



“Coming Out” LGBTQ+ Group
ЛГБТК+ группа “Выход”

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REPORT

on the Situation of LGBTQ+ People in Russia

This certificate has been prepared by Denis Oleinik, Executive Director of LGBTQ+ Group “ComingOut”, a non-profit human rights initiative that has cooperated with various Russian and international NGOs.

The certificate is issued upon request of an LGBTQ+ citizen of the Russian Federation and addresses the current situation of LGBTQ+ people in Russia.

I. Information about the Organization

This report has been prepared by LGBTQ+ Group “ComingOut”. “ComingOut” (comingoutspb.org/en/) is a non-profit initiative founded in 2008 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The organization works to protect the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and supports queer individuals in living safe and with dignity in Russia.

The core objective of “ComingOut” is to achieve equal legal and social opportunities for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. The organization documents cases of discrimination, records the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Russia, and engages with state authorities in cases involving discrimination and violence.

This certificate is devoted to the current situation of LGBTQ+ people in the Russian Federation.

II. General Social and Legal Context

Based on our research data, as well as ongoing legal and psychological consultations conducted by our organization, it can be concluded that LGBTQ+ individuals in Russia face a real risk of severe persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as constant discrimination, violence, and other human rights violations.

These conclusions are supported by annual reports of “ComingOut” on the situation of the LGBTQ+ community in Saint Petersburg and across Russia, needs assessments of LGBTQ+ individuals, and analysis of legislation and judicial practice.

The most recent reports of “ComingOut” include:

- [“Persecution of LGBTQ+ People in the Russian Federation in 2025”](#)
- [“Report on the Situation of LGBTQ+ People in Russia in 2024”](#)

The situation of LGBTQ+ individuals in Russia significantly deteriorated after 24 February 2022 and continues to worsen rapidly in 2025–2026. Separate reports by “ComingOut” cover the period 2021–2025; however, the situation is changing so quickly that by April 2026 they no longer fully reflect current developments.



In December 2022, the state strengthened the administrative ban on so-called “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations.” On 5 December 2022, amendments were introduced into the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation establishing liability for any public “propaganda” of same-sex relations or gender transition, including fines of up to 400,000 rubles for Russian citizens and up to 15 days of administrative detention with subsequent deportation for foreign nationals.

On 30 November 2023, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation declared the “International LGBT Movement and its structural subdivisions” an extremist organization and ordered its activities to be banned within Russia. This Supreme Court decision, in conjunction with existing criminal legislation, establishes criminal liability for any involvement in LGBT-related activities, including volunteering and donations of any amount, organizing any commercial or non-commercial activities with a queer-related context, and, in certain cases, expressions of LGBT+ identity in private life. Depending on the specific legal qualification, penalties include imprisonment for terms ranging from 4 to 10 years.

In July 2023, a legislative ban was introduced on legal gender marker change, access to gender-affirming hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgical interventions, as well as professional medical consultation on these issues.

III. Legislation on “LGBT Propaganda”

Russian legislation on so-called LGBT “propaganda” includes Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation (“propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations and gender transition”) and Article 6.21.2 (“distribution among minors of information depicting non-traditional sexual relations and preferences or capable of inducing minors to change their sex”).

In September 2023, the federal authority responsible for oversight in the field of communications and media approved clarifications expanding the concept of “propaganda of non-traditional relations” to include any information “approving such relations,” and “propaganda of gender transition” to include any information “presenting gender transition as acceptable.”

In practice, these provisions are used to prosecute LGBT+ individuals for a wide range of actions, including:

- participation in public life: administration of online LGBT+ communities, creation of LGBT+ content for social media and podcasts regardless of audience size, publication of any information containing any representation of LGBT+ relationships or identity, regardless of when it was originally posted;
- expression of sexual orientation or transgender identity in private contexts: outside the home (including public spaces, even without witnesses), at private events, or online (for example, posting dating advertisements or photographs with a partner);
- gender expression not corresponding to assigned sex.



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The “propaganda” provisions are also used for internet censorship, including blocking LGBT+ platforms and any materials containing any representation of LGBT+ relationships and identities, including scientific or medical materials and works of art. These provisions are also used as grounds for applying “foreign agent” legislation to individuals and organizations, which restricts their rights and creates risks of both administrative and criminal liability.

Under the pretext of searching for “propaganda,” authorities conduct raids on LGBT+ events, including private parties and gatherings, during which dozens of individuals are subjected to humiliation, violence, abuse, and detention. These raids often result in administrative charges against participants, and in some cases criminal cases against organizers.

In 2025, monitoring identified 117 cases under Articles 6.21 and 6.21.2 of the Code of Administrative Offenses specifically against individuals. These included numerous cases of prosecution for any information or imagery relating to LGBT+ relationships or identity, including archived content, as well as dating advertisements. Offline expression increasingly served as grounds for liability in 2025. The most common offline “offense” was wearing clothing traditionally associated with another gender by a person whose legal documents indicated otherwise.

Cases have been documented where individuals were prosecuted for kissing after being captured on public surveillance cameras. Prosecution for attending LGBT+ parties was also common, including on the basis of photographs published by third parties. Administrative liability has also been imposed on manifestly absurd grounds, for example, a fine was issued for kissing a monument.

The body and physical appearance of LGBT+ individuals are treated as legitimate objects of administrative control.

IV. Criminal Prosecution on Charges of “Extremism”

On 30 November 2023, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation declared the “International LGBT Movement and its structural subdivisions” an extremist organization and ordered its activities to be banned within Russia. No formal organization under this name exists. However, the Supreme Court’s ruling has significant legal consequences both within Russia and for Russian citizens abroad, due to Article 12 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, which provides for criminal liability for offenses committed by Russian citizens outside the territory of Russia.

The practice of banning fictitious “extremist” associations to which a destructive ideology is attributed has a long history in Russia. In such cases, extremism legislation allows authorities to designate as an “extremist subdivision” any group of individuals who, in the view of the authorities, share such ideology. This creates the possibility of criminal prosecution of leaders, participants, employees, volunteers, event attendees, supporters, and any other associated individuals.

According to the court ruling, the “international LGBT movement” in Russia also includes individual activists, individuals with a public presence on social media, and authors of LGBT+ literature.



Among the examples of extremist activity cited in the ruling is the creation of artistic works depicting same-sex relationships involving minors. Other forms of “extremism” include the creation of any content promoting the ideas of equality or equal social value of heterosexual and non-heterosexual relationships, including any materials aimed at providing psychological, social, or legal support to LGBT+ individuals.

According to the ruling, maintaining online communities or organizing and participating in LGBT+ events are also classified as extremist activity.

Under current Russian legislation, such activities fall under:

- Part 2 of Article 282.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (participation in the activities of an extremist organization), punishable by imprisonment from two to six years; or
- Part 1 of Article 282.2 (organization of an extremist organization), punishable by imprisonment of up to ten years.

At present, the application of Article 282.2 has become an increasingly common tool of criminal prosecution for any activity related to the LGBT+ community, including the operation of gay clubs and bars, activism, distribution of literature featuring LGBT+ characters, ordinary social life, and in some cases even the expression of identity as such.

At least 18 criminal cases related to so-called “LGBT extremism” are currently known, many involving multiple defendants. Among those prosecuted are both activists previously known to the authorities and ordinary LGBT+ individuals who had not previously attracted attention, with prosecutions often triggered by denunciations from homophobic groups. One of the defendants has already died in pre-trial detention.

In 2025, six convictions were issued in such cases, and in 2026 to date, two. Sentences ranged from two to nine years of imprisonment.

At the same time, it remains unclear which specific legal elements constitute the offense under Parts 1 and 2 of Article 282.2. LGBT+ individuals are effectively unable to predict whether their public or private activities or even a proposal to enter into a same-sex relationship may result in criminal prosecution.

V. Administrative Cases Related to “Extremism” (2024–2026) and Subsequent Criminal Prosecution

On 30 November 2023, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation established administrative liability for displaying LGBT+ symbols under Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses. Neither the court ruling nor other legislation defines what constitutes such symbolism, resulting in broad interpretation in practice.

Individuals are fined for images of a seven-color rainbow, transgender symbols, and any other imagery interpreted as LGBT-related, despite the Supreme Court describing the LGBT symbol as a six-color flag (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet).



Article 20.3 provides for up to 15 days of administrative detention.

In 2025, 43 cases of liability for displaying “extremist LGBT symbols” were recorded. In the first three months of 2026, 13 such cases were recorded.

A repeated violation leads to criminal liability under Article 282.4 of the Criminal Code, punishable by up to four years of imprisonment.

The prohibition applies not only to display and publication but to any images that law enforcement authorities may interpret as LGBT-related. This makes it impossible for LGBT+ individuals to predict legal consequences or minimize risks.

If a person has ever posted online an image that could be interpreted as LGBT symbolism (e.g., a rainbow emoji), and it remains accessible, they may be subject to administrative liability.

Criminal prosecution becomes possible if:

- the image was posted more than once; and
- the individual has previously been held administratively liable under Article 20.3.

This applies regardless of whether the image was posted before or after the Supreme Court ruling or whether the same image remained online because the person was serving administrative detention.

Thus, at present, no LGBT+ individual in Russia can feel safe.

Additionally, after initiation of criminal proceedings for “extremism” (regardless of conviction), or after administrative liability under Article 20.3, individuals are placed on the financial monitoring list of persons associated with extremist and terrorist activity.

This status severely restricts rights:

- individuals lose access to their bank funds and may withdraw no more than 10,000 rubles per month in cash, and only if funds are received as salary;
- they are prohibited from disposing of property without state authorization;
- even when authorization is granted, they cannot freely use the proceeds.

In practice, individuals are pushed below the poverty line and may be unable to leave Russia due to lack of financial means.

VI. Criminal Prosecution of LGBT+ Individuals under Non-“Extremism” Charges

An additional risk factor for LGBT+ individuals is the selective application of other provisions of the Criminal Code based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

In 2025, two convictions under Article 135 of the Criminal Code (“indecent acts involving minors”) entered into force. These cases involved two adult men who were naked inside an apartment in a residential building, where they could theoretically have been seen by children in the courtyard.



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In 2025, at least three cases were documented under Article 148 (“offending religious feelings”) in situations involving proximity of queer-related content to religious symbols.

At least three convictions were also issued under Article 330.1 (“failure to comply with obligations of a foreign agent”) against activists designated as foreign agents specifically due to LGBT+ activism.

A separate risk factor is prosecution under Article 242 (“distribution of pornographic materials”). This provision is applied not only to online publication of intimate images involving same-sex individuals, but also to private exchange of such images between homosexual men, including between partners.

At least three convictions of this kind were recorded in 2025. This provision is also widely used for police abuse, private violence, and blackmail against gay and bisexual men and transgender individuals.

VII. Other Forms of State Violence (2024–2025)

LGBT+ individuals in Russia face a growing risk of physical violence and ill-treatment by state authorities.

Prior to 2024, cases of torture and violence by law enforcement against LGBT+ individuals were primarily documented in the North Caucasus, with only occasional incidents in police departments in other regions. However, the designation of the “International LGBT Movement” as extremist has led to the spread of state violence across the country.

In one such case, Andrey Kotov, who later died in pre-trial detention, reported to his lawyer and to the court during a hearing that police officers beat him in the face and jumped on his leg in an attempt to gain access to his phone and laptop. These actions meet the definition of torture.

In January 2025, in the city of Tula, a gay man was detained and subjected to degrading treatment at a police station, as confirmed by video recordings disseminated in the media.

Extremism legislation is also used to interfere with freedom of assembly and association, including police raids on closed gay parties and other events. These raids are accompanied by physical violence, degrading treatment, threats, and outing of participants.

According to monitoring conducted by “ComingOut,” at least 18 raids on LGBT+ clubs and events, including private parties, were recorded in 2025. In 2026, two such raids have been recorded so far. During each raid, between 10 and 40 individuals were beaten and required medical assistance; people were humiliated, forced to perform physical exercises, sing, and assume degrading positions. At some raids, all male participants were issued military summons.

In a number of cases, all participants were photographed, and their images were later disseminated online or provided to their employers.

VIII. Threats of Criminal Prosecution

LGBT+ individuals face a constant threat of criminal prosecution on extremism-related charges. In practice, such accusations arise in almost any legal situation involving an LGBT+ person.



The label of “extremism” itself provokes physical attacks in public spaces and serves as justification for police raids accompanied by humiliation and violence against dozens of individuals.

The risk of being accused of extremism based on sexual orientation or gender identity extends to:

- same-sex couples living together,
- minors coming out at home or at school,
- individuals seeking police protection from violence, extortion, or harassment.

In 2025, “ComingOut” documented 43 cases involving threats of criminal prosecution, as well as 7 additional cases where individuals reported such threats but further developments remain unknown due to loss of contact.

Threats of criminal prosecution are used both by law enforcement authorities and by private individuals for purposes such as extortion, coercion into signing military service contracts, or forcing individuals into informal cooperation with police. In cases involving private actors, such threats are used for intimidation, extortion, or to resolve family disputes.

IX. Violence by Private Individuals

LGBT+ individuals in Russia face a significant risk of physical violence by private individuals and organized groups.

According to the 2024 annual report of “ComingOut,” 47.5% of LGBT+ respondents experienced non-state persecution. One in five LGBT+ respondents experienced physical violence. This figure exceeded 30% among transgender individuals and minors. 20% of homosexual men experienced extortion and blackmail. 59% of victims of hate crimes did not report incidents to law enforcement authorities.

In 2025, “ComingOut’s” monitoring program identified three murders motivated by anti-LGBT+ hatred; in one of these cases, no criminal proceedings were initiated. A total of seven serious crimes were recorded (including murder, grievous bodily harm, attempted murder, and kidnapping), some of which were met with no response from law enforcement authorities.

In 2026, a conviction was issued in a murder case motivated by hatred. As a mitigating factor, the court recognized the “immoral behavior” of the victim, who had proposed to the perpetrator to engage in a homosexual relationship, without any violence or coercion.

In March 2026, in the Moscow region, suspicions of the victim’s homosexual orientation served as the motive for another killing.

Although crimes motivated by hatred are legally required to be classified as such, crimes committed against LGBT+ individuals are generally not recognized as hate crimes in practice.

Other hate crimes include extortion, robbery, and assault. Many of these crimes are committed online. Based on requests for legal assistance received by “ComingOut,” at least 37



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cases of extortion and hundreds of cases of unlawful collection of private information have been recorded.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, law enforcement authorities take no action in response to complaints by victims, except in cases involving robbery schemes (such as fake dating setups) or serious bodily harm.

Victims of hate crimes, as well as LGBT+ individuals generally, face a risk of being prosecuted themselves when seeking protection from law enforcement. Filing a counter-complaint alleging “propaganda” or “extremism” became a common method in 2025 for perpetrators to avoid liability for crimes committed against LGBT+ individuals.

Furthermore, if a crime involves the use of the internet or if evidence is stored electronically, this often serves as grounds for law enforcement to examine victims’ electronic devices. In some cases, police inspect phones even when they themselves have doubts regarding the victim’s sexual orientation.

This creates direct risks of administrative liability for “propaganda,” criminal liability if exchange of intimate images is discovered, as well as liability for administering LGBT+ online resources or even active participation in closed LGBT+ chats on social media. In some cases, these risks materialize in practice.

Thus, seeking protection from law enforcement authorities in Russia is directly associated with risks of administrative and criminal prosecution for LGBT+ individuals. The overwhelming majority of LGBT+ victims of non-state violence, outing, extortion, and blackmail do not report crimes due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on sexual orientation or the risk of being accused of extremism following examination of their personal correspondence.

An additional problem concerns access to professional legal assistance. Lawyers not affiliated with human rights organizations often refuse to represent LGBT+ individuals due to fear of extremism-related charges. No LGBT+ organization can operate openly in Russia. Providing legal assistance to LGBT+ defendants carries risks of criminal liability for both the lawyer and the client.

X. Discrimination

LGBT+ individuals in Russia frequently face systemic discrimination in the fields of education and employment.

Employees in educational institutions are particularly vulnerable, living under a constant threat of dismissal on the grounds of “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations,” including cases where the basis consists of personal photographs from private accounts. Between 2023 and 2026, dismissals of LGBT+ employees in the public sector on the basis of sexual orientation have increased.

The designation of the “International LGBT Movement” as an extremist organization and the introduction of the ban on gender transition in 2023 have created additional grounds for violations of labor rights.

Under current legislation, employers are required to maintain military registration records of employees. If an employee with male legal gender is absent from the database, the employer bears responsibility. Following the introduction of the ban on gender transition, military registration



authorities require all transgender men to undergo mandatory in-person psychiatric examination in order to be registered, while transgender women are expected to undergo similar procedures for removal from the registry.

This effectively forces transgender individuals to undergo compulsory medical examinations in order to access their labor rights. In most regions, such examinations are accompanied by degrading treatment by medical personnel.

The rights of LGBT+ employees are further undermined by the lack of effective legal protections against employer actions. According to legal consultations provided by “ComingOut,” employers, including state institutions, frequently force LGBT+ employees to submit resignation letters “of their own free will” under threat of accusations of extremism or “propaganda.” In 2024, 28% of LGBT+ employees experienced workplace pressure related to SOGI. Among transgender individuals, this figure rises to 39%.

LGBT+ students face systemic violations of basic rights, including expulsion from schools, colleges, and universities on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as bullying and violence by peers and educators. State-sponsored “lessons on important matters” reinforce anti-LGBT+ narratives and hate speech. Misgendering is widespread.

Adolescents who openly identify as homosexual or transgender risk being accused of “propaganda” or even “extremism.” In many cases, educational institutions themselves initiate police involvement or mobilize parents of other students to file complaints. This deprives LGBT+ students of their rights to education, non-discrimination, and protection from inhuman or degrading treatment as guaranteed by international law. In 2024, 56% of minors experienced pressure or violence in educational settings related to SOGI.

LGBT+ individuals are frequently outed by homophobic groups that unlawfully obtain access to personal data, addresses, and places of work or study, and use this information for extortion, public dissemination, or pressure on employers or educational institutions to secure dismissal or expulsion.

LGBT+ individuals face barriers in accessing healthcare and medication. In 2024, 7% of LGBT+ individuals and 15% of transgender individuals were denied medical care due to SOGI, while 17% of LGBT+ individuals and 29% of transgender individuals experienced discrimination in healthcare settings. Discriminatory practices include punitive approaches, such as conducting procedures without adequate anesthesia or refusing to prescribe necessary treatment, including psychiatric medication, on the grounds of the patient being “abnormal.”

The state health insurance system does not cover gynecological care for transgender men, resulting in serious barriers to treatment of urogenital conditions. In some regions, access to private gynecological services is also limited by infrastructure and financial constraints. In cases requiring costly treatment, such as oncology of the urogenital system, transgender individuals who have changed their legal gender are deprived of access to state-funded medical care and, in most cases, lack the financial means to obtain such care privately. This creates a direct threat to life.

Additional secondary risks arise in connection with the war in Ukraine and the broader risk of mobilization. Military service is mandatory for all men, including gay and bisexual men and transgender women with male legal gender, creating a risk of conscription into military service in Ukraine. Refusal on grounds of conscience may lead to criminal prosecution and imprisonment.

For LGBT+ individuals, especially transgender women, imprisonment is associated with systematic humiliation and violence, including sexual violence, typically inflicted by other detainees with the acquiescence of prison authorities. Even where attempts are made to ensure



safety, measures are often limited to solitary confinement, which itself constitutes a form of ill-treatment, or forced legal gender reassignment of transgender men from male to female.

According to data from the crisis group “NC SOS,” in 2024–2026, gay men in the regions of the North Caucasus were coerced into signing military service contracts through torture and prolonged unlawful detention without formal charges.

XI. Conversion Practices

An additional threat is posed by conversion practices, which exist entirely outside state control.

At the request and expense of relatives, LGBT+ individuals are placed in so-called rehabilitation centers for drug addiction, where they are subjected to ill-treatment and forced labor with the aim of “correcting” their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Refusal to comply is met with threats of involuntary psychiatric hospitalization.

Complaints to law enforcement by partners or human rights defenders rarely result in criminal cases or the release of victims, as investigations are typically limited to collecting statements from relatives who arranged the placement.

In 2023–2026, there has been an increase in conversion practices conducted during psychiatric consultations, including the use of religious narratives. In Muslim regions, religious exorcism practices are widespread, as some LGBT+ individuals are believed to be “possessed by a jinn.”

In the North Caucasus, specialized “Muslim hospitals” operate for the detention and “treatment” of LGBT+ individuals. Similar practices are also present in other Muslim regions.

XII. Specific Risks for Transgender Individuals

Transgender individuals constitute the most vulnerable group within the LGBT+ community.

First, they face an elevated risk of physical violence, particularly where their appearance does not conform to traditional expectations associated with their legal gender. Violence originates both from private individuals and law enforcement authorities. Detentions are often accompanied by demands to undress or expose genitalia, humiliation, and ill-treatment, including coercion to provide testimony in unrelated criminal cases or to confess to crimes they did not commit. Law enforcement authorities frequently interpret the mere existence of a transgender individual as “propaganda of gender transition.”

Second, following the introduction of the ban on gender transition on 24 July 2023, transgender individuals are deprived of the ability to change their legal gender, further increasing the risk of violence.

Third, there is no legal possibility in Russia to obtain gender-affirming surgeries, which violates the right to health and deprives individuals who changed their legal gender prior to the ban of necessary medical care.

Finally, transgender individuals are deprived of legal access to hormone therapy, creating serious health risks for those who were previously receiving such treatment, regardless of legal gender, and violating the right to necessary medical care.

XIII. LGBT+ Parents

LGBT+ parents constitute another particularly vulnerable group. Their situation deteriorated during the summer of 2024 to the current level.



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Many face intervention by child protection authorities, which threaten removal of children and undertake legally significant actions to implement such measures. Authorities consider children living in same-sex families as being subjected to “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations,” which is classified as abuse of parental rights and serves as grounds for removal.

Transgender parents who changed their legal gender prior to the ban are particularly vulnerable. Under current legislation, transgender individuals cannot be listed as parents on a child’s birth certificate, and often lack legal proof of their relationship with their biological child.

LGBT+ parents are also vulnerable when attempting to defend their rights: applying to police may result in threats to their parental rights.

Conclusion

In light of the above, virtually all LGBT+ individuals in Russia live under conditions of constant threat of state persecution, violence, and impunity for perpetrators, as well as systemic discrimination that effectively reduces their legal capacity, as attempts to exercise their rights are directly associated with additional risks.

These risks are significantly higher for openly LGBT+ individuals.

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