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1.3.7. LGBTIQ persons

For detailed information on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTIQ) persons in Syria, see section 14. LGBTIQ persons of the EUAA COI report Syria: Targeting of individuals (September 2022).

☐ (a) Legislative framework

According to the article 520 of the 1949 Penal Code, 'Unnatural Sexual Intercourse' is a crime punishable for up to three years in prison and it is applicable to men as well as women.[317]At the time of drafting this report, sources indicate that it is not yet clear what the position of the new authorities on same-sex relations is.[318]In a meeting with journalists in December 2024, Mohamed Khaled from the HTS' political office indicated that the treatment of LGBTIQ persons is one of the topics that will be discussed by the new government.[319]BBC News reported that the new authorities 'have been implicated in violence and persecution against gay people'[320]and ILGA indicated that 'consensual same-sex sexual acts continue to be criminalized' in 2025.[321]

☐ (b) Treatment by state authorities, family and society

Sources have documented abuses against LGBTIQ individuals during the Syrian conflict by state[322]and non-state actors.[323]Additionally, according to Freedom House, persons

suspected of same-sex relations ‘are at risk of execution in areas held by extremist groups.’[324]Sources indicate that homophobia is prevalent in Syrian society,[325] including from family members, religious groups, and society at large.[326]

In 2024, a Syrian transgender woman was deported from Türkiye to north-western Syria and killed by Turkish-backed armed groups in collaboration with her family.[327]In February 2025, sources reported on attacks targeting transgender individuals in Syria.[328]Videos circulating online were reportedly showing a campaign by the Syrian authorities targeting transgender individuals for arrests.[329]According to ‘an anonymous security source in the Damascus government’ interviewed by the Jerusalem Post, the goal of the operation was to ‘send a message to these people that they should not appear freely in the area and stop their activities in front of the people.’[330] According to an article by the Guardians of Equality Movement (GEM), the first Syrian LGBTIQ organisation,[331]since December 2025, armed groups linked to the new authorities as well as non-state actors were implicated in serious violations against LGBTIQ individuals including ‘entrapment through dating apps, home raids, abductions, arbitrary arrests, torture, humiliation, threats of physical violence and disfigurement, as well as other dangerous practices such as forced filming and public shaming.’[332]GEM also indicated that ‘society has become a major source of violence against LGBTQIA+ individuals’, while the authorities have not shown support for them.[333]

- [317]

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