



Legal Challenges

Homosexuality for men was decriminalized in 1951 in the West Bank but same-gender sexual activities between men in the Gaza Strip are still prohibited. The law is not applied to women in both regions. LGBTQIA+ people in Palestine face legal challenges and discrimination and there is no specific, stand-alone civil rights legislation that protects them. There is no recognition of same-gender relationships in Palestine. Legally changing gender for trans* people is not allowed. There are reports that Palestinian authorities harass, abuse, and sometimes arrest and torture LGBTQIA+ individuals. They keep files, threatening to report them to their family, blackmailing them into working as spies and informants. In the Gaza Strip, the punishment is imprisonment for a term of 10 years. No death penalty has been reported.

Societal Challenges

Palestinian society is governed by traditions and inherited social values. There are high levels of societal discrimination and pressure. There are reports of family intolerance, forced marriage, and even honour killing by family members. Families and society do not accept homosexuality and describe it as a "stigma." The predominant religion of Palestine is Islam, which has a strong influence on the population, regulating people's life and society. Thus, LGBTQIA+ individuals' behavior goes against religious and traditional values.

Displacement

Numerous Palestinian LGBTQIA+ people frequently seek refuge in Israel, especially fearing death from the members of their own families. According to an Israeli lawyer, around 2000 Palestinian homosexuals live in Tel Aviv. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Israel should offer effective protection to asylum seekers, but they rarely fulfil its protection obligations towards Palestinian asylum seekers since 1993. Otherwise, most Palestinian LGBTQIA+ individuals claim and receive international protection in Europe and North America.

Activism

AlQaws ("Rainbow" in Arabic), is the leading organisation for Palestinian LGBTQIA+ rights and was founded in 2001. Al-Qaws has expanded since its founding and now hosts social activities in Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, and the West Bank as an arena of support for members of the LGBTQIA+ Palestinian community.

<http://alqaws.org/>

Aswat ("Voices" in Arabic), was founded in 2002 and leading Palestinian lesbian rights.

<https://www.aswatgroup.org/>

Sahar association from Israel supporting people emotionally in Arabic language.

<https://sahar.org.il/arabic/>

Resources

- [1] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/palestine-state-of/report-palestine-state-of/>
- [2] <https://genderandsecurity.org/projects-resources/research/nowhere-run-gay-palestinian-asylum-seekers-israel>
- [3] <https://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/occupied-palestinian-territory-lgbti-resources>
- [4] https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2019.pdf
- [5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_the_State_of_Palestine