

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. Same-sex unions or other forms of legal recognition for same-sex couples are not acknowledged in any of those 15 codes. Provisions of the Penal Code continue to criminalise or constrain the expression of sexual orientation and gender identity. Article 521 prescribes imprisonment of six years for ‘men disguising themselves as women,’ thereby criminalising gender expression of transgender women and individuals who cross-dress.⁶⁴⁸ Article 534 penalises ‘sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature’ with up to one year of imprisonment.⁶⁴⁹ Although several judicial decisions between 2007 and 2018 affirmed that consensual same-sex relations could not be considered illegal, the provision remains in force.⁶⁵⁰ 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’.⁶⁵¹ 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.⁶⁵² This discourse contributed to a broader campaign rejecting LGBTIQ rights.⁶⁵³

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.⁶⁵⁴ 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.⁶⁵⁵

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.⁶⁵⁶ 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 534.⁶⁵⁷

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.⁶⁵⁸

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649

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650

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651

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652

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653

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654

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655

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656

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657

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658

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