



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Russia: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

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Executive summary

In Russia, including the autonomous republic of Chechnya, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and people of other minority sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+) form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the refugee convention.

Same-sex sexual activity or relationships are not criminalised, but same-sex marriage and gender transition are banned. The constitution does not mention sexual orientation or gender identity and there are no specific legal protections for LGBT+ people.

In general, lesbian, gay, bisexual persons and those from other sexual minorities, do not face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state solely due to their sexual orientation. However, those in the North Caucasus, trans people and those who are publicly active in LGBT+ advocacy are likely to face treatment amounting to persecution.

Under the 'gay propaganda' law, public expression 'promoting' non-heterosexual relationships or gender transition are punishable by administrative fines or detention of up to 15 days. Repeated administrative offences may result in criminal prosecution, with potential prison sentences of up to four years. The designation of the international LGBT+ movement as an 'extremist' organisation in 2023 allows the state to classify LGBT+ support or activities as extremist. Participation in such activities may be punished with 2 to 6 years of imprisonment and organising them with 6 to 10 years imprisonment.

Reporting on human rights, including those of LGBT+ people, is restricted and the available data on the number of LGBT+ individuals arrested, detained, or prosecuted under anti-LGBT+ legislation is limited, but between 2022 and 2024, at least 139 individuals in Russia were impacted by anti-LGBT+ laws, including convictions under the 'gay propaganda' law, detentions, and prosecutions under 'extremism' laws. Some faced fines, imprisonment, or detention in various state facilities.

LGBT+ persons who are open about their identity are likely to face discriminatory treatment by societal actors which, by its nature or repetition, may amount to persecution, particularly in areas such as the North Caucasus.

The state is able but not willing to provide protection. Internal relocation may be possible for those who fear non-state actors.

Where a claim is refused it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded'.

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

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Assessment

Section updated: 11 June 2025

About the assessment

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

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

This note provides an assessment of the situation of actual and perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and people of other minority sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+). Sources often refer to LGBT+ people collectively, but the experiences of each group may differ. Where information is available, the note will refer to and consider the treatment of each group discretely.

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

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

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

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

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1.2 Exclusion

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

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- 1.2.4
- 1.2.5 The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

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2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 LGBT+ people form a PSG in Russia 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 Russia because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.3 Although LGBT+ people form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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3. Risk

3.1 Risk from the state

- 3.1.1 Lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not likely to be at real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state because of their sexual orientation alone. However, lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the North Caucasus (see [About the country information](#)), trans people and those who publicly advocate for and support LGBT+ rights are likely to face persecution or serious harm. The treatment of other sexual minorities is likely to be similar to that of lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
- 3.1.2 Each case must be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to

demonstrate a risk.

- 3.1.3 Russia's population is approximately 140 million. However, there is no reliable information on the size of the LGBT+ population or how it is distributed across the country (see [Demography](#)).
- 3.1.4 Same-sex sexual activity or relationships are not criminalised, but same-sex marriage is banned. The constitution does not mention sexual orientation or gender identity and there are no specific legal protections for LGBT+ people. The law bans gender transition, prohibits changes to gender markers on documents and prevents trans people from adopting or fostering. Trans-specific healthcare was effectively banned in 2023, severely limiting access to hormone therapy and surgeries. There is no legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in areas such as housing, healthcare or employment. Although hate crime provisions exist, they do not explicitly cover these characteristics (see [Constitution and statutory laws](#) and [Other legal provisions affecting LGBT+ people](#)).
- 3.1.5 Under the 'gay propaganda' law, public expression 'promoting' non-heterosexual relationships or gender transition are punishable by administrative fines of up to 400,000 rubles (around £3,600) for individuals (see ['Gay propaganda' law](#)) and 4,000,000 rubles (around £34,000) for organisations, or detention of up to 15 days (see [Timeline of legislative changes affecting LGBTI rights](#)). Offences include posting LGBT+ related content online (even on private pages), placing personal ads seeking same-sex partners and displaying rainbow symbols. Repeated administrative offences may result in criminal prosecution, with potential prison sentences of up to four years (see ['Gay propaganda' law](#)). The Supreme Court ruled in November 2023 that the international LGBT+ movement is an 'extremist' organisation, although no definition of the movement was provided. The ruling allows the state to classify LGBT+ support or activities – such as providing counselling, organising events, or managing online communities – as extremist. Participation in such activities may be punished with 2 to 6 years of imprisonment and organising them with 6 to 10 years under Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code (see [Proscription of the LGBTI movement](#)).
- 3.1.6 State rhetoric has increasingly framed LGBT+ identities and activism as threats to national security and traditional values. Between 2023 and early 2025, some senior officials described LGBT+ rights as forms of 'Satanism', 'hybrid warfare' and 'Western interference'. Activism is portrayed as a political movement aimed at undermining Russian society, with public figures calling for bans on LGBT+ symbols, organisations, and visibility (see [State attitudes](#)).
- 3.1.7 Reporting on human rights, including those of LGBT+ people, is restricted and the available data on the number of LGBT+ persons arrested, detained, or prosecuted under anti-LGBT+ legislation is limited. International and domestic LGBT+ groups and media sources indicate that the state uses such laws against some people and organisations. Reported penalties vary depending on the perceived offence, the specific legal provisions invoked and by geography (see [Arrests and punishments](#)).
- 3.1.8 Between December 2022 and March 2024, various sources reported that 139 people had been affected by the enforcement of anti-LGBT+ laws across the country. Human Rights Watch claimed 44 people were convicted

for displaying LGBT+ symbols – mostly online – under the ‘gay propaganda’ law, with punishments ranging from fines to detention of up to 15 days. The non-government organisations, Coming Out and Sphere Foundation, based on a survey of almost 5,000 LGBT+ people in 2024 observed 7 people claimed to have been detained and 63 reported being confined in various forms of state custody, including mental health institutions, temporary detention centres, and prisons. Since February 2024, there have also been prosecutions under ‘extremism’ laws with 15 criminal defendants reported to have faced penalties including house arrest, pre-trial detention, or imprisonment. Some people were targeted for social media posts, with fines reaching up to 500,000 rubles (about £4,500), and minors and their parents have been subjected to police interventions and administrative charges. The actual number of affected people may be higher due to underreporting and limited public access to case data (see State treatment: [Arrests and punishments](#)).

- 3.1.9 Between 2023 and early 2025, state actors were reported to be responsible for violence and mistreatment of LGBT+ persons. Coming Out reported that it was aware of 19 raids on LGBT+ clubs and events took place in 2024, during which attendees were reportedly subjected to physical violence, humiliation, threats, and abuse by police. Coming Out stated physical violence in detention had previously been largely confined to the North Caucasus but following the designation of the LGBT+ movement, there were reports of this elsewhere in Russia. Sources also reported on incidents of involuntary medical examinations of trans and intersex people, and coercion of intersex children into surgeries without proper information or consent. Public demonstrations in support of LGBT+ rights have effectively been banned and a Russian news media source reported that authorities had compiled a database of LGBT+ persons based on arrests and surveillance (see State treatment: [Harassment, surveillance, blackmail and violence](#)).
- 3.1.10 Between 2017 and 2024, Chechen and North Caucasus authorities carried out systematic campaigns against LGBT+ people, including abductions, torture, and extrajudicial killings – albeit most of the country information relates to incidents before 2021. Reported abuses also included threats of conscription, blackmail, and detention by security forces or family members. Officials continue to deny the existence of LGBT+ people and have publicly justified and encouraged violence. No perpetrators have been held accountable, and victims face serious barriers to legal redress or protection (see State treatment: [State attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#)).
- 3.1.11 The 2023 Supreme Court ruling designating the international LGBT movement as extremist has led to closures of support organisations, increased self-censorship, and some criminal cases against activists. Whilst a number of LGBT+ groups continue to operate, many have scaled back their activities, moved online, or relocated abroad to avoid prosecution (see [Civil Society Organisations \(CSOs\) and support groups](#) and [Restrictions on LGBT+ organisations](#)).
- 3.1.12 Between 2023 and early 2025, LGBT+ persons reportedly faced barriers to education, employment, healthcare, and housing. The US State Department (USSD) reported that in 2023 LGBT+ students at school and university faced discrimination and while others hid their sexual orientation in the workplace

for fear of losing their jobs or homes. In a survey by Coming Out and other NGOs, most respondents did not report any problems but 23% (1,080 people) said they had difficulties accessing jobs or education due to their sexual orientation, rising to 46% (2,162 people) among trans people. Respondents described hiding their identity at work to avoid dismissal and 5% (235 people) reported being dismissed in 2023 for SOGIE-related reasons, with trans people twice as likely as other LGBT+ groups to lose their jobs. Public sector employees have also been reportedly dismissed following accusations of 'gay propaganda', with teachers particularly likely to face discrimination. Most of those who faced problems lived in the North Caucasus. The Coming Out survey noted that LGBT+ people also face financial insecurity with 15% (and 32% amongst trans people) of respondents indicated they considered their sexual orientation/gender identity negatively affected their situation. Some linked this to job loss, family rejection, or workplace discrimination (see [Education and employment](#)).

- 3.1.13 LGBT+ people face discrimination in accessing healthcare. The USSD reported that medical practitioners limited or denied healthcare to LGBT+ people in 2023. The Coming Out survey 2023 noted that of participants who disclosed their identity to doctors, the majority did not face problems but 19% (684 people) experienced discrimination, rising to 29% (273 people) for trans people, and 9% (82 people) reportedly being denied care altogether (see [Healthcare](#)).
- 3.1.14 In housing, the large majority of people did not report difficulties in finding accommodation with just 6% (282 people) said they did, due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and 3% (141 people) lost housing. Many reported concealing their identity from landlords or neighbours due to fear of prejudice (see [Housing](#)).
- 3.1.15 If a LGBT+ person is not 'out' about or conceals their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum or humanitarian protection.

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3.2 Risk from societal actors

- 3.2.1 LGBT+ persons who are open about their identity are likely to face discriminatory treatment by societal actors which, by its nature or repetition, amounts to persecution, particularly in areas such as the North Caucasus. Each case must be considered on its facts.
- 3.2.2 Public opinion surveys show that a significant proportion of the population – particularly older, rural, and less-educated respondents – viewed LGBT+ people and their rights negatively. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office observed that attitudes towards to LGBT+ people are less tolerant than the UK and vary from place to place (see Societal attitudes and treatment: [Attitudes](#)).
- 3.2.3 A 2024 survey by Research Field found that 80% of respondents would be 'repulsed' by a non-heterosexual presidential candidate. While a 2024 Levada Centre poll found that 1% felt positive towards LGBT+ people, 26% were calm or neutral, 44% of respondents felt 'disgust and fear', 62% opposed equal rights, and 59% would sever ties with someone they

- discovered was gay (see Societal attitudes and treatment: [Attitudes](#)).
- 3.2.4 This negative perception is compounded by media portrayals linking homosexuality to paedophilia and portraying LGBT+ people as a societal threat. Sources report that visibility of LGBT+ people is low particularly in more conservative regions like the North Caucasus due to higher levels of societal homophobia and transphobia (see Societal attitudes and treatment: [Attitudes](#)).
- 3.2.5 Sources reported that between 2023 and early 2025, LGBT+ people faced some societal violence and threats, particularly transgender people and those in the North Caucasus. The USSD noted in 2023 there were instances of societal violence and of the police not responding. In the Coming Out and Sphere Foundation survey 2023, while the large majority of respondents did not report having problems, 8% (381 people) from across Russia said they experienced physical violence due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, rising to 13% (134 people) among trans people. The highest rates (17%, 16 people) were in the North Caucasus. Only 2% of the survey participants (94 people) were from the North Caucasus so the higher rates of reported violence will not have skewed the figures for Russia overall. One in 4 respondents (24%, or 1,115 people) reported threats of physical violence in 2023, including 34% of trans participants (352 people). Threat levels were highest in the North Caucasian (42%), Far Eastern (31%), and Southern (29%) federal districts. In the same survey, 14% (663 people) reported blackmail or extortion related to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. LGBT+ people have also described being outed by anti-LGBT+ groups who circulated private information and issued threats (see Societal attitudes and treatment: [Treatment](#) and [Societal attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#)).
- 3.2.6 Between 2023 and early 2025, conversion therapy practices continued to take place. The Coming Out and the Sphere Foundation survey 2023 found that 3% of surveyed LGBT+ people (125 out of 4,735) had undergone some form of conversion therapy in 2023, with 5% of transgender respondents (52 people) reporting the same. These practices, often arranged by family members, took place predominantly in unregulated 'rehabilitation' centres and psychiatric institutions across the country. While such practices had historically been concentrated in the southern regions of Russia, reports indicate that conversion therapy had increasingly spread to other areas, including the North Caucasus and Moscow. In some Muslim-majority regions, the practices included forced exorcisms or confinement in 'Muslim hospitals.' (see [Conversion therapy](#)).
- 3.2.7 If a LGBT+ person is not 'out' about or conceals their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum or humanitarian protection.
- 3.2.8 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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4. Protection

- 4.1.1 The state is able but not always willing to offer effective protection. Each case must be considered on its own facts.
- 4.1.2 State authorities have been responsible for harassment, discrimination and violence towards LGBT+ people. The state enforces anti-LGBT+ laws and fails to protect against, or prosecute, perpetrators of violence against the LGBT+ community, particularly in the North Caucasus, where violence against LGBT+ people has been condoned. It would therefore be unreasonable to expect a person identifying as LGBT+ to seek protection from the authorities (see [State attitudes and treatment](#)).
- 4.1.3 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [and the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).]

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5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or rogue state actor, depending on their circumstances, they may be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.3 This is because in general, there are parts of Russia, particularly large urban areas such as Moscow and St Petersburg, where survey data suggests LGBT+ people feel more able to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and where it may be reasonable to expect LGBT+ people to relocate (see [Attitudes](#)).
- 5.1.4 A person from the North Caucasus who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or rogue state actor is not likely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk. There is evidence of people from this region being pursued in other areas of Russia by persecutors, with help from North Caucasian security forces. (see [Societal attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#)).
- 5.1.5 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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6. Certification

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

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Country information

About the country information

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

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

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

This document covers the Russian Federation including the North Caucasus (Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria). All areas of Russia are officially governed under the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **4 June 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

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

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7. Demography

- 7.1.1 Estimates of the total population of Russia in 2025, including Chechnya, vary between 140.8 million and 144.4 million^{1 2 3 4 5 6}.
- 7.1.2 Last updated in March 2025, the CIA World Factbook stated that the land area is 16,377,742 sq km [not including areas of Ukraine currently occupied by Russia], and as of 2023, 75.3% of the population were living in urban areas⁷.
- 7.1.3 There were no official statistics available on the numbers of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex people in Russia in the sources reviewed, see [Bibliography](#).

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8. Legal context

8.1 Constitution and statutory laws

- 8.1.1 See the [Constitution of the Russian Federation](#), adopted in 1993 with amendments up to and including 2020 (available in Russian only).
- 8.1.2 The Constitution of the Russian Federation does not explicitly mention sexual orientation or gender identity. It guarantees certain general rights and freedoms to all citizens, such as equality before the law (Article 19) and the

¹ CIA, [Russia - The World Factbook](#) (Population), updated 4 June 2025

² Population Today, [Russia Population \(2025\)](#), 11 March 2025

³ Statista, [Countries with the largest population 2025](#), 2025

⁴ Macrotrends, [Russia Population 1950-2025](#), 2025

⁵ Nations Geo, [Russia population, March 2025](#), 11 March 2025

⁶ Worldometer, [Russia Population \(2025\)](#), 2025

⁷ CIA, [Russia - The World Factbook](#) (Geography), updated 3 March 2025

right to privacy (Article 23), but there are no specific protections or references to sexual orientation or gender identity⁸.

- 8.1.3 In 2024, the United States Department of State (USSD) published an annual report on human rights in Russia during the year 2023 (USSD HR report 2023). It noted, 'The law did not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults, cross-dressing, or other sexual or gender characteristic-related behaviors.'⁹
- 8.1.4 The [Criminal Code of the Russian Federation](#) includes provisions against inciting hatred or enmity based on characteristics such as sex (Article 282) and violating human and civil rights based on characteristics such as gender (Article 136). It does not specifically mention sexual orientation and gender identity in the list of protected grounds¹⁰.
- 8.1.5 The USSD HR report 2023 stated, 'The law did not prohibit discrimination by state or nonstate actors against LGBTQI+ persons with respect to essential goods and services such as housing, employment, or access to government services such as health care.'¹¹
- 8.1.6 All areas of Russia are officially governed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, but some sources suggest Chechnya has a parallel system of Sharia law. For example, in October 2024, The Moscow Times, a Russian, independent, English language, media outlet¹², stated, 'Chechnya is a republic where civil and religious laws mix with ancient customs. Despite Russian influence through governmental authority, people in Chechnya often continue to apply Adat (Chechen customary law) or Islamic Sharia law to resolve civil matters.'¹³
- 8.1.7 In 2022, the Organisation for World Peace (OWP), a not-for-profit organisation providing analysis in the field of international relations¹⁴, reported, "'Sharia Law trumps Russian Laws in Chechnya" declared Kadyrov [president of Chechnya] in an interview conducted in 2010 for "Le Figaro" newspaper. In theory, the Russian Constitution overrules regional legislation. However, in practice, enforcing the Constitution is an entirely different matter.'¹⁵
- 8.1.8 The 2024 book by Egor Lazarev from Yale University, 'State-Building as Lawfare. Custom, Sharia, and State Law in Postwar Chechnya', noted that '... the rulers of Chechnya promote and reinvent customary law and Sharia in order to borrow legitimacy from tradition and religion, increase autonomy from the metropole, and accommodate communal authorities and former rebels.'¹⁶
- 8.1.9 Older sources refer to a history of Sharia law in Chechnya. In 2010, Reuters, the international news agency¹⁷ stated, 'Against the backdrop of a spreading Islamist insurgency in Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus, the Kremlin

⁸ [Constitution of the Russian Federation](#) 1993

⁹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁰ [Criminal Code of the Russian Federation](#)

¹¹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹² The Moscow Times, [About us](#), no date

¹³ The Moscow Times, [Kadyrov's 'Blood Feud' Is a New Escalation ...](#), 15 October 2024

¹⁴ OWP, [What is the Organization for World Peace?](#), no date.

¹⁵ OWP, [State Within A State: Autocracy And Lawlessness In Chechnya](#), 13 August 2022

¹⁶ Egor Lazarev, [State-Building as Lawfare. Custom, Sharia, and State law ...](#), April 2024

¹⁷ Reuters, [About us -Reuters](#), no date.

watches uneasily as federal authority yields to Islamic tenets and sharia law.¹⁸

- 8.1.10 In 2012, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, an American government-funded media organisation¹⁹, stated, ‘Then-Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov did, indeed, introduce Shari’a law in early 1999, but he did so unwillingly, under pressure from the radical faction headed by Shamil Basaev. And crucially, Akhmad-hadji Kadyrov, [father of the current Chechen president] who was Chechnya’s mufti at that time, did not publicly object or condemn that move.’²⁰

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8.2 Timeline of legislative changes affecting LGBT+ rights

- 8.2.1 June 2013 – [Russian Federal Law 135-FZ](#) was introduced to prohibit the promotion of ‘non-traditional sexual relationships’ to minors, introducing fines and penalties for violations^{21 22}.
- 8.2.2 July 2020 – a nationwide referendum led to amendments defining marriage in the Russian Constitution as a union only between a man and a woman²³. December 2022 – amendments to the 2013 ‘gay propaganda’ law broadened the ban to include any positive portrayal of LGBT+ relationships to the general public, with increased fines and penalties, and extended to all ages, rather than just information specifically aimed at minors²⁴.
- 8.2.3 5 December 2022 – amendments to Russia’s Code of Administrative Offenses came into force, making it an offence to publicly express anything that might be seen as promoting non-heterosexual relationships or gender transition, with punishments including fines of up to 400,000 rubles (£3,642.73 GBP²⁵) or up to 15 days of detention²⁶.
- 8.2.4 July 2023 – Russian parliament approved amendments to the Family Code and federal laws prohibiting legal gender recognition and gender-affirming procedures, including prohibiting individuals who undergo gender-affirmation, from adopting children and automatically annulling same-sex marriages²⁷.
- 8.2.5 November 2023 – the Supreme Court designated the ‘International LGBT Movement’ (hereafter ‘LGBT+ ban’) to be an ‘extremist organisation’ and banned it^{28 29 30}.

See [‘Gay propaganda’ law](#), [‘Proscription of the international LGBT+ public movement’](#) and [‘Other legal provisions affecting LGBT+ people’](#) for details on the legislative changes.

¹⁸ Reuters, [Encroachment of sharia law in Russia's Caucasus](#), 26 August 2010

¹⁹ RFE/RL, [About](#), no date

²⁰ RFE/RL, [Chechen Leaders Slam Proposed Creation Of Shari'a Courts](#), 26 April 2012

²¹ Amnesty International, [Russia's anti-gay 'propaganda law'](#), 25 January 2013

²² Moscow Times, [Russia's 'Gay Propaganda' Law One Year On](#), 29 June 2014

²³ New York Post, [Russian constitution change ends hopes for same-sex marriage](#), 13 July 2020

²⁴ Open Democracy, [Russia passes expanded 'gay propaganda law'](#), 23 June 2022

²⁵ Xe.com, [400,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British Pounds Exchange Rate](#), 04 April 2025

²⁶ Coming Out, [Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March 2025](#), 10 March 2025

²⁷ Amnesty International, [Russia: Adoption of transphobic legislation a horrendous...](#), 14 July 2023

²⁸ Reuters, [Top Russian court bans LGBT movement as 'extremist'](#), 30 November 2023

²⁹ BBC News, [Russian court bans 'LGBT movement' - BBC News](#), 30 November 2023

³⁰ CNN, [Russia's top court bans 'international LGBTQ movement'](#), 30 November 2023

8.3 'Gay propaganda' law

8.3.1 In June 2013, The Guardian reported:

'Russia's parliament has unanimously passed a federal law banning gay "propaganda" amid a Kremlin push to enshrine deeply conservative values that critics say has already led to a sharp increase in anti-gay violence.

'The law passed 436-0 on Tuesday, with just one deputy abstaining from voting on the bill, which bans the spreading of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" among minors.

'The law in effect makes it illegal to equate straight and gay relationships, as well as the distribution of material on gay rights. It introduces fines for individuals and media groups found guilty of breaking the law, as well as special fines for foreigners ...'³¹

8.3.2 In November 2022, Time Magazine (Time), a digital news outlet based in the United States³², noted:

'On Monday [21 November 2022], Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into effect the "gay propaganda" bill, which Russian lawmakers unanimously approved in November [2022].

'The bill bans all forms of what authorities deem as LGBTQ "propaganda" across media, cinema, books, and advertisements. It also prohibits Russians from promoting or "praising" homosexual relationships or publicly suggesting that they are "normal" ...

'The new "gay propaganda" bill expands on existing legislation that was adopted by the Kremlin in 2013 to promote "traditional" family values in Russia. The 2013 law prohibited depictions of homosexuality, same-sex unions, and "non-traditional sexual relations" to be shown to minors. The new bill would extend those restrictions to all ages.

'The bill also bans what authorities describe as the "propaganda of paedophilia and sex change." While the concept of propaganda is loosely defined under the bill, it strictly prohibits the use of any medium to spread any related information.'³³

8.3.3 In November 2022, Reuters stated:

'Russia's parliament approved on Thursday a bill that widens a prohibition of "LGBT propaganda" and restricts the "demonstration" of LGBT behaviour, making any expression of an LGBT lifestyle almost impossible ...

'Lawmakers say they are defending traditional values of the "Russian world" against a liberal West they say is determined to destroy them - an argument also increasingly being used by officials as one of the justifications for Russia's military campaign in Ukraine.'³⁴

8.3.4 In December 2022, Reuters reported:

'Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday signed a law expanding

³¹ The Guardian, [Russia passes law banning gay 'propaganda'](#), 11 June 2013

³² Time, [Home](#), no date

³³ Time, [What To Know About Russia's So-Called 'Gay Propaganda' Bill](#), 24 November 2022

³⁴ Reuters, [law banning 'LGBT propaganda' among adults](#), 24 November 2022

Russia's restrictions on the promotion of what it calls "LGBT propaganda", effectively outlawing any public expression of LGBT behaviour or lifestyle in Russia.

'Under the [new law](#), which widens Russia's interpretation of what qualifies as "LGBT propaganda", any action or the spreading of any information that is considered an attempt to promote homosexuality in public, online, or in films, books or advertising, could incur a heavy fine.

'The law expands Russia's previous law against LGBT propaganda that had banned the "demonstration" of LGBT behaviour to children.'³⁵

8.3.5 'In November 2023, BBC News reported, 'Last year [in 2022], those restrictions [from the 2013 law] were extended to all age groups in Russia. References to LGBT people have been deleted from books, films, adverts and TV shows.'³⁶

8.3.6 The USSD HR report 2023 noted:

'During the year, [2023] authorities developed and issued implementing regulations for amendments adopted in December 2022 that broadened the law criminalizing the distribution of "propaganda" of "nontraditional sexual relations" to children. The law effectively limited the rights of free expression and assembly for citizens who wished to advocate publicly for the rights of LGBTQI+ persons or express the opinion that homosexuality was normal. The law completely banned such "propaganda" among persons of all ages through media, including the internet, advertising, literature, and cinema. The law also banned the sale of goods containing "prohibited information" and gave Roskomnadzor [the Russian Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media³⁷] the authority to monitor and block entities that distributed "prohibited information." Under the law, individuals faced significant administrative fines for "LGBT propaganda" or "demonstrations of LGBT and information that encourages a change of gender among teenagers." These fines were significantly greater for legal entities ...

'Roskomnadzor used the law to block websites and file administrative charges against numerous individuals and legal entities, including bookstores, theaters, and media companies.'³⁸

8.3.7 On 10 January 2024 an article published by European LGBTQ+ media brand 'Gay Times Group'³⁹ reported on the potential penalties. It stated, 'Under the legislation, which was signed by Vladimir Putin on 5 December 2022, any event or act viewed as an attempt to "promote" homosexuality could result in a fine of up to 400,000 roubles (£3,414) for individuals and 4,000,000 roubles (£34,140) for legal entities.'⁴⁰ For context, Statista stated the average monthly wage in Russia as of 2024 was 87,952 roubles⁴¹ (approximately £798⁴²).

³⁵ Reuters, [law expanding Russia's rules against 'LGBT propaganda'](#), 5 December 2022

³⁶ BBC News, [Russian court bans 'LGBT movement'](#), 30 November 2023

³⁷ Government of the Russian Federation (archive), [The Executive Branch](#), no date

³⁸ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

³⁹ Gay Times Group, [About](#), no date

⁴⁰ Gay Times Group, ["An attack on human rights": LGBTQ+ Russians in need...](#), 10 January 2024

⁴¹ Statista, [Employment in Russia - statistics & facts](#), 22 November 2024

⁴² Xe.com, [87,952 RUB to GBP - Convert Russian Rubles to British Pounds](#), 9 April 2025

8.3.8 Coming Out, a group supporting LGBT+ people in Russia⁴³, published a report on 10 March 2025 entitled 'Report on the situation of LGBTQ+ individuals in Russia: March 2025' (Coming Out report 2025). Coming Out noted that its report 'may be necessary for the following purposes ... Emigration planning - To assist individuals in assessing risks when preparing asylum cases and to serve as supporting evidence of the conditions faced by LGBTQ+ persons in Russia.' It noted, with reference to the gay propaganda law, that:

'Since September 2023, authorities responsible for regulating communication have expanded the interpretation of "propaganda of non-traditional relationships" to include any information "justifying such relationships." Similarly, "propaganda of gender transition" now refers to any information "justifying the permissibility of gender transition."

'...This legislation is currently used to prosecute LGBTQ+ individuals for a variety of activities, including:

- Public Activities: Managing LGBTQ+ communities on social media, running online channels or podcasts with any audience size, or other forms of public engagement.

- Private Life: Expressing one's sexual orientation or gender identity outside their residence, including in public places or private events, even without third-party witnesses. Examples of prosecutable actions include:

- Posting personal advertisements seeking same-sex partners online;

- Posting photographs with a same-sex partner on personal social media pages, even if those pages are private.

'... The legislation has also been used to:

- Block social media accounts focused on LGBTQ+ topics en masse;

- Label organizations and individuals as "foreign agents," resulting in loss of rights, administrative fines, and criminal prosecution.'⁴⁴

8.3.9 For examples of how the 'gay propaganda' law has been applied in practice, see State attitudes and treatment – [Treatment](#).

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8.4 Proscription of the international LGBT+ public movement

8.4.1 In November 2023, BBC News reported:

'Russia's Supreme Court has declared what it calls "the international LGBT public movement" an extremist organisation and banned its activities across the country.

'The ruling was prompted by a motion from the justice ministry, even though no such organisation exists as a legal entity.

'The hearing was held behind closed doors, but reporters were allowed in to hear the court's decision. Nobody from "the defendant's side" had been present, the court said.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Coming Out, [Home](#), no date

⁴⁴ Coming Out, '[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March 2025](#)' 10 March 2025

⁴⁵ BBC News, '[Russian court bans 'LGBT movement'](#)', 30 November 2023

8.4.2 In November 2023, The Guardian noted:

‘Russia’s supreme court has outlawed what it called an “international LGBT public movement” as extremist, in a landmark ruling that representatives of gay and transgender people warn will lead to arrests and prosecutions of the already repressed LGBTQ+ community.

‘The ruling in effect outlaws LGBTQ+ activism in a country growing increasingly conservative since the start of the war in Ukraine. The “extremist” label could mean that gay, lesbian, transgender or queer people living in Russia could receive lengthy prison sentences if deemed by the authorities to be part of the so called “international LGBT public movement”

...

Human rights activists have said the vague wording of the ruling that targets the “international LGBT public movement” allows Russian authorities to persecute any individual or organisation it considers to be part of the “movement”.⁴⁶

8.4.3 On 30 November 2023, ABC, an Australian news source⁴⁷, reported:

‘Multiple rights activists have noted the lawsuit was lodged against a movement that is not an official entity, and that under its broad and vague definition, Russian authorities could crack down on any individuals or groups deemed to be part of it.

‘Max Olenichev, a human rights lawyer who works with the Russian LGBTQ+ community, said it ushers in a number of restrictions.

‘He said these included participating in, aiding or funding organisations; publicly using certain logos and symbols related with them; or publicly endorsing ideas they propagate.

‘... The exact nature of these restrictions — such as which symbols will be banned — remains unclear, because the case is classified, and will only become apparent in the first legal actions brought against activists, Mr Olenichev added, although violating them exposes people to prosecution and potential prison terms.

‘This would likely lead to a decrease in legal, psychological and other aid and support for LGBTQ+ people in Russia get from rights groups and grassroots initiatives, he said, and make the community itself and its needs less visible.

“The authorities are doing everything for the LGBT agenda to disappear from the public square,” he added.⁴⁸

8.4.4 In November 2023, The Moscow Times reported:

‘[The ban and designation of the international LGBT+ public movement as an extremist group] ... is the latest episode in the sharp conservative turn by Russia’s leadership that has accelerated and permeated nearly every segment of society since the invasion of Ukraine.

‘By banning a vaguely defined movement, which does not formally exist, activists warn Russia will effectively criminalize any form of LGBT rights

⁴⁶ The Guardian, [‘Russia outlaws ‘...LGBT public movement’ as extremist’](#), 30 November 2023

⁴⁷ ABC, [‘About the ABC’](#), no date

⁴⁸ ABC News, [Russia’s Supreme Court effectively outlaws LGBT+...](#), 30 November 2023

advocacy, forcing groups providing support to LGBT Russians underground.⁴⁹

8.4.5 The same source noted:

‘Individuals face a maximum of six years in prison if convicted of involvement in an “extremist” organization.

“The fines for ‘LGBT propaganda’ are usually enormous, sometimes equivalent to several monthly salaries,” Sergeyev [Alexei Sergeyev, a St Petersburg-based civil rights and LGBT+ activist⁵⁰] said. “But this is still far from a ... prison sentence for extremism ...

‘He said the most liberal interpretation of the “extremist” designation could allow authorities to prosecute anyone who has associated with LGBT lifestyles or symbols in public.’⁵¹

8.4.6 In March 2024, Reuters reported:

‘The move [to designate the LGBT+ movement as an extremist group] was in line with a [ruling](#) by Russia's Supreme Court last November [2023] that LGBT activists should be designated as extremists, a move that representatives of gay and transgender people said they feared would lead to arrests and prosecutions.

‘The list is maintained by an agency called Rosfinmonitoring that has powers to freeze the bank accounts of the more than 14,000 people and entities designated as extremists and terrorists. They range from Al Qaeda to U.S. tech giant Meta and associates of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

‘The new listing refers to the “international LGBT social movement and its structural units”, state news agency RIA said.’⁵²

8.4.7 The Coming Out report 2025 noted that:

‘The Supreme Court’s ruling defines extremist activities broadly, including:

‘1. Creating artistic works that mention same-sex relationships involving minors.

‘2. Producing any content promoting equality of rights or the equal value of same-sex relationships compared to heterosexual ones.

‘3. Providing psychological, social, or legal support to LGBTQ+ individuals.

‘Additional Activities Classified as Extremist:

- Hosting or participating in LGBTQ+ events.
- Managing online LGBTQ+ communities.

‘Penalties:

‘Under Article 282.2 of the Russian Criminal Code:

- Participation in the activities of an extremist organization is punishable by 2–6 years of imprisonment.

⁴⁹ The Moscow Times, [Russia Labels LGBT Community ‘Extremist’, 30 November 2023.](#)

⁵⁰ The Moscow Times, [Russia Labels LGBT Community ‘Extremist’ ...](#), 30 November 2023

⁵¹ The Moscow Times, [Russia Labels LGBT Community ‘Extremist’ ...](#), 30 November 2023

⁵² Reuters, [Russia adds ‘LGBT movement’ to list of extremist organisations](#), 22 March 2024

- Organizing such activities carries a penalty of 6–10 years of imprisonment.⁵³

8.4.8 The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office’s travel advice for British citizens travelling to Russia updated 4 June 2025 noted: ‘In November 2023, the Russian Supreme Court banned the so-called ‘international LGBT movement’, designating it as “extremist”. The court provided no definition of “international LGBT movement”. Displaying “extremist” symbols and being a member of and donating money to ‘extremist’ organisations are criminal offences. This decision came in to force in January 2024. It is unclear how the authorities will implement the ruling ...’⁵⁴

8.4.9 On 16 January 2025, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published their annual report on events of 2024 in Russia (HRW report 2025), in which it noted: ‘The Supreme Court’s November 2023 ruling, which outlaws the “international LGBT movement” as an “extremist” organization, allows arbitrary prosecution of LGBT people and of anyone who defends their rights or expresses solidarity with them.

‘The ruling, which became public only in in mid-January 2024, declared the rainbow flag a forbidden symbol of the “LGBT movement”...

‘Repeated convictions for displays of LGBT symbols entail criminal prosecution, punishable by up to four years in prison. The ruling also stated that authorities had identified 281 “active participants in the movement.” These unnamed individuals could face up to 10 years in prison for involvement in an extremist organization.’⁵⁵

8.4.10 For information on how this legislation is affecting people in practice, see State attitudes and treatment – [Treatment](#).

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8.5 Other legal provisions affecting gender recognition and trans rights

8.5.1 In July 2023, The Moscow Times reported on a new law banning legal and surgical sex changes. It stated, ‘The law, which makes “medical interventions aimed at changing the sex of a person” and “the state registration of a change of gender without an operation” illegal, was swiftly passed by both houses of the Russian parliament earlier this month [July 2023].’⁵⁶

8.5.2 In July 2023, Reuters reported on gender markers, ‘The bill would bar Russians from changing their gender on official identity documents, which had been legal since 1997. Health workers would be banned from “performing medical interventions designed to change the sex of a person”, including surgery and prescribing hormone therapy.’⁵⁷

8.5.3 In November 2023, the Nordic Times, an English-language independent international newspaper⁵⁸, reported:

⁵³ Coming Out, ‘[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March 2025](#)’ 10 March 2025

⁵⁴ UK FCDO, [Foreign travel advice: Russia](#) (Safety and security, LGBT+), updated 4 June 2025

⁵⁵ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), (page 384), 16 January 2025

⁵⁶ The Moscow Times, [Putin Signs Gender Reassignment Ban Into Law](#), 24 July 2023

⁵⁷ Reuters, [Duma completes passage of bill banning gender change](#), 12 July 2023

⁵⁸ Nordic Times, [About TNT - The Nordic Times](#), 2025

'In Russia, surgeries and drug treatments related to sex reassignment procedures are now allowed only in cases requiring treatment for malformations of children's reproductive organs. Decisions on these procedures are made by clinics with a special license from the Russian Ministry of Health ...

'According to the Russian Health Ministry, between 2018 and 2022, when the procedure was still legal, just over 2,000 people legally changed their gender in Russia.'⁵⁹

- 8.5.4 In January 2024, The Conversation, an independent publisher of research-based news and analysis⁶⁰, noted that Russia 'also introduced bans on the ... "promotion of gender reassignment", making it illegal for people to change their legal gender.'⁶¹
- 8.5.5 The ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2024 noted, 'In June [2023], the Duma adopted a ban on trans people adopting or fostering children. On the basis of the law, it is also possible to dissolve a marriage if a spouse had changed their legal gender. Already before the adoption of the law, prosecutors initiated legal proceedings against married couples, whose marriage was consequently annulled. Attorneys helped some trans people get married and many families have remained intact.'⁶²

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8.6 Other legal provisions affecting LGBT+ people

- 8.6.1 The age of consent in Russia has been 16 years since 2003⁶³ ⁶⁴.
- 8.6.2 In 2024, Equaldex, (an online publication, based on moderated data from LGBT+ community contributors, which measures the current status of LGBT+ rights, laws, and freedoms as well as public attitudes towards LGBT+ people across the world)⁶⁵ reported an equal age of consent in Russia, 'for both consensual same -sex activity and heterosexual activity'.⁶⁶
- 8.6.3 Since July 2020, same-sex marriage is not provided for in law⁶⁷.
- 8.6.4 In 2019 'Out Magazine', a US- based LGBTQ publication⁶⁸, stated, 'Same-sex couples have been barred from adopting children in Russia since 2012'.⁶⁹
- 8.6.5 In April 2024, Amnesty International reported, 'On 24 July [2023], President Putin signed into law transphobic legislation that ...prohibited adoption of children by transgender people.'⁷⁰
- 8.6.6 In 2024, ILGA-Europe published an index 'reflecting the legal and policy situation for the human rights of LGBTI people in Europe' showing the

⁵⁹ Nordic Times, [Russia considers adoption ban for "gender swap" countries](#), 26 November 2023

⁶⁰ The Conversation, [Who we are](#), no date

⁶¹ The Conversation, [30 years of LGBTQ+ history in Russia...](#), 10 January 2024

⁶² ILGA-Europe, [Annual Review 2024](#) (Russia, Family), 29 February 2024

⁶³ World population review, [Age of Consent by Country 2024](#), 2024

⁶⁴ Age of Consent, [Russia Age of Consent & Statutory Rape Laws](#), 2025

⁶⁵ Equaldex, [LGBT Equality Index | Equaldex](#), 2025

⁶⁶ Equaldex, [Entry #16: Equal age of consent in Russia | Equaldex, no date](#)

⁶⁷ New York Post, [Russian constitution change ends hopes for same-sex marriage](#), 13 July 2020

⁶⁸ Out Magazine, [About Out](#), no date

⁶⁹ Out Magazine, [Gay Parents Who Fled Russia Seek Asylum in America](#), 30 September 2019

⁷⁰ Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights](#), (Russia, page 319),23 April 2024

situation in each European country and providing each country with a percentage score. The index showed Russia only had one policy; provision of artificial insemination to single people; considered to assist LGBT+ people. Russia was scored 2% in the index, the lowest score in Europe. In comparison, the highest scoring European country scored 88%⁷¹.

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8.7 Withdrawal from ECtHR

8.7.1 In 2023, the European section of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe) published 'The Human Rights Situation of LGBTI People in Europe and Central Asia between January-December 2022', (ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2023). It stated 'In June [2022], the [Russian] parliament adopted a law establishing that Russian court rulings will take precedence over rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and that the government will not execute the Court's rulings.'⁷²

8.7.2 In July 2024 the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) published a press release stating:

'On 22 March 2022, the European Court of Human rights adopted a Resolution on the consequences of the cessation of membership of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe in light of Article 58 of the European Convention on Human Rights. On 16 September 2022 the Russian Federation ceased to be a Party to the European Convention on Human Rights. Since the Russian Federation ceased to be a High Contracting Party to the Convention on 16 September 2022, the office of judge at the Court with respect to the Russian Federation also ceased to exist.

'...The Court dealt with 5,299 applications concerning Russia in 2023, of which 833 were declared inadmissible or struck out. It delivered 217 judgments (concerning 4,466 applications), 216 of which found at least one violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.'⁷³

8.7.3 The same source [listed examples of cases](#) decided by the ECtHR including cases relevant to SOGIE in the last six years.

8.7.4 For further information on the legal context for SOGIE in Russia see, [The Conversation: 30 years of LGBTQ+ history in Russia: from decriminalisation in 1993 to 'extremist' status in 2023](#)

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9. State attitudes

9.1.1 In January 2023, BBC News reported, '... the president [of Russia] lashed out at the West and LGBT rights, calling them "pure Satanism".'⁷⁴

9.1.2 A BBC News article published on 30 November 2023 in which a BBC correspondent interviewed a Russian MP, noted:

'At the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, Vitaly Milonov, a

⁷¹ ILGA-Europe, [2024-rainbow-index.pdf](#), 2024

⁷² ILGA, '[Annual Review 2023](#),' 20 February 2023

⁷³ ECtHR, [Russia Press country profile](#), July 2024

⁷⁴ BBC News, [Russia: Putin's Kremlin targets LGBT](#), 23 January 2023

famously homophobic MP from the ruling party, United Russia, said the ban on LGBT groups was "not about sexual minorities or the private life of individuals".

"It's more about the political agenda proclaimed by this LGBT international movement," he told me.

"They have their own tasks, their own goals. They act as a political force, a political structure and the goals of this structure contravene the Russian Constitution."

"You talk about a political structure," I responded. "But there isn't a movement called the 'International LGBT public movement.' How can you ban something that doesn't exist?"

"Oh, it's easy," Mr Milonov replied. "We can ban any activities from LGBT international organisations here in Russia. That's nice. We don't need them."

"And I'm looking forward to the next step: banning the six-colour rainbow flag. We don't need this flag. It's a symbol of the fight with the traditional family. I hope that no-one can show this flag in Russia."

'Under Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin has embraced an ideology centred around conservative thinking and "traditional family values". The authorities portray LGBT activism as something inherently Western and hostile to Russia. Pressure on the LGBT community is presented as a means of defending the moral fabric of Russia.'⁷⁵

- 9.1.3 In November 2023, the Nordic Times reported, 'State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin defended the ban on gender reassignment, arguing that it was introduced to protect the country from what he called the Western "transgender industry".'

'Volodin cited the US, where he claimed the number of gender reassignment surgeries has increased 50-fold in the past decade. "This is the path leading to the degradation of a nation", he said.'⁷⁶

- 9.1.4 In December 2023, Meduza, an international publication released in Russian and English⁷⁷ published reactions to the 'LGBT+ ban':

'Vakhtang Kipshidze

'Deputy chairman of the Synodal Department of the Moscow Patriarchate for Church Relations with Society and Mass Media',

'It [the LGBT+ movement] has signs of extremism, since the logical conclusion of its activities result in the destruction of the traditional concept of marriage and family.

' ...

'Yevgeny Popov

'Propagandist, deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee on Information Policy

'If we want to protect ourselves from drag queen shows in daycare centers, I'm all for it. If we want to protect children from changing their sex without

⁷⁵ BBC news, '[Russian court bans 'LGBT movement'](#)', 30 November 2023

⁷⁶ Nordic Times, '[Russia considers adoption ban for "gender swap" countries](#)', 26 November 2023

⁷⁷ Meduza, '[About Meduza — Meduza](#)', 2025

their parents being notified, I'm all for it. But basically, there are different people out there. We have a free country; please express your opinion, but forcing someone to be gay or lesbian, promoting it, is also unacceptable. We have to sort it out. Cutting out gay scenes from masterpieces, I don't know ... Although we also have excess on the other side. The state has no business in the bedroom, but on the other hand, of course, we have to protect society from all sorts of monstrous projects and the realities of modern times, such as drag queens and gender reassignment without parental notification. But we need to understand what it [the ban] was and why it [the hearing] was secret. Of course, since the Justice Ministry filed this lawsuit and the court approved it, there should be a full explanation."⁷⁸

' ...

'Pyotr Tolstoy

'Deputy chairman of Russia's State Duma

'LGBT are not some unfortunate gay or lesbian people that we are told Russia has decided to fight. It's actually a well-organized and well-planned project to undermine traditional societies from within. Sodomy is a sin and the exact opposite of traditional values. And sodomy in pretty packaging is an attractive product designed to accomplish this. That's the goal. Everything else is just a cover. Of course, the law adopted last year banning LGBT propaganda has cut off many tentacles of this monster. Though it is not the tentacles that need to be destroyed, but the entire monster.'⁷⁹

9.1.5 The ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2024 noted:

'Lawmakers continued to refer to LGBT rights and trans rights as Western imports that try to "infiltrate the country". In January 2023, State Duma deputy Adam Delimkhanov (United Russia party) pledged to "destroy LGBT people".

'During the debates on the ban on trans healthcare and legal gender recognition, the deputy chair of the Duma, Vladislav Davankov (New People Party) said the law was "yet another step to protect national interests" from "perversions." The minister of Justice, Konstantin Chuichenko (Independent) said in May that trans people should receive "forced treatment".⁸⁰

9.1.6 In August 2024, Foreign Policy, an American international news publication based in Washington⁸¹, described how Russian officials released statements linking LGBT+ groups to Ukraine and its Western allies. It reported:

'... "A special military operation is taking place not only on the battlefields, but also in the consciousness, in the minds and souls of people," said Aleksander Khinshtein, a member of the Russian parliament and an author of the updated gay propaganda law, in a speech to the Duma in October 2022. "LGBT today is a tool of hybrid warfare. And in this hybrid warfare, we must protect our values. We must protect our society, and we must protect our children."⁸²

9.1.7 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 noted 'In May,

⁷⁸ Meduza, [decision to ban the 'LGBT movement'](#), 1 December 2023

⁷⁹ Meduza, [decision to ban the 'LGBT movement'](#), 1 December 2023

⁸⁰ ILGA, [2024_russia.pdf](#), (Bias-motivated speech), 2024

⁸¹ Foreign Policy, [Foreign Policy Submission Manager](#), no date

⁸² Foreign Policy, [Russia's New Queer Purge](#), 6 August 2024

former deputy for the Liberal Democratic Party and public figure Roman Khudyakov criticised interviews with feminine men and trans women. Khudyakov notably described such interviews as part of an “information war” promoting “LGBTI behaviour”. As such, he called for further enforcement of anti-LGBTI legislation to criminalise the alleged promotion of LGBTI identities.⁸³

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10. State treatment

10.1 Arrests and punishments

10.1.1 CPIT has reproduced information reported by the sources in paragraphs 10.1.3 to 10.1.21 into the below table showing reported charges, detentions and prosecutions of LGBT+ individuals, including under which law:

Category	Law/Basis	Number/Description	Details
Administrative convictions (2024)	Article 6.21/6.21.2 (Administrative Code (AC))	At least 44 people	‘Mostly’ for displaying LGBT+ symbols, such as rainbow flag online. ⁸⁴ At least 7 people were detained for up to 15 days as punishment
Fines for individuals	Article 6.21	1,500–500,000 rubles	Various cases including rainbow imagery on social media, such as VKontakte, Instagram ⁸⁵
Fines for organisations	Article 6.21	500,000 rubles	Elton John Bar fined for featuring rainbow flag in video ⁸⁶
Children and parents penalised	Article 5.35 (failure of parental duties)	2 reported cases	Parents reported; minors registered with police for online content ⁸⁷
General detentions (2023)	Not specified	64 people	Detention types include: ‘mental wards’, nursing homes, prison etc. ⁸⁸
→ in nursing homes	–	17 people (27%) (Subset of 63)	‘Mentally disabled’ institutions ⁸⁹

⁸³ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Bias-motivated speech), February 2025

⁸⁴ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), 16 January 2025

⁸⁵ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Expression), February 2025

⁸⁶ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Expression), February 2025

⁸⁷ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Family), February 2025

⁸⁸ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

⁸⁹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

Category	Law/Basis	Number/Description	Details
→ in mental wards	–	12 people (19%) (subset of 63)	Confined by court order ⁹⁰
→ in detention rooms	–	11 people (17%) (Subset of 63)	Short-term confinement ⁹¹
→ Forced disclosure of SOGIE in detention	–	40 of 63 detainees (subset of 63)	Identified during detention ⁹²
Criminal cases (as of end March 2025)	Article 282.2 (extremism)	10 criminal cases, 15 defendants	Some in custody/house arrest; one died in pre-trial detention ⁹³
First criminal prosecution under 'extremism'	February 2024	Photographer fined 1,500 rubles	For rainbow flag imagery in artwork ⁹⁴

10.1.2 CPIT was unable to find official statistics on arrests or punishments under laws restricting the activities of LGBT+ people in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). The following information focuses on examples of individual cases, reported by a range of sources, and survey data.

10.1.3 In September 2024, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Russian Federation (OHCHR report September 2024). The report stated, 'The risk of severe punishment for any form of public dissent is very high, particularly for individuals and groups vulnerable to discrimination based on gender ... [and] sexual orientation ...'⁹⁵

10.1.4 In January 2024, an article authored by Sergey Katsuba, a researcher in human rights law and LGBTQ law at University College Dublin⁹⁶, in 'The Conversation', described how the 2013 'gay propaganda' law has been used. It noted: '... In reality the law worked as a blanket ban, restricting any neutral to positive expressions related to homosexuality. The cases when people were fined for "gay propaganda" varied greatly – from screening LGBTQ+-themed movies to wearing clothes with rainbow print, from providing psychological help to discussing homosexuality in public.'⁹⁷

10.1.5 The ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2023 noted, 'High school students in Moscow, who made a film about gay-straight conflicts in school, were detained.'⁹⁸ The report did not provide any further information on the incident.

10.1.6 The same source stated, 'In June 2023, activist Aleksandr Sinko went to

⁹⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

⁹¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

⁹² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

⁹³ Coming Out, [Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#) 10 March 2025

⁹⁴ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Expression), February 2025

⁹⁵ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 2) 13 September 2024

⁹⁶ Sergey Katsuba, [Sergey Katsuba - UCD Sutherland School of Law](#), no date

⁹⁷ The Conversation, [... LGBTQ+ history in Russia: from decriminalisation...](#) 10 January 2024

⁹⁸ ILGA, [Annual Review of the human rights situation...](#), Russia, page 2, 29 February 2024

protest against the adoption of the law banning gender reassignment with a poster reading "Save the right to be myself". On the same day, he was detained and a report was drawn up on him for "propaganda of non-traditional relations". ...⁹⁹ ILGA did note that eventually the case was reclassified to a violation of COVID-19 restrictions rather than in relation to anti-LGBTI sentiment¹⁰⁰.

10.1.7 The same source reported other examples of the law being applied:

'The human rights initiative First Department reported that in January 2024, Russian authorities opened the first administrative case against an artist for posting a "rainbow flag" on the Internet ...

'On December 1 [2023], less than 48 hours after the Supreme Court banned the "international LGBT movement" as "extremist", security forces raided gay clubs and bars across Moscow, including a nightclub, a male sauna, and a bar that hosted LGBTQ+ parties, under the pretext of a drug raid. Eyewitnesses told journalists that people's documents were checked and photographed by the security services ...

'There were several attempts again to block LGBTI-themed websites and some faced prosecution for groups on social media/messaging sites or for blogging.'¹⁰¹

10.1.8 In March 2024, BBC News reported:

'Two employees of an LGBTQ+ club in the Russian city of Orenburg have been arrested on suspicion of being members of an "extremist organisation".

'It is the first criminal case of its kind since Russia's Supreme Court outlawed the so-called "international LGBT movement" last November [2023].

'If found guilty, the defendants face up to ten years in jail.

'The hearing was held behind closed doors.

'The art director of the club, Alexander Klimov, and administrator Diana Kamilyanova will remain in custody until 18 May [2024].'¹⁰²

10.1.9 In October 2024, OVD-Info, 'an independent human rights media project'¹⁰³, published an article which stated '... The art director was released under house arrest, and the club administrator is in jail.'¹⁰⁴ The article was originally published in Russian and has been translated using Microsoft Bing translator¹⁰⁵ and Reverso¹⁰⁶ (translation available upon request). In the sources consulted, CPIT was unable to find any further information as to the current circumstances of Diana Kamilyanova (see [Bibliography](#)).

10.1.10 In April 2024, in 'The State of the World's Human Rights', Amnesty International reported:

'... Within days [of the LGBT+ movement ban], police raided LGBTI-friendly

⁹⁹ ILGA, [Annual Review of the human rights situation...](#), Russia, page 3, 29 February 2024

¹⁰⁰ Xe Currency Converter, [40,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁰¹ ILGA, [Annual Review of the human rights situation...](#), Russia, page 4, 29 February 2024

¹⁰² BBC News, [Two arrested in Russia's first LGBTQ+ extremism case](#), 20 March 2024

¹⁰³ OVD-Info, [About the project](#), undated

¹⁰⁴ OVD-Info, [The chief physician from the Ulyanovsk region was sent to a pre-trial...](#) 7 October 2024

¹⁰⁵ Microsoft Bing Translator, [bing translator - Search](#), no date

¹⁰⁶ Reverso, [Reverso | Free translation, dictionary](#), no date

clubs in various cities, photographed patrons' documents and intimidated them. Authorities issued dozens of fines to video streaming services for hosting "LGBT propaganda". Many films and television shows were subjected to censorship to remove any references to same-sex relationships.¹⁰⁷

10.1.11 In 2024, the USSD HR report 2023 stated, 'authorities used laws prohibiting the promotion of "nontraditional sexual relations" to justify the arbitrary arrest of LGBTQI+ persons.'¹⁰⁸ No information on specific cases, numbers of arrests or the outcomes of arrests was provided¹⁰⁹.

10.1.12 In August 2024, Citizens' Watch, a St Petersburg NGO, together with the Sphere Foundation, reported the results of a study of law enforcement practice on administrative articles prohibiting "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" among adults and children. It stated:

'We examined 64 enforceable court decisions made between December 2022 and March 2024. In the course of the study, systemic problems and contradictions in the practice of applying odious articles 6.21 and 6.21.2 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation are revealed
' ...

'The report draws particular attention to the problem of the independence of experts and specialists, whose opinions are often used as evidence by the courts. Many of them are affiliated with state bodies that draw up protocols on administrative offenses. Procedural violations are also noted.'¹¹⁰

10.1.13 The October 2024 article published by OVD-Info stated:

'Ilya Zhuravlev, the former head of the dialysis center in Inza in the Ulyanovsk region, was detained in August on charges of participating in the activities of the "extremist" "LGBT movement" (Part 2 of Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code) and coercion of a person to act of a sexual nature (Part 1 of Article 133 of the Criminal Code); The security forces consider him a "fan of Satanism."

'... According to the telegram channel "Cheka-OGPU", in early September, the man was sent to a pre-trial detention center. In the same month, he was added to the "list of terrorists and extremists" of the Federal Financial Monitoring Service.

'... Zhuravlev's arrest could be used to put pressure on LGBT+ representatives among the authorities and former law enforcement officers in the Ulyanovsk region. After Zhuravlev's arrest, lists of members of the "LGBT organization" began to be distributed in Ulyanovsk chats. It also included local officials. The case of Zhuravlev is the second such case of an extremist organization [the LGBTQ+ club referred to in paragraph 10.1.8 being the first], the defendants of which are charged with participation in the "LGBT community" ...¹¹¹ The article was originally published in Russian and has

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International, [The State of the World's Human Rights](#), (Russia, page 319), April 2024

¹⁰⁸ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁰⁹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹¹⁰ Citizens' Watch and Sphere Foundation, [Persecution for "LGBT+ propaganda"...](#), August 2024

¹¹¹ OVD-Info, [The chief physician from the Ulyanovsk region was sent to a pre-trial...](#) 7 October 2024

been translated using Microsoft Bing translator¹¹² and Reverso¹¹³ (translation available upon request).

- 10.1.14 In December 2024, Associated Press (AP) News reported, ‘... Charges have been launched for displaying symbols such as a rainbow flag — even though many of those accused had nothing to do with the LGBTQ+ community, said human rights lawyer Max Olenichev ... One man arrested for allegedly running a travel agency for gay customers faces charges of organizing activities of an extremist organization.’¹¹⁴
- 10.1.15 On 11 December 2024, Parni+, a media platform dedicated to LGBTI+ rights¹¹⁵, noted the arrest of a male travel agency director, Andrei Kotov, on suspicion of ‘LGBT extremism’¹¹⁶. No update on the case against Kotov could be found in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 10.1.16 The HRW Report 2025 stated ‘In 2024, at least 44 people received administrative convictions [a conviction for an ‘administrative offence’, usually considered more minor than criminal offences but sometimes given more severe penalties¹¹⁷] for “displaying” LGBT movement symbols, mostly for posting the rainbow flag online. At least 7 people were detained for up to 15 days as punishment.’¹¹⁸
- 10.1.17 The Coming Out report 2025 noted:
‘Currently, 10 criminal cases have been initiated under this article [Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code], and there are 15 defendants in criminal cases. Many suspects and accused are in custody, some are under house arrest, and a person involved in one of the criminal cases died in a pre-trial detention center ... The actual number of criminal cases may be significantly higher than what is currently known. Information about some criminal cases only becomes available after a verdict has been issued.’¹¹⁹
- 10.1.18 In 2024, Coming Out and the Sphere Foundation, a human rights organisation supporting the Russian LGBTQ+ community,¹²⁰ published the ‘Report on the Life of LGBTQ+ People in Russia in 2023’ (Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023)¹²¹.
- 10.1.19 The report was based on data collected using an online self-report questionnaire survey from 4,701 respondents through social networks of LGBTQ+ organisations and a gay dating website between 11 December 2023 and 14 February 2024. All survey respondents were living in the officially recognised territories of Russia. The Central and Northwestern federal districts are overrepresented with 22% of respondents living in in Moscow and 13% in St Petersburg. North Caucasian and Volga federal districts are underrepresented. Most (83%) lived in cities of more than 250,000 inhabitants. Participants’ ages ranged from 12 to 66 years with a

¹¹² Microsoft Bing Translator, [bing translator - Search](#), no date

¹¹³ Reverso, [Reverso | Free translation, dictionary](#), no date

¹¹⁴ AP News, [Russia's LGBTQ+ community is living in fear...](#), 6 December 2024

¹¹⁵ Parni+, [About the project](#), undated

¹¹⁶ Parni+, [Will Men Travel's clients become extremists? Are there any deadlines?](#) 11 December 2024

¹¹⁷ Amnesty International, [Amnesty Public Statement](#), 20 July 2023

¹¹⁸ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), 16 January 2025

¹¹⁹ Coming Out, [‘Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...’](#) 10 March 2025

¹²⁰ Sphere Foundation, [About Sphere](#), no date

¹²¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), 2024

median age of 26 years and mean of 27.9 years. In terms of gender, 52% identified as men, 33% as women 13% as non-binary and 2% 'other'. Transgender people made up 22% of participants. Gay people made up 61% of participants, 20% were bisexual, 1% straight, 13% pansexual, 3% asexual and 2% 'other'. The majority of participants (51%) had or were pursuing higher education¹²².

10.1.20 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 stated:

'Out of all our respondents, 63 people (1%) have been detained or confined in 2023. The majority (27%) [17 people] have been placed in 'nursing homes for mentally disabled', 19% [12 people] have been confined in mental wards by a court order, 17% [11 people] have been locked up in a detention room. Less commonly have our respondents been in temporary detention facilities (6%) [4 people], jail (5%) [3 people], prison (2%) [1 person] and juvenile detention centers (2%) [1 person] ...'¹²³

10.1.21 The report also noted that 40 of the 63 respondents who had been detained had their sexual orientation or gender identity revealed while in detention, approximately half were verbally abused by staff and other detainees and eight reported sexual or physical assaults by staff or other detainees¹²⁴. The report did not include details as to the initial reason for arrests.

10.1.22 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025, covering 2024, listed multiple examples of prosecutions under 'LGBT propaganda' laws. It stated:

' ... On 5 February 2024, prosecutions for LGBTI extremism began in Russia. The first judgement was handed down by a Saratov court against photographer Inna Mosina, who had previously used an image of a rainbow flag in her photographic works. She was fined 1,500 roubles [£13.97¹²⁵].

'In March 2024, Artem Medvedev was detained by police for two days for an Instagram post against the backdrop of a rainbow flag. The Russian LGBT Network managed to free Artem in court with a fine of 1,900 roubles (19 Euro) [£17.50¹²⁶] ...

'In May, a Moscow university student was sentenced to 15 days in jail for a Telegram post that allegedly featured symbols associated with the LGBTI community ...

'The Novosibirsk court fined the Elton John Bar 500,000 rubles [£4,597.88¹²⁷] for promoting LGBTI propaganda through the use of a rainbow flag. The ruling followed the bar's involvement in a video by blogger Karen Shainyan [an LGBT+ activist¹²⁸], who is labelled as a "foreign agent" ...

'In December, a student from Moscow, was fined 500,000 rubles (5,000 Euro) [[£4,597.88¹²⁹] for sharing five images with LGBTI symbols on her VKontakte page, dating back to 2019. The fine was imposed under Russia's "LGBTI propaganda" laws, specifically Article 6.21 of the Administrative

¹²² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), (pages 9-11), 2024

¹²³ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

¹²⁴ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 52, 2024

¹²⁵ Xe Currency Converter, [1,500 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British Pounds...](#), 18 March 2025

¹²⁶ Xe Currency Converter, [1,900 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹²⁷ Xe Currency Converter, [500,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹²⁸ ADC Memorial, [Karen Shahinyan disputed his status of the "media-foreign agent"](#), 11 August 2022

¹²⁹ Xe Currency Converter, [500,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

Code, which penalises the dissemination of LGBTI content online. The student was charged with five separate offenses, one for each image, and fined 100,000 rubles [£919.88¹³⁰] (1,000 Euro) per image.¹³¹

10.1.23 The same source reported on state enforcement of the ‘gay propaganda’ laws against children and their parents. It stated:

‘In April [2024], in Tula, the mother of an underage girl was reported to the Juvenile Affairs Commission for failing to meet parental responsibilities under part 1 of article 5.35 of the Administrative Code. The daughter was also registered with the police department for minors due to her posts on a Telegram channel, which, according to the law enforcement, included symbols of a “banned extremist LGBTI organisation” and other illegal content.

‘In September, in Tula, police conducted a “preventive visit” to a 17-year-old boy for distributing “symbols of the banned extremist LGBT organisation” in a Telegram channel. They forced him to delete the content and registered him with the juvenile affairs department. Additionally, his mother was charged with “failure to fulfil or improper fulfilment of parental duties” under part 1 of article 5.35 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences.’¹³²

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10.2 Censorship

10.2.1 In November 2023, BBC News noted, ‘Earlier this month one Russian TV channel discoloured a rainbow in a South Korean pop video, to avoid being accused of violating the "gay propaganda" law.’¹³³

10.2.2 The OHCHR report September 2024 described the surveillance and blocking of free expression on the internet, including of LGBT+ content. It stated:

‘The Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) has implemented a digital surveillance system known as SORM across telecommunications networks in the Russian Federation to monitor and censor the Internet. This system enables surveillance, violates privacy rights and has been instrumental in the Government’s efforts to suppress dissent and control information, particularly concerning the war against Ukraine.

‘Roskomnadzor maintains a centralized blacklist of IP addresses, domain names and URLs that Internet service providers in the Russian Federation are legally required to block. Over 1.7 million websites are currently blocked. Roskomnadzor undertakes automated Internet scanning for illegal content, detecting unsanctioned protests, anti-war dissent and “LGBT propaganda”.

‘In March 2024, Roskomnadzor implemented new restrictions on the advertising of virtual private network (VPN) services, reducing people’s ability to access uncensored information and communicate privately.’¹³⁴

10.2.3 In January 2024, HRW published their annual report on human rights in Russia, covering events in 2023 (HRW report 2024). It noted that, during

¹³⁰ Xe Currency Converter, [100,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British](#), 19 March 2025

¹³¹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Expression), February 2025

¹³² ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Family), February 2025

¹³³ BBC News, [‘Russia LGBT: Police raid Moscow gay clubs, media say’](#), 2 December 2023

¹³⁴ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 8), 13 September 2024

2023 'Russia's media and communications regulator, Roskomnadzor, prosecuted streaming services for movies featuring scenes with LGBT people and ordered blockings of websites featuring any LGBT content. In February 2023, Roskomnadzor developed by-laws outlining criteria for defining "gay propaganda".'¹³⁵

10.2.4 The HRW report 2025 noted:

'Authorities also continued using "LGBT propaganda" laws to suppress and punish LGBT visibility. In August, a court in Moscow fined a local resident 100,000 rubles (US\$1000) [£920¹³⁶] for "LGBT propaganda" over an old social media post featuring same-sex people kissing. A court in Volgograd imposed detention and subsequent deportation on a transgender sex worker, a Tajik citizen, for her online publications...

'Courts continued fining television channels and streaming services for running content featuring LGBT people or same-sex relations. Publishers continued recalling books with LGBT content. A court in Nizhny Novgorod fined a bookstore 500,000 rubles (US\$5000) [£4,598¹³⁷] for selling a novel including depictions of same-sex relations.¹³⁸

10.2.5 The HRW report 2025 reported that 'Freedom of assembly remained virtually non-existent.'¹³⁹

10.2.6 The same source described increased online censorship, more generally, which also prevents online LGBT+ representation. It stated:

'Authorities continued their campaign to censor and control independent voices online. 'In March, a 2023 law entered into force that prohibits the promotion of censorship circumvention tools, including virtual private networks (VPNs).

'Between July and September, Apple blocked at least 25 VPN apps in its App Store in response to a request by Roskomnadzor.

'In August, Roskomnadzor ordered the blocking of the secure instant messenger app Signal.

'In August, a new law established a state registry of social media pages with an audience of more than 10,000 people. The law requires the owners of such pages to submit their personal information to the authorities and prohibits sharing the posts of unregistered owners of such pages. It also stipulates that only social media pages on the registry should be allowed to monetize their content.

'Also in August, Russian authorities apparently introduced measures to drastically slow down YouTube.

'In September, Russian internet service providers said authorities were throttling YouTube using state-managed deep packet inspection technology installed in providers' networks.

'The Russia-proposed UN Cybercrime Convention was agreed to by member states in November. The treaty establishes broad surveillance

¹³⁵ HRW, [World Report 2024: Russia \(hrw.org\)](https://www.hrw.org/report/2024/01/10/russia-2024), 10 January 2024

¹³⁶ Xe Currency Converter, [100,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British](https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?from=RUB&to=GBP&amount=100000), 19 March 2025

¹³⁷ Xe Currency Converter, [500,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?from=RUB&to=GBP&amount=500000), 19 March 2025

¹³⁸ HRW, [World Report 2025](https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/01/13/russia-2025), (page 385) 13 January 2025

¹³⁹ HRW, [World Report 2025](https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/01/13/russia-2025), (page 388), 13 January 2025

powers and has the potential to transform cross-border access to data and facilitate transnational repression.¹⁴⁰

10.2.7 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 reported ‘Since the beginning of 2024, the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media has blocked over 170,000 internet pages containing prohibited content. The volume of content blocked for alleged LGBTI propaganda has surged nearly twelvefold compared to the same period last year.’¹⁴¹

10.2.8 The same source reported examples of restrictions on LGBT+ content on television and online. It noted:

‘In April, the Kino TV channel was penalised by the St. Petersburg district court under Part 2 of Article 6.21.2 of the Russian Administrative Code. The penalty was awarded for broadcasting a film depicting “non-traditional sexual relations” labelled with a “16+” rating, thus allegedly making it accessible to minors.

‘In May, administrative protocols were filed against the online cinemas Wink and KinoPoisk under the Russian law prohibiting the promotion of LGBTI content, as reported by RIA Novosti. In September, Moscow’s Tagansky District Court fined the online cinema Kinopoisk twice in one day, for a total of 10 million roubles (99,000 Euro) [£92,370¹⁴²] for the screening of the film ‘Love’ by French director Gaspard Noe. The online cinema was found guilty under the Protocol on “propaganda of paedophilia” on the Internet (Part 2 of Article 6.21.1 of the Code of Administrative Violations) and fined 7 million roubles (69,000 Euro) [£64,538¹⁴³]. In addition, Kinopoisk was fined 3 million roubles (29,000 Euro) [£27692¹⁴⁴] under the protocol on “propaganda of LGBT and sex change” (Part 3 of Article 6.21.1 of the Code of Administrative Offences).

‘A joint study by the Sphere Foundation and the human rights organisation Civic Control shows that the prosecution of streaming services and TV channels for showing films or videos under the “propaganda” law was the second largest group of court cases between December 2022 (when the new propaganda law comes into force) and March 2024.’¹⁴⁵

10.2.9 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 reported ‘In May, Russia’s first trans politician, Roman Alyoshin, announced his intention to detransition amid an intensifying crackdown on the rights of LGBTI people.’¹⁴⁶

10.2.10 The same source reported on LGBT+ representation in culture and sport. It stated:

‘In August, the Russian Computer Sports Federation announced its decision to discontinue holding League of Legends tournaments, citing the presence of LGBTI characters in the video game.

¹⁴⁰ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), (page 388) 13 January 2025

¹⁴¹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Expression), February 2025

¹⁴² Xe Currency Converter, [10,000,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁴³ Xe Currency Converter, [7,000,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁴⁴ Xe Currency Converter, [3,000,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁴⁵ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Access to goods and services), February 2025

¹⁴⁶ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Bodily Integrity), February 2025

'In April 2024, a complaint was filed demanding the expulsion of volleyball player Ebrar Karakurt from the Russian Lokomotiv team due to her being openly lesbian.'¹⁴⁷

10.2.11 In May 2025, Amnesty International reported on the detention of book publishers. It stated:

'On 14 May, Russian security forces detained at least 10 individuals in Moscow as part of a criminal investigation into alleged "involvement in the activities of an extremist organization," "participation in the activities" of such an organization, and "organizing its work using official position" (Article 282.2(1.1), (2), (3) of the Criminal Code) for publishing LGBTI-themed books. At least 10 individuals were taken in for questioning, including Anatoly Norovyatkin, distribution director at EKSMO, as well as *Popcorn Books* co-founder Dmitry Protopopov and former sales director Pavel Ivanov. On 15 May, three people were formally charged, their names are not yet disclosed. If convicted under these charges, they could face prison sentences of up to 12 years.'¹⁴⁸

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10.3 Harassment, surveillance, blackmail and violence

10.3.1 In 2024, the USSD HR report 2023 noted, 'There were reports police conducted involuntary physical exams of transgender or intersex persons. The Association of Russian-speaking Intersex reported medical specialists often pressured intersex persons (or their parents if they were underage) into having so-called normalization surgery without providing accurate information regarding the procedure or what being intersex meant.'¹⁴⁹

10.3.2 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 stated, 'In July [2024], police officers in Ufa attacked a migrant trans sex worker, beating her and robbing her of 100,000 rubles [£919.88¹⁵⁰]. The policemen were subsequently sacked and the woman deported.'¹⁵¹

10.3.3 The same report stated, 'No public rallies, marches, demonstrations or pickets in defence of LGBT people were held in Russia in 2024. This is largely due to the Russian authorities' persecution of people for expressing their opinions, which has become much more severe since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.'¹⁵²

10.3.4 The same source reported on examples of police action against LGBT+ people attending social events:

'In November [2024], Russian security forces raided the "Zebra" club in Voronezh, where a closed LGBTI costume party was being held. According to PostNews, approximately 40 people were present at the event when the raid occurred. Following the raid, a criminal case was opened against the event organisers under the article on extremism.

'In late November [2024], Russian police raided several bars and nightclubs in Moscow, enforcing laws criminalising "LGBT propaganda." During the

¹⁴⁷ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Participation in public, cultural...), February 2025

¹⁴⁸ Amnesty International, [Russia: Book publishers arrested in anti-LGBTI campaign](#), 15 May 2025

¹⁴⁹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁵⁰ Xe Currency Converter, [100,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁵¹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Bias-motivated violence), February 2025

¹⁵² ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Assembly), February 2025

raids, authorities confiscated smartphones, laptops, and video cameras, and checked the documents of club-goers. Social media footage showed police ordering partygoers to lie on the floor at the Arma nightclub, while another video depicted people being escorted out of the popular gay club Mono with their hands over their heads with a police van waiting outside. The Interior Ministry also reported a raid on a nightclub on Skladochnaya Street for allegedly promoting the “ideology of the banned LGBT movement.”¹⁵³

10.3.5 In February 2025, The Metro News, a UK-based news outlet,¹⁵⁴ stated:

‘Russia has spent more than a year creating an electronic database of its LGBTQ+ citizens, independent Russian media has reported.

‘... The officials, members of Russia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, are creating the list using police records of LGBTQ+ people arrested in recent raids.

‘Moscow views LGBTQ+ people as a shadowy cabal of “paramilitary groups” calling for an “open gender war” and engaging in “devil worship”, they said.

‘Citing ministry insiders, people making the watch list include the dozens of LGBTQ+ club-goers and venue owners detained in recent months under Russia’s “gay propaganda” ban.

‘... One queer bar owner told Meduza that during a raid, “security forces copied the entire database from the computer where we keep track of reservations”.

‘Dmitry Chukreev, of the pro-Kremlin political party United Russia, confirmed to Meduza that “records have been kept since the Supreme Court ruling came into force”.

‘Everyone is being recorded and put on record,’ he added.¹⁵⁵

10.3.6 The Coming Out report 2025 noted that:

‘Until 2024, instances of torture and cruel treatment by state authorities against LGBTQ+ individuals in Russia were largely confined to the North Caucasus region, with sporadic cases in police departments in other regions. However, the designation of the International LGBT Movement as an extremist organization has extended this practice to other regions of the country. For instance, Andrey Kotov reported to his lawyer and in court during the hearing on pretrial detention that he was subjected to violence by police officers to gain access to his laptops and phone, which qualifies as torture. The detention of a gay man in Tula in January 2025 was accompanied by degrading treatment, as evidenced by a video that was disseminated in the media. According to monitoring conducted by the LGBTQ+ group “Coming Out”, at least 19 raids on LGBTQ+ clubs and events, including those held in private spaces, were recorded in 2024. During each raid, between 10 and 40 people were subjected to physical violence, humiliation, threats, and abuse by law enforcement officers. Victims were forced to perform physical exercises, sing, or assume specific poses. In some raids, all male attendees were issued draft notices for military service. Additionally, participants were photographed, and these

¹⁵³ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Police and Law enforcement), February 2025

¹⁵⁴ Metro News, [About Metro.co.uk and Metro newspaper ...](#), 2025

¹⁵⁵ Metro News, [Kremlin accused of 'creating a database of LGBTQ+ Russians...](#), 21 February 2025

images were later published online or sent to their workplaces.’¹⁵⁶

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10.4 State response to anti-LGBT+ crimes

10.4.1 In 2024, The USSD HR report 2023 noted ‘There were instances of nonstate actor violence targeting LGBTQI+ persons and of police often failing to respond adequately to such incidents.’¹⁵⁷ The source did not include any details on how police response effectiveness was measured or the scale or extent of this.

10.4.2 The same source reported, ‘The Sphere Foundation claimed law enforcement authorities did not always protect the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals and were sometimes the source of violence themselves. As a result, LGBTQI+ individuals had extremely low levels of trust in courts and police.’¹⁵⁸

10.4.3 In 2024, the Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted:

‘Among those [500 LGBT+ people] who have been victims of hate crimes in 2023, as little as 14% (70 people) reported to the police. Last year, [2022] the proportion was 20% ...

‘Out of those who reported to the police, 54% had their statements accepted ...

‘More than a third (34%) of those who have reached out to the police stated that their case was denied, 29% noted that they are not aware of the status of their case since it had been filed. No more than 10% reported that their case had been filed and the investigation conducted, and only 9% had their offender caught and prosecuted. Only 4% of those respondents, who have reported to the police, had their hate crime case brought to court (3 people).’¹⁵⁹

10.4.4 The same source reported:

‘Among those who have been victims of hate crimes but did not report to the police, the most common reason for doing so was doubt that reporting to the police will be effective (78%). Fear of police officers was another common (73%) reason among our respondents ... Approximately 50% of those who refused to go to the police, explained that they decided to do so in fear of being outed which could have happened along their filing a case; 23% mentioned fearing that their offender could have found out about them having reported to the police.’¹⁶⁰

10.4.5 The Coming Out report 2025 noted that:

‘LGBTQ+ people in Russia often face outsourcing by homophobic movements and groups who illegally collect information about the private lives, names, addresses, place of work or study of LGBTQ+ people, after which they either extort money from them or simply disseminate this information, which leads to LGBTQ+ people receiving numerous threats to life and health or stalking. There is no effective investigation of these hate

¹⁵⁶ Coming Out, [‘Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...’](#) 10 March 2025

¹⁵⁷ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁵⁸ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁵⁹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 50, 2024

¹⁶⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 51, 2024

crimes by the law enforcement agencies of the Russian Federation. Contacting law enforcement agencies carries the risk of bringing the victim himself to justice for "promoting non-traditional sexual relations" or accusing him of extremism.

'In 2023, 14% of people surveyed by the LGBTQ+ group "Comingout" [sic] faced blackmail or extortion because of their sexual orientation or transgenderism. Also, LGBTQ+ people, including minors, have recently regularly faced threats of denunciations in the form of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" or anti-extremist crimes from homophobes, colleagues, neighbors, relatives or even parents.'¹⁶¹

10.4.6 The same report considered police response to LGBT+ individuals, in instances of non-state violence:

'In 2023, only 4% of cases [highlighted in the Coming Out study 2024] were effectively investigated. Contacting law enforcement agencies in a large number of cases not only does not entail an effective investigation, but also leads to humiliation and discrimination on the part of police officers, and may also entail checking whether there are grounds for bringing the victim to administrative responsibility for "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations", for "participation in extremist activities." or interference with privacy through verification of mobile communication facilities. So, in 2023, 44% of LGBTQ+ people who contacted the police in connection with homophobic and transphobic crimes against them were subjected to pressure from police officers. 73% of the respondents reported that they would not contact the police because of fear of police officers.

'[I]n 2024, a new trend emerged that further complicates access to legal protection from the Russian state. The ban on the "International LGBT Movement" has been perceived by the population as the criminalization of sexual orientation. Consequently, there has been an increase in cases where victims of violence have faced counterclaims from their attackers, alleging that the victims were engaged in extremist activities or "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" (Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses).'¹⁶²

10.4.7 The same report detailed instances of counterclaims against LGBT+ victims:

'... In one instance documented by the LGBTQ+ group "Comingout," [sic] a person in the Krasnodar region reported a robbery to the police. The attacker countered with an accusation that the victim was engaging in "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations." Despite the involvement of a professional lawyer, the case resulted in no investigation into the attacker, a guilty verdict against the victim, a significant fine, and the victim's deportation from Russia.

'... In January 2025, in St. Petersburg, an LGBTQ+ person was a victim of domestic violence and reported it to the police. The victim's father informed law enforcement that the person was engaged in "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" and financing LGBTQ+ organizations. With the help of a lawyer, the victim managed to avoid prosecution, but the police made dropping charges against the perpetrator of the violence a condition

¹⁶¹ Coming Out, '[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#)' 10 March 2025

¹⁶² Coming Out, '[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#)' 10 March 2025

for dismissing the case against the victim.

'... Also in January 2025, a homosexual individual refused to resign from their workplace at the request of their employer. In response, the employer filed a report with the Federal Security Service (FSB) alleging that the individual was engaged in extremist activities.'¹⁶³

10.4.8 For more information on the state response to involuntary 'conversion therapy' see [Conversion therapy](#).

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10.5 State attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus (including Chechnya)

NOTE: The maps in this section are not intended to reflect the UK Government's views of any boundaries.

10.5.1 The North Caucasus region covers parts of Russia, Azerbaijan and Georgia¹⁶⁴ ¹⁶⁵. The Russian territory includes the republics of Chechnya¹⁶⁶, Dagestan¹⁶⁷, Ingushetia¹⁶⁸, Karachay-Cherkessia¹⁶⁹, North Ossetia¹⁷⁰ and Kabardino-Balkaria.¹⁷¹

10.5.2 Map of the Northern Caucasus region including Russians republics of Chechnya , Dagestan , Ingushetia, North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria:



10.5.3 The Republic of Karachay-Cherkessia is not labelled on the above map but is also within the North Caucasus of Russia, as shown in the map below¹⁷²:

¹⁶³ Coming Out, '[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#)' 10 March 2025

¹⁶⁴ World Atlas, '[Is the North Caucasus a Country?](#)', 26 November 2019

¹⁶⁵ BBC News, '[North Caucasus: Guide to a volatile region](#)', 11 January 2011

¹⁶⁶ BBC News, '[Chechnya profile - BBC News](#)', 28 August 2023

¹⁶⁷ BBC News, '[Dagestan profile - BBC News](#)', 30 October 2023

¹⁶⁸ BBC News, '[Ingushetia profile - BBC News](#)', 28 August 2023

¹⁶⁹ BBC News, '[Karachay-Cherkessia profile - BBC News](#)', 28 August 2023

¹⁷⁰ BBC News, '[North Ossetia profile - BBC News](#)', 17 October 2024

¹⁷¹ BBC News, '[Kabardino-Balkaria profile - BBC News](#)', 28 August 2023

¹⁷² BBC News, '[Karachay-Cherkessia profile - BBC News](#)', 28 August 2023



- 10.5.4 See the BBC News article [North Caucasus: Guide to a volatile region](#), 25 January 2011, for information on republics and regions, including Chechnya, within North Caucasus.
- 10.5.5 For information on the 2017 ‘anti-gay purge’ in Chechnya, affecting primarily gay men but also lesbian women and trans persons, see:
- Human Rights Watch report [“They Have Long Arms and They Can Find Me”](#), published 26 May 2017
 - Rapporteur for the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE) report [OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on alleged Human Rights Violations and Impunity in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation](#), published December 2018
 - Pink News [Chechnya gay purge's forgotten lesbian and transgender victims](#), published 8 September 2018
- 10.5.6 In May 2019, an article in The Independent stated, ‘... [Chechnya’s] leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, who has been given free rein as part of a security deal struck with the Kremlin, has denied knowledge of any clampdown. But in a menacing interview given soon after the first reports of torture emerged [in 2017], he insisted there were “no gays” in Chechnya. And, even if there were, he added, they should be removed – “far away from us ... to purify our blood.”’¹⁷³
- 10.5.7 In 2021, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, a Berlin-based ‘independent, non-profit legal and educational organisation dedicated to enforcing civil and human rights worldwide’¹⁷⁴, reported, ‘The regime in the Russian republic of Chechnya has ultraconservative and patriarchal values. It regards homosexuality and bisexuality as violations of the norm that must be prevented and combated. Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov even described LGBTQ* as “non-human”.’¹⁷⁵
- 10.5.8 In 2021, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, reported:

¹⁷³ The Independent, [‘Gay purge’ responders in Russia attacked and receiving death...](#) 30 May 2019

¹⁷⁴ ECCHR, [ECCHR: Violent persecution of LGBTQ* by the Chechen regime](#), 19 April 2021

¹⁷⁵ ECCHR, [ECCHR: Violent persecution of LGBTQ* by the Chechen regime](#), 19 April 2021

'At least 150 LGBTQ* have been violently persecuted, tortured or sexually abused by government and security forces in Chechnya. ... The European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) and the Russian LGBT Network/Sphere Foundation filed a criminal complaint against five suspects with the German Federal Prosecutor's Office for crimes under international law...

'The February 2021 criminal complaint includes numerous crimes committed by Chechen government forces between 2017 and 2019. These are not isolated incidents, but part of a systematic and widespread attack on people based on their sexual orientation. ...'¹⁷⁶

10.5.9 In June 2023, Politico, an American news service specialising in politics and policy,¹⁷⁷ stated:

'There are signs that the war in Ukraine is making the situation even more precarious for those accused of being LGBTQ+. Miron Rozanov, a spokesperson for Russian NGO SOS Crisis Group ... revealed the number of people getting in touch for support after being detained on the basis of allegations about their supposed sexuality has doubled in recent months.

“People complain they are being detained and given three options. The first, according to long-standing practice, is to face a fabricated criminal case. The second is paying a ransom: Since the start of the war, the amounts have increased and now average about a million rubles [€ 11,150],[£9,204¹⁷⁸] Rozanov told Radio Free Europe's Chechen channel late last year. “The third is being sent to the territory of Ukraine as a ‘volunteer.’”¹⁷⁹

10.5.10 The USSD HR report 2023 referred to the case of a bisexual woman, Elina Ukhmanova who was forcibly returned to her home by Dagestan police after being tortured in a ‘rehabilitation centre’ in 2023¹⁸⁰ (see [Conversion therapy](#) for further information on the details of this case).

10.5.11 RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty reported on 21 January 2023 that:

'In August, 20-year-old Elina Ukhmanova fled her home in the Russian region of Dagestan for the third time. She feared for her safety after what she describes as years of violence and abuse from her relatives capped off with several harrowing months undergoing forced “treatment” for atheism and bisexuality at a dubious rehabilitation center in the regional capital, Makhachkala.

'Only now, after several months under the protection of human rights activists in an undisclosed location, does she feel safe enough to tell her story.

“Anyone running away from their family in the [North] Caucasus -- it doesn't matter if it is a young man or a woman -- is never completely safe, even outside of Russia,” Ukhmanova told RFE/RL's Caucasus.Realities. “Even abroad, there are no 100 percent guarantees.”¹⁸¹

10.5.12 In 2024, the LGBTQ+ support organisation, NC SOS Crisis Group described

¹⁷⁶ ECCHR, [ECCHR: Violent persecution of LGBTQ* by the Chechen regime](#), 19 April 2021

¹⁷⁷ Politico, [About POLITICO](#), 2025

¹⁷⁸ Xe Currency Converter, [1,000,000 RUB to GBP - Russian Rubles to British...](#), 19 March 2025

¹⁷⁹ Politico, [Inside Chechnya's gulag for gay men](#), 21 June 2023

¹⁸⁰ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 1B), 22 April 2024 4

¹⁸¹ RFE/RL, [... Woman From Russia's Dagestan Flees Forced 'Treatment'...](#) 21 January 2023

multiple cases of LGBT+ people who have been subjected to human rights abuses at the hands of state officials in the North Caucasus, in its progress report for 2023¹⁸². See [Civil Society Organisations \(CSOs\) and support groups](#) for more information on NC SOS Crisis Group.

10.5.13 In January 2024, The Moscow Times reported:

‘A gay Chechen man has fled Russia after spending months in police custody [in Chechnya], where he faced abuse from law enforcement officials linked to Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, the North Caucasus LGBTQ+ rights group SK SOS announced Wednesday.

‘Rizvan Dadayev was detained in the summer of 2022 after a video circulated online where local extortionists forced him to admit he is gay, SK SOS told The Moscow Times. He had not been heard from since.

‘The SK SOS rights group learned that Dadayev was held in the basement of a police station in the Chechen capital of Grozny from late July to mid-November 2022.

“Dadayev, who was detained only because of his sexual orientation, was also beaten and tortured,” it said.

‘Among those said to have abused Dadayev during his detention was a local police chief, who kicked him until he lost consciousness, according to SK SOS.

‘Dadayev identified the senior officer as the nephew of Kadyrov’s wife, Deni Aydamirov, who was named Chechnya’s Deputy Interior Minister in November ...

‘The circumstances surrounding Dadayev’s eventual release in November 2022 remain unclear ...

‘Credible reports have in recent years documented cases of large-scale arrests and violence toward individuals believed to be gay or lesbian in Russia’s conservative and predominantly Muslim republic of Chechnya.’¹⁸³

10.5.14 In 2024, the HRW Report 2024 stated, ‘In September [2023], the ECtHR handed down a [ruling](#) in the case of Maxim Lapunov, the only victim of Chechnya’s [2017 anti-gay purge](#) who dared seek justice despite great personal risk. The court found that Lapunov was “detained and subjected to ill-treatment by State agents,” which “amounted to torture” and was perpetrated “solely on account of his sexual orientation.”’¹⁸⁴

10.5.15 In 2024, the USSD HR report 2023 stated:

‘Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and independent media outlets continued to publish reports that local authorities in the Republic of Chechnya continued a campaign of violence against individuals perceived to be members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or other sexual minority (LGBTQI+) community.

‘According to human rights organizations, authorities failed to open investigations into the allegations or reports of extrajudicial killings and mass torture of LGBTQI+ persons in Chechnya and denied there were any such

¹⁸² NC SOS Crisis Group, [sos2023_en.pdf](#), 2024

¹⁸³ Moscow Times, [Gay Chechen Man Flees Russia After Months of Police Abuse](#) , 17 January 2024

¹⁸⁴ HRW, [World Report 2024: Russia](#), 2024

persons in the republic.¹⁸⁵

10.5.16 The same source reported:

‘There were reports state actors committed violence against LGBTQI+ individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, particularly in Chechnya. There were reports government agents attacked, harassed, and threatened LGBTQI+ activists...

‘... on February 15 [2023], Moscow airport police arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared Idris Arsamikov as he returned to the Netherlands after attending his father’s funeral in Chechnya. In 2018, Arsamikov fled Russia following his detention and torture by Chechen police in connection with his presumed homosexuality. According to media, Shelkovsky District police in Chechnya refused to disclose his whereabouts, and the Investigative Committee in Chechnya refused to investigate his disappearance.’¹⁸⁶

10.5.17 The OHCHR report September 2024 stated:

‘Six cases are known of LGBT persons abducted by Chechen law enforcement and threatened with long prison sentences or death, unless they signed a contract to join the war against Ukraine. Such actions are part of a broader pattern of systematic persecution of LGBT persons in the North Caucasus, especially in Chechnya, where police and the military have subjected them to arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture, including rape and sexual violence, perpetrated with impunity. If they were released, their families were often given free rein to murder them as “honour killings”, without facing any legal consequences.

‘In 2023, at least 243 people from the LGBT community in the North Caucasus contacted the human rights group North Caucasus SOS with requests for protection from persecution, twice as many as in 2022.’¹⁸⁷

10.5.18 In 2024, the Freedom House ‘Russia: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report’ stated, ‘Chechnya remains particularly dangerous for LGBT+ people. Authorities in the republic have allegedly engaged in waves of extralegal detention and torture, targeting people based on their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.’¹⁸⁸

10.5.19 In October 2024, the OHCHR published a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Russian Federation on the use of torture (OHCHR report October 2024). The report found ‘In Chechnya, rape is used against LGBT men in police custody to extract information about other LGBT people.’¹⁸⁹

10.5.20 The same source reported:

‘Police and security forces in Chechnya are known to abduct, blackmail and torture LGBT men. Victims are unlikely to file complaints due to fears of further reprisals on themselves or their families and knowing that it would be unlikely that their case would be investigated because law enforcement agencies in Chechnya do not investigate allegations of torture, kidnapping, “honour killings” or “conversion” practices. In 2022, the NGO North

¹⁸⁵ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁸⁶ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁸⁷ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 13) 13 September 2024

¹⁸⁸ Freedom House, [Russia: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report](#), (G1), 2024

¹⁸⁹ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#),(page 9) 1 October 2024

Caucasus SOS Crisis Group filed 3 crime reports and 20 appeals to law enforcement agencies concerning incidents of police and family violence against LGBT people. No investigations were undertaken, and no criminal cases were opened.

‘The Special Rapporteur collected a number of first-hand accounts from victims of LGBT persecution by Chechen police and security forces, often with the involvement of local authorities. The victims have all had to flee the Russian Federation due to concerns about their safety. Their testimonies consistently documented that they had been held incommunicado without any charges in secret detention places, including in the Chechen villages of Argun and Tsotsi-Yurt, where they had been tortured to get information about other LGBT people. Methods of torture included electric shocks, beatings with pipes and batons and waterboarding, as well as rape and sexual violence. Some testified that they had been forced to beat or administer electric shocks to other prisoners. No one received medical attention for their injuries while being detained. If they were released – often in return for bribes – family members were told that they should kill them to “clear their name” and that they would not be punished.’¹⁹⁰

10.5.21 In January 2025, the HRW report 2025 stated: ‘In September [2024], North Caucasus SOS, a leading LGBT rights group, reported that Chechen police hunted down seven gay men and blackmailed them into “volunteering” to serve in the war.’¹⁹¹

10.5.22 For more details of this case see [Armenia Denies Extradition Request for Gay Chechen Man Wanted by Russia - The Moscow Times](#).

10.5.23 In January 2025, HRW Report 2025 stated ‘...in 2024, North Caucasus SOS also alleged that a 23-year-old woman from Chechnya, who had fled her abusive family in 2023 but was later found by Chechen police in St Petersburg and forcibly returned to her family, died in an “honor killing.” There has been no effective investigation into these allegations.’¹⁹²

10.5.24 In June 2024, the Peter Tatchell Foundation¹⁹³, a UK human rights organisation, stated:

‘... Since 2017, there has been a violent crackdown on the LGBT+ community. Ramzan Kadyrov has even launched a “virtue campaign” to encourage “traditional values” and encourage so-called “honour” killing. Local authorities in Chechnya are even pressuring families to undertake such so-called “honour” killing. Law enforcement across Chechnya began rounding up, imprisoning and torturing gay men and women too. Entrapment of gay people is common, often leading to torture, imprisonment and even death.’¹⁹⁴

10.5.25 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted survey responses for the North Caucasian Federal District often showed a more negative situation for LGBT+ people. For example, on healthcare it stated:

‘Among the LGBTQ+ people we surveyed, 77% of respondents (3,602

¹⁹⁰ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 16) 1 October 2024

¹⁹¹ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), (page 386) 13 January 2025

¹⁹² HRW, [World Report 2025](#), (page 386), 13 January 2025

¹⁹³ Peter Tatchell Foundation, [About Us Peter Tatchell Foundation](#), no date

¹⁹⁴ Peter Tatchell Foundation, [Dimitri from Chechnya was thrown in a pit for being gay](#) 24 June 2024

people) requested healthcare in 2023. Of those, 25% [900 people] noted that their doctor knew about their sexuality and/or gender identity. Questions about discrimination in the healthcare sector were only addressed to them.

‘Among those who requested healthcare and disclosed their SOGIE to a doctor or other medical professional, almost one out of five encountered discriminatory or violent actions by healthcare workers (19%, 174 people) ...

‘In the North Caucasian Federal District, a third of the respondents (33%) experienced discrimination from doctors who knew about their SOGIE ...’¹⁹⁵

10.5.26 The same source noted a much larger percentage of respondents from the North Caucasus (42%) compared to all respondents (23%), had difficulties due to their SOGIE when seeking education or employment during 2023 and also a higher percentage in the North Caucasus (8%), than amongst all respondents (5%), were dismissed from a job due to SOGIE¹⁹⁶.

10.5.27 CPIT was unable to find up to date information specifically on treatment of trans persons in Chechnya and no information specifically on treatment of intersex people in Chechnya was found in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

10.5.28 For more information on the state response to ‘conversion therapy’ in North Caucasus, see [Conversion therapy](#).

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10.6 Education and employment

10.6.1 The USSD HR report 2024 stated, “LGBTQI+ students reported discrimination at schools and universities.”¹⁹⁷ The source did not expand on what was meant by discrimination, how it was manifest or who were the perpetrators.

10.6.2 The same source reported, ‘Activists asserted most LGBTQI+ persons hid their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace due to fear of losing their jobs or homes, as well as the risk of violence.’¹⁹⁸

10.6.3 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted:

‘A significant part of our [4,701] respondents have sought employment or education in 2023. Among those who have looked for employment or a place of education, nearly a quarter (23%) encountered difficulties in doing so due to their SOGIE. Their proportion has increased by 3% compared to last year’s data. Nearly a half of those transgender participants, who have sought employment or education, faced issues due to their SOGIE (46%) ...

‘In 2023, as much as 5% of the participants have been fired from work due to their SOGIE. However, transgender participants lose jobs due to their SOGIE twice as frequently ...

‘Elaborating on their experience at work or in school, our participants most frequently mentioned encountering prejudice, homophobic and/or transphobic comments and mocking. Many have reported having to stay in the closet in their place of work or study. Prejudiced environment at work

¹⁹⁵ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 26, 2024

¹⁹⁶ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), (pages 23 and 24), 2024

¹⁹⁷ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

¹⁹⁸ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

forces people to resign and has a negative effect on academic performance of those getting an education.’¹⁹⁹

10.6.4 The same report stated, ‘Compared to last year’s data, it has become more common for our participants to encounter discrimination at work or in school ... Furthermore, according to our respondents, the new oppressive legislation has had a negative effect on the situation at work and in school: the environment has become more homophobic and transphobic, and queerness itself has become a matter of constant criticism and scrutiny.’²⁰⁰

10.6.5 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 reported on the effects of homophobia on several individuals’ employment. It stated:

‘In April 2024, Denis Leontovich, an official in Samara’s youth policy agency, was publicly targeted by Russian State Duma deputy Alexander Khinshtein, who shared photos of his alleged gay wedding online with the objective of discrediting him and fueling hatred. Following intense social media harassment and public outcry, Leontovich was forced to resign and ultimately left Russia due to fears of further persecution and legal threats ...

‘In September, a biology and chemistry teacher from Khabarovsk was forced to resign after a video surfaced showing him dancing in high heels, sparking public controversy. In October, he filed a lawsuit against the Khabarovsk education department, seeking reinstatement, and the case is currently ongoing.

‘In October, two policewomen in St Petersburg were fired for allegedly flirting with each other on social media.’²⁰¹

10.6.6 The Coming Out report 2025 noted that:

‘LGBTQ+ people in the Russian Federation are often subjected to systemic discrimination regarding the right to education and the right to work, especially representatives of the teaching profession, who are at constant risk of dismissal due to accusations of "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" which can be expressed, for example, by posting personal photos on their own private pages in social networks. In 2023-2024, cases of dismissal of homosexual persons from public service motivated by homophobia became more frequent. The level of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in the field of work remains high, however, after the recognition of the International LGBT Movement as an extremist organization and the introduction of a legislative ban on changing the gender marker in documents introduced in the summer of 2023, additional factors of violation of the right to work have emerged.’²⁰²

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10.7 Healthcare

10.7.1 In February 2024, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2024. Covering events in 2023, stated:

‘In June, the Duma adopted a ban on trans-specific healthcare provision by amending the Federal Law on the Fundamentals of Protecting the Health of

¹⁹⁹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 23 -24, 2024

²⁰⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 25, 2024

²⁰¹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Employment), February 2025

²⁰² Coming Out, [‘Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...’](#) 10 March 2025

Citizens. President Putin signed the law in July. The Ministry of Health voiced concern about the law and several protests were held. The Deputy Minister of Health however asserted that the law did not violate the Constitution. The ban received significant attention from INGOs and human rights bodies.

'In September, a group of doctors and healthcare specialists started preparing clinical recommendations on trans healthcare, with input from trans communities, according to the standards of the Ministry of Health. Civil society also shared they would appeal against the law to the Constitutional Court.

'Hormonal therapy and surgeries are no longer possible as "treatment" for an F64.0 diagnosis, [F64.0 is a billable diagnosis code used to specify transsexualism²⁰³] but hormones and mastectomies could theoretically be accessed in other ways. Getting a diagnosis is still possible, but until October, no treatment protocol was in place. In October, the government released a draft order that would allow a total of five institutions to issue certificates authorising trans-related surgeries.

'The law set an exception for medical interventions on intersex children ... A commission consisting of doctors in various fields will be responsible for making each decision.

'LGBT organisations submitted an appeal to the UN In response to the appeal, the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls issued recommendations to Russia, expressing their concerns and requesting clarification on how the adopted law complies with Russia's international obligations ...

'Civil society fears that the new "propaganda law" will make HIV prevention much harder. Russia now accounts for over half of new infections in Europe and Central Asia.

'A survey by Killkota found that since the outbreak of the war, trans people continue to face a shortage of hormones and a significant increase in prices.'²⁰⁴

- 10.7.2 The USSD HR report 2024 stated, 'Medical practitioners reportedly continued to limit or deny LGBTQI+ persons health services due to intolerance and prejudice; the Russian LGBT Network reported LGBTQI+ individuals seeking health care often encountered strong negative reactions and the presumption they were mentally ill.'²⁰⁵
- 10.7.3 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted that out of the 900 respondents who requested healthcare and whose doctor was aware of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, nearly one fifth (19% or 174 people reported discrimination or violence from healthcare providers. Rates were higher in North Caucasian (33%), Southern (27%) and Siberian (24%)

²⁰³ ICDlist, [ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code F64.0 - Transsexualism](#), 2025

²⁰⁴ ILGA, [Annual Review 2024 | ILGA-Europe](#), (Health), 29 February 2024

²⁰⁵ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

Federal Districts²⁰⁶.

- 10.7.4 The report stated, 'Transgender people faced discrimination from doctors much more frequently (29%, 94 people). There have been no changes in these figures since last year ... 82 people (9% of those who were out to their healthcare workers) were denied healthcare because of their sexuality or gender identity in 2023. Among transgender people, one in five (20%) has been denied care.'²⁰⁷ It was not clear whether or not 'healthcare' was specifically related to their sexuality or gender identity.
- 10.7.5 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 reported:
'A study by the LGBTI group "Exit" surveyed 816 trans people across Russia, highlighting severe challenges following the 2023 ban on gender transitions. Participants reported restricted healthcare access, the inability to change gender markers, and rising discrimination, with many viewing emigration as the only solution despite financial barriers. The study also noted occasional support from some state employees, offering rare positive examples amid the overwhelmingly negative environment.'²⁰⁸
- 10.7.6 The same source noted, 'Due to pressure from conservative activists, a clinic cancelled a scheduled gender-affirming surgery for a trans woman, despite the fact that the patient had obtained a transition certificate and changed the gender marker on her passport before the law banning gender transitions was passed.'²⁰⁹
- 10.7.7 The Coming Out report 2025 noted:
'Most often, LGBTQ+ people face refusals to provide medical care, to be admitted by a doctor in medical institutions where medical care is provided under the compulsory medical insurance program. Obtaining care in private medical institutions is challenging in many regions of the country due to the lack of such facilities locally and financial constraints.
'In 2023, 20% of transgender people and 9% of other LGBTQ+ people experienced refusals to access medical care unrelated to gender affirmative therapy or surgery.
'LGBTQ+ people in Russia are frequently subjected to discriminatory or violent behavior by medical professionals. In 2023, 19% of LGBTQ+ people and 39% of transgender people reported discrimination from doctors. It included punitive medical practices, such as performing procedures without adequate anesthesia, or the refusals to prescribe necessary therapies, such as psychiatric medications. These refusals were justified by the doctors on the grounds of the patient's perceived "abnormality," such as homosexuality or "transgenderism."
'The compulsory medical insurance program in Russia does not cover gynecological [sic] care for transgender men.
'As a result, transgender men face significant barriers in obtaining medicines for the treatment of urogenital diseases.'²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 26, 2024

²⁰⁷ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 26, 2024

²⁰⁸ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Data collection), February 2025

²⁰⁹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Health), February 2025

²¹⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#) 10 March 2025

10.8 Housing

10.8.1 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 stated:

‘Difficulties finding housing due to sexuality and/or gender identity have been noted by 6% [282] of those surveyed in 2023, with this proportion being higher among transgender people - 9% [93] ...

‘3% [141] of all survey participants were deprived of housing due to their sexuality or gender identity in 2023, with the number [proportion] increasing to 5% [51] among transgender respondents...

‘Only 2% [94] have encountered conflicts with landlords due to their sexuality and gender identity. This remains the least common problem in the housing sector. However, the proportion of transgender people who faced this issue is twice as high - 4% [41] ...

‘Most respondents have mentioned that they have to hide their sexuality or gender identity from neighbors or landlords, as they often make homophobic and transphobic remarks and make prejudiced statements against the LGBTQ+ community.’²¹¹

11. Societal attitudes and treatment

11.1 Attitudes

- 11.1.1 On 2 July 2020, BBC News reported on a package of over 200 proposed amendments to the constitution that Russians were asked to vote on. The changes included a ban on same-sex marriage by defining marriage as between a man and a woman²¹².
- 11.1.2 On 3 July 2020, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty stated, ‘Official results of the weeklong vote that ended July 1 showed that 77.92 percent of Russian voters endorsed the constitutional changes, with only 21.26 against.’²¹³
- 11.1.3 The ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2023 noted: ‘In August, the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre’s study found that over 50% of Russians think sexual orientation is biologically coded. 86% of the respondents indicated that they had never encountered ‘propaganda of non-traditional values.’²¹⁴ Between 2015 and 2022, the rate of those who knew LGBT+ people in their environment doubled from 8 to 15%’²¹⁵
- 11.1.4 In February 2024, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2024 stated, ‘Public opinion about LGBT has worsened over the past years as anti-LGBT state propaganda has intensified ... 80 percent of respondents to a survey by the independent research group Russian Field said that the non-heterosexual orientation of a hypothetical candidate for the Russian presidency would rather repulse them.’²¹⁶ Kommersant, the Russian news organisation²¹⁷ responsible for originally publishing the survey findings reported “‘The

²¹¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 30, 2024

²¹² BBC News, [Putin strongly backed in controversial Russian reform vote](#), 2 July 2020

²¹³ RFE/RL, [Election Monitors find "unprecedented" levels of fraud ...](#), 3 July 2020

²¹⁴ ILGA, [Annual Review 2023](#), 20 February 2023

²¹⁵ ILGA, [‘Annual Review 2023,’](#) 20 February 2023

²¹⁶ ILGA, [Annual Review 2024](#), (Russia, Public Opinion), 29 February 2024

²¹⁷ Kommersant, [Kommersant Publishing House: history, media projects](#), 1 September 2021

sample size is 1,600 respondents, it is representative in terms of gender, age within the Russian Federation and federal districts in particular,” the researchers said.²¹⁸

- 11.1.5 The USSD HR report 2024 stated: ‘LGBTQI+ persons reported significant societal stigma and discrimination, which some attributed to official promotion of homophobia, including campaigns on state-controlled media that derided LGBTQI+ persons as “perverts” and conflated homosexuality with pedophilia.’²¹⁹
- 11.1.6 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted survey respondents were asked about how open or ‘out’ they were able to be about their sexuality and/or gender identity. The report stated that in 2023, 43% [2,021] of respondents said most of their friends knew about their sexuality and/or gender identity, 49% had told only closest friends and 8% [376] had not told any friends. These results indicated fewer respondents felt able to be out to friends than in the 2022 survey²²⁰.
- 11.1.7 The same survey reported, ‘Only 13% of respondents [in 2023] are out to most of their relatives (14% in 2022). The majority of respondents (47%) indicated that only one or a few closest relatives know about their sexuality or gender identity (48% in 2022). The proportion of those who are closeted with all relatives, including parents, has increased by 2 percentage points since last year – from 38% to 40%.’²²¹
- 11.1.8 The proportion of respondents who indicated they were ‘out’ varied by geographical area. The report stated that in St Petersburg ‘57% of respondents are out to most friends, 19% – to most relatives, and 24% – to most classmates or colleagues’ and in Moscow, 50% are out to most friends, 15% to most relatives and 19% to people at work or in study groups. In contrast, higher proportions of respondents in the North Caucasus, Siberia Ural and Volga areas were ‘closeted’ compared with the whole study sample²²².
- 11.1.9 The survey report stated:
- ‘In the North Caucasus, the proportion of those whose social environment is mainly homophobic and transphobic [21%] has increased significantly [from 15% in 2022], while in St. Petersburg, the proportion of such respondents remained as small as it was in 2023 (4%). Therefore, we can conclude that homophobic and transphobic attitudes have significantly increased where they had already been strongly expressed. On the contrary, homophobia and transphobia remained at approximately the same level in friendlier regions.’²²³
- 11.1.10 The same source opined that, ‘All the changes that we have recorded indicate that LGBTQ+ people have become more closeted within their close social circle ... This dynamic emphasizes the high degree of distrust and anxiety that had surrounded LGBTQ+ people in Russia by the end of 2023. In addition, these data confirm the growth of homophobic and transphobic

²¹⁸ Kommersant, [Russians began to speak out against the LGBT community more...](#), 30 August 2023

²¹⁹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

²²⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 12, 2024

²²¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 12, 2024

²²² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 13, 2024

²²³ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 15, 2024

rhetoric in Russian society.²²⁴

11.1.11 In November 2024, RT, 'a global TV news network ... publicly financed from the budget of the Russian Federation'²²⁵, reported on findings from the Levada Centre, 'a Russian non-governmental research organisation'²²⁶ survey conducted between 24 and 30 October 2024 with 1,617 participants from 137 villages, towns and cities. RT stated:

'44% of respondents feel "disgust and fear" toward gays and lesbians, while another 15% said they are irritated by them. An additional 10% expressed wariness of the LGBT community. Just 1% of those surveyed held a positive view of sexual minorities, while 26% described their feelings as calm or neutral. Notably, 0% of respondents expressed specific interest in LGBT issues.

'The poll highlights a sharp increase in hostility over the past decade. In a similar Levada study from 2013, 27% of Russians reported feeling disgust or fear toward sexual minorities ...

'Opposition to equal rights for gays and lesbians has also grown steadily in recent years, with 62% of respondents stating they do not believe LGBT people should have the same legal protections as other citizens.

'Similarly, 59% said they would reduce or sever contact with acquaintances if they discovered they were homosexual.

'Concerns about so-called "gay propaganda" remain widespread. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents voiced fears that their children or grandchildren could be influenced by LGBT material.'²²⁷

11.1.12 The Levada Center noted that overall, 44% of respondents reported feeling disgust or fear toward people with a 'homosexual orientation' and that such attitudes were higher amongst certain groups:

'... older respondents (54% among respondents aged 55 and older), less educated respondents (47% among those with secondary education and below), low-income respondents (54% among those who barely have enough for food), as well as residents of villages (53%), those who do not have acquaintances of homosexual orientation (48%), those who believe that things in the country are going the wrong way (45%), those who trust television as a source of information (48%).'²²⁸

11.1.13 The same source reported that certain subgroups were more likely than the overall 26% of survey respondents to feel 'calm or neutral' towards gay and lesbian people. It stated:

'People with homosexual orientation are more likely to be treated calmly and without much emotion by women (29%), young people under 24 years old (44%), more educated (30% among those with higher education), respondents who can afford durable goods (28%), those who barely have enough money for clothes (28%), those who have homosexual people among their acquaintances (64%), as well as those who trust YouTube

²²⁴ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 15, 2024

²²⁵ RT, [About RT](#), undated

²²⁶ Levada Centre, [About us](#), undated

²²⁷ RT, [Russians' attitudes to LGBT changing...](#), 20 November 2024

²²⁸ Levada Center, [Attitudes towards homosexuality...](#), 18 November 2024

channels as a source of information (47%).²²⁹ Note: this webpage is published in Russian and has been translated using a free online translation tool. As such, 100% accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

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11.2 Treatment

11.2.1 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation 2023 survey asked respondents about their experience of parenting. The report stated:

‘Among our respondents, only 5% stated that they have children (229 people) ...Our research shows that the most common problem for LGBTQ+ parents is conflicts with other relatives of the child due to one of the parent’s sexuality and/or gender identity. In 2023, one in five respondents with children (21% of those surveyed [48 people]) encountered this problem. This number is higher among transgender people — 23% [53 people] ...

‘In 2023, 6% of the respondents with children [14 people] encountered difficulties when interacting with educational or medical institutions due to their sexuality and/or gender identity. Among transgender parents, this number is nearly three times higher - 17% [39 people]. The proportion of transgender people who experienced difficulties interacting with educational or medical institutions has increased by four percentage points compared to last year. Only 3% of parents in our sample (7 people) experienced difficulties interacting with social services due to their sexuality and gender identity. Describing their experience in more detail, respondents have indicated the following problems. Many LGBTQ+ parents are criticized for their parenting, most commonly by their relatives and acquaintances. LGBTQ+ parents are sometimes threatened with being reported to child services and having their children taken away from them. Being in a particularly vulnerable position, LGBTQ+ parents often try to hide their sexuality or gender identity from others. Transgender parents encounter difficulties proving their parental status after changing documents.’²³⁰

11.2.2 For more details see the report from Coming Out and the Sphere Foundation, published in 2024: [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#)

11.2.3 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2024 reported that respondents were asked about experiences of physical abuse and threats of physical abuse as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity during 2023. It stated:

‘In 2023, 381 people (8%) experienced physical abuse motivated by homophobia or transphobia. Transgender people are physically abused more frequently (13%, 134 people). This year, the number of participants who experienced physical abuse has increased by one percentage point compared to last year ...

‘In 2023, one in four participants were threatened with physical abuse because of their sexuality or gender identity (24%, 1,115 people). The percentage of those who have received such threats has increased significantly (by four percentage points) since last year.

²²⁹ Levada Center, [Attitudes towards homosexuality...](#), 18 November 2024

²³⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 32, 2024

‘Transgender people are threatened with physical abuse much more frequently. In 2023, every third transgender participant received threats of physical abuse (34%). This is not significantly different from last year...

‘The North Caucasian (42%), Far Eastern (31%), and Southern (29%) federal districts of Russia saw the highest percentages of those who were threatened with physical abuse. The figures for these districts also increased significantly compared to last year (in 2022, those numbers were 22%, 27%, and 23%, respectively).’²³¹

11.2.4 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 noted, ‘In 2023, 14% of the participants have been blackmailed or preyed upon due to their sexuality or gender identity (668 people) ... There has been no significant change compared to last year’s data. The highest number of blackmail and extortion victims was found in the North Caucasian (32%), Southern (20%), and Far Eastern federal districts.’²³² The source did not specify who the perpetrators were.

11.2.5 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 stated, ‘The Russian LGBT network has recorded several cases of “fake dates” against underage men: the perpetrators recorded sex with young gay men on video and then extorted money from them.’²³³ It was not clear whether the blackmailers were linked to the state or were non-state actors.

11.2.6 The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2024 concluded:

‘According to the findings of our research, LGBTQ+ people across Russia face various forms of hate-based discrimination. Many respondents have reported encountering violence, threats, prejudice, insensitive language, and other forms of physical and verbal abuse in a range of settings: the workplace, educational institutions, and healthcare, as well as from relatives, neighbors, landowners, and even random passersby.

‘Last year [2022], despite a noticeable upsurge of homophobic and transphobic rhetoric on the state level, there was no increase in violence and discrimination, but this year has seen significant changes in how LGBTQ+ people live in Russia. Although the changes have not yet been drastic, there is a clear trend toward a rise in discrimination and hate-motivated violence ... We observe a considerable increase in the percentage of those who have encountered some kind of violence and pressure (such as blackmail) because of their sexuality or gender identity.’²³⁴

11.2.7 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 reported incidents of bias-motivated violence by the public during 2024. It stated:

‘In March in Minusinsk, two students were verbally and physically attacked by a teenage boy after being questioned about their short haircuts and gender presentation.

‘In April, two men beat up and robbed a gay man on a fake date in Yekaterinburg ...

‘During the year, 4 anonymous reports of homophobic violence from different

²³¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 34-36, 2024

²³² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 47, 2024

²³³ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Bias-motivated violence), February 2025

²³⁴ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 62, 2024

Russian cities were reported to Coming Out. Some cases involved regular family violence, another involved an attack by a stranger on public transport ...²³⁵

11.2.8 For information on conversion therapy, see [Conversion therapy](#).

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11.3 Societal attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus (including Chechnya)

11.3.1 In June 2024, the Peter Tatchell Foundation reported the experience of a gay man at the hands of his family, in Chechnya. It stated:

‘... my relatives found out that I was gay when they eavesdropped on me ... I was so afraid of what they would do to me that I ran away. I thought I could find my way and hopefully live peacefully. But I was terribly wrong; they searched for me and even reported that I was missing to the police. I was caught up by the police, who handed me over to my relatives.

‘I was told that I brought terrible shame to the family and that I needed correction. They started to beat me and said that only my blood would wash away the shame and sin that I brought to the family. I was beaten with a stick and punched so hard that I lost my teeth in the process. Yet, they were not satisfied. I implored them to stop, but it was pointless. There was no one to go to for help, and I felt utterly powerless.

‘I did not know what would be done to me, and every day, I was terrified that they would kill me since so-called “honour” killing is rife here. My relatives chose what was to be an even worse option. They reached out to my older brothers in Chechnya, who worked under Kadyrov and transferred me back to them in Chechnya. They took my mother as well with me and warned me that she would be harmed and even killed if I ever dared to escape. They said they were doing me a favour and that I should be thankful that they were “caring” for me and the family’s honour ...

‘My brothers wanted to correct me ...

‘First, I was put in a pit in a village without food for many days ... After some days, someone just appeared and threw a few scraps of bread at me ...

‘I was totally confused when they finally took me out of the pit. Sadly, this was not the end of my ordeal. I was forced to take several pills; I still don’t know what they were, and then the torture started. They beat me up with hoses repeatedly, up to the point that my skin was broken and I was bleeding; even my screams imploring them to stop did nothing. There was no pity nor an end in sight for my torture.

‘I would have done anything to stop this pain. But they were not satisfied and took me later to watch others being tortured. They warned me that this would happen to me if I did not correct myself ...

‘All of this abject treatment continued until I started saying I did not know who I was. I began to agree that the torture and treatment was working. They decided to force me into a marriage and warn me that they will know for sure if I am cured after the marriage. They said if I did not sleep with my wife, I would disappear. No one would be looking for me, and my mother would disappear. They asserted that if this were to happen, our family would

²³⁵ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Bias-motivated violence), February 2025

be totally cleansed.²³⁶

- 11.3.2 Around 2% of (94) respondents to the Coming Out and Sphere Foundation survey, conducted in 2023, were from the North Caucasus. The North Caucasian federal district has around 4% of the Russian population so people from this area were underrepresented in the survey²³⁷.
- 11.3.3 The survey report noted that, in 2023, 8% (381) of all respondents experienced physical abuse as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity during 2023 but this was higher in the North Caucasus. It stated, 'The highest percentage of physical abuse victims were from the North Caucasian Federal District (17%). This district has also seen a significantly higher increase in physical abuse cases compared to the national average: in 2022, the number of participants who experienced physical abuse in the North Caucasus was only 12%.²³⁸
- 11.3.4 The same source reported the North Caucasian district had highest percentage of respondents who were threatened with physical abuse, at 42%. This compared with 24% of all respondents. The 2023 percentage of 42% was a significant increase since 2022 when 22% of respondents from the North Caucasus reported such threats²³⁹.
- 11.3.5 The survey asked participants about their social environment. It noted: 'Participants from the North Caucasian Federal District were most likely to indicate that their social environment mostly includes cisgender straight people (42%). This can indirectly indicate the isolated and closeted existence of the LGBTQ+ community in the region. The North Caucasian Federal District also demonstrates the highest proportion of those whose social environment is mostly homophobic and transphobic: 21%, which is three times higher than the sample average. Last year, this proportion was also the highest, but it was 15% and only two times higher than the average.'²⁴⁰
- 11.3.6 The survey found the North Caucasian federal district was one of the areas with the lowest proportion of respondents who are surrounded by LGBTQ-friendly people (34%), compared to 46% for the whole sample²⁴¹.
- 11.3.7 The report noted that higher proportions of respondents from the North Caucasus were 'closeted' in terms of not telling friends (16%), family (46%) and work or study groups (49%) about their sexuality and/or gender identity, compared to the whole study sample (8%, 40% and 40% respectively)²⁴².
- 11.3.8 For information on conversion therapy in the North Caucasus, see [Conversion therapy](#).

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11.4 Conversion therapy

- 11.4.1 In December 2023, The Moscow Times wrote about links between religion

²³⁶ Peter Tatchell Foundation, [Dimitri from Chechnya was thrown in a pit for...](#), 24 June 2024

²³⁷ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 10, 2024

²³⁸ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 34-36, 2024

²³⁹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 34-36, 2024

²⁴⁰ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 14, 2024

²⁴¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 15, 2024

²⁴² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 12 and 13, 2024

and conversion therapy in Russia. It reported:

“God created a woman and a man. Any deviations from the norm are from the Devil, and religion can help to change this,” a priest from the village in the Novosibirsk region told The Moscow Times.

‘Perhaps for this reason many organizations that conduct “conversion therapy” in Russia are connected with religious groups. The therapy aims to change a person's sexual orientation through surgery, hormonal drugs or antipsychotics, psychoanalysis, hypnosis, electroshock therapy, beatings, food deprivation, isolation, and even so-called “corrective rape.” It's banned in most countries, but it is prevalent in Russia.’²⁴³

- 11.4.2 In December 2023, the same source reported the case of Ada Blakewell who was subjected to ‘conversion therapy’. It stated:

‘Ada Blakewell, 23, a non-binary transgender woman, was undergoing hormone therapy when in August 2022 her parents took her to a private center in the Altai region to undergo “masculinization” — an attempt to change her to her birth sex. “My parents, with the help of third parties, sent me to an official center where they tried to take me through what they would call ‘conversion therapy’,” Blakewell told The Moscow Times. “They got me to do things like construction, physical activity, everything that society considers especially masculine.”

“Then there were some, what we might call ‘unique’ activities. They forced me to castrate a pig because I wanted to have gender-affirming surgery. Therefore, I should do the corresponding operation on animals ‘to know how it looks.’ That was their logic.”

“Sometimes they would beat me... they would show me news about how ‘trans society’ had taken over the West, and this was already starting to happen to Russia.”

‘Blakewell said staff threatened her to conform to the program by describing the prosecution of prominent transgender activist Yan Dvorkin for spreading “propaganda of ‘non-traditional’ sexual relations.”

‘After nine months of abuse and trauma, she finally escaped in May 2023.’²⁴⁴

- 11.4.3 In January 2024, The Moscow Times published an article by Ada Blakewell. It stated, ‘Unfortunately, I am not the only one who has faced this struggle. Through collaborative efforts with a few other queer activists, I have documented over 5 similar cases over the past six months. While conversion therapy used to be confined to the southern regions of Russia, today it has spread across the country. This trend is a troubling illustration of Russia’s trajectory.’²⁴⁵

- 11.4.4 In January 2024, HRW report 2024 noted, ‘In June 2023, Russia’s health minister stated that President Putin instructed the ministry to establish a new psychiatry institute to study the behavior of LGBT people. Human rights defenders are concerned that this could lead to the official introduction of conversion therapy.’²⁴⁶ The HRW report 2025, covering events in 2024, did

²⁴³ The Moscow Times, [Russia's Small-Town LGBTQ+ Communities](#), 22 December 2023

²⁴⁴ The Moscow Times, [Russia's 2013 'Gay Propaganda' Law Violence](#), 26 December 2023

²⁴⁵ The Moscow Times, ['Conversion Therapy Is a Symptom of Russia's Crisis...'](#), 8 January 2024

²⁴⁶ HRW [World Report 2024: Russia](#), 10 January 2024

not refer to a new psychiatry institute.²⁴⁷

11.4.5 This instruction was widely covered in the international media in June 2023^{248 249 250 251} but at the time of writing CPIT has been unable to find any further information in sources consulted indicating that the state has officially introduced conversion therapy (see [Bibliography](#)).

11.4.6 In March 2024, The Moscow Times reported:

‘At least a dozen clinics in Russia “secretly” conduct so-called conversion therapy, an abusive practice used to forcibly “cure” LGBTQ+ people, the U.S.-funded broadcaster Current Time reported on Monday.

‘According to Current Time journalists, “patients” are often sent to these conversion therapy clinics against their will. Their treatment involves being isolated from the outside world for several months, during which they are sometimes forced to take psychotropic drugs, pray and undergo hypnosis.

‘The clinics, which operate in Moscow as well as the Moscow and Rostov regions and parts of Russia’s North Caucasus...’²⁵²

11.4.7 In 2024, The Coming Out and Sphere Foundation report 2023 stated, ‘In 2023, 3% of the participants underwent a form of conversion therapy (125 people) ... (5% of all transgender participants [52 people]).’ It was not stated whether they had been pressurised or forced to undergo conversion therapy or done so voluntarily²⁵³.

11.4.8 The OHCHR report October 2024 found that LGBT+ people belonged to a group at increased risk of torture²⁵⁴. The report also stated:

‘The responsibility of the Russian authorities to address and prevent torture also extends to any private places where individuals may be confined and thereby deprived of liberty. This includes “rehabilitation centres” where individuals are subjected to so-called “conversion therapy”.

“Conversion therapy” procedures inflict severe physical and/or mental pain and suffering which amount to torture. A 2021 report by the Moscow Community Center for LGBT+ Initiatives showed that, for 82 per cent of victims, the “therapy” started when they were children, and it subjected them to violence, including acts of physical and psychological abuse, forced medication, isolation and confinement.

‘People sent to private “conversion therapy” centres have described being held against their will and subjected to harmful punishment as “treatment”. Ada Blakewell, a 23-year-old transgender non-binary person, was held for nine months, beaten, thrown into a nearby river and administered neuroleptic drugs intended for persons with psychiatric illnesses. Alexandra, a 28-year-old transgender woman, was forcibly held for 21 months while heavily sedated. She was repeatedly told that she was sick, and other residents threatened to kill her. Elina Ukhmanova, a bisexual 18-year-old, was kept for

²⁴⁷ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), 13 January 2025

²⁴⁸ Russian Free Press, [Putin instructed to create a psychiatric institute](#), 15 June 2023

²⁴⁹ Euronews, [Russia ramping up attacks on LGBT rights](#), 29 June 2023

²⁵⁰ Meduza, [Putin orders research into ‘social behavior’ of LGBT people](#), 16 June 2023

²⁵¹ Reuters, [Russian sexologists to target homosexuality](#), 29 June 2023

²⁵² The Moscow Times, [Russian LGBTQ+ ‘Conversion Therapy’ Isolates Patients ...](#), 4 March 2024

²⁵³ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 43, 2024

²⁵⁴ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 19) 1 October 2024

four months, subjected to violence, handcuffed to handrails and left to hang suspended for long periods. After her release in 2022, she requested that the police investigate her unlawful imprisonment in the “rehabilitation centre” and its unauthorized “medical” practices. Her request was dismissed.²⁵⁵

11.4.9 In 2024, the USSD HR report 2023 stated, ‘There were reports of LGBTQI+ persons being targeted for involuntary “conversion therapy.” On June 26, Radio Liberty reported a student, age 22, was forced by his parents to undergo conversion-therapy treatment at the Inextinguishable Hope center in the Ramensky District of Moscow Region.’²⁵⁶

11.4.10 The same report stated: ‘There were reports of abductions and torture in the North Caucasus, including of ... LGBTQI+ persons ... For example, in January, independent news outlet Novaya Gazeta Europe reported Elina Ukhmanova was tortured in a rehabilitation center in Dagestan where her parents sent her for “treatment” for bisexuality and atheism. ...’²⁵⁷

11.4.11 RadioFreeEurope/Radio Liberty reported on 21 January 2023:

‘... In late 2021, a gay Chechen woman named Khalimat Taramova alleged that she had been abducted and held for three months at a clinic outside of Moscow called Invia Elite. During that time, she was allegedly subjected to exorcisms and other procedures aimed at chasing away demons. Russian authorities did not react to her claims.

‘... In an interview with RFE/RL in October, SK SOS spokesperson Miron Rozanov said “there are quite a few” such rehabilitation centers in the North Caucasus and there have been numerous complaints of LGBT people being abducted and forcibly “treated” at them.

‘Aminat Lorsanova, a native of Chechnya, “has told how she was held in a rehab center for several months in 2019,” Rozanov said. “She was forcibly medicated with drugs that affected her cognitive abilities under the guise of treatment for a made-up diagnosis.”²⁵⁸

11.4.12 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 stated, ‘According to Sever. Reality St. Petersburg, Russian authorities are using abusive methods, including beatings, prayers, and forced injections, to “treat” LGBTI people.’²⁵⁹

11.4.13 The Coming Out report 2025 noted:

‘LGBTQ+ individuals in Russia also face risks of being subjected to conversion therapy, which operates outside any form of government oversight. At the request and expense of their relatives, LGBTQ+ individuals are often placed in so-called rehabilitation centers for drug and alcohol addiction treatment ... where they are subjected to cruel treatment and forced labor intended to “cure” their sexual orientation and gender identity. When such individuals refuse to comply, they face threats of involuntary hospitalization in psychiatric institutions. Attempts by partners or human rights organizations to appeal to law enforcement in such cases rarely lead to investigations or the release of the individual. Police usually rely solely on

²⁵⁵ OHCHR, [Situation of human rights in the Russian...](#), (page 16)1 October 2024

²⁵⁶ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

²⁵⁷ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 1B), 22 April 2024 4

²⁵⁸ RFE/RL, [... Woman From Russia's Dagestan Flees Forced 'Treatment'...](#), 21 January 2023

²⁵⁹ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, bodily integrity), February 2025

the testimony of family members who arranged for the person to be placed in the "rehabilitation center."

'... In 2023, cases of conversion therapy during visits to psychiatrists increased significantly. These therapies often involve the use of religious rhetoric. In Muslim regions, conversion therapy may take the form of so-called "exorcism of jinn." In the North Caucasus region, there are even dedicated "Muslim hospitals" where LGBTQ+ individuals are held and "treated." Similar practices are also found in other Muslim regions of Russia.'²⁶⁰

11.4.14 For more information on the North Caucasus see [State attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#) and [Societal attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#).

11.4.15 For more information on police response to complaints by LGBT+ people, see [State response to anti-LGBT+ crimes](#).

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12. LGBT+ civil society organisations

12.1 Restrictions on LGBT+ organisations

12.1.1 Freedom House stated in its 'Russia: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report', The government has relentlessly persecuted nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those that work on human rights and governance issues. Civic activists are frequently arrested on politically motivated charges.'²⁶¹

12.1.2 In August 2024, Foreign Policy published a feature by J. Lester Feder which stated:

'Olga Baranova, who has been executive director of an LGBTQ community center in Moscow since 2015, told me that the movement is now backpedaling after years of encouraging people to come out. They used to believe visibility would gradually make Russian society more supportive of LGBTQ people. Now it's just dangerous.

"We've worked all these years just to be [out] and to be in the mainstream. And now we just say, 'Okay, stop, stop, stop!'" Baranova said. Most people she knows who were visibly out have left the country, Baranova said—as has she—and she and other activists now advise people living in Russia to stay in the closet for their own safety.'²⁶²

12.1.3 In October 2024, The Moscow Times reported:

'A non-profit organization providing mental health and legal support services to LGBTQ+ people in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg announced Monday that it would shut down after coming under "anti-queer pressure."

'The organization, called Lupta, was created in April 2023 as a support center for people facing discrimination over their sexual identity after its predecessor, the LGBT Resource Center, was designated a "foreign agent." Lupta organized lectures and provided individual consultations to LGBTQ+

²⁶⁰ Coming Out, '[Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Russia: March...](#)' 10 March 2025

²⁶¹ Freedom House, '[Russia: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report](#)', E2, 2025

²⁶² Foreign Policy, '[Russia's New Queer Purge: The Court Decision...](#)', 6 August 2024

Russians...

“The Lupta project will not be able to continue its work due to the anti-queer atmosphere [in the country],” it said. “Our priority has always been the safety of the venue, and unfortunately, we can no longer guarantee this.”²⁶³

- 12.1.4 In December 2024, The Independent reported how the ban on the ‘International LGBT Movement’ in Russia was affecting LGBT+ support organisations. It noted:

‘Some regional organizations have shut down completely; others operate openly, but in a drastically different way. The Moscow Community Center for LGBT+ Initiatives moved its community-building efforts into a sprawling online network of chats and Zoom meeting rooms, according to Baranova [head of the Moscow Community Center for LGBT+ Initiatives].

“Our strategy today is to preserve the community in some form and size at least, for the people to just know each other, support each other,” she said.

‘Center T, a prominent trans rights group, closed its Moscow shelter after visits from police and opened one in Yerevan, Armenia, said group leader Yan Dvorkin. Center T helps emigres as well as those still in Russia to find doctors and medical care, trying to resolve crises and still be a part of a community, if only online.’²⁶⁴

- 12.1.5 In January 2025, HRW World Report 2025: Russia, covering events in 2024, stated:

‘The Supreme Court’s November 2023 ruling, which outlaws the “international LGBT movement” as an “extremist” organization, allows arbitrary prosecution of LGBT people and of anyone who defends their rights or expresses solidarity with them ...

‘In March [2024], the Justice Ministry and Rosfinmonitoring, the governmental agency mandated to monitor money laundering and financing of terrorism, included the LGBT movement in their extremist and terrorist organization registries.

‘At least three groups supporting LGBT rights shut down their operations in Russia to avoid prosecution. Other consequences of the ruling have included a series of police raids on gay clubs, incidents of self-censorship, and an uptick in requests for legal advice from remaining LGBT support groups, which increasingly have turned to working clandestinely’²⁶⁵

- 12.1.6 In February 2025, the ILGA-Europe Annual Review 2025 listed examples of restrictions and legal action against LGBT+ organisations in 2024. It stated:

‘In March [2024], the Federal Financial Monitoring Service added the “LGBT movement” to its list of terrorists and extremists.

‘In May 2024, a second criminal case on LGBTI extremism was opened in Russia - against Artem Fokin, the head of the LGBT initiative “Irida” (Samara). He faces up to 10 years in prison for leading an LGBT initiative. This is the only criminal case against the head of an LGBT initiative in Russia so far.

²⁶³ The Moscow Times, [LGBTQ+ Support Group in Russia's Yekaterinburg Closes](#), 21 October 2024

²⁶⁴ The Independent, [Russia's LGBTQ+ community is living in fear following ...](#), 6 December 2024

²⁶⁵ HRW, [World Report 2025](#), 13 January 2025

'In October 2024, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against Russia's "foreign agents" law, condemning it as a violation of fundamental rights. The Court found that the law infringed on the right to freedom of association for the LGBT organisation Social Information Centre Action in St. Petersburg.

'In 2024, Russian LGBT initiatives minimised offline events due to the criminalisation of LGBTI extremism by Russian authorities ...

'In 2024, at least seven criminal cases were opened for LGBTI extremism. The accused face up to six years in prison, and in some cases up to 10 years. Among the accused are employees of LGBT bars and organisers of LGBT parties ... the director of a medical Centre, the head of a travel agency for gays (in December, he died in a pre-trial detention Centre, the cause of death declared by the authorities was suicide).²⁶⁶

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12.2 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and support groups

12.2.1 See [Restrictions on LGBTI organisations](#) for information on how groups are being restricted and impacted by legislative changes. The following information highlights a non-exhaustive list of some of the LGBT+ groups in Russia which appear to still be operational at the time of writing:

- [Plus Voice](#) noted on an undated webpage that it is an international movement supporting LGBTQ+ people, operational in Russia and is focused on strengthening parent networks, organising groups, and creating educational resources²⁶⁷. Note: this webpage is published in Russian and has been translated using a free online translation tool. As such, 100% accuracy cannot be guaranteed.
- [Coming Out](#) noted on an undated webpage that it is an organisation which offers free counselling, support, legal advice, and advocacy for LGBTQ+ individuals, works towards equal rights for all, assists in hate crime investigations, and raises awareness through statistics and public events²⁶⁸.
- [Moscow Community Center for LGBT+ initiatives \(MCC\)](#) noted on an undated webpage that, founded in 2015, it offers a safe space for the LGBT+ community in Moscow, providing support and assistance, running over 20 projects including transgender support, LGBT+ family groups, and cultural events alongside psychological and legal services for the community²⁶⁹.
- [NC SOS Crisis Group](#) noted on an undated webpage that the project assists LGBT+ people from the North Caucasus region and can provide them with housing, legal, financial, medical and psychological aid²⁷⁰.
- [Safe Space Alliance](#), an 'organisation that helps people identify, navigate, and create safe spaces for LGBTQI+ communities worldwide'²⁷¹ noted, on an undated webpage, the existence of 'LGBT social movement Revers', an LGBT+ organisation in southern Russia with a community centre for LGBT+

²⁶⁶ ILGA Europe, [Annual Review 2025](#), (Russia, Freedom of Association), February 2025

²⁶⁷ Plus voice, [About Us - Plus Voice](#), no date

²⁶⁸ Coming Out, [LGBTQ+ Group Coming Out](#), 2024

²⁶⁹ Moscow Community Center, [Moscow Community Center](#), undated

²⁷⁰ NC SOS Crisis Group, [About the project – NC SOS](#), 19 November 2024

²⁷¹ Safe Space Alliance, [Overview](#), undated

individuals in a private location and a separate project to assist trans people²⁷².

- AsyLex, a non-profit advocacy organisation for refugees worldwide²⁷³ outlined the [Russian LGBT Network](#) as Russia's largest LGBT+ human rights organisation which documents violations, litigates hate crimes and provides assistance to LGBT+ people across Russia, including in Chechnya²⁷⁴. The Russian LGBT Network was designated as a 'Foreign Agent' in 2021^{275 276 277} but in February 2025 Equaldex listed it as an active organisation.²⁷⁸ It was not clear what help the organisation is now able to provide.

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13. Freedom of movement

13.1.1 The USSD HR report 2023 stated:

'The law provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but authorities restricted these rights.

'... Although the law gave citizens the right to choose their place of residence, adult citizens had to carry government-issued internal passports while traveling domestically and had to register with local authorities after arriving at a different location ... Authorities often refused to provide government services to individuals without internal passports or proper registration, and many regional governments continued to restrict this right through residential registration rules.

'Authorities imposed in-country travel restrictions on individuals facing prosecution for political purposes.

'... The law provided for freedom to travel abroad, but the government restricted this right for certain groups. The law stipulated a person who violated a court decision did not have a right to leave the country. A court could also prohibit a person from leaving the country for failure to satisfy debts; if the individual was suspected, accused, or convicted of a crime; or if the individual had access to classified material.

'The government restricted the foreign travel of millions of its employees, prescribing which countries they were allowed to visit. The restriction applied to employees of agencies including the Prosecutor General's Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Federal Prison Service, Federal Drug Control Service, Federal Bailiff Service, General Administration for Migration Issues, and Ministry of Emergency Situations.

'In 2021, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed a decree stating that prior to traveling abroad, his deputies and ministers had to obtain his written permission. The travel restriction applied to lower-ranking officials, such as heads of agencies, who had to obtain permission from their supervisors

²⁷² Safe Space Alliance, [LGBT social movement "Revers"](#), no date

²⁷³ AsyLex, [About AsyLex](#), undated

²⁷⁴ AsyLex, [Russian Federation LGBTQI+ Resources](#), May 2023

²⁷⁵ Los Angeles Times, [About the Los Angeles Times - Los Angeles Times](#), 2025.

²⁷⁶ Los Angeles Times, [Russia labels gay rights group, lawyers as 'foreign agents'](#), 9 November 2021

²⁷⁷ RFE/RL, [Noted Russian Lawyer, Associates Labeled 'Foreign Agents'](#), 9 November 2021

²⁷⁸ Equaldex, [LGBT Organizations](#), 28 February 2025

before travel.

'On June 13, President Putin signed into law amendments that required military conscripts to hand over their passports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the duration of their service.'²⁷⁹

13.1.2 The Freedom House 'Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report' stated:

'The government restricts freedom of movement. Adults must carry internal passports while traveling and to obtain many government services. Some regional authorities impose registration rules that limit the right of citizens to choose their place of residence, typically targeting members of ethnic minorities and migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Russians have emigrated in large numbers since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. The British government estimated in 2023 that 1.3 million people had left Russia in 2022. Some men fleeing conscription or mobilization are stopped by security personnel at the border. Since 2023, draftees are banned from leaving the country once a summons is issued.

'A law that took effect in 2023 requires individuals to submit their passports to authorities within five days of being notified of a travel ban. Those affected may include people who work or worked for the FSB, have access to state secrets, or have been summoned to military service.'²⁸⁰

13.1.3 The 2024, Coming Out and Sphere Foundation's 'Report on the Life of LGBTQ+ People in Russia in 2023', stated, '... according to our participants, some of them have also received financial support from LGBTQ+ organizations assisting them to pay for housing, move to another city or leave the country. Besides, some of them mentioned having stayed in LGBTQ+ shelters.'²⁸¹ This suggests that some LGBT+ people were able to relocate within Russia.

13.1.4 The same survey asked respondents about emigration from Russia. The report stated:

'In 2023, only 6% of respondents (286 people) indicated that the war and repressions compelled them to leave Russia. Last year, the number of those who left was almost three times higher (16%). It stands to reason that those who left in 2022 did not partake in our survey, as they have not been to Russia since. Our findings indicate a substantial dip in LGBTQ+ migration from Russia in 2023, albeit without cessation ...

'A noteworthy subset of emigrants (29%, 82 people) entertain the prospect of returning to Russia, while a slightly lower percentage (28%, 79 people) remain uncertain. Conversely, nearly half (44%) harbor no intentions of returning. Notably, the proportion considering a return has increased marginally since last year (by 5 percentage points). Almost half of those who emigrated (43%) reported that they had to come back to Russia temporarily, till their next attempt at migration, or permanently.'²⁸²

13.1.5 It was not clear whether all participants who said they emigrated, were inside Russia at the time of completing the survey, either before leaving or after

²⁷⁹ USSD, [2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices](#) (section 2d), 22 April 2024 4

²⁸⁰ Freedom House, [Russia: Freedom in the World 2025 Country Report](#) (G1), 2025

²⁸¹ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 21, 2024

²⁸² Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), pages 59-60, 2024

returning. The report noted, ‘ ... our survey, which targeted individuals who had spent at least some portion of the year in Russia during 2023 ...’²⁸³.

13.1.6 It was not possible to find references specifically stating whether LGBT+ people had successfully relocated to particular places within Russia, in the sources reviewed (see [Bibliography](#)).

13.1.7 Sources reported LGBT+ people from the North Caucasus had been relocated to other parts of Russia with the help of NGOs but there were also reports of people who had relocated from the North Caucasus being tracked down and forcibly returned. See ([State attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#) and [Societal attitudes and treatment in the North Caucasus \(including Chechnya\)](#)).

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²⁸³ Coming Out, [Report on the life of LGBTQ+ people in Russia in 2023](#), page 61, 2024

Research methodology

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

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

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

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

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

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

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

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

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Terms of Reference

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

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

- Legal context - considering laws that protect and/or discriminate- applicable to
 - general anti-discrimination provisions (and inclusion or absence of reference to LGBT+ people)
 - (being) a LGBT+ person
 - same-sex sexual behaviour
 - same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
 - gender reassignment/transition, and recognition of gender identity of trans people
 - LGBT+ organisations
 - relevant significant court cases and caselaw
- **State attitudes and treatment**
- statements made by government figures and public officials
 - government policies/programmes that assist or discriminate against LGBT+ people
 - how the law is applied (including discriminatory application non-LGBT+ specific laws). Numbers:
 - arrests and detentions
 - prosecutions, convictions, acquittals
 - restrictions/enforcement of law against LGBT+ organisations
 - other state treatment, such as
 - harassment
 - blackmail
 - bribery
 - corrective therapy
 - access to public services
 - education
 - healthcare
 - employment
 - state protection
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- **Societal attitudes and treatment**
 - public opinion/views/surveys, including anti-LGBT+ movements and

public demonstrations

- prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour
- media representation, language and discourse
- treatment by the public, including family members
 - shunning and stigma
 - harassment and violence, including mob attacks and gender-specific forms such as corrective rape
 - accessing accommodation, education, employment and healthcare
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- **LGBT+ communities and groups**
 - size and location of LGBT+ population
 - presence, projection and location of openly LGBT+ people and communities into public life
 - numbers, aims and location of openly LGBT+ communities
 - services, meeting places and events, such as bars, restaurants and Gay Pride
 - operation, activities and restrictions of LGBT+ civil society and other supportive groups or associations, including websites
 - geographic, socio-economic or other factors affecting behaviour of individuals and groups.
- **Freedom of movement**
 - legal freedoms/restrictions, including documentation

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **11 June 2025**

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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Changes from last version of this note

Updated Country of origin information including new laws (since 2022) reducing the rights of LGBT+ people in Russia and declaring the ‘International LGBT Movement’ to be an extremist organisation.

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Feedback to the Home Office

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

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Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

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

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

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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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