



HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST LGBTI+ PERSONS IN IRAN

6Rang (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network) submission for the
48th session of the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

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KEY ISSUES

1 **Criminalisation of Same-Sex Conduct and Non-Conforming Gender Expression**

Iran's Islamic Penal Code criminalises same-sex conduct with punishments ranging from flogging to death. Transgender and non-binary expressions including cross-dressing face similar restrictions under general provisions about immorality and indecency. Individuals expressing their identity through appearance, clothing, or behaviours considered non-conforming may face imprisonment, fines, or lashes. Lesbian and trans women encounter additional discrimination due to gender discriminatory laws and policies, relegating them to a second-class position.

2 **Medical Abuses**

Medical professionals in Iran often label homosexuality as mood disorders or obsessive-compulsive disorder and treated with antipsychotics or behavioural therapy. Transgender individuals are often mischaracterized as delusional and forced to undergo treatment with antipsychotic drugs. Many gay and lesbian people are coerced into gender reassignment surgeries without free, informed consent. Conversion therapy methods, including electric shocks and emetic drugs, are widely used with the state's complicity, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity. [6Rang's research](#) confirms that the Iranian government actively encourages these practices, which are widely regarded as forms of torture or ill-treatment.

3 **Persecution of LGBTI+ Human Rights Defenders**

LGBTI+ human rights defenders in Iran face severe discrimination, including arrests, torture, and even death sentences. The Iranian government not only condones but also actively participates in online harassment and hate speech against LGBTI+ defenders, further isolating them and escalating violence.

4 **Violations Against LGBTI+ Protesters**

LGBTI+ individuals who participated in the 2022-23 nationwide protests were disproportionately targeted. [Evidence collected by 6Rang](#) confirms that they experienced aggravated violations of their fundamental human rights solely due to their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity during the nationwide protests. These individuals were targeted by security forces, prisons, and judicial authorities, facing brutal gender-based violence, including sexual abuse and rape. Such actions amounted to crimes against humanity, specifically gender persecution, with authorities acting with impunity, reinforced by inflammatory hate speech.

5 **State-Sanctioned Hate Speech**

State-sanctioned hate speech continues to fuel discrimination and violence. High ranking officials, including the Supreme leader and the president, regularly dehumanise LGBTI+ persons, branding them as animals, immoral, corrupt, or aligned with foreign enemies. The intensification of hate speech following the protests has further stifled the voices of LGBTI+ individuals seeking justice.



About 6Rang

6Rang (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network) is a UK registered not-for-profit organisation which aims to eradicate homophobia, transphobia, and violence against lesbian and transgender people, as well as the LGBTI+ community in general. 6Rang has made submissions to UN bodies and published reports focused on documenting human rights abuses of LGBTI+ persons in Iran.

 6rang.org/english

 info@6rang.org

 [@6rangIran](https://twitter.com/6rangIran)

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WE RECOMMEND

- 1 Fully decriminalise same-sex conduct**, remove the death penalty and flogging for consensual same-sex relations among adults, and repeal all laws criminalizing non-conforming gender identities and expressions;
- 2 Ban all forms of conversion therapies**, including electroshock therapy, antipsychotic drugs, and any forced or involuntary psychological, medical, or surgical procedures aimed at changing sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics without free, prior, and informed consent;
- 3 Put an end to official hate speech** against sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.
- 4 Release LGBTI+ activists and human rights defenders** immediately, and stop the persecution and harassment of advocates for sexual orientation diversity and gender rights;
- 5 Prosecute and punish perpetrators** of human rights violations and gender-based persecution against LGBTI+ persons who participated in protests.