

7.5. LGBTIQ persons, including activists

7.5.1. Institutional discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity

In Lebanon, personal status matters are regulated exclusively through religious law, with 15 distinct family codes applied by confessional courts, while same-sex unions or other forms of legal recognition for same-sex couples are not acknowledged in the country[648]. The Penal Code criminalises certain forms of conduct relating to same-sex sexual activity[649]. Article 521 stipulates that 'Any man who disguises himself in women's clothing and enters a place reserved for women, or a place where entry is, at the time of the act, prohibited to persons other than women, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or by a fine of up to one million Lebanese pounds.'[650] Article 534 penalises 'sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature' with up to one year of imprisonment.[651] Although several judicial decisions between 2007 and 2018 affirmed that consensual same-sex relations could not be considered illegal, Article 534 remains in force.[652]

For more information on personal status law, see section 3.1.1 Personal Status Law.

According to Amnesty International, public rhetoric targeting sexual and gender minorities has intensified markedly since 2022, when the Minister of Interior prohibited public gatherings during Pride month on the grounds that they promoted 'sexual perversion'.[653] The climate further deteriorated in 2023, when opposition parliamentarians introduced a proposal to repeal Article 534. Political and religious leaders from across the spectrum mobilised against the initiative.[654] This discourse contributed to a broader campaign rejecting LGBTIQ rights.[655]

Restrictions extended beyond rhetoric. According to Freedom House, security agencies monitored online activities of activists and groups, including LGBTIQ persons, by infiltrating social media networks[656]. In September 2024, the president of the Lebanese University suspended the defence of a psychology master's thesis on strengthening resilience among homosexuals against homophobia despite the thesis having met academic requirements, citing conflict with 'prevailing social values,' a decision that provoked criticism from faculty and students.[657]

In parallel, access to shelters for LGBTIQ survivors of violence remained extremely limited. Government-operated shelters largely excluded queer and transgender individuals, who were either denied entry or compelled to conceal their identity. A 2024 survey conducted by Jasmin Lilian Diab, further found that transgender women experiencing violence were frequently refused protection by the police and were instead threatened with arrest under morality

provisions such as Article 534.659

Despite these constraints, reporting by L'Orient-Le Jour in February 2025 noted signs of revival in LGBTIQ life in Beirut, with events, performances, and conferences being organised. However, organisers maintained strict discretion, and community members continued to regard open communication as too risky, underscoring the persistence of caution.660

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