



4.7. LGBTIQ+ persons and activists

The situation of LGBTIQ+ people in Belarus is characterised by a lack of protection mechanisms for LGBTIQ+ rights⁵⁹⁷ and a deteriorating human rights environment.⁵⁹⁸ While same sex-sex relations and gender transition are not criminalised and remain legal,⁵⁹⁹ discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people is widespread.⁶⁰⁰ The Belarusian authorities have declared ‘the safeguarding and promotion of the traditional family’ a matter of national security⁶⁰¹ and perceive gender identity as an area that requires protection from ‘Western ideology’, with ‘hostile rhetoric toward the LGBTIQ+ community’ expressed by state officials and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus.⁶⁰²

Legislation discriminating against LGBTIQ+ people has been expanded.⁶⁰³ Since April 2024, the legal definition of pornography has been expanded to include depictions of same-sex relationships and transgender people, allowing the authorities to treat such content as pornography, punishable by up to four years’ imprisonment.⁶⁰⁴ In July 2025, the Law on the Rights of the Child was amended to classify the ‘propaganda of homosexual relations, gender reassignment, paedophilia, and childlessness’ as harmful to the psychological health of children.⁶⁰⁵

On 2 April 2026, the parliament adopted amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences, introducing, *inter alia*,⁶⁰⁶ Article 19.16 ‘Propaganda of homosexuality, sex change, childlessness, and paedophilia’. Under this legislation, the distribution of information that creates a positive perception of ‘same-sex relations, gender transition, voluntary childlessness, or recognising paedophilia as permissible’ is punishable by fines, community labour, or administrative detention of up to 15 days.⁶⁰⁷ The term ‘propaganda’ lacks a clear legal definition, allowing for the broad and arbitrary application of the law,⁶⁰⁸ including potential punishment for educational materials, social media posts, and the work of civil society and human rights organisations.⁶⁰⁹ The law was signed by President Lukashenko on 15 April 2026⁶¹⁰ and will enter into force in mid-June 2026.⁶¹¹

Sources noted that LGBTIQ+ people have faced harassment and intimidation,⁶¹² increased surveillance,⁶¹³ arbitrary arrest and detention,⁶¹⁴ and mistreatment in detention.⁶¹⁵ Security forces reportedly carry out raids on LGBTIQ+ cultural events,⁶¹⁶ nightclubs and private gatherings.⁶¹⁷ During raids, LGBTIQ+ individuals have reportedly been subjected to selective detention, document checks, and searches of mobile devices, as well as interrogations ‘often conducted without the drafting of formal records.’⁶¹⁸ In addition, KGB officers reportedly used blackmail against LGBTIQ+ individuals to pressure them into cooperation.⁶¹⁹

Due to 'the absence of independent media and effective legal protection mechanisms', many violations of the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals remain undocumented, with many of those affected refraining from making public statements 'due to fear of further repression, threats against relatives, or repeated violence.' [620](#)

LGBTIQ+ organisations in the country have been closed.[621](#) In September 2025, a district court of the Minsk Region designated the LGBTIQ+ media outlet DazHip as an extremist formation.[622](#) In April 2025, a psychologist and LGBTIQ+ activist was detained in Minsk and interrogated by the KGB officers, who threatened her with criminal proceedings for participation in an extremist formation unless she cooperated and provided information about LGBTIQ+ activists and groups supporting LGBTIQ+ people. In September 2025, a 'queer activist' was convicted for the creation of an extremist formation and sentenced to three years in prison in a trial held behind closed doors in relation to her participation in the educational project 'School of Leadership for

Women.'[623](#)



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