

LGBTQIA+ life challenges in Iran



Legal Challenges

Any type of sexual activity outside a heterosexual marriage is forbidden in post-revolutionary Iran and the government is one of the most discriminatory against sexual minorities in the world. An estimated 4000 gay people were executed in the immediate aftermath of Islamic revolution. Same-gender sexual activities are punishable by imprisonment, corporal punishment, or execution. Gay men face stricter enforcement actions under the law than lesbians. Penetrative intercourse between two men is always punishable by death for the receptive party, whereas the penetrative party receives the death penalty if he used coercion or is married, and 100 lashes if not. Non-penetrative intercourse generally is penalized by dozens of lashes. Intercourse between two women incurs a penalty of 100 lashes and is punishable by death upon the fourth offense. Nonetheless, transgender persons can legally change their gender and name after sterilization surgery.

Displacement

Many LGBTQIA+ people have fled to neighboring Turkey, where their status is not a crime. In 2020 alone, over 1400 Iranians sought international protection from Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management. They are generally transferred to the third LGBTQIA+-friendly countries after a long (to 5-6 years) and difficult period staying in Turkey. Some escape and seek asylum in European and North American countries that provide greater protection.

Resources

[1] https://www.voanews.com/a/extremism-watch_lgbt-people-fleeing-harassment-iran-find-life-no-easier-turkey/6204685.html

[2] <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/17/iran-persecution-gay-community-revealed>

[3] <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/lgbt-people-fleeing-harassment-iran-find-life-no-easier-turkey>

[4] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344580584_Migration_and_Gender_for_Iranian_LGBTQ

[5] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Iran - Wikipedia

Societal Challenges

The lifestyles of LGBTQIA+ people in Iran are systematically denied by the Islamic regime, which exposes them to horrific punishment, bullying and risk of suicide. Since they are stigmatized and criminalized, many LGBTQIA+ teenagers in Iran suffer emotional anguish from social isolation, intolerance, distorted self-image, family violence. They are forced into marriage or sterilization as part of gender confirmation surgery. This leads some of them to self-present to health care professionals. However, health care professionals do not often know how to address their issues, leading to distress and poor mental health in LGBTQIA+ individuals. There are several reports of police attacks and arrests at LGBTQIA+ gatherings.

Activism

Some organizations based in other countries actively support LGBTQIA+ individuals:

IRQO (Iranian Queer Organization) or (Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization) based in Canada <http://www.irqo.org/>

Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network - (6Rang) in UK <http://6rang.org/>

Persian LGBT Organisation in UK
<https://www.persianlgbt.org/>