

3.7.3. Regional differences

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The main regional distinction regarding the situation of LGBTIQ people is between Russia as whole and the North Caucasus republics, particularly Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.599 A lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues noted that non-state violence, such as discrimination, outing, and physical assault, is widespread across the country. While some cities like St. Petersburg may be comparatively safer environments for LGBTIQ people, the overall difference between the regions when Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan are excluded is not very substantial.600 However, regarding St. Petersburg, Marianna Muravyeva noted that while it is 'often considered safe, it's a city of six million people and is always closely affected by Moscow's politics, especially in what concerns the court caseloads.' According to the same source, if Chechnya is left aside, it is not possible to say that one location in Russia is safer than others for LGBTIQ people.601

As noted by Marianna Muravyeva, in the North Caucasus, policing of behaviour by the community is much more intense, with close networking resulting in reporting LGBTIQ people to the authorities.602

According to lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan, the authorities rarely use 'LGBT propaganda' laws as they do not want to acknowledge the presence of LGBTIQ people in the republics. However, in these three republics, LGBTIQ people face serious threats to life due to their gender identity or sexual orientation, including torture, enforced disappearance, domestic violence, including 'honour killings', and pressure to sign contracts for service in the army. Gay men have been detained by authorities in basements for months, being subjected to beatings and electrocution (including in 2024 and 2025), which is a practice more common in Chechnya, but also occurring in Dagestan and Ingushetia.603 As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur, Mariana Katzarova, in December 2024, a 19-year-old Chechen man was detained 'for alleged association with a gay friend,' tortured, including by electrocution, and died in custody. No investigation was conducted into his death, which 'follows a documented pattern of abuse against LGBT individuals in Chechnya.'604

According to a lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, if a person's gender identity or sexual orientation is revealed, the likelihood of conversion practices or domestic violence – particularly for men and transgender men – is 'extremely high'. There 'is no state protection' against physical and domestic violence, particularly in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan.605 According to Marianna Muravyeva, violence against LGBTIQ people in Chechnya never reaches police or courts, unlike in the other republics of the North Caucasus; particularly, there are some

court cases in the Vladikavkaz court.606 As noted by a lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, LGBTIQ persons who leave their families and their regions, can be abducted elsewhere inside Russia (or abroad) and ‘possibly taken to Chechnya for education,’ with more than 20 documented cases of LGBTIQ people, who lived outside Russia, being brought to Chechnya against their will and forced to stay.607

In Chechnya specifically, the authorities have conducted ‘raids on gays’ at least since 2016,608 with over 100 men detained in March 2017.609At the end of August 2024, human rights activists reported an ‘intensified wave of arrests’ of gay men in Chechnya and Dagestan, with North Caucasus SOS noting that security forces were arranging fake dates using social media accounts of previously detained men.610 As reported by North Caucasus SOS, in April 2025, a gay man in Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia-Alania in Russia’s North Caucasus region, was allegedly lured into a fake date by people posing as drug enforcement officers who attempted to blackmail him into informing on other gay men. According to North Caucasus SOS, North Ossetia is considered more liberal than neighbouring Chechnya or Ingushetia, with no previous reports of fake dates or practices of rounding up gay men, with Vladikavkaz being a place where gay men from other North Caucasian republics – Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Ingushetia – often come to seek for partners.611

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  Lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, Online interview with EUAA, 26 September 2025; Marianna Muravyeva, Online interview with EUAA, 3 October 2025

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  Lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, Online interview with EUAA, 26 September 2025

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  Marianna Muravyeva, Online interview with EUAA, 3 October 2025

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  Marianna Muravyeva, Online interview with EUAA, 3 October 2025

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  Lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, Online interview with EUAA, 26 September 2025, and Email correspondence with EUAA, 20 November 2025

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  UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation, Mariana Katzarova, 15 September 2025, url, para. 115

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Lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, Online interview with EUAA, 26 September 2025

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  Marianna Muravyeva, Online interview with EUAA, 3 October 2025

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  Lawyer specialising in LGBTIQ issues, Online interview with EUAA, 26 September 2025

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  Caucasian Knot, Gay raids spread to North Ossetia, 27 June 2025, url

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  Novaya Gazeta, Убийство чести [Honour killing], 1 April 2017, url

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  DW, Власти Чечни отправляют задержанных геев воевать в Украину [Chechen authorities send detained gay men to fight in Ukraine], 5 September 2024, url

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  NC SOS, “Let’s Just Settle This Quietly.” The Story of Zaur, Who Was Forced to Inform on Gay Men in North Ossetia – But Refused, 11 September 2025, url

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