



Overview of the Situation of the LGBTQ+ Community in Belarus in the First Half of 2026

TG House, 2026

Introduction

Between January and June 2026, the Belarusian state's policy towards the LGBTQ+ community was characterized by a further intensification of repressive measures. A new anti-LGBTQ+ law was adopted, persecution of LGBTQ+ people increased, the authorities continued to use extremism legislation against LGBTQ+ organisations, initiatives, and activists, and transgender people continued to face obstacles to the legal recognition of their gender identity.

Since the beginning of April 2026, TG House has documented a significant increase in cases of individual persecution targeting LGBTQ+ people. During this period, there was a notable rise in arbitrary detentions, searches of mobile phones, interrogations, and incidents of pressure being exerted on the relatives of LGBTQ+ activists who had left Belarus.

1. Adoption of Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation

In 2026, Belarus adopted the Law of the Republic of Belarus **No. 138-Z of 15 April 2026 “On Amendments to the Codes Concerning Administrative Liability”**¹. The law introduced a new Article 19.16 into the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, establishing administrative liability for the “dissemination, in any form, of information intended to promote among citizens the perception of the attractiveness of homosexual relationships, gender reassignment, childlessness, or the acceptability of paedophilia.”

The law was adopted by the House of Representatives on **13 March 2026**, approved by the Council of the Republic on **2 April 2026**, signed by the Head of State, Alexander Lukashenko, on **15 April 2026**, officially published on **19 April 2026**, and entered into force on **19 June 2026**.

Article 19.16 establishes administrative liability for individuals, sole proprietors, and legal entities. Individuals face **fines of up to 20 basic units** for disseminating such information; sole proprietors may be **fined up to 100 basic units**; and legal entities may be **fined between 100 and 150 basic units**.

Where a minor has been exposed to such information, the penalties are more severe. Individuals may face **fines ranging from 20 to 30 basic units, community service, or administrative detention**. Sole proprietors may be **fined between 100 and 150 basic units**, while legal entities may be **fined between 150 and 200 basic units**.

The wording of Article 19.16 is **broad and vague**. The law does not define what information may be considered to create a perception of the "attractiveness" of homosexual relationships, gender transition, childlessness, or the acceptability of paedophilia. This allows state authorities to interpret and enforce the law arbitrarily.

As a result, virtually any individual or legal entity may fall within the scope of the provision if the authorities determine that the information they disseminate creates a positive perception of homosexual relationships or gender transition. Consequently, even neutral media coverage,

¹ <https://pravo.by/novosti/novosti-pravo-by/2026/april/93152/>

educational materials, social media posts, or public statements relating to LGBTQ+ issues may be considered violating the law.

Of particular concern is the fact that the law places homosexual relationships, gender transition, childlessness, and paedophilia within the same legal provision. This legislative approach further stigmatizes LGBTQ+ people and is likely to reinforce discrimination and negative public attitudes towards them.

In substance, the law closely mirrors similar legislation previously adopted in the Russian Federation and creates a legal basis for further censorship, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the persecution of LGBTQ+ people and those who publicly advocate for their rights.

2. Persecution and Pressure Targeting LGBTQ+ People

During the first half of 2026, **TG House** documented **20 cases of persecution and pressure** against LGBTQ+ people by law enforcement and other security bodies.

The documented cases included:

- Arbitrary identity checks, searches of mobile phones, and inspections of the private correspondence of LGBTQ+ people by law enforcement officers.
- Arbitrary detention and short-term deprivation of liberty.
- Police raids and mass detentions at LGBTQ+-friendly events.
- Collection of personal data, including photographing individuals and recording personal information, without clear legal grounds.
- Summonses for interrogation of LGBTQ+ people.
- Monitoring of LGBTQ+ people's social media activity.
- Searches and questioning of the parents and relatives of LGBTQ+ activists who had left Belarus.
- Attempts to recruit LGBTQ+ people as informants.

Ниже приведены отдельные примеры задокументированных случаев. Все кейсы публикуются с согласия заявителей. На момент публикации отчета все заявители были эвакуированы из Беларуси.

The following are selected examples of documented cases. All cases are published with the consent of the individuals concerned. At the time of publication of this report, all of them had been evacuated from Belarus.

1. On 29 April 2026, a non-binary person in Minsk was summoned for questioning by the Investigative Committee of Belarus as a witness. During the interrogation, officers searched their mobile phone and questioned them about their sexual orientation, connections with the LGBTQ+ community, participation in queer events, and social media activity.

2. On 7 May 2026, police officers visited the home of a transgender woman in Minsk. They questioned her about her social media activity and political views, threatened her with further detention, and ordered her to appear at a police station with all of her electronic devices for inspection.
3. In June 2026, a gay man reported to TG House that officers of the KGB had attempted to recruit him as an informant. After searching his mobile phone, they demanded that he cooperate by collecting information about members of the LGBTQ+ community. After he left Belarus, state authorities continued to inquire about his whereabouts through his relatives

3. Use of Extremism Legislation Against the LGBTQ+ Community

In 2026, the Belarusian LGBTQ+-friendly organisations **Іншыя (Inshyia)** and **Спадчына (Spadchyna)** were designated as “extremist formations.” Participation in the activities of such organisations may result in criminal liability under **Article 361(1)** of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (“Creation of or participation in an extremist formation”), while cooperation with or other assistance to such organisations may result in liability under **Article 361(4)** (“Assisting extremist activity”), which provides for penalties of up to seven years’ imprisonment.

Throughout 2026, the authorities also continued designating the information resources of LGBTQ+ organisations and activists as “extremist materials.” On **13 March 2026**, the Instagram page of the **Prismatica Belarus** project was added to the National List of Extremist Materials, followed on **13 April 2026** by the Instagram page of LGBTQ+ activist **Jane**. Disseminating materials designated as “extremist” leads to administrative liability under **Article 19.11** of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. In practice, this provision has also been used against individuals who subscribe to such resources, share their content, or store such materials on their electronic devices.

TG House documented **three cases** in which individuals were subjected to administrative prosecution, confiscation of electronic devices, and pressure from law enforcement authorities because they subscribed to resources designated as “extremist.”

4. Rights of Transgender People

In Belarus, legal gender recognition continues to be available only upon the approval of a specialised state commission. The commission's work remains **not transparent**: the criteria used to assess applications are not publicly disclosed, decisions are not reasoned, and there is no effective mechanism for appealing them. Moreover, applicants are often informed of the date of the commission's hearing only a few days, or even the day before it takes place, significantly limiting their ability to attend.

The commission held its first session of 2026 on **10 June 2026**. According to information received by TG House, approximately **35 applicants** participated in the session, but only around **45% received favourable decisions**.

All six applicants seeking authorisation for medical transition received approval. However, only **10 of the 29 applicants** seeking legal recognition of their gender identity were granted permission.

TG House also documented cases in which transgender people encountered difficulties accessing public and other services because their appearance did not correspond to the gender marker indicated in their identity documents. These discrepancies resulted in additional checks, requirements to explain the differences between their appearance and official documents, and an increased risk of discrimination and pressure from state authorities.

Conclusions

The documented cases and trends described in this overview demonstrate a continued deterioration in the situation of the LGBTQ+ community in Belarus.

The adoption of new anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, the application of extremism legislation against LGBTQ+ organisations and activists, increasing surveillance and pressure by law enforcement agencies and security services, and the continuing barriers to legal gender recognition have created an environment in which LGBTQ+ people face an elevated risk of discrimination, intimidation, and persecution.

Under these circumstances, forced emigration remains the only way for many LGBTQ+ people to avoid persecution and ensure their safety.

Recommendations

TG House calls on the international community to:

1. Publicly condemn the adoption of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in Belarus and call on the Belarusian authorities to repeal legal provisions that restrict the rights of LGBTQ+ people.
2. Provide continued support to Belarusian LGBTQ+ organisations, human rights defenders, and civil society initiatives.
3. Urge the Belarusian authorities to establish a transparent, non-discriminatory, and human rights-based procedure for legal gender recognition, including an effective mechanism for appealing decisions of the state commission.
4. Ensure access to humanitarian visas for LGBTQ+ people in Belarus who are at risk of persecution.
5. Ensure access to international protection and asylum procedures for LGBTQ+ people who have fled Belarus because of a well-founded fear of persecution.