

LGBTQIA+ life challenges in Afghanistan



Legal Challenges

The legal situation for LGBTQIA+ people in Afghanistan is not explicitly clear on paper, but same gender relation for men and for women is illegal according to Islamic Sharia Law. There is no protection against discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity and no legal recognition of same-gender couples and transgender people. The security of the LGBTQIA+ community in Afghanistan has deteriorated dramatically following the Taliban takeover in August 2021 when all sexual activities outside of heterosexual marriage are potentially punishable by the death penalty. Homosexual people can be stoned to death. LGBTQIA+ Afghans are being abducted, tortured, and killed by the Taliban. They carry out house searches for LGBTQIA+ people. Family members of LGBTQIA+ people are being killed or asked to turn over their suspected queer to them.

Displacement

Afghans are the largest protracted refugee population in Asia, and the second largest refugee population in the world. Considering the increasingly deteriorating security situation after Taliban domination, the violence continues to drive LGBTQIA+ people from their homes. There are many queer people escaped to Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and European/North American countries. After Taliban takeover, some of them were transferred to Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States. Some countries such as Germany are running the program to rescue and evacuate vulnerable LGBTQIA+ individuals from Afghanistan to a safe country.

Societal Challenges

Homosexuality is a taboo subject in Afghanistan, rarely discussed in the media and widely condemned as immoral and un-Islamic. Based on the religious structure and limited access to education of Afghanistan population, there are very limited understanding of LGBTQIA+ people in the society. Queer communities in Afghanistan have always lived a secret life because of being considered homosexuality as immoral. There are plenty of reports of harassment, violence, and detention or being beaten and threatened with death. Also, there is other significant violence like honour killing in society and families.

After the Taliban domination, neighbors can report LGBTQIA+ Afghans to gain social credit thanks to this new regime.

Activism

There are some advocacy organisations actively supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals in- and outside of the country mostly based abroad:

- **Afghan LGBT** in Czech Republic (<https://afghanlgbt.com>)
- **Be hesht Collective** (secretly active in Afghanistan)
- **Rainbow Afghanistan** in Germany (<https://www.facebook.com/rainbowafghanist/>)
- **Roshaniya LGBT** in the United States (<https://m.facebook.com/RoshaniyaLGBT>)
- **Sarah Nour NAWA** (<https://noursarah.com>)

Resources

- [1] <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/7714/had-i-stayed-in-afghanistan-i-would-have-been-killed>
- [2] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/02/26/afghan-lgbt-asylum-seekers-uk-among-most-vulnerable>
- [3] <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-lgbtq-afghan-refugees-rebuild-their-lives>
- [4] https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2019.pdf
- [5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Afghanistan
- [6] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36884732>



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