

7.5.2. Societal discrimination

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Individuals identifying as LGBTIQ, and particularly transgender women, were reported to face entrenched marginalisation, hostility, and violence within Lebanese society. Accounts from within the community described that they were targeted by relatives, neighbours, and community members, with limited avenues for safety or support services.659 Jasmin Lilian Diab's 2024 survey indicated that visibly queer persons—such as gender-nonconforming lesbians, transmasculine people, and transfeminine individuals—were subjected to violence in both public and private settings. Transgender persons, regardless of age, experienced heightened exposure to physical assault, harassment, and sexual violence, often at the hands of family members or acquaintances. Advocates underlined that for many transgender individuals, the act of appearing in public constituted both a declaration of identity and a considerable risk.660

In September 2025, Lebanese dancer Alexandre Paulikevitch, known for performing in dresses and corsets to classical Arabic music in a style traditionally associated with women, held sold-out performances in Beirut despite threats from extremist groups, including the right-wing Christian 'Soldiers of God' and Sunni Islamist actors. Prior to the event, security forces contacted the venue to express concern; however, the management proceeded with the performance and arranged additional police presence. Armed officers were deployed outside the venue, and the events concluded without incident.661

Violence against queer individuals was frequently regarded as socially acceptable, and in some cases even encouraged by families, religious communities, and wider society. Transgender persons were identified as facing the gravest risks, including repeated attempts on their lives by relatives, blackmail, forced confinement, and systematic exclusion. One transgender woman from Beirut stated that her family had attempted to kill her several times and continued to pursue her. In many communities, such acts were framed not as violations but as measures to restore family honour, preserve morality, or protect society from perceived corruption.662

A survey conducted by Beirut-based civil society organisation Proud Lebanon with 93 members of the LGBTIQ community in Lebanon found that two-thirds (66.7 %) of respondents reported psychological or emotional abuse related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, 83.1 % felt unsafe when seeking help or reporting discrimination and violence, and 70.3 % concealed their identity in the workplace out of fear of discrimination or retaliation.663

Furthermore, sexual harassment in public spaces (such as threats, verbal abuse or groping)664 was experienced by the majority of LGBTIQ persons, according to Jasmin Lilian Diab.665 Alongside this, emotional abuse and online harassment grew in prominence. Survivors recounted experiences of blackmail via social media, threats of exposure or shaming, and campaigns of online harassment.666 Human Rights Watch in 2023 documented that digital targeting often had severe repercussions in the offline environment. Hostility intensified in 2022 following the Interior Ministry's ban on public LGBTQ+ gatherings, which was accompanied by a surge of online hate speech.667

Healthcare provision was likewise characterised as exclusionary. LGBTIQ persons reported experiences of ridicule, misgendering, and denial of services. Healthcare delivery was frequently accompanied by intrusive or moralising inquiries concerning sexual behaviour and gender identity. Transgender women in particular stated that they were perceived as suffering from mental illness rather than being recognised as patients requiring a doctor. The anticipation of humiliation or involuntary disclosure of identity deterred many from accessing sexual and reproductive health services, even when such care was essential.668

Despite widespread discrimination, certain spaces of acceptance and support for LGBTIQ persons continued to exist in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut, where some bars, clubs, and cultural events catered to the community. These venues nevertheless operated under constant risk of raids and closures, and their presence did not necessarily indicate wider societal tolerance.669

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