



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Bangladesh: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression**

**Version 6.0**

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# Executive summary

LGBT+ people in Bangladesh form a particular social group.

Same-sex sexual activity between men is criminalised under Section 377 of the Bangladesh Penal Code and punishable by imprisonment. Though rarely enforced, it is used to arrest, harass and extort individuals based on their sexual orientation, contributing to a climate of fear and repression for LGBT+ people. It is unclear as to whether same-sex sexual activity between women is included within the ambit of Section 377.

The hijra (a distinct community that can fall under the umbrella term trans) were legally recognised as a 'third gender' in 2013, but there is no legal framework for recognising other gender-diverse people who do not fall within the hijra community.

LGBT+ people are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state.

Societal attitudes towards LGBT+ people tend to be conservative and influenced by traditional cultural and religious values. LGBT+ people are often stigmatised, leading to discrimination, social exclusion and hostility. Many face pressure to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid harassment and violence.

While there are supportive allies and groups working for tolerance and equality, progress in acceptance and rights is limited.

In general, LGBT+ people are likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors.

If a person does not openly express their sexual orientation or gender identity consideration must be given to the reasons why they do not.

A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is unlikely to obtain protection from the state. This is because in general the state is able but not willing to offer effective protection.

Given that homophobic attitudes are prevalent throughout the country there is unlikely to be any place in Bangladesh in which a LGBT+ person could reasonably relocate to.

Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded'.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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# Assessment

Section updated: 13 April 2026

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by the state or non-state actors because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression
- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- a grant of asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave is likely
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is likely or not to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

This note provides an assessment of the situation of actual and perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual and, trans and people of other minority sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBT+). Sources often refer to LGBT+ people collectively, but the experiences of each group may differ. Where information is available, the note will refer to and consider the treatment of each group discretely.

This CPIN has been developed with assistance from Artificial Intelligence (AI). Where AI has been used, it has been reviewed by a human editor.

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), and the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).]
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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**1.2 Exclusion**

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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**2. Convention reason(s)**

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason
- 2.1.3 LGBT+ people form a PSG in Bangladesh within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it **and** have a distinct identity in Bangladesh because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.4 Although LGBT+ people form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.1.5 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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**3. Risk**

### 3.1 Risk from the state

- 3.1.1 LGBT+ people are unlikely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 Bangladesh retains colonial laws criminalising same-sex sexual activities (Section 377 of the Bangladesh Penal Code). Section 377 applies to same-sex sexual activity between men. It is unclear whether it includes same-sex sexual activity between women. There are no laws in Bangladesh protecting people against discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and no legal recognition of same-sex unions or marriage (see [Bangladesh Penal Code](#)).
- 3.1.3 If Section 377 were to be applied, it is punishable by a fine and a prison term not exceeding 10 years, or life imprisonment. As such, it would be disproportionate and discriminatory. However, it is rarely enforced. Nevertheless, LGBT+ groups claim the government retains the law due to societal pressure and its existence reinforces a general climate of homophobia. It is also used to arrest, harass or extort gay and bisexual men, or those perceived as such (see [Bangladesh Penal Code](#)).
- 3.1.4 Laws against pornography, drug or alcohol offences, or a suspicious-behaviour provision of the police code, are also used to harass and threaten LGBT+ people. There are no official statistics on the arrest or prosecution of LGBT+ people making it difficult to ascertain the scale and extent of such treatment. JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF) reported in 2024 based on media reporting and first-hand experiences for LGBT+ people, 21 incidents that led to charges against 90 LGBT+ people and 17 cases resulting in 41 arrests. In 10 incidents, 22 individuals were arrested reportedly due to their sexual orientation (see [Use of laws against LGBT+ people](#) and [state treatment: violence, harassment and discrimination](#)).
- 3.1.5 There is limited information on violence against LGBT+ people by security forces and no official statistics on prosecutions of those alleged to have committed crimes. JMBF noted in 2024, 21 incidents implicating law-enforcement officers in acts of violence committed against LGBT+ people. There is no estimate of the number of LGBT+ people in Bangladesh but in a general population of over 168 million these numbers are low, although likely to be under reported (see [State treatment and attitudes: Violence, harassment and discrimination](#)).
- 3.1.6 Bangladesh has made progress since 2013 in legally recognising the hijra (a distinct community that can fall under the umbrella term trans), allowing them to identify as a ‘third gender’ on passports and other official government documents, although the process can be complex and lengthy. Although hijra was included as a gender category in the 2022 census, recognition has not been across all laws and policies. There is no legal recognition of non-hijra trans people, who cannot apply for national identity cards or register to vote on this basis, but can apply for passports under the ‘other’ category (see [Legal context: Trans people, including hijras and intersex persons](#)).
- 3.1.7 The government has implemented assistance programmes in respect of hijras including tax breaks and recruitment into the civil service, however uptake has been minimal and hijras have been subjected to invasive medical procedures to gain jobs (see [Employment](#) and [Violence, harassment and discrimination](#)).

- 3.1.8 After the interim government took over in August 2024, some LGBT+ activists and LGBT+ organisations note a rise in anti-LGBT+ right wing groups, which created fear and uncertainty in the LGBT+ community. In February 2026 elections took place in which the Bangladesh National Party were voted in as the new government. In the sources consulted there were no references to any comments or commitments on LGBT+ rights from the government (see [State treatment and attitudes](#)).
- 3.1.9 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on LGBT+ issues exist and operate, however they are unable to register with the government as official LGBT+ NGOs due to stigma and discrimination and face limited access to funding and security threats (see [NGOs and support](#)).
- 3.1.10 If an LGBT+ person is not 'out' about or conceals their sexual orientation and / or gender identity, consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum or humanitarian protection.
- 3.1.11 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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## 3.2 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.2.1 LGBT+ people are likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors.
- 3.2.2 If an LGBT+ person is not 'out' or conceals their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, consider why this is the case. If it is because the person fears persecution or serious harm and this is well-founded, they are likely to require asylum or humanitarian protection. Due to social taboos and societal pressure to conform to heterosexual, cultural and religious norms, including marriage and having children, the majority of LGBT+ people in Bangladesh choose to keep their sexual orientation a private matter to avoid discrimination, social exclusion and hostility from their families and wider society (see [Societal norms and acceptance](#)).
- 3.2.3 Bangladesh is a conservative society in which traditional gender roles are enforced, sexuality is a taboo subject and LGBT+ people are often viewed as outside social norms. There is very little detailed specific information about how lesbians and bisexual women, and gay and bisexual men are treated in society. Most available sources discuss LGBT+ people as a broad group, but as this term covers many identities it may not always include all of them equally. However, lesbians are likely to face discrimination due to both their sexuality and their gender given the social and cultural expectations for women to marry and have children (see [Societal treatment and attitudes](#)).
- 3.2.4 LGBT+ people frequently face discrimination, violence, verbal and sexual harassment, extortion, predominantly by community and family members. In 2024, JMBF reported through media reporting and first-hand accounts 70 reported incidents of violence and discrimination against 396 LGBT+ people, including 5 murders of transwomen and 12 incidents of physical assault against 83 individuals. However, due to stigma, intolerance and the criminalisation of same-sex sexual activity, most incidents go unreported. Conversion therapy is not outlawed and is reportedly used although there is

limited information on its frequency, the contexts in which it occurs, or the groups most affected. Discrimination exists in areas such as education employment, housing, and access to government services, including healthcare and justice (see [Societal treatment and attitudes](#)).

- 3.2.5 There is some evidence of tolerance and acceptance of the hijra community, who are generally more able to express their identity. For example, a hijra was elected as mayor in a rural town in 2021 and a mosque for hijra individuals opened in 2024. However, some local news reporting indicates that there has been an increase in negative attitudes against hijra individuals since 2024 and some have experienced harassment and violence. Trans men are less visible than hijras and trans women due to cultural norms around women's sexuality (see [Trans persons, including hijras](#)).
- 3.2.6 LGBT+ events such as Dhaka Pride are limited to online spaces due to legal obstacles and social barriers. Although there is limited reporting, VoA News noted there are some LGBT+ gatherings in secret locations, embassies and safe spaces organised by NGOs (see [Pride events](#)).
- 3.2.7 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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## 4. Protection

- 4.1.1 A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is unlikely to obtain protection from the state. This is because in general, the state is able but not willing to offer effective protection.
- 4.1.2 Bangladesh has functioning criminal justice system. Police professionalism varies although measures are in place to address accountability for misconduct. Attitudes of police staff towards LGBT+ people reporting crime is likely to vary between districts and within local areas, for example some Hijra report positive experiences with Dhaka police division (see [Police and judicial response to violence against LGBT+ people](#) and the [Country Policy and Information Note Bangladesh: Actors of Protection](#))
- 4.1.3 There are few reported prosecutions for crimes against LGBT+ people. The most frequently cited case is from 2021, when 6 members of a banned Islamic group who were sentenced to death for the 2016 murder of 2 LGBT+ rights activists. Although some recent reports mention a small number of arrests, no further information on prosecutions or convictions could be found in sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)). There are no official statistics on arrests or prosecutions for hate crimes against LGBT people (see [Police and judicial response to violence against LGBT+ people](#)).
- 4.1.4 In general steps taken to investigate, prosecute and punish those involved in violence against LGBT+ people are limited and LGBT+ people are reluctant to report crimes due to discrimination and homophobia (see [Police and judicial response to violence against LGBT+ people](#)).
- 4.1.5 Although NGOs advocating for LGBT+ rights face some restrictions they exist and, whilst they cannot provide protection to LGBT+ people in lieu of the state, they may be able to assist the person in availing themselves of the

protection of the state by providing support and advice (see [NGOs and support](#)).

- 4.1.6 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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## 5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors or rogue state actors, they are unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.3 Internal relocation is unlikely to be reasonable for LGBT+ people because homophobic attitudes are prevalent throughout the country, therefore there is unlikely to be any place in Bangladesh to which a LGBT+ person could reasonably relocate
- 5.1.4 For further guidance on internal relocation and factors to consider, see the Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

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## 6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment which, as stated in the [About the assessment](#), is the guide to the current objective conditions.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **13 April 2026**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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## 7. Legal context

### 7.1 Constitution

7.1.1 The Constitution of Bangladesh does not directly refer to sexual orientation or gender identity in articles defining the rights of citizens but provides:

- Article 27: 'All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law'
- Article 28(1): 'The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth'
- Article 29(1): 'There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the Republic.'<sup>1</sup>

7.1.2 According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) December 2020 report, there are no laws in Bangladesh protecting people against discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity<sup>2</sup>.

7.1.3 The ILGA database, which tracks 'laws, human rights bodies, advocacy opportunities, and news related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics issues worldwide'<sup>3</sup> states: 'The Constitution of Bangladesh does not explicitly include "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics" as protected grounds of discrimination.'<sup>4</sup>

7.1.4 The draft Anti-Discrimination Law, laid before parliament in April 2022<sup>5</sup>, proposed to ban discrimination on various grounds<sup>6</sup>. The UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights stated in his end of

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<sup>1</sup> Laws of Bangladesh, [The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh](#), 1972

<sup>2</sup> ILGA, [State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020](#) (page 327), December 2020

<sup>3</sup> ILGA Database, [Home](#), undated

<sup>4</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

<sup>5</sup> BSS, [A bill titled "Anti-Discrimination act-2022" placed in parliament](#), 5 April 2022

<sup>6</sup> bdnews24, [Bangladesh pitches sweeping new anti-discrimination bill to uphold...](#), 5 April 2022

mission statement, following a visit to Bangladesh from 17 to 29 May 2023, that

‘[The bill] currently does not specifically define who the “backward communities” or individuals are that it aims to protect... While Section 3 of the bill recognizes discrimination against the “third gender”, it does not mention Hijra (transgender) communities – who are the margins and subjected to extreme levels of discrimination.’<sup>7</sup> The bill did not address other sexual minorities<sup>8</sup>. On 8 November 2025, the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, in collaboration with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), and Nagorik Uddyog, organised a multi-stakeholder public discussion on the proposed Anti-Discrimination Act 2025 which ‘... reaffirmed that the Anti-Discrimination Act 2025 represents a critical opportunity to strengthen Bangladesh’s legal and institutional commitment to equality ...’<sup>9</sup>. As of 10 November 2025, the Anti-Discrimination Law had not been adopted into law<sup>10</sup>; according to Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Convenor of the Citizen’s Platform and Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), ‘although the draft law was first placed before the authorities in 2022, it failed to progress due to the lack of political commitment and institutional inefficiency under the previous government.’<sup>11</sup>.

- 7.1.5 On 22 May 2025, Pathchola and Global Action for Trans Equality, NGOs focused on trans and gender diverse communities<sup>12</sup>, published a report on SOGIE rights in Bangladesh for the UN Universal Periodic Review mid-term (Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report), which noted the Anti-Discrimination Bill 2022 is still in the draft stage, being reviewed by stakeholders, and the political context may create more obstacles to its completion<sup>13</sup>.
- 7.1.6 In regard to the draft Anti-Discrimination Bill, the same report noted: ‘The anti-discrimination bill-2022 is still in draft process, but a good number of expert criticisms are already there as they believe that once this bill is passed into a law, it will only serve a handful of people in the society. Experts also believe that this proposed law is not inclusive and does not ensure to cover issues of the full spectrum of present SOGIESC identities.’<sup>14</sup>

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## 7.2 Bangladesh Penal Code

- 7.2.1 The Bangladesh Penal Code 1860, a retained British colonial law, does not specifically refer to same-sex sexual activity, but refers to ‘unnatural offences’. Section 377 states:

‘Section 377: Unnatural offences: Whoever voluntary has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with man, woman, or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term

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<sup>7</sup> OHCHR, [End of mission statement by Mr. Olivier De Schutter Special Rapporteur...](#), 29 May 2023

<sup>8</sup> Dhaka Tribune, [Make anti-discrimination law more inclusive, says think tank](#), 10 April 2022

<sup>9</sup> Citizen’s Platform for SDGs Bangladesh, [Democracy Thrives when Discrimination is...](#), 10 Nov 2025

<sup>10</sup> Citizen’s Platform for SDGs Bangladesh, [Democracy Thrives when Discrimination is...](#), 10 Nov 2025

<sup>11</sup> Citizen’s Platform for SDGs Bangladesh, [Democracy Thrives when Discrimination is...](#), 10 Nov 2025

<sup>12</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (pages 3&4), 22 May 2025

<sup>13</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (pages 3&4), 22 May 2025

<sup>14</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 19), 22 May 2025

which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to fine.

‘Explanation: penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section.’<sup>15</sup>

7.2.2 According to the Human Dignity Trust, an LGBT+ rights group, ‘Only men are criminalised under this law.’<sup>16</sup>

7.2.3 It is unclear as to whether lesbianism is included within the ambit of Section 377 of the Bangladesh Penal Code, as indicated by ILGA’s State-Sponsored Homophobia report for 2019, which noted that female-female sexual activity was not a criminal offence under existing penal law, although elsewhere within the same report it stated that the provision in the penal code was relevant for ‘all genders.’<sup>17</sup> The most up-to-date ILGA State-Sponsored Homophobia report 2020 did not include any information on the criminalisation of female-female sexual activity<sup>18</sup>. The August 2025 European Union Agency for Asylum Bangladesh report (EUAA 2025 Bangladesh report) did not include any information on the criminalisation of female-female sexual activity<sup>19</sup>.

For information on the implementation of the Penal Code against LGBT+ people see [Use of laws against LGBT+ people](#)

7.2.4 Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted that Section 376 of the Penal Code sets out the punishment for rape<sup>20</sup>, but ‘... fails to provide legal protection to men, boys, transgender, hijra, or intersex people who are victims of sexual assault.’<sup>21</sup> On 24 April 2024, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons published a mission report conducted from 3 June to 15 June 2023 in Bangladesh (OFPRA 2023 mission report), which noted also noted: ‘... the Penal Code restricts rape to non-consensual sexual relations imposed by a man on a woman, which de facto excludes from the legal framework sexual violence committed against a person of the same sex or a transgender person.’<sup>22</sup>

7.2.5 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) compilation of information on Bangladesh for the Universal Periodic Review published 30 August 2023 noted:

‘The United Nations country team noted that Bangladesh continued to criminalize homosexuality ... The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended decriminalizing same-sex relations between consenting adults, raising public awareness thereon and combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Committee against Torture recommended that Bangladesh repeal section 377 of the Penal criminalizing “unnatural behaviour” and used to prohibit consensual same-sex sexual conduct.’<sup>23</sup>

7.2.6 In regard to recommendations from the UPR to decriminalise same-sex

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<sup>15</sup> Laws of Bangladesh, [The Penal Code](#) (Section 377), 6 October 1860

<sup>16</sup> Human Dignity Trust, [Country profile: Bangladesh](#), 28 August 2025

<sup>17</sup> ILGA, [State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019](#) (pages 50 and 172), March 2019

<sup>18</sup> ILGA, [State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020](#) (pages 129 and 130), 15 December 2020

<sup>19</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#), 5 August 2025

<sup>20</sup> Laws of Bangladesh, [The Penal Code](#) (Section 377), 6 October 1860

<sup>21</sup> HRW, [Bangladesh: Protests Erupt Over Rape Case](#), 9 October 2020

<sup>22</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 68), 24 April 2024

<sup>23</sup> OHCHR, [Bangladesh: Compilation of information prepared by...](#) (paragraph 73&74), 30 Aug 2023

relation, the same report noted: 'No significant progress has been made in this criterion, as the society is becoming more conservative, and a change in the political context shifted the paradigm more towards anti-LGBTQ views.'<sup>24</sup>

- 7.2.7 With regards to hate crime law, the ILGA Bangladesh database states: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Bangladesh neither aggravate penalties for crimes committed on the basis of "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics" nor do they explicitly consider such crimes as "hate crimes".'<sup>25</sup>
- 7.2.8 With regards to laws prohibiting incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination, the same source states: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Bangladesh do not prohibit incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics".'<sup>26</sup>

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### 7.3 Trans people, including hijras and intersex persons

- 7.3.1 In the culture of the Indian sub-continent, hijras are regarded as a 'third gender' and most hijras see themselves as 'neither man nor woman'<sup>27 28</sup>. They cannot accurately be described as 'eunuchs' or 'hermaphrodites' or 'transsexual women', which are Western terms<sup>29 30</sup>. Most hijras are born male and some will have undergone a ritual emasculation operation, which includes castration<sup>31 32</sup>.
- 7.3.2 Hijras can fall under the umbrella term transgender<sup>33</sup> but the Kaleidoscope Human Rights Foundation, Australia, noted in September 2016 'The Hijra community often identifies itself as an alternative gender, rather than as transgender.'<sup>34</sup>
- 7.3.3 Although most hijras wear women's clothing and have adopted female mannerisms, they generally do not attempt to pass as women<sup>35</sup>. Becoming a hijra involves a process of initiation into a hijra 'family', or small group, under a guru teacher<sup>36 37</sup>. Therefore, hijra is not a gender but instead a community<sup>38</sup>. George Arney wrote, in a BBC News article of 30 November 2000, that hijras have been part of the South Asian landscape for thousands of years<sup>39</sup>.
- 7.3.4 In November 2013, the Bangladesh government granted hijras legal status as members of a 'third gender' for 'purposes of voting, travel, identification

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<sup>24</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 3), 22 May 2025

<sup>25</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

<sup>26</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

<sup>27</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>28</sup> BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

<sup>29</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>30</sup> BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

<sup>31</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>32</sup> BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

<sup>33</sup> BBC, [The semi-sacred "third gender" of South Asia](#), 20 July 2017

<sup>34</sup> Kaleidoscope Australia, [Parallel Report to the CEDAW](#) (paragraph 4.2), September 2016

<sup>35</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>36</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>37</sup> BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

<sup>38</sup> The Daily Star, [The twisted plight of Bangladeshi transgender community](#), 11 June 2022

<sup>39</sup> BBC News, [Blurring the gender lines in Bangladesh](#), 30 November 2000

and other core civil rights.<sup>40</sup>

- 7.3.5 In April 2019, following amendments to the Voter List Act 2009 and the Voter List Rules 2012, hijras were given the option to vote as ‘hijra’ opposed to the ‘male’ and ‘female’ options on the voter registration form<sup>41</sup>
- 7.3.6 In regard to legal rights for hijra, the EUAA 2025 Bangladesh report noted:  
‘There is a ‘third gender’ understood in the context of Bangladeshi society, referred to as hijra, which can be described as an umbrella term for intersex individuals, castrated men and transwomen. Based on a 2013 Bangladesh Cabinet Directive, the former government recognised hijras as a legal ‘third gender’ category. The precise definition of hijra was however not provided and the gender recognition has not been reflected in laws and policies. However, hijra was included as a gender category in the national census from 2022 ...’<sup>42</sup>
- 7.3.7 The same report noted: ‘While the former government made some progress in promoting social acceptance for hijras, limited efforts were made to advance rights and legal recognition of other LGBTIQ persons.’<sup>43</sup>
- 7.3.8 CPIT could find no specific information on the legal rights of intersex people who are not hijra in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 7.3.9 Some hijras are born intersex<sup>44</sup>. The International Republican Institute (IRI), an American non-profit, non-partisan organisation committed to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide<sup>45</sup>, published a report on Bangladesh’s LGBT+ community, dated 8 April 2021, based on a mixed-method study of Bangladesh’s LGBT+ community that combined focus group discussions (FGDs) with 76 participants and an online survey, completed by 579 respondents (see the [report](#) for the full methodology)<sup>46</sup>. The report noted that ‘In official government discourse and the public’s common perception, Hijras are intersex – not transgender. Because intersex is not a sexual orientation – intersex people are widely viewed as asexual in Bangladesh – they are not considered “controversial.”’<sup>47</sup>
- 7.3.10 The US State Department human rights report on Bangladesh covering events in 2023 and published 22 April 2024 report (USSD 2023) stated: ‘Passports and legal identification documents, including voter registration forms, included the option to select “X” or “Hijra” as a third gender. The most recent national census included a “third gender” category ...’<sup>48</sup> The USSD 2024 report did not include information on LGBT+ people<sup>49</sup>. However, the 2024 report is notably shorter than in previous years and provides less coverage of certain topics.
- 7.3.11 On 30 May 2024 ILGA published a report on legal developments that impact the LGBT+ community between January 2023 and April 2024 in 193 UN

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<sup>40</sup> ILGA, [State Sponsored Homophobia 2017](#) (page 121), May 2017

<sup>41</sup> Dhaka Tribune, [Members of the third gender can vote as ‘hijra’](#), 19 April 2019

<sup>42</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (page 94), 5 August 2025

<sup>43</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (page 94), 5 August 2025

<sup>44</sup> Nanda. S., [Neither Man nor Woman...](#) (Introduction and Chapter 2), 1999

<sup>45</sup> IRI, [About IRI](#), no date

<sup>46</sup> IRI, [Understanding the Lives of Bangladesh's LGBTI Community](#) (page 3), 8 April 2021

<sup>47</sup> IRI, [Understanding the Lives of Bangladesh's LGBTI Community](#) (page 2), 8 April 2021

<sup>48</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>49</sup> USSD, [2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#), 12 August 2025

Member States (ILGA 2024 report), which noted:

‘In Bangladesh, despite some recognition of hijra identities, uncertainty remains regarding gender marker changes on official document ... In late 2013 and early 2014, authorities announced that the hijra status would be legally recognised. However, no procedures for gender marker change have been put in place. National Identity Cards have a hijra category, passports have an “other” category, while other government forms have a “third gender” category. Despite this, it remains unclear who has access to these gender marker options and what measures individuals must undergo to legally change their gender on official documents ...’<sup>50</sup>

7.3.12 The same report stated:

‘[Former] Home Minister, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, announced in January 2024 that the government would not pass laws deemed “anti-Islamic”, explicitly rejecting legal gender recognition for trans individuals. This declaration coincided with discussions on the unreleased “Protection of Rights of Transgender Persons Act” (2023), aimed at addressing gaps in trans and gender-diverse people’s rights. In this line, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Shah Jahan, stated that the law—still in the drafting stage—would provide more certainty to transgender rights, including with regard to education, healthcare, and land ownership ...’<sup>51</sup>

For more information on governmental/political response to discussions on the potential law to protect transgender people see [Government attitudes and policies](#)

7.3.13 On 17 May 2025, JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF), described as an independent non-profit organisation focused on human rights in Bangladesh, published a report covering the period January to December 2024 based on ‘... media reports, firsthand accounts, and extensive research to document the lived experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals and the broader socio-political context in which they exist ...’<sup>52</sup> (JMBF 2024 report), which noted:

‘In 2013, the government officially recognized hijras (a traditional third-gender community) as a distinct gender, marking a significant step toward inclusivity. However this recognition has not translated into comprehensive policy changes. The process for legally changing one’s gender on official documents remains unclear and inaccessible for many. Additionally, transgender individuals often face invasive medical examinations to verify their gender identity, further violating their dignity and privacy. Despite these challenges, there have been some positive developments. In the 2024 Upazila Parishad Election, the Election Commission of Bangladesh granted the hijra community the right to stand for elections under their own identity. This decision marked a historic step toward greater inclusion and recognition of gender diversity in the country.’<sup>53</sup>

7.3.14 The JMBF 2024 report noted: ‘There are no law[s] prohibiting harmful practices such as conversion therapy, which continues to pose a threat to

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<sup>50</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#) (page 186), 30 May 2024

<sup>51</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#) (page 186), 30 May 2024

<sup>52</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 7), 17 May 2025

<sup>53</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 11), 17 May 2025

LGBTQI+ individuals.’<sup>54</sup>

- 7.3.15 On 14 April 2025, a research article published in the International Journal of Community Well-Being, a peer-reviewed journal<sup>55</sup>, noted: ‘... The study employed a qualitative research approach, gathering data from both primary and secondary sources, which reveals that despite the official recognition of hijras as a third-gender group by the government of Bangladesh, practical challenges persist. Hijras face difficulties legally registering under this category ...’<sup>56</sup>
- 7.3.16 In regard to a lack of legislation granting transgender persons rights, on 5 May 2023 a journal article published in the International Journal of Law, Policy and Social Review, a peer-reviewed open access journal, noted: ‘... Bangladesh’s policy of distinguishing only two sexes and declining to recognize transgender as third sex has deprived them at a knock of several rights that Bangladesh citizens take for settled. These rights contain the right to own property, the right to marry, the right to claim a formal identity through a passport and a driver’s license, the right to education, employment, health, and so on. Such deprivation secludes hijras from the very fabric of Bangladesh’s civil society.’<sup>57</sup>
- 7.3.17 In regard to property and inheritance rights for Hijras, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report stated: ‘Article 42 of the Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the right to property, which includes the right to inherit property, but this is not specifically applied to hijras. The government has taken steps to enact laws to ensure inheritance rights of ‘Hijra’ or ‘third gender’ community, but different religious rules that influence family laws do not allow inclusion of ‘Hijra’ or any other gender identity besides male and female to be considered as the rightful inheritor of properties.’<sup>58</sup>
- 7.3.18 In relation to UPR recommendations preventing non-consensual “corrective” surgeries on intersex, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted: ‘No visible steps have yet been taken to proceed with this recommendation.’<sup>59</sup>
- 7.3.19 In relation to UPR recommendations to “[b]an invasive and humiliating medical examinations to prove hijra and transgender status”<sup>60</sup>, the same report noted: ‘Planning is going on to make more regressive practices of testing to verify identity,’<sup>61</sup>
- 7.3.20 The same report noted:  
‘In 2013, Bangladesh Government has allowed Hijra community to be recognised legally as ‘third gender’, the term which is still largely questioned by the trans and gender diverse community as it does not have proper definition and also does not include the entire community which has a diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations. Among the Hijra

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<sup>54</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 12), 17 May 2025

<sup>55</sup> International Journal of Community Well-Being, [Submission guidelines](#), no date

<sup>56</sup> Rahman.M & others, [Recognition of Gender Identity of Hijra as ‘Third Gender’...](#), 14 April 2025

<sup>57</sup> Islam, R& others, [Right to property of the transgender people in Patuakhali district...](#), 5 May 2023

<sup>58</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 14), 22 May 2025

<sup>59</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 4), 22 May 2025

<sup>60</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 4), 22 May 2025

<sup>61</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 4), 22 May 2025

communities, Kotis are a group of homosexuals who are biologically male but psychologically identify as females.

'... Even though there has been State recognition of Hijra community by Bangladesh Government since 2013 as a 'Third Gender', the human rights situation has not improved even after 10 years and people are still struggling with the legal recognition of their gender identities as there is no proper explanation whether a gender diverse population is included in the term 'Third Gender'.<sup>62</sup>

- 7.3.21 In relation to freedom of expression, the same report stated: 'There is no specific law that particularly hinders the free expression of sexual orientation and gender identity, but being a Muslim majority country, most of the debates and obstacles come from Shariah laws and Islamic scholars who suppress the expression regarding gender identities.'<sup>63</sup>
- 7.3.22 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade country information report on Bangladesh based on '... in-country knowledge and discussions. It takes into account reporting from a range of credible sources ...' published 23 July 2025 (DFAT 2025 report) report noted hijras '... lack inheritance rights under sharia (Islamic law) provisions governing personal status matters.'<sup>64</sup>

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## 7.4 Same-sex marriage, civil unions and adoption rights

- 7.4.1 The ILGA December 2020 report noted that there is no legal recognition of same-sex civil unions or marriages, and same-sex couples cannot adopt children<sup>65</sup>.
- 7.4.2 With regards to guardianship rights, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted: 'There is no legal or practical difference between the terms 'Adoption' and 'Legal Guardianship', and there is no mention of a specific gender to become a legal guardian. But the social stigma hinders trans and gender diverse persons from availing guardianship.'<sup>66</sup>

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## 8. State treatment and attitudes

### 8.1 Government attitudes and policies

- 8.1.1 In regard to government attitudes towards LGBT+ individuals, the USSD 2023 report stated: '... Although the government made some progress in promoting social acceptance of hijra persons, the government made limited efforts to promote the rights of others in the LGBTQI+ community and did not offer legal recognition.'<sup>67</sup>
- 8.1.2 In relation to government officials' attitudes to procedures for gender marker change, the ILGA database page on Bangladesh states: '...[O]fficials' bias and perceptions of hijra have reportedly reinforced a medicalised approach that includes forced medical examinations... In September 2022, allegations

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<sup>62</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (pages 8&9), 22 May 2025

<sup>63</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 14), 22 May 2025

<sup>64</sup> DFAT, [Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.149), 23 July 2025

<sup>65</sup> ILGA, [State-Sponsored Homophobia 2020](#) (page 327), December 2020

<sup>66</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 20), 22 May 2025

<sup>67</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

that certain applicants fraudulently applied for Hijra status led a Parliamentary Standing Committee to recommend that the Ministry of Social Welfare take necessary measures to implement a mechanism to identify "real" hijras through medical examination. That same month, the National Human Rights Commission opposed the proposed regressive measure.<sup>68</sup>

- 8.1.3 In regard to government official's attitudes towards the LGBT+ community, the ILGA 2024 report noted:

'Against this backdrop of criminalisation in the country, prominent political and government figures have also expressed their positions against recognising LGBTI rights in the country through 2023 and early 2024. Most recently, in January 2024, the [former] Home Minister, Azaduzzaman Khan Kamal, said to the media that the government does not recognise transgender individuals, considers their identity as "haram" [forbidden] in Islam, and that no "anti-Islamic" law will be passed in the country.'<sup>69</sup>

- 8.1.4 In relation to the banning of a schoolbook depicting gender diverse people, the same report stated:

'In February 2023, it was reported that the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) had withdrawn new school textbooks for allegedly "promoting homosexuality" and "transgender identities". This came after thousands gathered in the capital, Dhaka, as part of a campaign by Islamist groups demanding that the NCTB remove the two textbooks for students aged 11 to 13. One of the textbooks featured the story of a transitioning child named Sharif who later takes the name Sharifa. Islamist groups criticised the transgender narrative as "dangerous". Parliamentary debates ensued, with several MPs calling for its removal, citing conflict with Islam. Opposition Chief Whip of the National Parliament in Bangladesh and Jatiya Party General Secretary, Mujibul Haque Chunnu also argued that the inclusion of the transgender character in the textbook was solely aimed at creating "social chaos by undermining traditional social values". The education minister also reportedly commented on the issue, saying that the rights of hijras are legally recognised in Bangladesh, that they are citizens of the country, and that he would be open to reviewing the content if there was sufficient "issue" with it. Despite the minister's openness to review the content, the Islami Andolan Bangaledesh [sic] political party held a protest rally condemning the government's alleged promotion of trans people through text books in January 2024 ...'<sup>70</sup>

For more information on the banning of the school book see [Societal norms and acceptance](#), [Violence, harassment and discrimination](#) and [Access to services: Education](#)

- 8.1.5 In regard to the political response to a draft bill protecting transgender people (Protection of Rights of Transgender Persons Act" (2023)), the same report stated:

'... Islamist groups, including Hefazat e-Islam, launched a campaign against the proposed law, urging the government to abandon it. Additionally, the National Fatwa Board reportedly planned to disseminate anti-trans

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<sup>68</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

<sup>69</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#), (page 50), 30 May 2024

<sup>70</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#), (page 77), 30 May 2024

messages through literature, leaflets, seminars, and press conferences, branding transgender individuals as “cursed” and advocating for their exclusion. Such negative sentiments against trans people have been echoed by other prominent government figures. ILGA World was informed by JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF) that in April 2023, the Assistant Secretary of the Health Service Department under the Health and Family Planning Department likened “gender dysphoria” to a “disease” while advocating for so-called “conversion practices” to these groups through extensive psychological treatment. He further stated that Bangladesh has not enacted any laws allowing for legal gender recognition, and that allowing it would be “contrary to social norms and religious teachings in the country”. He made such comments following news that an application for sex reassignment surgery was denied.<sup>71</sup>

- 8.1.6 In regard to the government’s attitude towards hijras, on 12 July 2024, the Daily Star, described as the largest Bangladeshi English language daily newspaper<sup>72</sup>, op-ed noted:

‘In the case of gender diverse rights... Among the most egregious and commonly cited instances date back to 2014-15, when the Ministry of Social Welfare had offered employment for members of the hijra community, only to then issue a memorandum noting that the authenticity of the applicants’ gender identities would need to be determined through medical examinations. This betrayed a [fundamental misunderstanding](#) and also a woeful lack of rapport with the community, as it wrongfully endorsed the popular misconception that the hijra community only comprises intersex individuals (even this understanding is limited, as it only takes genital ambiguity into account). In actuality, the label hijra acts as both a gender and cultural marker, and the community is composed of individuals belonging to a diverse range of identities—primarily transgender women and intersex people.<sup>73</sup>

For more information on the treatment of gender diverse person who applied for government employment see [Violence, harassment and discrimination](#)

- 8.1.7 In regard to treatment of gender diverse people during the 2022 census, the same article stated:

‘In 2022, during the recording of the national census, all gender diverse people (trans men and women, non-binary individuals, intersex people, hijra, etc.) were lumped together under “hijra”. Since many did not feel comfortable identifying with the category on account of its sociocultural implications, we were left with a record of only 12,000 gender diverse people in all of Bangladesh—around 0.01 percent of the population—as opposed to community estimates ranging in the 1-2 lakhs (100,000 - 200,000). The situation was also exacerbated by accounts of census workers refusing to log anyone who did not “appear hijra”, once again revealing the desperate need for sensitivity training ...’<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#), (page 186), 30 May 2024

<sup>72</sup> The Daily Star, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>73</sup> The Daily Star, [The Story of Sharifa: One step forward, many steps backward?](#), 12 July 2024

<sup>74</sup> The Daily Star, [The Story of Sharifa: One step forward, many steps backward?](#), 12 July 2024

8.1.8 In relation to the interim government's attitude towards LGBT+ people, on 10 October 2024, an ILGA Asia website article noted:

'... Some LGBTIQ activists who conducted advocacy work with [former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's] Hasina's government feel further threatened by the interim government's alignment with radical Islamic groups who have been a part of anti-LGBTIQ movements. Targeted harassment against such visible LGBTIQ activists highlights a dangerous shift in the current political environment, where not only the progress made for trans inclusion under the previous government is at risk but LGBTIQ communities in Bangladesh face increased threat of violence.'<sup>75</sup>

8.1.9 In regard to LGBT+ people's stance on the interim government, on 9 August 2024 the Los Angeles Blade, described as US based LGBT+ news source<sup>76</sup>, noted:

'Tushar Kanti Baidya, program director of [Inclusive Bangladesh](#), a local NGO and transgender-led LGBTQ youth organization ... noted the recent rise of right-wing political parties, which have spearheaded anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ movements, poses an even greater threat to the community. Baidya fears the lives of local trans activists are now in grave danger as these groups move to align themselves with the newly formed interim government. This alliance, he says, not only encourages those who wish to silence them but also creates an environment where hate and violence could escalate unchecked.'<sup>77</sup>

8.1.10 The same article stated:

'Baidya told the Blade that despite Hasina's government's problematic human rights record and her autocratic regime, it is noteworthy that LGBTQ and other minority groups felt relatively safe when she was in office and were able to conduct their advocacy work with minimal government interference. The trans community, in particular, saw significant benefits that included increased social support, greater acceptance in mainstream jobs, and even successful bids for local government positions.'<sup>78</sup>

8.1.11 In regard to the government's stance on LGBT+ issues, the JMBF 2024 report noted:

'In 2024, the government of Bangladesh maintained a conservative stance on LGBTQI+ issues, with little to no legal recognition or protections for LGBTQI+ individuals. While a positive portrayal of transgender issues was included in the seventh-grade textbook through the story of Sharifa's Tale, the government withdrew the story after constant protests from Islamic political and religious groups, as well as opposition from pro-Islamic teachers and students.'<sup>79</sup>

8.1.12 The Pathchola and Global Action for Trans Equality May 2025 UPR report noted:

'Since 2023, some regressions have been made with regard to the promotion and protection of equal rights of LGBTQI+ persons in Bangladesh.'

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<sup>75</sup> ILGA Asia, [Bangladesh: Student Protests, Government Transition, and Implications...](#), 10 Oct 2024

<sup>76</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Advertise](#), no date

<sup>77</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Bangladesh political turmoil has forced LGBTQ people into hiding](#), 9 Aug 2024

<sup>78</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Bangladesh political turmoil has forced LGBTQ people into hiding](#), 9 Aug 2024

<sup>79</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 84), 17 May 2025

Based on our follow-up and monitoring work since 2019, we observe that the Bangladeshi Government has not yet taken concrete actions to advance the process of legal reforms necessary for the full implementation of the SOGIESC rights recommendations accepted by Bangladesh at its last UPR review.’<sup>80</sup>

8.1.13 In relation to a schoolbook which depicted gender diverse individuals, the same report noted:

‘A social science book containing a simplified story of gender fluidity under the name ‘The story of Sharifa’ created chaos across the country among a certain section of people as Islamic scholars, teachers, and advocates did not want the children to read the part about gender diversity as it clashes with religious values. Things escalated, and it became a heated topic at the national parliament. The government formed an investigation committee under the Ministry of Education and later they decided to remove it from the book to mitigate the tensions.’<sup>81</sup>

8.1.14 In June 2025, Erasing 76 Crimes, described as a news website focussed on anti-LGBTI laws<sup>82</sup>, reported:

‘The National Citizens Party (NCP), formed from the anti-discrimination student movement and currently backed by Bangladesh’s interim government under Chief Advisor and Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus, has witnessed a growing pattern of hate speech from its leadership. On May 18, Mr. Alam posted a series of inflammatory and discriminatory remarks targeting homosexuality, transgender individuals, and the broader LGBTQ+ community. In his post, Mr. Alam characterized LGBTQ+ individuals as “mentally ill” and “cancer to society,” further asserting that such “vile and destructive cultures” must be actively resisted.’<sup>83</sup>

8.1.15 On June 2025, iProbono, described as an international human rights NGO<sup>84</sup>, commentary article opined: ‘In Bangladesh ... State inaction has emboldened hate speech, and community infrastructures have been dismantled. With fewer safe spaces, legal protections, or support systems, queer individuals are increasingly vulnerable to violence in both the public and private spheres.’<sup>85</sup>

8.1.16 In regard to the formation of the interim government, the same article noted: ‘... in the months that followed [August 2024], as political power began to consolidate under a new interim government and the newly formed National Citizens Party (NCP) [MD Muntasir Rahman, an LGBTQ advocate and openly gay individual, queer organisers were systematically excluded from recognition and decision-making space.

‘In February 2025, when a group of student leaders formed a new political party, namely “[National Citizen Party \(NCP\)](#)”, Muntasir was appointed Joint Secretary of the NCP. But within hours, [his name and sexual identity were publicly exposed online, and his appointment was revoked](#).’<sup>86</sup> CPIT could not

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<sup>80</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (page 2), 22 May 2025

<sup>81</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR...](#) (pages 13&14), 22 May 2025

<sup>82</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [About](#), no date

<sup>83</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Bangladesh politician labels LGBTQ+ people...](#), 2 June 2025

<sup>84</sup> iProbono, [What we do](#), no date

<sup>85</sup> iProbono, [Pride Under Pressure: The Escalating Crisis for LGBT+ Communities...](#), June 2025

<sup>86</sup> iProbono, [Pride Under Pressure: The Escalating Crisis for LGBT+ Communities...](#), June 2025

find information specifying if the perpetrators who exposed his sexuality online were state or non-state.

- 8.1.17 The Outright International report 'The Global Elections in 2024 and How LGBTIQ People Fared', published in September 2025 (the Outright International 2025 report) stated: 'As of writing, the interim government has not publicly positioned itself on LGBTIQ equality. Shahanur Islam, a Bangladeshi human rights lawyer who heads JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF), told Outright that the interim government is even "worse" on LGBTIQ people's rights than the previous regime. It depends on the backing of Islamist groups, which is why "they cannot take positive initiatives for LGBTIQ people."<sup>87</sup>

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## 8.2 Use of laws against LGBT+ people

- 8.2.1 The OFPRA 2023 mission report) noted: '... In practice, no prosecutions are brought under this article [section 377 of the Penal Code], but it is still used by the authorities as a means of pressuring community members and activists to remain discreet. Furthermore, to use the words employed by members of civil society encountered by the mission, it "shapes the mentality of the population".<sup>88</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

- 8.2.2 In relation to laws which could be used to target LGBT+ people, the same report stated:

'Several sections of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance of 1976 which provide for fines and detentions ranging from a few months to a year, can also be brandished as threats against LGBTIQ+ people: sections 74 (solicitation for the purpose of prostitution), 75 (indecent behavior in public), 77 (harassing passers-by) and 86 (being apprehended under suspicious circumstances between dusk and dawn). Being found in possession of condoms, an allusion to a sexual act, can also be considered an offense.<sup>89</sup>

- 8.2.3 The USSD 2023 report stated:

'Same-sex sexual conduct was illegal under the penal code, which carried with it punishment up to life imprisonment. The government did not actively enforce the law. Members of LGBTQI+ groups reported the government retained the law because of societal pressure. There were no credible efforts to rescind discriminatory laws that targeted LGBTQI+ persons.<sup>90</sup> The USSD 2024 report did not include information on LGBT+ people<sup>91</sup>. However, the 2024 report is notably shorter than in previous years and provides less coverage of certain topics.

- 8.2.4 The Freedom House report (FH report 2024) published on 26 February 2025, covering events in 2024, which according to its information is produced by in-house and external analysts who used a range of sources

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<sup>87</sup> Outright International, [Queering Democracy](#) (page 47), September 2025

<sup>88</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 67&68), 24 April 2024

<sup>89</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 68), 24 April 2024

<sup>90</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>91</sup> USSD, [2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#), 12 August 2025

from news articles to on-the-ground research to inform the report<sup>92</sup> stated: ‘A criminal ban on same-sex relations is rarely enforced ...’<sup>93</sup>

8.2.5 In May 2025, Erasing 76 crimes reported: ‘On the morning of Saturday, April 26 [2025], two teenage girls in a same-sex relationship were handed over to the Faridganj Police Station in Chandpur, Bangladesh, reportedly under pressure from local Islamic fundamentalist groups. The girls were accused of engaging in homosexuality—a charge not formally recognized under Bangladeshi law per se... The next day, police returned the girls to their respective families and issued a warning to the guardians to prevent similar incidents in the future.’<sup>94</sup>

8.2.6 In regard to reported incidents against LGBT+ people, the JMBF 2024 report noted: ‘... 21 incidents implicated 90 LGBTQI+ individuals in criminal charges. Seventeen cases resulted in the arrest and jail custody of 41 individuals, and in one incident, five transgender women were convicted and sentenced to three months in prison.’<sup>95</sup> The JMBF 2024 report did not include information on the specific criminal charges against LGBT+ people.

8.2.7 In regard to the arrest of LGBT+ people reportedly due to their sexual orientation, the JMBF 2024 report noted:

‘In 2024, 21 incidents led to criminal charges being filed against 90 LGBTQI+ individuals, while 17 cases resulted in the arrest of 41 individuals, leading to jail custody for various reasons across the country. Among these, 10 incidents led to the arrest of 22 LGBTQI+ individuals solely because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, in one incident, 5 transgender (hijra) women were convicted and imprisoned for being in front of Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.’<sup>96</sup> The statistics included in the JMBT 2024 report were drawn from ‘... media reports, firsthand accounts and extensive research ...’<sup>97</sup>, however the report did not include a detailed breakdown on the offences LGBT+ people were arrested for but case studies included charges related to same-sex marriage, attempting a same-sex marriage ceremony, kidnapping and same-sex relationships<sup>98</sup>.

8.2.8 In regard to the arrest of LGBT+ people, the same report provided case studies of 2 gay men arrested for same sex marriage, and 12 lesbian women were arrested or detained for attempting to marry, fleeing home to be with their partner or being in a same-sex relationship<sup>99</sup>.

For more details on individuals arrested see [JMBF Annual Report 2024](#)

See also [Legal context](#)

8.2.9 In regard to enforcement of laws against LGBT+ people, the DFAT 2025 report stated: ‘... Sex between men is illegal under section 377 of the Penal Code 1860 and punishable by life in prison. Prosecutions under this law are rare but do occur. Other laws used to target LGBTQIA+ individuals and

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<sup>92</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World Research Methodology](#), no date

<sup>93</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section F4), 26 February 2025

<sup>94</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Bangladesh lesbian couple taken to police by their...](#), 5 May 2025

<sup>95</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 18), 17 May 2025

<sup>96</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 38), 17 May 2025

<sup>97</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 10), 17 May 2025

<sup>98</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (pages 38 to 40), 17 May 2025

<sup>99</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (pages 38 to 43), 17 May 2025

venues include laws against pornography, drug and alcohol offences and venue licensing restrictions.<sup>100</sup>

- 8.2.10 The Human Dignity Trust country profile on Bangladesh states '[Section 377] and other laws are used as a pretext to harass LGBT people.'<sup>101</sup>

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### 8.3 Violence, harassment and discrimination

- 8.3.1 The USSD 2023 report noted:

'...some [LGBT+ people] were harassed by police... LGBTQI+ advocacy organizations reported police used the law as a pretext to harass individuals who were perceived to be LGBTQI+ regardless of their sexual orientation. Some groups reported harassment under a suspicious behavior provision of the police code. LGBTQI+ individuals experienced high levels of fear, harassment, and law enforcement actions taken in the wake of violent extremist attacks in the past decade.'<sup>102</sup>

- 8.3.2 The FH 2024 report noted: '... Some legal recognition is available for transgender people, though they face severe discrimination in practice.'<sup>103</sup> The FH report did not include any further information on the type of discrimination faced and the perpetrators of the discrimination.

- 8.3.3 The same report stated: 'LGBT+ people are also limited in their ability to participate in politics, though they have won office. In 2021, the town of Trilochanpur elected as its mayor a member of the hijra community, whose members identify as neither male nor female and are classified as having a distinct gender identity in Bangladesh.'<sup>104</sup>

- 8.3.4 In regard to acts of violence committed by members of the police against LGBT+ people, the JMBF 2024 report stated: '... Law enforcement officials were implicated in 21 incidents, affecting 147 individuals ...'<sup>105</sup>

- 8.3.5 The DFAT 2025 report stated: 'Hijra are often subjected to violence by...law enforcement.'<sup>106</sup>

- 8.3.6 In February 2026, Inclusive Bangladesh, described as a '... a multi-national, non-profit and transgender-led youth LGBTIQ+ human rights organisation, which promotes human rights in Bangladesh & United Kingdom'<sup>107</sup>, published an annual report on human rights violations against LGBT+ people in Bangladesh based on data '... recorded through Inclusive Bangladesh's community-led monitoring mechanism, incorporating survivor testimonies, community focal reporting, and corroborated secondary sources ...'<sup>108</sup> during the 2025 period. The Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report provided the below breakdown of perpetrators of violence across the 41 verified of human rights violations against LGBT+ people<sup>109</sup>. The source noted: '... Due to fear of

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<sup>100</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.147), 23 July 2025

<sup>101</sup> Human Dignity Trust, [Country profile: Bangladesh](#), 28 August 2025

<sup>102</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>103</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section F4), 26 February 2025

<sup>104</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section B4), 26 February 2025

<sup>105</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 22), 17 May 2025

<sup>106</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.150), 23 July 2025

<sup>107</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) February 2026

<sup>108</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 3), Feb 2026

<sup>109</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 9), Feb 2026

retaliation, stigma, and safety risks, many violations remain unreported; therefore, the documented cases represent only a portion of the actual scale of abuse ...<sup>110</sup> (Table created by CPIT):

State perpetrators of violence (percent across 41 cases)	
Law Enforcement Agencies	34.1%
Local Government Authorities	17.1%
State Authorities	14.6%
Armed Forces	7.3%
Judicial Authorities	4.9%
Border Guards	2.4%

For information on non-state perpetrators of violence see [Societal treatment and attitudes: Violence, harassment and discrimination](#)

- 8.3.7 The same report noted: ‘... The substantial involvement of law enforcement agencies and local government authorities raises serious concerns regarding misuse of authority, lack of accountability, and inadequate protection obligations under international human rights law. The presence of state authorities, armed forces, judicial actors, and border guards—even at lower reported levels—highlights risks of institutional complicity and procedural abuse.’<sup>111</sup>
- 8.3.8 In regard to the types of violations perpetrated by state actors against LGBT+ people, the same report recorded 17 freedom of expression violations, 10 violations of due process and fair trial, 8 arbitrary arrests and detention, 7 injuries from state or non-state actors (the report did not provide a breakdown of how many injuries were caused by state actors), and 4 freedom of assembly violations<sup>112</sup>.
- 8.3.9 The same report stated: ‘A comparison of monitoring data from 2024 and 2025 indicates that human rights violations against LGBTIQ+ persons in Bangladesh remain systemic, entrenched, and widespread, with no evidence of meaningful structural improvement. Across both years, recurrent patterns include inhuman and degrading treatment, discrimination, physical violence, threats and intimidation, arbitrary arrest, and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly ...’<sup>113</sup>
- 8.3.10 On 11 March 2025, UN Women published an analysis report on the how the period of civil unrest from July to December 2024 in Bangladesh affected women and gender-diverse individuals, drawing on a survey which used both qualitative and quantitative methods with a total of 2,938 respondents across 24 districts of which 4% were gender-diverse individuals<sup>114</sup> (UN Women 2025 report). The UN Women report noted: ‘Institutional harassment affected... 3 per cent of gender-diverse individuals ...’<sup>115</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 3), Feb 2026

<sup>111</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 9), Feb 2026

<sup>112</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 9), Feb 2026

<sup>113</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 15), Feb 2026

<sup>114</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 14), 11 March 2025

<sup>115</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 19), 11 March 2025

### 8.3.11 In October 2025, Erasing 76 Crimes reported:

‘According to reports published in different newspapers and verified by JMBF’s reliable sources, members of the Hijra community in Chattogram in southeastern Bangladesh were assaulted for filing a complaint with the police after refusing to pay extortion money around 9pm on September 10 [2025]. At least twelve Hijras were injured in the attack that took place in the Gomdondi Phultala area of the municipal town. In another incident on September 17 [2025], police arrested twelve members of the Hijra community who were collecting money from expatriate-carrying vehicles — a traditional and long-standing means of livelihood for them — in Narayanganj, a city near the capital Dhaka. JMBF firmly believes that the victims were attacked and arrested solely because they refused to pay extortion money and were engaged in their traditional livelihood practices, which constitutes a clear violation of their human rights.’<sup>116</sup>

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## 8.4 Police and judicial response to violence against LGBT+ people

### 8.4.1 In regard to previous violence against LGBT+ people, the OFPRA 2023 mission report stated:

‘During 2016, a wave of violence perpetrated by extremist groups targeted journalists, bloggers, and activists who supported secularism and freedom of expression, including LGBTIQ+ activists. On April 25, 2016, two activists, Tonoy Mahbub and Xulhaz Mannan, the latter also editor-in-chief of Bangladesh's first LGBTIQ+ magazine, Roopban, were machete-killed. The double murder was claimed by the Islamist group Ansar al-Islam ; in August 2021, six members of this group were sentenced to death for the crime.’<sup>117</sup>  
(To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed)

### 8.4.2 The USSD 2023 report stated:

‘... The government and police took few official actions to investigate, prosecute, and punish those complicit in violence and abuses against LGBTQI+ persons. LGBTQI+ advocacy organizations reported police used the law as a pretext to harass individuals who were perceived to be LGBTQI+ regardless of their sexual orientation. Some groups reported harassment under a suspicious behavior provision of the police code. LGBTQI+ individuals experienced high levels of fear, harassment, and law enforcement actions taken in the wake of violent extremist attacks in the past decade.’<sup>118</sup>

### 8.4.3 In regard to police response to violence against LGBT+ people, the OFPRA 2023 mission report noted:

‘... the police are often reluctant to investigate these types of crimes and, when they do, rarely acknowledge their homophobic nature. LGBTIQ+ rights organizations or those supporting access to justice can assist victims in their dealings with the police and judicial authorities: indeed, the presence of an

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<sup>116</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Bangladesh police arrest dozens of third-gender people](#), 22 October 2025

<sup>117</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 68), 24 April 2024

<sup>118</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

activist or lawyer alongside the complainant is one of the few ways to overcome police reluctance to register a complaint, even if it rarely leads to actual prosecutions ...<sup>119</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

8.4.4 In regard to police response to violence against hijras, the same report stated:

‘The hijras interviewed by the mission, residing in Dhaka, stated that they were not subjected to threats or violence, not even from extremist groups, and expressed satisfaction with the assistance provided by the Dhaka police division. However, they noted that the local police chief was very proactive and, for personal reasons, went beyond the authority assigned to him by the state, suggesting that the level of protection varies from one division to another and depends on the personality and interests of local officials. They also pointed out that the situation was better in large cities than in rural areas, where there is a taboo surrounding the expression of non-normative gender identities...<sup>120</sup>

8.4.5 On 15 November 2024, an Erasing 76 Crimes article reported: ‘Three homophobic Bangladeshi men have been charged with murdering a gay kindergarten teacher last month in the midst of an argument about homosexuality... [Following the murder] Within three weeks, police arrested Abdur Razzak, Mojibur Rahman and Mohiuddin, son of the late Amin Uddin, and charged them with the murder.<sup>121</sup> In the sources consulted, CPIT could not find any further information on the prosecution or final convictions in this case.

8.4.6 In regard to the number of incidents officially reported to the police by LGBT+ people, the JMBF 2024 report noted:

‘In 2024, out of a total of 70 incidents, only 13 were officially recorded as cases, leaving 57 incidents unregistered. This suggests a significant gap in the documentation and acknowledgment of incidents involving victims, potentially due to factors such as lack of awareness, fear of reporting, or systemic barriers to accessing legal recourse.<sup>122</sup> The JMBF report did not provide specific information on the barriers to officially reporting crimes that were reported by victims of violence.

8.4.7 On 21 July 2025, an Erasing 76 Crimes article reported:

‘Two men were arrested on July 6 [2025] in Bangladesh on charges of murdering an openly gay man after luring him to an isolated rooftop.

‘Police claimed that the murder of electrician Parvez Hasan was motivated by jealousy related to a same-sex relationship. However, Bangladeshi LGBT+ rights activists believe the circumstances point more strongly toward it being a hate crime.<sup>123</sup> In the sources consulted, CPIT could not find an update on the progress of the murder investigation.

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<sup>119</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>120</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 72), 24 April 2024

<sup>121</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Three men charged with killing gay teacher in Bangladesh](#), 15 November 2024

<sup>122</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 26), 17 May 2025

<sup>123</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Banker and professor charged with the murdering gay ...](#), 21 July 2025

8.4.8 In regard to the police response to attacks of LGBT+ groups following the depiction of a transgender woman in a schoolbook, the DFAT 2025 report noted: ‘... In-country sources told DFAT police had responded appropriately, although many LGBTQIA+ activists now lived in fear ...’<sup>124</sup>

See also [Societal treatment and attitudes](#) and [Access to services: Education](#)

8.4.9 The Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report stated: ‘A significant shift observed in 2025 is the increase in cases where victims’ sexual orientation or gender identity is recorded as “unknown or undisclosed.” This does not reflect reduced victimisation, but rather a shrinking space for safe disclosure ...’<sup>125</sup>

8.4.10 In the sources consulted, CPIT could not find any official government or police statistics on hate crimes against LGBT+ people.

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## 9. Societal treatment and attitudes

### 9.1 Societal norms and acceptance

9.1.1 In regard to societal attitudes towards sexuality, the OFPRA 2023 mission report noted: ‘Bangladeshi society considers sexuality taboo, even within the family ... Furthermore, gender stereotypes are deeply entrenched, and any transgression is poorly received by society ...’<sup>126</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

9.1.2 The same report noted LGBT+ people (excluding hijras) ‘... are rendered invisible, both in the eyes of the State and the rest of society. The very term LGBTIQ+, taboo in Bangladesh, is no longer used in the public sphere by associations and international organizations, which, for security reasons, prefer to use the term " gender diverse people " or GDP.’<sup>127</sup>

9.1.3 On 31 July 2024, Muhammad Kamruzzaman Mozumder, a Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Dhaka<sup>128</sup>, published a non-peer reviewed research article focussed on self-harm and suicide among LGBT+ people in Bangladesh which stated:

‘In Bangladesh, the perception of LGBT people being abnormal is so widespread in the general population that the members of the LGBT community themselves often consider them abnormal ... The LGBT population, as sexual minorities, are regarded as vulnerable communities in Bangladesh ... Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country that still carries the legacy of the British colonial thinking in most of its laws. Many sexual behaviours and practices of the LGBT population contradict the religious and sociocultural norms as well as the legal provisions of the country.’<sup>129</sup>

9.1.4 The FH 2024 report stated: ‘Open discussion of sensitive religious issues is constrained by fears of harassment and violence from religious fundamentalists. Religious fundamentalists have retaliated against those

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<sup>124</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.156) , 23 July 2025

<sup>125</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 16), Feb 2026

<sup>126</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>127</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 67), 24 April 2024

<sup>128</sup> University of Dhaka, [Profile of Dr. Muhammad Kamruzzaman Mozumder](#), no date

<sup>129</sup> Mozumder.M, [Life under the rainbow: Self-harm and suicidality among...](#), 31 July 2024

who publicly discuss LGBT+ rights ...<sup>130</sup>

- 9.1.5 In regard to transgender women living openly following the recent political uprising, the Global Press Journal August 2025 article noted: ‘... the revolution in 2024, led by young people who demanded widespread political change, opened avenues for hardline conservatives to gain ground. Now, conservative Islamist groups threaten minorities — specifically LGBTQ+ people. Naziya, a trans woman, says she welcomed political change, including the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the new interim government. But when she saw that LGBTQ+ people were increasingly at risk, she stopped identifying publicly as a woman. She cut her hair. With a growing beard, she doesn’t look in mirrors. She’s been attacked, she says, and has stopped going to university.’<sup>131</sup>
- 9.1.6 The FH report 2024 noted: ‘... societal discrimination remains the norm, and LGBT+ individuals are regularly attacked ...’<sup>132</sup> The FH 2024 report did not provide any examples of recent attacks of LGBT+ people or details of societal discrimination.
- 9.1.7 The Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted: ‘As people shun homosexual individuals, consider them immoral and abnormal, and view homosexuality as a crime in Bangladeshi society, many homosexual individuals get involved in a heterosexual marriage only to satisfy their families and comply with societal expectations despite their lack of sexual interest towards the heterosexual partner.’<sup>133</sup>
- 9.1.8 The DFAT 2025 report stated:  
‘Societal attitudes in Bangladesh towards LGBTQIA+ people are very conservative. Very few gay men, lesbian women or people who are bi-sexual publicly disclose their sexual orientation. While hijra are more accepted, they are more vulnerable to abuse due to their greater visibility ...’<sup>134</sup>
- 9.1.9 The same report noted: ‘In-country sources reported LGBTQIA+ people were sometimes evicted from the family home by their parents. This was more common for gay men and transgender women than for lesbian women. In other cases, parents pressured LGBTQIA+ children to accept heterosexual marriages or confined them to avoid ‘dishonouring’ the family ...’<sup>135</sup>
- 9.1.10 The DFAT 2025 report noted: ‘LGBTQIA+ identities and behaviours are not widely accepted in Bangladesh ...’<sup>136</sup>
- 9.1.11 In regard to public reaction to LGBT+ inclusion in school text, the same report stated: ‘In 2023, public controversy erupted over the depiction of a transgender woman in a school textbook ... The textbook was subsequently withdrawn.’<sup>137</sup>

For more information on the public backlash see [NGOs and support](#)

- 9.1.12 The EUAA 2025 Bangladesh report noted ‘As reported in the 2024 EUAA

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<sup>130</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section D4), 26 February 2025

<sup>131</sup> Global Press Journal, [No Longer Safe: Extremism Upends Trans Lives in...](#), 22 Aug 2025

<sup>132</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section F4), 26 February 2025

<sup>133</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of...](#) (page 8), 22 May 2025

<sup>134</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.152) , 23 July 2025

<sup>135</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.153) , 23 July 2025

<sup>136</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 1.4), 23 July 2025

<sup>137</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.156) , 23 July 2025

COI Report: Bangladesh – Country Focus, sources described a stigma surrounding sexuality in Bangladesh, and that homosexuality is met with societal disapproval ‘deeply ingrained and reinforced by the legal system, societal norms, and religious beliefs.’ Hijras reportedly also faced social stigma and discrimination ...<sup>138</sup>

- 9.1.13 The Outright International 2025 report stated: ‘since the appointment of an interim government, LGBTIQ people have faced an “atmosphere of fear” brought about by rising religious fundamentalism threatens [sic] the rights of women and minorities... LGBTIQ activists whom Outright interviewed, although they were at the forefront of the three-week-long July Revolution, are concerned by a right-wing turn in the country and increasingly visible misogyny since the establishment of the interim government. Some now feel betrayed by those whom they helped usher into power.’<sup>139</sup>

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## 9.2 Violence, harassment and discrimination

- 9.2.1 In regard to harassment by members of the public, the USSD 2023 report stated: ‘Members of LGBTQI+ communities received threatening messages via telephone, text, and social media, and ... They stressed the need for online and physical security due to continued threats of physical violence ...’<sup>140</sup>

- 9.2.2 The USSD 2023 report noted: ‘Societal pressures limited freedom of expression ... lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) writers and bloggers reported they continued to receive death threats from extremist organizations.’<sup>141</sup>

- 9.2.3 The same report noted: ‘On August 20 [2023], media reported Islamic extremists killed Golam Kibria, a gay schoolteacher in Savar, claiming Kibria’s sexual orientation contradicted their beliefs. Human rights groups emphasized this incident was not an isolated occurrence but rather emblematic of the broader human rights abuses faced by LGBTQI+ individuals within the country.’<sup>142</sup>

- 9.2.4 The OFPRA 2023 mission report noted:

‘Assaults and violence against LGBTIQ+ people are still regularly reported. Some of these occur after the perpetrators have arranged to meet their future victim via social media and dating apps, one of the few ways for LGBTIQ+ people to meet in the absence of safe social spaces. Although several recent murders of homosexuals have been committed by LGBTIQ+ people and also involved a criminal aspect, the homosexuality of the victims had nevertheless been used by the perpetrators of the violence as a means of pressure and blackmail to force them to pay large sums of money.

‘Few victims file complaints, fearing that their homosexuality will be revealed and their family will be seen as tarnished ...’<sup>143</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023

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<sup>138</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (pages 94 & 95), 5 August 2025

<sup>139</sup> Outright International, [Queering Democracy](#) (pages 27 and 41), September 2025

<sup>140</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>141</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 2a), 22 April 2024

<sup>142</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>143</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

9.2.5 In relation to treatment of gender diverse people who applied for employment through a government scheme, the July 2024 Daily Star article noted: ‘... all 12 selected applicants, who identified as hijra, were subjected to check-ups that invaded their privacy—they were strip-searched, inappropriately touched by non-professionals, and photographed when found to have "male" genitalia. Not only were they rejected from a job opportunity marked out for them, they were also severely humiliated when their information leaked to the media ...’<sup>144</sup>

9.2.6 In regard to online harassment, the August 2024 Los Angeles Blade article stated:

“The political turmoil in Bangladesh that led to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s resignation and subsequent decision to flee the country on Monday has left the LGBTQ community under unprecedented threat ... Inclusive Bangladesh Executive Director Sanjiboni Sudha, and Saraban Tahura, the group’s project coordinator, are among those who anti-trans activists publicly targeted, publishing their photos and sharing their personal information.

‘This targeted harassment, according to Baidya [Program Director at Inclusive Bangladesh], underscores the dangerous shift in the current political environment, where the progress made under the previous government is now at risk.’<sup>145</sup>

9.2.7 The JMBF 2024 report noted: ‘In 2024, LGBTQI+ communities in Bangladesh experienced an alarming rise in violence and discrimination, with 70 reported incidents affecting 396 individuals. These violations included killings, physical assaults, suicides, detainments, arrests, convictions, harassment, death threats, job suspensions, and the vandalism of homes and businesses.’<sup>146</sup>

9.2.8 In regard to the type of violence experienced by the LBGT+ community, the same report noted: ‘Among the reported incidents, five tragic murders claimed the lives of five transgender women... Twelve incidents of physical assault left 83 individuals injured, while eight incidents led to the detainment of 18 LGBTQI+ individuals by local powerful groups and police.’<sup>147</sup>

9.2.9 The JMBF 2024 report recorded the below statistics based on media reporting and firsthand accounts from LGBT+ people on the type of violence and number of incidents against LGBT+ individuals between 2022 and 2024<sup>148</sup> (Table created by CPIT):

	2022		2023		2024	
	Number of incidents	Number of victims	Number of incidents	Number of victims	Number of incidents	Number of victims

<sup>144</sup> The Daily Star, [The Story of Sharifa: One step forward, many steps backward](#), 12 July 2024

<sup>145</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Bangladesh political turmoil has forced LGBTQ people into hiding](#), 9 Aug 2024

<sup>146</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 16), 17 May 2025

<sup>147</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 18), 17 May 2025

<sup>148</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 17), 17 May 2025

Gay and other	11	13	17	19	13	114
Lesbian	8	18	5	9	14	23
Trans	32	173	34	191	43	259
Total	51	204	56	219	70	396

9.2.10 In regard to motivation of violence against LGBT+ people, the JMBF report noted:

‘In 2024, social unacceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals emerged as the leading cause of violence against them. A total of 43 incidents related to social unacceptance resulted in 283 victims, reflecting deep-seated societal discrimination and hostility.

‘Violence driven by economic benefit, including exploitation, extortion, forced labor, and financial abuse, was another major factor, with 13 reported incidents affecting 77 victims. Internal conflicts within the LGBTQI+ community also played a role, with 12 incidents leading to 89 victims, often linked to disputes within the Hijra community over economic and territorial control.’<sup>149</sup>

9.2.11 In regard to perpetrators of violence against LGBT+ people, the same report stated: ‘In 2024, organized groups of political and religious Islamic fundamentalists were the primary perpetrators of violence against LGBTQI+ individuals in Bangladesh, responsible for 14 incidents that victimized 234 people... and the Hijra community, representing internal conflicts, was responsible for 12 incidents, impacting 89 individuals.’<sup>150</sup>

9.2.12 In relation to attacks on LGBT+ people’s homes, the JMBF 2024 report stated ‘In 2024, at least 120 homes of LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly transgender Hijra individuals, were attacked, vandalized, and looted in Dinajpur and Sherpur districts. These incidents were primarily carried out by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, supported by Islamic political and fundamentalist religious groups, following the fall of the Awami League government and the rise of the interim government.’<sup>151</sup>

9.2.13 In relation to reports of physical assault on LGBT+ people, the same JMBF report noted:

‘In 2024, a significant number of LGBTQI+ individuals became victims of physical violence. In 12 incidents, 83 individuals were injured, mostly from the transgender community, particularly Hijra individuals. These assaults, often linked to their sexual orientation, were carried out by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, supported by Islamic fundamentalist groups following the fall of the previous government. These incidents underscored the ongoing dangers faced by LGBTQI+ individuals amid rising societal and political opposition.’<sup>152</sup>

9.2.14 In March 2025, JMBF released a public statement condemning the

<sup>149</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 24), 17 May 2025

<sup>150</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 22), 17 May 2025

<sup>151</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 46), 17 May 2025

<sup>152</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 49), 17 May 2025

abduction and rape of two 'sexual minority individuals' in two cases in Rangpur and Narayanganj: 'In Rangpur city, a sexual minority youth was allegedly abducted and raped [on 3 March 2025], with the perpetrators recording the incident to blackmail him for money. In connection with these allegations, a joint force arrested four members of a teenage gang on the morning of Thursday, March 6, 2025... On the night of Saturday, March 8, 2025, a 20-year-old sexual minority youth was allegedly sexually assaulted after being lured away from the street in the Shahi Mosque Palli Bidyut Road area of Bandar Upazila, Narayanganj. Following the incident, the victim's mother filed a case at Bandar Police Station today, Tuesday, March 11.'<sup>153</sup>

9.2.15 The DFAT 2025 report cited:

'... A 2021 report by the International Republican Institute, an American NGO, found widespread experiences of discrimination, exclusion and violence among LGBTQIA+ people in Bangladesh. Forty-five per cent of respondents said they faced 'discrimination, violence or harassment' on a daily or weekly basis. A majority reported experiencing discrimination in healthcare, education and employment. Half said they kept their sexual orientation and/or gender identity a secret from their family.'<sup>154</sup>

For more information on specific acts of violence against LGBT+ people see Chapter 3 of the [JMBF Annual Report 2024](#)

9.2.16 In regard to harassment of LBGT+ people following the formation of the interim government, the iProbono June article noted following the expulsion of the NCP joint secretary '... Posts targeting queer activists and organisations flooded social media. Names and home addresses of many such persons were shared online. In response, many LGBT+ organisations were forced to take down their websites and close community Facebook groups that had existed for years.'<sup>155</sup>

9.2.17 The Outright International 2025 report, stated: 'The immediate post-election period [2024] coincided with a wave of anti-trans protests, which were led by right-wing and fundamentalist factions, with huge popular support... The protests had far-reaching consequences. Many well-known trans and queer activists went into hiding and even left the country due to threats of violence and the targeting of groups working on sexual and gender diversity...'<sup>156</sup>

9.2.18 In regard to human rights violations against LGBT+ people, the Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report noted out of a total of 41 recorded incidents of violations: 'Data documented in 2025 indicates that inhuman or degrading treatment is the most frequently reported violation affecting LGBTIQ+ individuals, with 37 mentions, followed by discrimination (21) and threats and intimidation (20), reflecting pervasive social and institutional harm. Physical violence, including beatings (18) and torture (14), remains a significant concern ...'<sup>157</sup>

9.2.19 The same report noted that: 'The substantial proportion of cases recorded as unknown or undisclosed suggests ongoing barriers to safe disclosure, likely

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<sup>153</sup> JMBF, [Press & Public Statement: JMBF Strongly Condemns...](#), 16 March 2025

<sup>154</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.152) , 23 July 2025

<sup>155</sup> iProbono, [Pride Under Pressure: The Escalating Crisis for LGBT+ Communities...](#), June 2025

<sup>156</sup> Outright International, [Queering Democracy](#) (pages 43 and 44), September 2025

<sup>157</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 14), Feb 2026

resulting in underreporting of violations.<sup>158</sup>

9.2.20 In relation to non-state perpetrators of violence against LGBT+ people, the same report provided the below breakdown (Table by CPIT):

<b>Perpetrators of violence (percentage)</b>	
Local community members	48.8%
Criminal Groups or Gangs	14.6%
Family Members	12.2%
Political Groups or Activists	12.2%
Educational Institutions	9.8%
Online Harassers	7.3%
Religious Groups or Institutions	7.3%
Teachers or School Staff	2.4%
Employers or Workplace	2.4%
Hijra	2.4%
Others	26.8%
Unknown	2.4%

9.2.21 The same report noted: ‘The distribution of perpetrators in the 2025 dataset indicates that local community members constitute the largest share of reported incidents, accounting for nearly half of all cases. This underscores the pervasive role of societal stigma, social surveillance, and community-level hostility in driving human rights violations against LGBTIQ+ individuals ... Violations perpetrated by family members, educational institutions, and workplaces further demonstrate how discrimination extends into private, educational, and economic spheres, restricting access to safety and livelihoods. The diversity of perpetrator categories suggests that violations are not isolated acts but occur within an enabling environment shaped by social norms and institutional failures ...’<sup>159</sup>

9.2.22 In relation to the location of incidents of human rights violations against LGBT+ people, the same report included the below figures of cases reported by district<sup>160</sup> (Table by CPIT):

<b>District</b>	<b>Number of incidents</b>
Dhaka	12
Jashore	3
Khulana	3
Gazipur	2
Narayanganj	2

<sup>158</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

<sup>159</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 14), Feb 2026

<sup>160</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 11), Feb 2026

Chandpur	2
Jhenaidah	2
Gopalganj	1
Gaibandha	1
Feni	1
Faridpur	1
Brahmanbaria	1
Chattogram	1
Dinajpur	1
Rangamati	1
Rangpur	1
Barisal	1
Barguna	1
Kushtia	1
Mymensingh	1
Comilla	1
Natore	1

- 9.2.23 With regards to the geographic distribution of these incidents, the same report stated: ‘These harms occurred across urban, suburban, and rural areas, demonstrating that risks are nationwide and not confined to specific localities... Dhaka’s position as the primary concentration of reported incidents is consistent with its role as the capital and a densely populated urban centre, where LGBTIQ+ visibility, community presence, and reporting mechanisms are comparatively higher. However, the recurrence of incidents in Jashore, Khulna, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chandpur, and Jhenaidah indicates the presence of localized patterns of violence beyond the capital ... The reporting of incidents across a wide range of additional districts further suggests that discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ+ people are geographically widespread and not confined to specific regions.’<sup>161</sup>
- 9.2.24 The same report recorded 24 incidents in urban areas, 10 incidents in suburban areas, and 7 incidents in rural areas<sup>162</sup>.
- 9.2.25 The same report noted: ‘the data underscores the intersection of age and gender in shaping risk, with young, gender-diverse individuals facing the greatest documented exposure to human rights violations.’<sup>163</sup>
- 9.2.26 The Human Rights Watch World Report 2026 on Bangladesh, published in February 2026 and covering events of 2025, stated: ‘Among the challenges faced by the interim government [led by Muhammad Yunus, established in

<sup>161</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 11), Feb 2026

<sup>162</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 12), Feb 2026

<sup>163</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

2024 following the overthrow of Sheikh Hasina’s autocratic Awami League government] was an alarming surge in mob violence by political parties and other non-state groups, such as religious hardliners hostile to ...lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. According to the Bangladeshi human rights group Ain O Salish Kendra, at least 124 people were killed in mob attacks between June and August 2025.’<sup>164</sup>

9.2.27 The same report stated: ‘Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and advocates have reported increased threats of violence and hate speech, including by politicians.’<sup>165</sup>

9.2.28 On 20 February 2026, Outright International, described as a LGBT+ NGO<sup>166</sup>, published an analysis report on online gender-based violence against ‘LBQ’ people in Bangladesh, based on a study conducted in 2023 across 5 Asian countries including Bangladesh, using qualitative and quantitative methods with a total of 104 survey responses and 10 in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi participants. In terms of gender identity 48% identified as a trans man, 26% identified as cis women, 15% identified as nonbinary or genderqueer and 5% identified as trans women. In terms of sexual orientation, 67% reported being interested in women and 19% reported being interested in men. The Outright International 2026 report noted:

‘73 percent of our survey respondents had experienced online gender-based violence in the 12 months preceding the survey... Sixteen LBQ respondents (16 percent) reported receiving “lewd, offensive, sexual, or hateful comments,” while six respondents (6 percent) reported receiving sexually explicit pictures in their inboxes or being asked for sex, underscoring the issue of unwanted advances. “Discriminatory behavior” was experienced by sixteen respondents (16 percent), while four (4 percent) faced attacks for speaking out on LGBTIQ people’s rights, highlighting challenges in advocating for equality. Eighteen respondents (18 percent) reported other negative experiences, including impersonation, being followed in cyberspace, and having their photos posted without consent. Only 28 respondents (27 percent) indicated that they had not encountered any negative experiences.’<sup>167</sup>

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### 9.3 Conversion therapy

9.3.1 An undated All Out Campaign website page, a campaign started by ILGA Asia, noted:

‘LGBTIQ community members in Bangladesh report that “conversion therapy” practices are widespread and it is often parents who send their LGBTIQ children to drug rehabilitation facilities, force them to take sedatives, wear traditional clothing, and recite religious books ... many members of the LGBTIQ community in Bangladesh have been victims of harmful “conversion therapy” practices, which continue to be performed by individuals, family members, medical professionals, and religious and community leaders.’<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Bangladesh](#), 4 February 2026

<sup>165</sup> Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2026: Bangladesh](#), 4 February 2026

<sup>166</sup> Outright International, [Context and Culture of Online Gender-Based...](#) (page 2), 20 February 2026

<sup>167</sup> Outright International, [Context and Culture of Online Gender-Based...](#) (page 33), 20 February 2026

<sup>168</sup> All Out, [Stop “Conversion Therapy” in Bangladesh](#), no date

- 9.3.2 The same website page included testimony from a transgender woman who was forced to undergo conversion therapy: ‘... For 6 months, I clearly remember that they locked me in a room. They tortured me. And some religious leader [used to] come everyday and [used] some...holy water and [said] that I am a man, not a woman ... Then they sent me to a doctor. The doctor gave me some therapies... and some medicine which were horrible for [my health] ... Several times... I think I have attempted suicide.’<sup>169</sup>
- 9.3.3 The USSD 2023 report stated: ‘LGBTQI+ activists reported so-called conversion therapy practices were widespread. Lesbian women and gay men recounted stories of being sent by their parents to drug rehabilitation facilities and forced to take sedatives, wear traditional clothing, and recite the Quran. The government did not condemn these practices.’<sup>170</sup>
- 9.3.4 The EUAA 2025 report states: ‘LGBTIQ persons have been facing various forms of violence, discrimination and harassment, including conversion therapy which is reportedly a widespread practice.’<sup>171</sup>
- 9.3.5 In the sources consulted, CPIT found limited information on the use of conversion therapy in Bangladesh (see [Bibliography](#)).

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## 9.4 Gay and bisexual men

- 9.4.1 On 28 October 2024, an Erasing 76 Crimes news article reported: ‘An assistant professor at Islamic University in Kushtia, Bangladesh, has been barred from teaching classes in response to pro-Islamist students’ protests that he is gay. Protesting students burned an effigy of Asst. Prof. Hafizul Islam at the main gate of the university and demanded his resignation.’<sup>172</sup>
- 9.4.2 In regard to the period of civil unrest and the impact on gay men, the EUAA report noted:  
 ‘Sources reported on LGBT teachers affected by the political turmoil. In October 2024, an assistant professor at the Islamic University in Kushtia was barred from teaching in response to pro-Islamist students’ protests that he is gay, and in November 2024, the principal of Kurigram Collectorate School and College was reportedly suspended from his job following ‘allegations’ of him being gay and subsequent protests. In late 2024, the Islamic University barred two educators from teaching due to student protests accusing them of being gay or ‘pro-LGBT ...’<sup>173</sup>
- 9.4.3 In regard to human rights violations faced specifically by gay men, the Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report recorded 11 cases out of a total of 41 cases<sup>174</sup>. The report did not provide a breakdown of the type of violations specifically faced by gay men.
- 9.4.4 In the sources consulted by CPIT there was limited information on discrimination specifically faced by gay and bisexual men (see [Bibliography](#)).

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<sup>169</sup> All Out, [Stop “Conversion Therapy” in Bangladesh](#), no date

<sup>170</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>171</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (page 95), 5 August 2025

<sup>172</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Academic in Bangladesh barred from teaching...](#), 28 October 2024

<sup>173</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (page 97), 5 August 2025

<sup>174</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

## 9.5 Lesbian and bisexual women

- 9.5.1 The OFPRA 2023 mission report noted: ‘The situation can be particularly difficult for lesbian women who refuse marriage and wish to live alone, without a male companion ...’<sup>175</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).
- 9.5.2 The ILGA 2024 Laws on Us report noted: ‘Other reports also surfaced in March 2024 concerning the detainment of two lesbian couples in the districts of Manikganj and Natore respectively who were handed over to the police by homophobic neighbours. They were reportedly released without being charged, but local activists have criticised such instances as part of a concerning trend of interference in the personal lives and privacy of sexual and gender minorities in Bangladesh.’<sup>176</sup>
- 9.5.3 In regard to self-harm rates and societal norms for lesbian women, the July 2024 academic research article by Mozumder stated:  
‘Lesbians were found to be the most vulnerable groups among the sexual minorities in terms of self-harm and suicidal behaviour. Previous reports suggested a link between their extreme vulnerability and the existing marginalisation of women in the socio-cultural framework of the country. Although some services are available for the gay and transgender population through community-based organisations, comprehensive customised services for lesbians are yet to be developed at an organisational level ...’<sup>177</sup>
- 9.5.4 The Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted: ‘Many women experience violence from the police or report beatings when they refuse to marry into families, or are suspected to be in same-sex relationships. Some young lesbians have been beaten, raped, forcibly impregnated or married, and attacked by family members in the streets of Dhaka, seemingly by religious fundamentalists.’<sup>178</sup>
- 9.5.5 The DFAT 2025 report noted: ‘In-country sources said lesbian women... were much less visible... in part due to strict cultural norms around women’s sexuality, behaviour and movement ...’<sup>179</sup>
- 9.5.6 In regard to human rights violations, the Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report noted that out of 41 recorded cases of human rights violations, 14 victims identified as lesbian<sup>180</sup>. The report did not provide a breakdown of the type of violations specifically faced by lesbians.
- 9.5.7 The same report noted that 6 persons who identified as bisexual faced human rights violations<sup>181</sup>. The report did not provide a breakdown of the type of violations specifically faced by bisexual people.
- 9.5.8 The same report stated: ‘... lesbian individuals continue to represent one of the most affected groups by sexual orientation ... The sustained targeting of

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<sup>175</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>176</sup> ILGA, [Laws on Us 2024](#), (page 50), 30 May 2024

<sup>177</sup> Mozumder.M, [Life under the rainbow: Self-harm and suicidality...](#), 31 July 2024

<sup>178</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of...](#) (pages 6 &7), 22 May 2025

<sup>179</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.154) , 23 July 2025

<sup>180</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

<sup>181</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

lesbians underscores the gendered nature of violence and discrimination, intersecting with patriarchal norms and moral policing.<sup>182</sup>

- 9.5.9 In regard to lesbian women accessing services, the Outright International February 2026 report stated:

‘In the patriarchal context of Bangladesh, it is exceedingly challenging for LBQ people to access formal mental health support from various institutions, and when they do, they may face judgment or ignorance from medical professionals. Sabiha, a lesbian woman in Dhaka and a survivor of online gender-based violence, said that when she experienced panic attacks as a result of online gender-based violence, doctors in four clinics that she visited were “not aware of panic attacks” and unable to help her ...’<sup>183</sup>

- 9.5.10 In the sources consulted, CPIT could not find information specifically relating to the treatment of bisexual women (see [Bibliography](#)).

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## 9.6 Trans persons, including hijras

- 9.6.1 The OFPRA 2023 mission report noted: ‘... The situation can be particularly difficult for ... transgender women and kothis (men who adopt gender expressions generally labelled as feminine) ...’<sup>184</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

- 9.6.2 In regard to society’s perspective on hijras, the OFPRA 2023 mission report noted: ‘... [hijras] define themselves as a distinct cultural community rather than as a gender and are tolerated to a certain extent by Bangladeshi society ...’<sup>185</sup>

- 9.6.3 In regard to the hijra community, the same report stated:

‘Hijras are generally transgender women (or kothis) who, after being expelled by their families of origin due to their overly feminine behavior, have formed communities of 30 to 40 members, also called “families,” led by a “guru.” These closed communities provide them with a degree of physical and social protection as well as a cultural identity, while simultaneously isolating them from the rest of society.

‘Hijras speak their own language, called “ulti,” a mixture of Bengali, Urdu, and Farsi common to all hijras in South Asia, but not understood by the rest of the societies of this subcontinent. They also define themselves by their professions and cultural practices: singing, dancing, blessing newborns, begging (although they themselves reject this term), and prostitution.’<sup>186</sup>

- 9.6.4 The same report noted:

‘The gurus, appointed for life, are considered “mothers” or “spokespeople” for the community, ... Their role is to teach ulti to new members of the community, resolve conflicts within the “family,” and maintain discipline. While the gurus interviewed stated that “the money [earned by the hijras] is

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<sup>182</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 15), Feb 2026

<sup>183</sup> Outright International, [Context and Culture of Online Gender-Based...](#) (page 40), 20 February 2026

<sup>184</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>185</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 67), 24 April 2024

<sup>186</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 70), 24 April 2024

personal” and that nothing is given to the gurus, a Human Rights Watch report claims that other members of the “family” must give them half of their earnings from begging and blessing newborns, while Inclusive Bangladesh believes the gurus are very wealthy because “they exploit [the] members [of their “family”]

‘The “families are then grouped into Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), ...[which] advocate for the rights of hijras, help them protect their physical and sexual health and access healthcare, and conduct awareness campaigns, among other activities.

‘In 2022, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics included hijras in its population census for the first time. According to its preliminary report, 12,629 people identified themselves as hijras, well below estimates of the latter, which range from 150,000 to 500,000 people.’<sup>187</sup>

For treatment of hijras during the census see [Government attitudes and policies](#)

- 9.6.5 In regard to violence against hijras, the OFPRA report noted: ‘They [Hijras] also pointed out that the situation was better in large cities than in the countryside, where there is a taboo on the expression of non-normative gender identities and where they can be subjected to violence or “punishment” by the shalishs’<sup>188</sup> [non-state justice system in rural areas of Bangladesh<sup>189</sup>].
- 9.6.6 In regard to acceptance of trans persons, the ILGA Asia October 2024 article noted: ‘... There is low social acceptance for transgender individuals as people who identify differently from their gender assigned at birth in Bangladesh, and the term is sometimes used to refer to intersex people ...’<sup>190</sup>
- 9.6.7 On 12 February 2025, Erasing 76 Crimes reported: ‘A prominent transgender activist in Bangladesh was the victim of a gruesome murder last week [3 February 2025], which police suspect was orchestrated by extremists... Shila was found decapitated with additional stab wounds to her abdomen, suggesting the involvement of militants... Shila... was a prominent advocate for the transgender community.’<sup>191</sup>
- 9.6.8 The UN Women 2025 report noted:  
‘Gender-diverse individuals faced the highest levels of violence post-unrest, with 42 per cent reporting incidents, compared to 27 per cent during and 25 per cent before the unrest ... Gender-diverse individuals reported the highest levels of verbal threats 15 per cent and psychological harassment 12 per cent, emphasizing the unique challenges faced by this group ...’<sup>192</sup>
- 9.6.9 The same report stated: ‘The perception of safety during periods of unrest varies significantly across different gender identities, with gender-diverse individuals experiencing the highest levels of insecurity. The findings reveal that a staggering 76 per cent of the gender-diverse respondents reported a

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<sup>187</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 70&71), 24 April 2024

<sup>188</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 72), 24 April 2024

<sup>189</sup> Business Standard, [How can we make the shalish system more effective in...](#), 14 May 2021

<sup>190</sup> ILGA Asia, [Bangladesh: Student Protests, Government Transition, and Implications...](#), 10 Oct 2024

<sup>191</sup> Erasing 76 Crimes, [Bangladesh trans activist brutally murdered](#), 12 February 2025

<sup>192</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 18), 11 March 2025

reduced sense of safety, positioning them as the most vulnerable group within the study.<sup>193</sup>

- 9.6.10 In regard to online harassment during the period of civil unrest, the same report stated: ‘The period of civil unrest in Bangladesh witnessed a significant surge in incidents of social media harassment, disproportionately affecting women and gender-diverse individuals. According to the data, a staggering 76 per cent of gender-diverse individuals reported receiving explicit harassing messages, the highest among all gender groups ... The figures underscore the gendered nature of online abuse during and after times of instability, reflecting broader forms of societal marginalisation where women and gender-diverse individuals are targeted, in both physical and digital spaces.’<sup>194</sup>
- 9.6.11 The same report stated: ‘The civil unrest caused significant mental health challenges across all genders, with gender-diverse individuals and women being disproportionately affected... Fear of self-expression was a prominent issue, particularly for gender-diverse individuals, with 37 per cent reporting concerns about expressing their identities during the civil unrest. This rate was higher than for women (17 per cent) and men (2 per cent), highlighting the constraints faced by marginalised groups ...’<sup>195</sup>
- 9.6.12 The DFAT 2025 report noted: ‘... Relatives often reject hijra family members ... [and] are often subjected to violence by the community ... In-country sources reported online and in-person attacks and harassment of hijra were common.’<sup>196</sup>
- 9.6.13 The same report noted: ‘In-country sources said... transgender men were much less visible in Bangladesh than... transgender women, in part due to strict cultural norms around women’s sexuality, behaviour and movement. According to in-country sources, a transgender man would face grave risks to his safety if his transgender identity was revealed.’<sup>197</sup>
- 9.6.14 The Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted:  
“Hijra’, trans and gender diverse persons are often harassed, tortured by neighbours and influential people of the society if they develop a love or interest towards heterosexual people. [One participant reported] “I had fallen in love with a man over the phone. We talked for 6 months and finally we decided to meet one day. After the meeting, we had lunch together and spent some good time in the park. Then we returned home, and a few days later, this guy started asking for a large amount of money. He started emotionally blackmailing me by saying that nobody else would love and adore me the way he wants to do it. He kept telling me that because of my identity (nonbinary), I would always end up being a lonely person. Nobody else except him will pamper me with love. Thankfully, I had been able to end that relationship, but it will probably haunt me for a long time before I can be able to gain the courage to fall in love again.” KII participant -2, Gazipur, Bangladesh.’<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 20), 11 March 2025

<sup>194</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 28), 11 March 2025

<sup>195</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 29), 11 March 2025

<sup>196</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.150) , 23 July 2025

<sup>197</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.154) , 23 July 2025

<sup>198</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 7), 22 May 2025

- 9.6.15 The Pathchola and GATE report footnote 12 reported: ‘The locals have harassed and got them [hijra, trans and gender diverse people] arrested by local police in the name of disturbing ‘social harmony’ in Monohorpur, Kaliganj, Jhenaidah, Bangladesh when a ‘hijra’ person allegedly showed love interest to a man.’” which was sourced from a Facebook post.<sup>199</sup>
- 9.6.16 The same report stated: ‘Because of the harassment and safety/privacy concerns trans and gender diverse persons face on online platforms, they often consider migrating, moderating, or completely withdrawing their participation from online spaces. However, even such a transition becomes challenging for many transgender and all other gender diverse community users, as many of these private groups/communities are extremely hard to find.’<sup>200</sup>
- 9.6.17 In regard to online harassment, the same report noted: ‘Trans and gender diverse persons are experiencing the utmost level of cyber-bullying while trying to incorporate into the mainstream society, and often choose to take extreme paths as the society does brutal things to make their journey even more measurable. An upcoming transgender model allegedly committed suicide as she faced major backlash after attending a female beauty pageant.’<sup>201</sup>
- 9.6.18 The same report stated: ‘There has been a rise in ‘unnatural deaths’ and ‘brutal killings’ of transgender persons across the country and the exact reasons for deaths are often left unnoticed in the mainstream media. The lack of follow-up on the related news is also a matter of concern.’<sup>202</sup> In the Pathchola and Gate UPR report footnote for this statement referenced 4 local news articles relating to the killings of hijra and transgender individuals between 2020 and 2025<sup>203</sup>.
- 9.6.19 In regard to attacks on the hijra persons, the iProbono June 2025 article stated:
- ‘Beyond digital spaces, public violence against hijra communities has increased in both frequency and brutality. In September 2024, [a hijra individual in Cox’s Bazar was physically assaulted by a mob led by a group of men; they were beaten with sticks and forced to squat in public while others watched and filmed the assault](#). Several women were also sexually harassed during the incident. Similar events have been reported in rural areas, where hijra individuals were stripped, humiliated, and paraded through villages by a group known as ‘[Tawhidi Janata](#)’ ...’<sup>204</sup>
- 9.6.20 In regard to recent attacks on Hijras, on 22 August 2025, Global Press Journal, described as a non-profit news organisation, article reported:
- ‘Early this year, dozens of men stormed the gate of a safe house for third-gender people.
- ‘Among the attackers were people who used to sympathize with the community, says Babuni, who was in the safe house at the time. They threw

<sup>199</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 7), 22 May 2025

<sup>200</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 11), 22 May 2025

<sup>201</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 11), 22 May 2025

<sup>202</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 12), 22 May 2025

<sup>203</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 12), 22 May 2025

<sup>204</sup> iProbono, [Pride Under Pressure: The Escalating Crisis for LGBT+ Communities...](#), June 2025

stones and broke windows. Babuni took important items from the home's office — crests, certificates and photographs — and threw them in the nearest river. Then, she went into hiding.

'It wasn't always like this. Everything changed after the Monsoon Revolution, Babuni says. Since 2013, Bangladesh has allowed third-gender people to officially identify as such. Some even entered politics; a rural town elected a transgender woman as mayor in 2021. But the revolution in 2024, led by young people who demanded widespread political change, opened avenues for hardline conservatives to gain ground. Now, conservative Islamist groups threaten minorities — specifically LGBTQ+ people.'<sup>205</sup>

- 9.6.21 In regard to human rights violations against those who identify as transgender and hijra, the Inclusive Bangladesh 2025 report recorded 5 cases involving 5 transgender women and 8 cases involving hijras<sup>206</sup>. The report did not provide a breakdown of the type of violations specifically faced by transgender and hijra people.
- 9.6.22 The same report noted: '... among individuals aged 18–30 ... Hijra [17.1%] and transgender women [9.8%] are disproportionately affected, reflecting persistent structural discrimination and targeted violence against gender-diverse communities ...'<sup>207</sup>

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## 10. Access to services

### 10.1 Overview

- 10.1.1 The USSD 2023 report noted: '... LGBTQI+ groups reported official discrimination in employment and occupation, housing, and access to government services, including health care and access to justice ...'<sup>208</sup>
- 10.1.2 The July 2024 academic research article by Mozumder regarding self-harm and suicidality among LGBT community in Bangladesh stated: 'Although some services are available for the gay and transgender population through community-based organisations, comprehensive customised services for lesbians are yet to be developed at an organisational level ...'<sup>209</sup>
- 10.1.3 In regard to access to identity documents for hijras, the DFAT 2025 report stated: '... It is possible for hijra to obtain national ID cards, passports and other documents which list their gender as 'hijra' or 'other', although activists describe the process as 'complex, time-consuming and labyrinthine'.<sup>210</sup>
- 10.1.4 In regard to access to social security programmes for hijras, the EUAA 2025 Bangladesh noted: 'In July 2024, a Supreme Court lawyer sent a notice to the former government requesting a monthly allowance, separate educational institutions, and civic amenities to the hijra community. Announced in April 2025 by the Advisory Council Committee on social safety net programmes, in the upcoming 2025–2026 fiscal year, the allowance for the hijra community would be raised from 600 taka to 650 taka [about EUR

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<sup>205</sup> Global Press Journal, [No Longer Safe: Extremism Upends Trans Lives in...](#), 22 August 2025

<sup>206</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

<sup>207</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Annual Report 2025 on Human Rights Violations of...](#) (page 13), Feb 2026

<sup>208</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>209</sup> Mozumder.M, [Life under the rainbow: Self-harm and suicidality...](#), 31 July 2024

<sup>210</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.149), 23 July 2025

4.20 to EUR 4.50] [£3.65GBP<sup>211</sup> to £3.95GBP<sup>212</sup>]. The number of beneficiaries in this group would remain the same.<sup>213</sup>

- 10.1.5 The ILGA database page on Bangladesh states: 'National Identity Cards have a "hijra" category, while passports have an "other" category, and other government forms have a "third gender" category. This also creates a gap where it is unclear who has access to these gender marker options and whether non-Hijra trans and gender-diverse people can be recognised under this other/third gender category. It is also unclear whether the mismatch of categories creates a problem when accessing certain services, including passport applications.'<sup>214</sup>
- 10.1.6 In regard to access to housing, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report cited a September 2024 article in bdnews24: "There have been allegations of 40 transgender people being evicted from their homes in the Ashrayan project in Sherpur Sadar Upazila. They have come and taken shelter on the balcony of the Deputy Commissioner's office. The attack took place on Wednesday night at the 'Dream Address', a transgender housing project in Andharia Sutirpar of the upazila, said Acting Deputy Commissioner Md. Monirul Hasan."<sup>215</sup>

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## 10.2 Education

- 10.2.1 In regard to controversies over LGBT+ inclusion in education, the JMBF 2024 report stated:

'In 2024, rather than taking positive initiatives to support transgender individuals in the education sector, the government faced strong opposition from Islamic political parties, fundamental religious groups, and pro-Islamic student groups. As a result, the government was compelled to remove a story on transgender issues from the seventh grade textbook, which had been positively included under the title "Sharifa's Tale." In addition, at least three teachers were suspended due to their sexual orientation after protests by pro-Islamic student groups.'<sup>216</sup>

- 10.2.2 A July 2024 op-ed published by the Daily Star opined:

'The hijra community faces a similar predicament in school, where they are physically bullied and verbally abused, called maigya polas (effeminate boy), and sexually exploited by their teachers who accuse them of violating school principles and social decorum... a prime example of the country's inadequate and vapid policies lies in the first school it opened in 2020 for the transgender community. The aim was to provide education and eventual employment opportunities to release the group from a life of sex work, dancing, singing, or begging. However, the curriculum included only religious teachings and vocational subjects. The decision to not include subjects like Bangla, Mathematics, English, and Science only sets up the hijra community for failure. In the last few years, Bangladesh has opened a handful of Islamic

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<sup>211</sup> Xe.com, [600 BDT to GBP - Convert Bangladeshi Takas to British Pounds](#), 11 March 2026

<sup>212</sup> Xe.com, [650 BDT to GBP - Convert Bangladeshi Takas to British Pounds](#), 11 March 2026

<sup>213</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (page 94), 5 August 2025

<sup>214</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

<sup>215</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth](#) (page 10 Footnote 22), 22 May 2025

<sup>216</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 61), 17 May 2025

curriculum schools catering solely to the hijra community. However... [a] structurally inbred segregation inadvertently reinforces existing social biases and exacerbates the prejudices against the hijra community by alienating them from the mainstream education system.<sup>217</sup>

10.2.3 The DFAT 2025 report noted: '... Many LGBTQIA+ people experience bullying in school, leading to high drop-out rates. Very few openly LGBTQIA+ people attend university. Those who do face bullying from fellow students and faculty.'<sup>218</sup>

10.2.4 In regard to education initiatives for hijra/transgender individuals, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report stated:

'University of Dhaka introduced a reservation for transgender/Hijra quota, but later they had to revise their press release by mentioning that only students with gender diversity at birth can apply for admission under the transgender/hijra quota. Meanwhile, a group of university students who had been demanding the removal of the word 'transgender' from admission notices have announced that they will continue their sit-in, calling DU's latest notice a 'modern fraud'. As an outcome of the protest, the University of Dhaka authority made another statement stating that persons having 'Voluntary gender reassignment' surgeries will not be able to apply under the trans reservation quota. With this statement, the trans and gender diverse community will face even more difficulties in getting admission in higher educational institutions.'<sup>219</sup>

10.2.5 In regard to the banning of 'Sharifa's story', the July 2024 Daily Star op-ed noted: 'On June 26, it was [reported](#) that the much-debated Sharifa's story would be removed from the Class 7 history and social science textbook. Earlier this year, fundamentalist and reactionary figures drummed up public sentiment against the inclusion of "[The Story of Sharifa](#)" in the NCTB curriculum and [a probe committee consisting of only cisgender men](#) was formed, and following its [recommendation](#), the education ministry announced the retraction of the passage in June.'<sup>220</sup>

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### 10.3 Employment

10.3.1 The USSD 2023 report stated: '... Though the government offered limited training and employment opportunities to help third-gender persons gain employment, rights activists stated only a small number of third-gender persons worked in the manufacturing and service sectors, and many faced workplace discrimination.'<sup>221</sup>

10.3.2 In regard to employment opportunities for LGBT+ people, the OFPRA 2023 mission report noted: 'Access to... employment is limited for LGBTIQ+ people, at least when they are identified as such, because they are victims of insults, humiliation, and harassment. Access to employment is therefore one of the priority areas for LGBTIQ+ support organizations, as many of them have low levels of education because they had to prematurely end their

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<sup>217</sup> The Daily Star, [The illusion of inclusion: Empty policies and promises...](#), 4 July 2024

<sup>218</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.153) , 23 July 2025

<sup>219</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 22), 22 May 2025

<sup>220</sup> The Daily Star, [The Story of Sharifa: One step forward, many steps backward?](#), 12 July 2024

<sup>221</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

schooling or were driven from their homes by their families, particularly in rural and poor areas.<sup>222</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

#### 10.3.3 In relation to employment for hijras, the same report noted:

‘One of the key measures implemented by the government aims to integrate hijras into the job market and get them off the streets, where their aggressive begging generates numerous complaints.

‘In 2014, the Ministry of Social Affairs launched a program to recruit hijras into the civil service. Furthermore, since 2022, a 5% tax break has been offered to companies that agree to hire hijras – only one recruitment is required according to the Shacheton Hijra Odhikar Shangha, “a certain number” according to Inclusive Bangladesh, and 100% or 10% of the workforce according to sources at Business Standard. Several large companies in the restaurant, retail, and electronics sectors have joined the project and begun recruiting hijras.

‘These recruitment assistance programs for hijras, however, suffer from several limitations. The work environment, where new recruits can be victims of discrimination, harassment, and insults due to their perceived feminine behavior, is unwelcoming and ill-suited, leading several hijras to leave their new jobs and return to their communities. The jobs offered are also not always commensurate with their level of education, which is generally low due to the harassment they previously experienced within the school system<sup>223</sup>

#### 10.3.4 In regard to the requirements for employing hijras, the same report stated:

‘The work environment, where new recruits can face discrimination, harassment, and insults due to their perceived feminine behavior, is unwelcoming and ill-suited, leading many hijras to leave their new jobs and return to their communities. Furthermore, the jobs offered are not always commensurate with their educational level, which is generally low due to the harassment they previously experienced within the school system.

‘...But the main difficulty lies in the medical test required of hijras to prove their gender identity, a prerequisite for employment. A Human Rights Watch report published in 2016, just over a year after these tests were instituted by a memorandum from the Ministry of Health demanding the identification of “authentic hijras,” describes the humiliating and degrading nature of the medical procedures imposed on the first twelve hijras who participated in the civil service recruitment program. Following the tests, photographs of the victims were published in the press, accompanied by commentary claiming they were actually men fraudulently obtaining employment. Indeed, doctors are largely unaware of what hijras are, and that it is “something mental, not physical,” in the words of the Shacheton Hijra Odhikar Shangha, according to which these tests are still taking place despite the protests of the people concerned.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>223</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 71), 24 April 2024

<sup>224</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 71&72), 24 April 2024

10.3.5 In relation to employment quotas, the ILGA Asia October 2024 article stated: 'LGBTIQ activists from Bangladesh have [stated](#) that the job quota (1% of government jobs) reserved under the third gender category is only for intersex people and hijras, a traditional queer identity found across South Asia ...'<sup>225</sup>

For more information on 2024 protests see [Country Policy and Information Note Bangladesh: Political Situation](#)

10.3.6 In relation to government job quotas, the August 2024 Los Angeles Blade article quoted Tushar Kanti Baidya, the director of Inclusive Bangladesh: 'Baidya said trans activists had initially raised the issue of their inclusion in the job quota system nearly two years ago, well before the current crisis emerged. The trans and LGBTQ communities, however, chose not to participate in the quota demand. Baidya said fear drove this decision, noting anti-LGBTQ and anti-trans rhetoric from some quota reform movement leaders grew more intense.'<sup>226</sup>

10.3.7 The same article noted: 'While some trans people have supported the broader student movement that demanded Hasina's resignation, they have been cautious about specifically advocating for the quota reserved for them because they were wary of the potential backlash. Baidya emphasized this reluctance reflects the severe risks and hostility the community faces in this fraught political climate.'<sup>227</sup>

10.3.8 A report published by the National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh in October 2024, entitled 'Bangladesh, National Human Rights Strategy to Remove Human Rights-related Barriers to HIV Services in Bangladesh (2024-2029)' stated: 'Individuals, who self-identify with a gender other than male or female, face significant social and economic marginalization in Bangladesh. Traditionally, the transgender population (hijra) held an important role in providing entertainment at marriage and birth ceremonies. However, modernization has diminished these traditional earning opportunities. With limited education and skills, many hijra individuals now turn to high-risk sex work for survival.'<sup>228</sup>

10.3.9 In regard to the economic impact of the civil unrest in mid-2024, the UN Women report stated: 'For... transgender individuals, the limited access to income sources led to greater vulnerability to abuse, extortion, and forced displacement, compounding their pre-existing limitations to access services.'<sup>229</sup>

10.3.10 In regard to employment of LGBTQ+ individuals in the education sector, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report stated: 'The teachers having diverse gender identities and sexual orientation also face discrimination in the workplace, a school principal got sacked because of allegations of homosexuality. An assistant professor at a public university faced protests from his own students after homosexuality allegations were made. A

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<sup>225</sup> ILGA Asia, [Bangladesh: Student Protests, Government Transition, and Implications...](#), 10 Oct 2024

<sup>226</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Bangladesh political turmoil has forced LGBTQ people into hiding](#), 9 Aug 2024

<sup>227</sup> Los Angeles Blade, [Bangladesh political turmoil has forced LGBTQ people into hiding](#), 9 Aug 2024

<sup>228</sup> National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh, [National Human...](#), (page 8) October 2024

<sup>229</sup> UN Women, [Gender Analysis Bangladesh](#) (page 9), 11 March 2025

kindergarten teacher was killed in Meherpur for allegations of homosexuality.<sup>230</sup>

- 10.3.11 In regard to employment of LGBTQ+ individuals in the education sector, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report stated: 'The teachers having diverse gender identities and sexual orientation also face discrimination in the workplace, a school principal got sacked because of allegations of homosexuality. An assistant professor at a public university faced protests from his own students after homosexuality allegations were made. A kindergarten teacher was killed in Meherpur for allegations of homosexuality.'<sup>231</sup>
- 10.3.12 In regard to government quotas for employment of hijras, the DFAT 2025 report stated: 'In 2013, Bangladesh officially recognised hijra as a third gender and subsequently announced quotas for hijra in employment and education. Implementation of these quotas has been controversial. In-country sources reported minimal uptake. According to these sources, gender-diverse applicants were subjected to invasive medical procedures and most hijra were rejected on the grounds they were biologically male.'<sup>232</sup>
- 10.3.13 The same source reported: 'While hijra have an accepted role in Bangladeshi society, they remain marginalised. Few mainstream employment options are open to them and besides providing ceremonial services, many obtain income through extortion, begging or sex work ...'<sup>233</sup>
- 10.3.14 In relation to the tax break offered to companies who hire hijra individuals, the Pathchola and GATE UPR May 2025 report noted: 'In 2021, the Government introduced a 5% yearly tax cut for corporations if they hire a certain number or percentage of transgender persons in their respective organizations. Even though the transgender community leaders and members appreciated the initiative there has not been a proper reflection and implications of exercising the practice to enjoy the maximum tax cut benefits.'<sup>234</sup>
- 10.3.15 In regard to public backlash to the depiction of a transgender women in a school textbook, the DFAT 2025 report stated: '... the textbook controversy had been a significant setback for the LGBTQIA+ community in Bangladesh. For example, many of around 100 transgender women who had been employed under a pilot scheme lost their jobs, which LGBTQIA+ activists attributed to backlash following the controversy ...'<sup>235</sup>

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## 10.4 Healthcare

### 10.4.1 The USSD 2023 report noted:

'LGBTQI+ groups reported nonmale persons faced legal, cultural, and social barriers that impeded access to sexual and reproductive health services. In

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<sup>230</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 21), 22 May 2025

<sup>231</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 21), 22 May 2025

<sup>232</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.149) , 23 July 2025

<sup>233</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.150) , 23 July 2025

<sup>234</sup> Pathchola&GATE, [Mid-term report for the fourth cycle UPR of Bangladesh](#) (page 22), 22 May 2025

<sup>235</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.156) , 23 July 2025

many cases, there were requirements for a third party, such as a spouse or male guardian, to authorize access to health-care services.

‘Many health practitioners expressed discomfort in discussing sexual activity, and shamed patients that discussed sexually transmitted infections. Discussions of women’s sexuality were particularly taboo. Civil society organizations and LGBTQI+ activists often cited social stigma against HIV and AIDS and against higher-risk populations as a barrier for accessing health services, especially for the transgender community.’<sup>236</sup>

#### 10.4.2 The same report stated:

‘Mental health care was a top concern and, according to these groups, mental health-care providers tended to use moralistic terms to shame LGBTQI+ persons. Access to preexposure and postexposure medications that prevent transmittal of HIV during sex was limited. HIV testing was free, but stigma regarding testing and seeking treatment remained strong.

‘While some transgender women in the country identified as *hijra* (a cultural South Asian term for some transgender women as well as some intersex and gender-nonconforming individuals), due to an affinity for the hijra subculture or a desire for increased social protection, not all chose to do so. Many transgender women asserted their transgender identities and corrected those that identified them as hijra. Meanwhile, transgender men received little support or tolerance, particularly in poor and rural communities. Transgender rights advocates claimed the government conducted genitalia checks on hijra in some cases, before allowing them access to services.’<sup>237</sup>

#### 10.4.3 In regard to LGBT+ people seeking healthcare, the OFPRA 2023 mission report noted:

‘... LGBTIQ+ people rarely seek medical care for fear of being identified, stigmatized, and discriminated against. Indeed, many doctors have a poor understanding of the issues these individuals face, particularly transgender people, and are unfamiliar with gender transition procedures; LGBTIQ+ patients also fear being accused of criminality due to repressive legislation. The fear of stigmatization and the resulting reluctance to seek care are also an obstacle in the fight against the spread of ...HIV..., which is on the rise among men who have sex with men (MSM, a term not being synonymous with homosexuals and bisexuals) and transgender people, particularly transgender women and hijras ...’<sup>238</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

#### 10.4.4 In regard to access to mental health services, the July 2024 research article by Mozumder noted:

‘Suicide is thought to be preventable at an individual level with psychological support and intervention. Sadly, for the LGBT population in Bangladesh, service accessibility concerns are understandably high due to widespread stigma, discrimination, and legal provisions. It may be noted here that attempted suicide is a cognisable offence as per the penal code in

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<sup>236</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>237</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>238</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

Bangladesh [section 309...] and anyone knowing about it (including the psychosocial service providers) is mandated to report such behaviour to law enforcing authorities. The same also applies to anyone engaged in sodomy [section 377...]. These legal provisions further intensify the existing burden due to scarcity of service, feared discrimination, or lack of agency, and further prevent individuals from seeking service or disclosing such history needed to get appropriate service ...<sup>239</sup>

- 10.4.5 The DFAT 2025 report noted: ‘Opportunities to receive appropriate medical care are a major challenge for gender diverse people in Bangladesh. In-country sources reported access to gender-affirming medication and surgeries was essentially non-existent. Doctors could only provide limited aftercare treatment for those who had travelled overseas for surgery. Hormone replacement medication is not available through formal channels. Black market options may exist but are highly risky.’<sup>240</sup>

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## 11. **LGBT+ community**

### 11.1 **NGOs and support**

- 11.1.1 The USSD 2023 report stated:

‘Organizations working on LGBTQI+ topics in the country faced major hurdles to fund and implement projects due to their inability to register with the government as formal LGBTQI+ NGOs and thus receive international funding. Organizations specifically assisting lesbians were rare, though programming by LGBTQI+ organizations continued to expand beyond traditional male and hijra participants. Severe social stigma regarding sexual orientation was common and prevented open discussion of the subject.’<sup>241</sup>

- 11.1.2 The same report noted: ‘... The government’s NGO Affairs Bureau increasingly withheld or delayed approval for foreign funding to NGOs, especially those working on matters the bureau deemed sensitive, such as ... LGBTQI+ rights ...’<sup>242</sup>

- 11.1.3 In regard to shelters for LGBT+ people, the 2023 OFPRA mission report noted: ‘Existing shelters, whether run by public authorities or NGOs, are reserved for women and do not even accept transgender women. However, for security reasons, no shelter for LGBTIQ+ people has been able to be opened, although members of associations can provide occasional support by housing victims in need of protection.’<sup>243</sup> (To note the OFPRA 2023 mission report is published in French and has been translated using a free online translation tool and 100% accuracy can therefore not be guaranteed).

- 11.1.4 In regard to access to healthcare, the same report noted: ‘... Some NGOs can help patients access treatment, provided however that they come forward to them, which is rarely the case.’<sup>244</sup>

- 11.1.5 In regard to other support services offered by NGOs, the same report stated:

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<sup>239</sup> Mozumder.M, [Life under the rainbow: Self-harm and suicidality...](#), 31 July 2024

<sup>240</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.151) , 23 July 2025

<sup>241</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>242</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Bangladesh](#) (section ), 22 April 2024

<sup>243</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 69), 24 April 2024

<sup>244</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 70), 24 April 2024

‘Several associations have set up telephone helplines to provide advice and psychological or medical support to LGBTIQ+ people who have survived violence or discrimination, as well as networks of pro bono lawyers able to advise and support a victim who wishes to initiate legal proceedings.

‘Inclusive Bangladesh, which focuses its work on assisting legal emigration through skills acquisition professional and managerial training in line with the international job market, has also established an emergency aid fund aimed at helping people in difficulty by paying them sums of 500 to 1000 takas<sup>245</sup> (4.20 to 8.40 euros). [£2.89<sup>246</sup> to £5.96 GBP<sup>247</sup>]

11.1.6 In regard to difficulties faced by LGBT+ NGOs, in October 2024 an iProbono article reported:

‘In Bangladesh, the struggle for LGBT+ rights has several dimensions. Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of association, legislative and socio-political barriers severely limit the ability of LGBT+ groups to organise and operate. From an organisational perspective, this includes challenges in registration, securing and utilising international funding, and routine functioning. The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance of 1961 and other restrictive regulations, compounded by intense scrutiny from intelligence agencies, create an environment of fear and oppression ...

‘So far, [no LGBT+ group has been successful in registering in Bangladesh](#) as an LGBT+ organisation under the Department of Social Services, Department of Youth Development, and Department of Women Affairs. This is largely because it requires undergoing a [vetting process by intelligence agencies](#) like the Special Branch of the Bangladesh Police and the National Security Intelligence. This scrutiny extends to the personal lives of the individuals involved in the organisations, creating a pervasive fear of oppression and harassment, leaving no alternative path for LGBT+ organisations to register themselves.’<sup>248</sup>

11.1.7 The FH 2024 report stated: ‘... Pressure and intimidation from Islamist groups also limited NGO activities on some issues such as LGBT+ rights ...’<sup>249</sup>

11.1.8 In regard to NGO support for LGBT+ people, the JMBF 2024 report noted: ‘In 2024, several NGOs in Bangladesh... took a strong stance in favor of LGBTQI+ rights, advocating for equality, social inclusion, and the protection of human rights. These organizations worked to raise awareness, provide support services, and push for policy changes to ensure the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals, particularly transgender people and the hijra community.’<sup>250</sup>

11.1.9 The DFAT 2025 report noted:

‘The operating environment for LGBTQIA+ activists is extremely challenging and, according to in-country sources, deteriorated since the collapse of the

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<sup>245</sup> OFPRA, [Rapport de mission en République populaire du Bangladesh](#) (page 70), 24 April 2024

<sup>246</sup> Xe.com, [500 BDT to GBP - Convert Bangladeshi Takas to British Pounds](#), 3 February 2026

<sup>247</sup> Xe.com, [1,000 BDT to GBP - Convert Bangladeshi Takas to British Pounds](#), 3 February 2026

<sup>248</sup> iProbono, [LGBT+ Advocacy in Bangladesh: Building a Path to Equality](#), October 2024

<sup>249</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Bangladesh](#) (section E2), 26 February 2025

<sup>250</sup> JMBF, [JMBF Annual Report 2024: An Updated State of LGBTQI+...](#) (page 87), 17 May 2025

Hasina Government emboldened Islamist elements. LGBTQIA+ activists routinely experience threats and physical attacks, including by Islamist militants. In April 2016, Islamist militants murdered LGBTQIA+ activists, Xulhaz Munnan and Mahbub Tonoy, in their apartment. Six members of the Islamist group Ansar al-Islam were convicted of the crime and sentenced to death in August 2021. In-country sources said this event continued to have a chilling effect on advocacy and public discussion of LGBTQIA+ issues in Bangladesh.<sup>251</sup>

11.1.10 The same report stated:

‘CSOs working on sensitive topics or groups... including... LGBTQIA+ issues ... have reported formal and informal government restrictions .... This includes repeated audits or delayed approvals by the National Board of Revenue, legal harassment under the Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 and the former Digital Security Act 2018 (repealed and replaced by the Cyber Security Act 2023, in turn repealed and replaced by the Cyber Security Ordinance in 2025), temporary freezing of bank accounts, overt monitoring by intelligence agencies, disruption of planned events and delays in/withholding approvals such as NGO registration.’<sup>252</sup>

11.1.11 In regard to public reaction to the depiction of a transgender woman in a school textbook, the same report stated: ‘LGBTQIA+ groups were subsequently targeted by online hate speech, harassment and protests. In one incident, around 100 anti-LGBTQIA+ protesters gathered outside the office of an LGBTQIA+ organisation shouting abuse ...’<sup>253</sup>

For information on police response to harassment of LGBT+ groups see [Police and judicial response to violence against LGBT+ people](#)

11.1.12 The EUAA 2025 report citing sources noted: ‘Under the former government, organisations and activists advocating for LGBTIQ rights faced legal barriers, limited access to funding, as well as security risks. LGBTIQ activists faced censorship and restrictions, and organisations supporting the LGBTIQ community were hindered in registering their organisations with state authorities ...’<sup>254</sup>

11.1.13 The ILGA database page on Bangladesh states: ‘Only specific types of organisations may be registered under the Societies Registration Act (1860) pursuant to Section 20 and activists have reported that registration of their groups has been rejected on the basis of the criminalisation of same-sex sexual conduct. In addition, due to threats to the safety of activists by state officials and citizens, activists have been unable to complete the registration process which requires them to meet with government officials.’<sup>255</sup>

11.1.14 Organisations who support individuals and advocate for LGBTI rights include:

- [Inclusive Bangladesh](#)
- [Bandu Social Welfare Society](#)

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<sup>251</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.155) , 23 July 2025

<sup>252</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.121) , 23 July 2025

<sup>253</sup> DFAT, [DFAT Country Information Report Bangladesh](#) (paragraph 3.156) , 23 July 2025

<sup>254</sup> EUAA, [Bangladesh: Country Focus](#) (pages 95&96), 5 August 2025

<sup>255</sup> ILGA, [Bangladesh](#), undated

- [Lokenattya O Sanskritik Unnayan Kendra](#)
- [Roopbaan](#)

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## 11.2 LGBT+ spaces

11.2.1 On 5 April 2024, an Al Jazeera article reported:

‘Members of Bangladesh’s transgender hijra community, who were disallowed from attending other prayer services, have been welcomed at a new mosque in the Muslim-majority nation with the promise of worship without discrimination.

‘The humble structure, a single-room shed with walls and a tin roof, is a new community hub for the minority, who have enjoyed greater legal and political recognition in recent years but still suffer from entrenched prejudice.

‘The mosque near Mymensingh, north of the capital Dhaka, on the banks of the Brahmaputra river, was built on land donated by the government after the city’s hijra community was expelled from an established congregation.’<sup>256</sup>

11.2.2 On June 2025, an iProbono commentary article opined: ‘In Bangladesh ... State inaction has emboldened hate speech, and community infrastructures have been dismantled. With fewer safe spaces, legal protections, or support systems, queer individuals are increasingly vulnerable to violence in both the public and private spheres.’<sup>257</sup>

11.2.3 An article published in January 2026 by Eco-business, a ‘business intelligence and advisory platform dedicated to advancing sustainable development’ based in Singapore<sup>258</sup>, stated:

‘In Bangladesh, a country where a colonial-era law still criminalises same-sex relations, the grassroots group Noboprobhaat Foundation created a rare safe space for LGBTQ+ people living in the countryside. The group provided HIV testing services, helped young people rejected by their families learn new job skills, offered free counselling and provided connections to lawyers to fight cases of blackmail and eviction.

‘That was until President Donald Trump curtailed US funding for human rights programmes across the world that were not considered fully aligned with his foreign policy, ending more than a decade of financial support for LGBTQ+ rights initiatives.

‘The Noboprobhaat Foundation, headquartered in the northern city of Rangpur, had to lay off half its staff and close the office where it ran training courses and counselling sessions because it could no longer pay the rent and utilities. With about 50 per cent of its funding gone, many core services were terminated.’<sup>259</sup>

11.2.4 In the sources consulted, CPIT found limited information relating to LGBT+ spaces in Bangladesh (see [Bibliography](#)).

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<sup>256</sup> Al Jazeera, [Bangladesh opens mosque for transgender hijra community](#), 5 April 2024

<sup>257</sup> iProbono, [Pride Under Pressure: The Escalating Crisis for LGBT+ Communities...](#), June 2025

<sup>258</sup> Eco-Business, [About Us](#), undated

<sup>259</sup> Eco-Business, [How LGBTQ+ rights funding collapsed in 2025](#), 2 January 2026

### 11.3 Pride events

11.3.1 An undated page on the Inclusive Bangladesh website, described as a non-profit LGBT+ organisation promotes human rights in Bangladesh and United Kingdom<sup>260</sup>, noted:

‘Dhaka Pride is an annual LGBTQ+ pride festival that takes place online on the first Friday of June, highlighting the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka. Dhaka Pride is the only publicly accessible pride event in Bangladesh. Due to the legal and social obstacles faced by the LGBTIQ+ community in Bangladesh, Dhaka Pride is not held offline ...

‘Inclusive Bangladesh is the current host organisation of Dhaka Pride, coordinating this extraordinary event with partner organisations from Bangladesh and international Pride organisations.’<sup>261</sup>

11.3.2 On 26 June 2024, VOA News, described as ‘... the largest U.S. international broadcaster ...’<sup>262</sup>, article noted:

‘Pride Month, the monthlong celebration of LGBTQ+ culture and rights, is not publicly celebrated in Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country where same-sex relationships are illegal under a colonial-era law dealing with “unnatural offences,” and conservative religious values are rising, despite the nation's self-imposed secular label ...

‘Despite public constraints, private LGBTQ gatherings still take place in secret locations, embassies, and safe spaces organized by civil society groups, as well as online. Organizers and participants say these events connect to the global LGBTQ community, fostering discussions on diversity and acceptance in a confidential, supportive setting.

“The Bangladeshi LGBTQ community has been organizing its own private events for years,” Tushar Baidya, a Dhaka LGBTQ and human rights activist, told VOA. “The positive side of these gatherings is that attendees find a sense of connectivity, build new networks, and enjoy knowing they have a common, safe space to share.”

‘However, such events have limitations, Baidya said, typically attracting an urban, educated and wealthier audience and often regularly draw the same attendees.’<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>261</sup> Inclusive Bangladesh, [Dhaka Pride](#), no date

<sup>262</sup> VoA News, [VoA Mission](#), no date

<sup>263</sup> VoA News, [Pride Month is a secret celebration in Bangladesh](#), 26 June 2024

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal context
  - general anti-discrimination provisions (and inclusion or absence of reference to LGBT+ people)
  - same-sex sexual behaviour
  - same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
  - gender reassignment/transition, and recognition of gender identity of trans persons
  - relevant significant court cases and caselaw
- State attitudes and treatment
  - statements made by government figures and public officials
  - government policies/programmes that assist or discriminate against LGBT+ people
  - restrictions/enforcement of law against LGBT+ organisations
  - other state treatment, such as harassment, blackmail, bribery, corrective therapy
  - access to public services
- Societal attitudes and treatment
  - public opinion/views/surveys, including anti-LGBT+ movements and public demonstrations
  - prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour
  - religious group attitudes, statements and actions
  - media representation, language and discourse
  - treatment by the public, including family members
- LGBT+ people and their lives
  - LGBT+ organisations (including possibility to operate openly)
  - Meeting places and events for LGBT+ people.

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## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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## Changes from last version of this note

Update to country information

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