report noted that, ‘...; state-controlled media outlets are replete with homophobic articles and commentaries which incite hostility and discrimination towards homosexual people.’¹³³ OutRight Action International also noted that, ‘Portrayal in the media is overwhelmingly derogatory and negative.’¹³⁴

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6.2 Threats, harassment and violence

6.2.1 Freedom House noted in its 2022 Freedom in the World report, covering 2021 events, that, ‘Members of the LGBT+ community face harassment and discrimination, though the problem is underreported due to the criminalized and hidden nature of these groups in Iran.’¹³⁵

6.2.2 The DFAT 2020 report stated ‘... gay people face severe discrimination. This includes abuse and harassment from family members, work colleagues, religious figures, and school and community leaders. Ostracism from one’s family is common, particularly in the case of conservative families. DFAT

¹³⁰ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.154), 14 April 2020

¹³¹ DW, ‘[The difficulties of being gay in Iran](#)’, 26 February 2021

¹³² OONI and others, ‘[No Access: LGBTIQ Website Censorship in Six...](#)’ (page 84), 31 August 2021

¹³³ 6Rang, ‘[“It’s a great honor to violate homosexuals’ rights”...](#)’ (page 9), December 2017

¹³⁴ OutRight Action International, ‘[Islamic Republic of Iran](#)’, no date

¹³⁵ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2022](#)’ (F4), 28 February 2022

heard anecdotally that gay men and lesbians face considerable societal pressure to enter into a heterosexual marriage and produce children.¹³⁶

6.2.3 The September 2020 6Rang report noted:

‘Sexual minorities in Iran face constant threats, insults, harassments, blackmail and abuse in their daily life by non-state actors who feel emboldened to enact violence with impunity, due to discriminatory laws that criminalize same-sex conduct and transgender expression. For instance, one participant reported being surrendered to the police by her own family due to her non-binary gender expression. Also, a homosexual couple had to resign and leave their job because their relationship was “outed” or disclosed to their colleagues, which led to threats of them being handed over to the police by their employer.’¹³⁷

6.2.4 Referring to the JFI and 6Rang 2014 report¹³⁸, the September 2020 6Rang noted that, ‘Prior in-person interviews illustrate that the members of the public as well as family members inflict violence on LGBTI people.’¹³⁹ The same source went on to say:

‘The current legal landscape of Iran that criminalizes same-sex conduct and gender-variant expression paired with the incitement to hate speech and hatred by top-ranking Iranian officials, not only provides the opportunity for, but also actively promotes abuse and violence against LGBTI people. This kind of abuse also takes the form of blackmail and extortion. Participants have previously given accounts of verbal abuse on public transport because of their appearance, harassment for public displays of affection such as kissing in a parking lot, etc. Other testimonies show that taunts, insults and threats are a constant reality for LGBTI people. In fact, these incidents are so common that many of them try to isolate themselves and avoid public interaction in order to reduce their risk of being harassed and abused.’¹⁴⁰

6.2.5 According to the survey, over 52% of participants reported experiencing violence in public spaces and just over 49% experienced some form of violence from their peers, including friends and classmates¹⁴¹.

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6.3 Treatment by family members

6.3.1 The September 2020 6Rang report found that 143 (over 62%) of the 230 survey participants had experienced some form of violence against them by their immediate family members. A quarter of the participants reported the threat of forced marriage:

‘A great number of participants have also reported experiencing violence in their families because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Experiences of violence in the family involve beating, flogging, psychological abuse, forced isolation from friends and society, verbal abuse, and death

¹³⁶ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.152), 14 April 2020

¹³⁷ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 11), September 2020

¹³⁸ JFI and 6Rang, ‘[Diagnosing Identities, Wounding-Bodies](#)’, 24 June 2014

¹³⁹ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 16), September 2020

¹⁴⁰ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 16), September 2020

¹⁴¹ 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (pages 20, 21), September 2020

threats. In case of lesbians and female-to-male transgender people, family abuse also elevated to threats to or actual coercion to arranged marriage. There have been reports of lesbians and trans individuals who were victims of honor-based violence. Families may kill, physically harm, or force their members into arranged marriages with the intent to protect or defend the honor or reputation of the family and/or the community. Iranian LGBTI people often have no recourse to justice for the violence and abuse they suffer in their families. Participants have given accounts of being beaten by their families until they abandoned their homes or were told to become “normal”.¹⁴²

6.3.2 Citing a range of sources that reported on the murder of a gay man in May 2021, the EUAA response on LGBT persons in Iran stated:

‘On 4 May 2021, a young non-binary gay man was reportedly abducted and killed by “several male relatives in his hometown of Ahvaz, Khuzestan province”, according to a report by Amnesty International quoting friends of the victim. The same source stated that the victim had “faced years of homophobic and transphobic harassment and death threats by several male relatives because he did not conform to the binary socio-cultural gender stereotypes and ‘norms’ in Iran”, but was afraid to report the incidents to the police “out of a fear of facing violence and prosecution at the hands of the authorities”. As reported by various sources, the murder occurred after the young man had received an exemption card from the military service. The murder was described by 6Rang as an “honour killing.” According to researchers Mai Sato and Christopher Alexander, “honour killings are often carried out by family or community members for bringing shame or dishonour on a family”. Moreover, the same sources highlighted the “the existence of numerous reports of honour killings against sexual and gender minorities in Iran”, while quoting interviewees who stated that “such [honour] killings are particularly rife in rural areas”. The fact that such violent incidents “received very little media attention in Iran” showed, according to Sato and Alexander, the “normalisation of violence within families and towards sexual minorities” in Iran.¹⁴³

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Section 7 updated: 16 May 2022

7. LGBTI groups and activity

7.1 Presence

7.1.1 Kameel Ahmady’s research study on LGB persons in Iran, which took place in the cities of Tehran, Mashhad and Isfahan, found that, ‘LGB are in abundance in these three selected cities as they have come out, as much as one can openly come out in Iran, within certain like-minded circles and talk openly about their sexual orientation.’¹⁴⁴ According to the study, ‘... interviewees gave the idea of a specific number of LGBs who has [sic] come out and are experiencing a significant amount of problems in their daily lives.’ From this, the study indicated the number, shown in parentheses, of

¹⁴² 6Rang, ‘[Hidden wounds: A research report on violence against...](#)’ (page 16), September 2020

¹⁴³ EUAA/EASO, ‘[Iran, Islamic Republic of: LGBT persons in Iran](#)’ (page 7), 3 November 2021

¹⁴⁴ Ahmady K, ‘[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)’, 10 July 2019

'come out' LGB persons in the 3 cities: Tehran (4,274), Mashhad (2,466) and Isfahan (2,171)¹⁴⁵. These figures should be treated with caution due to the research method used – Grounded Theory – which is largely based on qualitative, rather than quantitative, data.

For the number of persons who are reported to have undergone gender reassignment surgery, see [Gender reassignment surgery](#).

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7.2 Online community/activity

7.2.1 A 2018 report on the use of social and dating apps by LGBTI persons in the Middle East and North Africa, by Article 19, a UK-based organisation which promotes the right for freedom of expression, noted in regard to Iran, that:

'Research findings and local experts' testimonials indicate that there are unofficial and random monitoring of apps used by LGBTQ persons. The use of the data gathered has ranged from threats of arrest to use of the information incriminating them under Iran's anti-LGBTQ laws when interrogating users for political or other activities seen as punishable by the state. Chat groups on Telegram have also been monitored with LGBTQ groups having their admins arrested.'¹⁴⁶

7.2.2 In October 2020, IranWire reported on the arrest and detention of 3 trans persons after they published on Instagram '... explicit posts about their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as humorous content and posts critical of the Iranian regime.'¹⁴⁷

See also [Arrests and detention](#).

7.2.3 The 2021 OONI and others report found that 75 unique LGBTI web pages had been blocked in Iran. According to the report, Iran extensively censors LGBTI content, including information on human rights, culture, and news websites¹⁴⁸. The same source noted:

'In addition to censorship, LGBTIQ individuals in Iran have been targeted with online surveillance and harassment. The Computer Crimes Law of 2009 significantly expanded state surveillance and censorship powers, while the Islamic Penal Code of 2013 has resulted in attacks against the few remaining online spaces for free expression, such as LGBTIQ social media groups and organized community chat rooms. Our interviewees indicated that there are significant risks of surveillance and entrapment (e.g., using online dating apps) by the authorities. As a result, LGBTIQ individuals must remain vigilant and continuously update their digital security knowledge.'¹⁴⁹

7.2.4 The same source also noted:

'Widespread censorship has harmed the ability of LGBTIQ people to organize and advocate for human rights, as well as access critical information about health and well-being. The push towards establishing a

¹⁴⁵ Ahmady K, '[LGB in Iran-The Homophobic Law and Social System](#)', 10 July 2019

¹⁴⁶ Article 19, '[Apps, arrest, and abuse in Egypt, Lebanon and Iran](#)' (page 10), 22 February 2018

¹⁴⁷ IranWire, '[Three Transgender Iranians Arrested Because of Instagram Posts](#)', 20 October 2020

¹⁴⁸ OONI and others, '[No Access: LGBTIQ Website Censorship in Six...](#)' (page 100), 31 August 2021

¹⁴⁹ OONI and others, '[No Access: LGBTIQ Website Censorship in Six...](#)' (page 100), 31 August 2021

national Internet (the National Information Network) and adopting national messaging apps (e.g., Soroush and Bale) are projected to further restrict online freedom.¹⁵⁰

- 7.2.5 Referring to Iran’s Cyberspace Users Rights Protection and Regulation of Key Online Services Bill, under review by the Iranian parliament, and its potential effect on the LGBTI community, the Atlantic Council, an American think tank, noted in an article dated 12 April 2022, that:

‘Deprived of public spaces by the state and rampant queerphobia in society, Iran’s LGBTQI persons have found solace in fragile pockets of expression online. For as long as the Internet has existed in the country, state surveillance has been intensifying and crackdowns have been reoccurring on dissenting voices. Queer expression and identities are targeted as “immoral” or “obscene” criminal acts within Iran’s Islamic Penal Code and, in some cases, are punishable by the death penalty. Despite this, the queer community has been using social media, dating apps – like Grindr, Hornet, Bumble, and Tinder – along with messaging apps like WhatsApp and Telegram in creative ways to forge a semblance of community online.

‘The Internet has provided the Iranian LGBTQI community with a safer space to seek human connections vital for support and survival. The community has also utilized social media to educate itself and wider society about queer issues. Most importantly, online spaces have become vital for processing and healing trauma rooted in misogyny and queerphobia.

‘All these hard-earned but fragile gains can be eroded, or at least severely impaired, if Iran’s parliament, as expected, proceeds with ratifying and implementing this oppressive piece of legislation.’¹⁵¹

- 7.2.6 According to the USSD human rights report for 2021, ‘The government censored all materials related to LGBTQI+ status or conduct. Authorities particularly blocked websites or content within sites that discussed LGBTQI+ issues, including the censorship of Wikipedia pages defining LGBTQI+ and other related topics.’¹⁵²
- 7.2.7 For further information on social media restrictions, see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Iran: Social media, surveillance and sur place activities](#).

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7.3 Meeting places

- 7.3.1 The April 2020 DFAT report stated:

‘Local sources told DFAT that there are two gay-friendly parks in Tehran – Daneshjoo Park and Honarmandan Park (in central Tehran). The parks are patrolled by the police (sometimes in plain clothes), although contacts were not aware of any recent arrests there. DFAT heard anecdotally that one can observe same-sex couples holding hands in these parks, although couples

¹⁵⁰ OONI and others, ‘[No Access: LGBTIQ Website Censorship in Six...](#)’ (page 9), 31 August 2021

¹⁵¹ Atlantic Council, ‘[The Internet “Protection Bill” will hurt all Iranians...](#)’, 12 April 2022

¹⁵² USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

show greater discretion today given the known police presence. There are no gay bars in Iran.¹⁵³

- 7.3.2 In a qualitative study of 23 gay men in Iran, by Mohammadrasool Yadegarfarad at the School of Psychology, University of Bedfordshire, published in May 2019, 2 participants mentioned that there were ‘well-know[n] “pick-up points” in Tehran for gay men such as zeer-e-pole karim khan (under the Karim Khan bridge).¹⁵⁴ The study noted, ‘All twenty-three participants mentioned that they attended private gatherings and parties (Mehmoon) as well as gatherings in public places such as parks and restaurants. All of the participants also stated that there was always risk when attending these kind of gathering and parties. Three participants mentioned that they had experience of being arrested by the police at one of the parties.’¹⁵⁵

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7.4 Civil society and NGOs

- 7.4.1 The USSD human rights report for 2021, commenting on civil society generally, stated ‘The government restricted the operations of, and did not cooperate with, local or international NGOs investigating alleged violations of human rights. The government restricted the work of domestic activists and often responded to their inquiries and reports with harassment, arrests, online hacking, and monitoring of individual activists and organization workplaces.’¹⁵⁶
- 7.4.2 A study on gay men in Iran, published in May 2019, noted, ‘While there are no dedicated LGB organisations in Iran, many LGB individuals receive sexual health support (such as HIV testing) through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).¹⁵⁷ The same source added that there were ‘... a number of trans-focused NGOs in Iran...’¹⁵⁸
- 7.4.3 According to the April 2020 DFAT report, ‘NGOs are unable to work openly on LGBTI issues.’¹⁵⁹ Whilst the 2021 USSD report said, ‘There were active, unregistered LGBTQI+ NGOs and activists in the country.’¹⁶⁰

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¹⁵³ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.153), 14 April 2020

¹⁵⁴ Yadegarfarad M, ‘[How are Iranian Gay Men Coping with Systematic Suppression...](#)’, 20 May 2019

¹⁵⁵ Yadegarfarad M, ‘[How are Iranian Gay Men Coping with Systematic Suppression...](#)’, 20 May 2019

¹⁵⁶ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 5), 12 April 2022

¹⁵⁷ Yadegarfarad M, ‘[How are Iranian Gay Men Coping with Systematic Suppression...](#)’, 20 May 2019

¹⁵⁸ Yadegarfarad M, ‘[How are Iranian Gay Men Coping with Systematic Suppression...](#)’, 20 May 2019

¹⁵⁹ DFAT, ‘[Country Information Report Iran](#)’ (paragraph 3.151), 14 April 2020

¹⁶⁰ USSD, ‘[2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran](#)’ (section 6), 12 April 2022

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToR, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal context
 - constitution, criminal, penal and civil codes, Sharia law
 - general anti-discrimination provisions
 - same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
 - gender reassignment/transition, and recognition of gender identity of trans persons
- State attitudes and treatment
 - government rhetoric
 - policies/programmes that assist or discriminate against LGBTI persons
 - application of laws – arrests and detentions, prosecutions, convictions, acquittals
 - restrictions/enforcement of law against LGBTI organisations
 - other state treatment, such as harassment, blackmail, bribery, corrective therapy
 - access to public services, including education, healthcare, employment, justice system
 - state protection – response and assistance provided, including arrests and prosecutions of persecutors, witness protection, assistance in relocation
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- Societal attitudes and treatment
 - public opinion/views/surveys, including anti-LGBTI movements and public demonstrations
 - societal norms – prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour
 - religious group attitudes, statements and actions
 - media representation, language and discourse
 - treatment by the public, including family members, including shunning and stigma, harassment and violence, including mob attacks and gender-specific forms such as corrective rape
 - accessing accommodation, education, employment and healthcare

- geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- LGBTI individuals, communities and groups
 - size and location of LGBTI population
 - presence, projection and location of openly LGBTI persons and communities into public life
 - numbers, aims and location of openly LGBTI communities
 - services, meeting places and events, such as bars, restaurants and Gay Pride
 - operation, activities and restrictions of LGBTI civil society and other supportive groups or associations, including websites

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **4.0**
- valid from **15 June 2022**

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment

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