



Türkiye
Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review

**Submitted by University Queer Research and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex
Solidarity Association,**

and

The Advocates for Human Rights
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

for the 49th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
April – May 2025

Submitted 9 October 2024

University Queer Research and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex Solidarity Association (ÜniKuir) is a rights-based civil society organization working at the intersection of LGBTI+ rights and youth rights. ÜniKuir was founded on February 14, 2020, in Ankara/Türkiye, and hold membership at international organizations such as ILGA Europe, IGLYO, Transgender Europe, and ERA. Together with its volunteers, staff, and authorized boards, ÜniKuir aims to strengthen self-organization among university and young LGBTI+ individuals on campuses and in cities, create safe and inclusive spaces, develop practices that will make the right to education for LGBTI+ individuals visible, combat discrimination, violence, and hate on campuses, and make the ongoing struggle visible. The organization also aims to contribute to the development of anti-discrimination policies, advocate for LGBTI+ rights at national and international levels, and enhance the media visibility of the university LGBTI+ movement. To achieve these goals, the association frequently employs advocacy methods such as monitoring, reporting, campaigning, and capacity-building activities.

The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States, including LGBTIQ+ individuals who have experienced discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. The Advocates also collaborates with in-country and diasporic human rights defenders to report on LGBTIQ+ human rights to various UN human rights mechanisms.

Executive Summary

In the third cycle review, the government of the Republic of Türkiye noted recommendations directly related to LGBTI+ individuals. Since the last cycle, there has been no progress regarding the recommended issues concerning LGBTI+ rights. On the contrary, human rights violations are increasing and deepening. As ÜniKuir, we will attempt to communicate the main issues and recommendations regarding the human rights of university LGBTI+ individuals in Türkiye from 2020 to 2024 through our research, media monitoring, reports, applications received, and observations.

Background

1. The 2010s were a period when the visibility and organization of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and other sexual and gender minorities' (LGBT+) movement in Türkiye increased. In particular, the Gezi Resistance in 2013 strengthened the movement's connection with other social movements and led to the mobilization of more young people. During this period, participation in pride marches increased significantly. However, in the aftermath, Türkiye entered another difficult period regarding fundamental rights and freedoms. Since 2015, pride marches, one of the most well-known activities of the LGBT+ movement in Türkiye, have been banned. Despite court rulings that annulled many of these bans, prohibitions continued to be imposed. Every year, dozens of rights defenders are detained during pride marches. The attempted coup in 2016 and the state of emergency declared afterward led to increased repressive policies against LGBT+ individuals, as with other social groups. Although no longer in effect today, the "indefinite" ban on LGBT+ events announced by the Ankara Governorship in 2017 marked a significant turning point.ⁱ On March 20, 2021, Türkiye withdrew from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence by presidential decision. One of the justifications for this withdrawal was the inclusion of the concepts of "sexual orientation and gender identity" in Article 4 of the convention. The lawsuit challenging the withdrawal was dismissed by the Council of State's Administrative Appeals Board.ⁱⁱ
2. The period leading up to and during the 2023 general elections was another turning point for LGBT+ individuals. During this time, many politicians, most notably President Erdoğan, made discriminatory, derogatory, or hostile statements against LGBT+ individuals. Political parties within the People's Alliance (Cumhur İttifakı) made promises aimed at obstructing LGBT+ rights advocacy.
3. President Erdoğan and the People's Alliance won the 2023 general elections. Following the elections, the government prepared the Twelfth Development Plan, covering the years 2024-2028, in which LGBT+ individuals were targeted under the terms "harmful trends that negatively affect the family structure, uniformity, and genderlessness movement".ⁱⁱⁱ In the section titled "Qualified People, Strong Families, Healthy Society," the plan states, "Efforts will be made to ensure the continuation of healthy generations and to reduce the effects of bad habits, addictions, and 'harmful trends' that negatively affect the family structure, with due regard to our national and moral values." During this period, the government also prepared the Action Plan for the Protection and Strengthening of the Family, addressing its anti-LGBT+ policy from various perspectives. President Erdoğan issued a directive instructing all institutions and organizations to comply with this circular.^{iv} The action plan targets LGBT+ individuals with phrases such as "global risk, perverse ideology, harmful movements, threat to the family institution, genderlessness policies"^v. With this action plan, anti-LGBT+ activities by public institutions will increase, and the resources allocated to this issue will be expanded.

A. Right to Education

4. During the 2023-2024 Academic Year Opening Ceremony, President Erdoğan emphasized the protection of the family institution with the following words: “We will never compromise against global deviant movements. We will protect the family institution. Fighting the perversions imposed by global lobbies is our primary duty”.^{vi} Open sources indicate that the curriculum for the "Family in Turkish Social Life" course in secondary schools consists of four units: "The Importance of Family," "Becoming a Family," "The Historical Process of the Turkish Family Structure," and "Social Change and Family." This course, which explains the role of the family in a healthy society, approaches the family definition in a heteronormative way, marginalizing queer families. It is observed that in various units, such as "the natural appropriateness of forming a family" and "the effects of social change on the family institution," the family institution is described from a male-dominated, heteronormative perspective, often with religious references. Concerns are raised that this curriculum may reinforce discrimination and hatred against LGBT+ individuals.^{vii} Courses on LGBT+ rights and gender issues are available in only a few universities, primarily foundation universities. Most of these courses are offered as electives, with only a small number being mandatory. Furthermore, medical school curricula generally lack comprehensive education on the medical aspects of queer existence, particularly concerning intersexuality. Intersex individuals often face significant challenges, as many are subjected to non-consensual normalization surgeries during infancy or childhood. These procedures are often conducted without the informed consent of the individuals or their parents, who may be misguided or pressured into making such decisions.
5. This lack of transparency in data collection and sharing extends beyond intersex individuals, encompassing broader issues related to sexual orientation, gender Identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). The absence of accessible and reliable data in these areas hampers efforts to ensure the protection of rights and the well-being of affected individuals, reinforcing the need for a more inclusive and transparent approach to healthcare and policy making.
6. The Higher Education Law No. 2547 defines the purposes and principles of higher education as upholding 'national, spiritual, moral, ethical, and cultural values. It is important to note that this Law, which nearly eliminated the autonomy of universities, was passed following the 1982 military coup. Universities remain under the supervision of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), a body that has lost its independence and is directly influenced by politics. University rectors are appointed by the President, who, under the current government system, is not impartial.
7. According to reports prepared by ÜniKuir and supported by SPoD, which examined state universities in Ankara and Istanbul concerning LGBT+ rights,^{viii} and reports that examined foundation universities,^{ix} the vast majority of LGBT+ members of the academic community conceal their sexual orientation and gender identity to avoid discrimination. LGBT+ individuals do not feel safe on campuses due to their identities. LGBT+ university students most frequently complain of psychological violence. The sexual harassment and violence prevention units established at universities can be effective in combating violence. However, these units are not LGBT+ inclusive at all universities, and even where they exist, students are often unaware of them. Additionally, according to LGBT+ students who participated in the survey during the reporting process, problems persist concerning the

freedom to organize LGBT+ activities, form LGBT+ groups, organize pride marches, ensure safe and inclusive campuses, and raise awareness among university administrators and staff about LGBT+ rights. According to the report, the existence of an LGBT+ student club at a university is an important step toward equality.

8. ÜniKuir's Research Report on Discrimination Against Trans+ Students at Universities^x indicates that rights violations are more frequent and painful for trans+ (transgender and other gender-minority) students on these campuses. Trans+ university students participated in the research. Of the participants in the study, 24 (53.3%) responded "always" and 17 (37.7%) "often" when asked how frequently trans+ students experience discrimination at universities. Participants hardly ever reported "never" and "very rarely" experiencing discrimination at universities. The most common issues trans+ students face are professors allowing discriminatory and hateful language in classes and professors addressing trans+ students using birth or dead names and pronouns that correspond to the students' sex assigned at birth, particularly in English-taught courses. The locations where discrimination is most frequently experienced include classrooms, restrooms, and dormitories.
9. Forty percent of the research participants stated that there is no unit at their university where they can report harassment and violence, while 33.3% were unsure if such a unit exists, and 26.7% confirmed the existence of a unit against sexual harassment and violence. The existence of sexual harassment and violence units at universities, currently found at only 26 of the 208 universities, is crucial for students and staff to access support mechanisms after experiencing violence. However, it is equally important that these units are adequately prepared to address LGBTI+ issues, as there are concerns that they may not always be sensitive to the unique challenges faced by LGBTI+ individuals.^{xi}
10. According to ÜniKuir's 2022^{xii} and 2023^{xiii} Reports on Violations of Rights and Discrimination at Universities, 186 cases of rights violations and discrimination were reported in 2022, and 203 were reported in 2023. As of the first five months of 2024, 90 rights violations and cases of discrimination have been reported according to ÜniKuir's data. These reports indicate that LGBT+ students face many rights violations at universities (see paragraphs 10 and 11), and that these violations are committed by faculty members, students, staff, and university administrators. Most of the victims of these violations did not report them to any university mechanisms. Victims reported that the reasons why they did not report these violations include the absence of a relevant authority, the belief that they would be blamed or unable to prove the violation, and the belief that they would not receive any support or results. Additionally, at the time of submission, 13 cases of rights violations involving LGBT+ students and student groups have been reported, including event bans, hate speech, censorship of the Hippocratic Oath,^{xiv} obstruction of demonstrations or concerts, and expulsions from dormitories (see paragraphs 10, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33).
11. In many universities, the original text of the Hippocratic Oath, traditionally recited by new graduates at medical school graduation ceremonies, has been altered by deans, removing the reference to "sexual orientation".^{xv}

12. Academics and students who actively participate in protests are blacklisted and, despite court rulings, are denied access to campuses at the initiative of university administrators.^{xvi}

Recommendations:

- Make the curricula at both primary education and university levels inclusive of LGBT+ individuals. Integrate mandatory courses on gender equality, and human rights of gender and sexual minorities at every level of education.
- Give each university the autonomy to make its own decisions on issues such as the selection of rectors and deans, appointment and accreditation criteria, and curricula. Limit the powers of the Council of Higher Education in these matters.
- Enact legal regulations providing protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in the university disciplinary regulations.
- Increase the number of units that combat harassment, violence, and discrimination at universities and ensure these units are LGBT+ inclusive.
- Provide regular training to university students, administrators, and academic and administrative staff on LGBT+ rights and inclusivity.
- End censorship practices targeting the visibility of LGBT+ identities.
- Establish standardized protocols for data collection and sharing on SOGIESC issues across healthcare and educational institutions.

B. Academic Freedom^{xvii}

13. Students and researchers wishing to conduct scientific studies in the field of LGBT+ rights face practical obstacles. When they attempt to work on LGBT+ rights, administrative barriers are imposed, and access to research resources becomes limited. Under pressure from the Council of Higher Education, departments, research centers, and faculties with names related to "gender equality" are being renamed as "women and family studies".^{xviii} A significant number of these center and departments discourage or prevent faculty from researching LGBTI+ rights.
14. For example, the article titled “Endocrinological Approach to Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria: Experience of the Pediatric Endocrinology Department at a Tertiary Center in Türkiye” was systematically targeted by some media groups due to its content on gender transition. As a result, the university administration initiated disciplinary investigations against the doctors and academics who published the article. In the media, this scientific work was discredited with LGBT+phobic and false statements.^{xix}
15. Universities are becoming places where anti-LGBT+ arguments are scientifically produced and funded. There is a growing tendency to reproduce these arguments using university resources and capabilities. A transphobic book, translated and edited by Prof. Nevzat Tarhan, the Rector of Üsküdar University was published by Üsküdar University Press.^{xx} Furthermore, the “Family Workshop Against Global Threats” was organized by the Istanbul Family Foundation and Great Family Platform, the groups behind anti-LGBT+ demonstrations at Istanbul Medeniyet University. One of the main objectives of this workshop was to produce arguments against the LGBT+ movement. The Governor of

Istanbul, the Rector of Katip Çelebi University, many academics, and politicians participated in this workshop, where they voiced arguments against LGBT+ rights and gender equality.

16. Resources allocated to anti-LGBT+ policies are not limited to universities. In the foreword of the four-year strategic plan of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, President Erdoğan stated that the Presidency would guide efforts against “all kinds of deviant movements and ideas that aim to disrupt our family structure.” The Presidency claimed that “gender-based deviant ideologies threatening the family are being normalized” and announced plans to spend 2 million Turkish Liras to combat these threats.^{xxi}

Recommendations

- Promotes these policies through the Council of Higher Education;
- Review curricula, ensuring sensitivity to gender equality, and LGBT+ rights taking into account regional and disciplinary differences.
 - Reestablish academic departments, centers, and administrative units that facilitate scientific research on gender equality.
 - Scientific studies on gender equality and LGBT+ rights should be supported through public policies. Prevent actions targeting and discrediting scholars conducting these studies.
 - Cease supporting works that aim to produce anti-LGBT+ literature lacking scientific merit using public resources.
 - Collaborate with rights-based civil society organisations in academic activities for more inclusive academic studies and safe campuses.

C. Right to Respect for Private Life

17. The regulations of most universities do not allow for the replacement of a diploma issued at the time of graduation due to changes in graduates' civil registry records post-graduation. These universities address changes in the graduate's civil records by annotating the back of the diploma. This practice violates the right to respect for private life, especially for transgender individuals who have changed their names or gender markers on their identity documents. However, in its ruling No. 2019/9162, the 8th Chamber of the Council of State determined that the relevant regulations of the universities involved in the lawsuit should be amended to protect the right to respect for private life.^{xxii} This ruling only applies to the universities involved in the case, meaning that the majority of universities' regulations still violate this right.^{xxiii}

Recommendations

- Adopt legal regulations that enable university graduates to update their diplomas according to current civil registry records without any annotations.

D. Dormitories and the Right to Housing

18. The failure to protect the right to housing on the basis of non-discrimination has affected LGBT+ individuals the most. The report^{xxiv} titled “LGBT+ Access to Social Services During the Pandemic” by the LGBT+ organization SPoD highlights the challenges faced by LGBT+ individuals in accessing their right to housing. In this study, which surveyed 856 people, 663 participants responded "no" to the question "Are you aware of places you can apply to for your housing needs?" Access to housing is one of the primary problems LGBT+ individuals experience.
19. State dormitories housing university students are not safe for LGBT+ individuals. Many LGBT+ students are subjected to discrimination and bullying in these dormitories by dormitory managers, staff and other students. Some are expelled for their LGBT+ identities,^{xxv} while others are expelled for participating in peaceful protests. Article 24 of the Dormitory Services Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports violates freedom of expression, assembly, and association, and permitting for:
- "Insulting or threatening ministry or other public institution officials, dormitory staff, or dormitory students through the press, social and visual media, or physically in the dormitory buildings, making false statements against them, participating in or encouraging such actions individually or collectively."
 - "Participating in or organizing sit-ins, carrying or hanging banners, holding ideological or political demonstrations, meetings, ceremonies, or issuing statements."
 - "Writing on, painting, or hanging posters or banners on dormitory buildings or facilities for ideological purposes."
20. Paragraph O further states that individuals against whom public lawsuits have been filed for certain crimes, such as offenses against state security, insulting the president, or denigrating state institutions, will be expelled from the dormitory. This provision violates the presumption of innocence. No one should be subjected to absolute penalties based on a criminal case unless their guilt has been definitively proven in court, as there is a possibility of acquittal at the end of the trial.
21. In addition, Article 23, which provides for lighter penalties, also contains restrictions on freedom of expression. For instance, it stipulates a warning penalty for "posting unauthorized announcements, posters, or banners on dormitory buildings or facilities, or distributing them," thus impeding the exercise of freedom of expression. Furthermore, the phrase "conducting acts or exhibiting behaviors contrary to public morality" in Article 23(h) serves as a pretext for discriminatory practices against LGBT+ individuals.
22. Further, Article 6 of the Regulation on Private Housing Services for Higher Education states that "institutions are to be opened and operated to house only male or only female students".^{xxvi} This provision causes difficulties for many trans+ students, as the segregation of dormitories into male and female excludes individuals who do not conform to these gender categories, preventing them from benefiting from housing services.
23. Unfortunately, one of the few positive examples in this regard is no longer in force. Boğaziçi University's dormitory regulation, which protected students from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, has been revised and repealed by the rectorate. Another example is the addition of a disciplinary article in the Middle East Technical University Dormitory Regulations, which penalizes students for "engaging in

behavior contrary to public morality".^{xxvii} Terms like "public morality" are used by decision-makers as a pretext for discriminatory practices against LGBT+ individuals.

24. Following the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, a decision was made to switch to remote education in universities, and state dormitories housing students were allocated to citizens affected by the earthquake. A similar decision was taken during the Covid-19 pandemic. Continuing university education remotely and forcibly evacuating students from dormitories during crises harms the right to education. Distance learning took students away from the campus environment and reduced the quality of education due to the lack of adequate equipment. Examinations were not conducted with sufficient reliability. For LGBT+ students, the termination of housing opportunities means they are forced to return to family homes or remain homeless, increasing their risk of experiencing violence.
25. LGBT+ individuals are one of the vulnerable groups exposed to violence both in private and public spaces. There are no institutions where LGBT+ individuals can seek shelter or access support mechanisms in cases of violence. Women's shelters and housing centers managed by local authorities and the government are not inclusive of LGBT+ individuals. Transgender women whose gender markers remain unchanged on their civil registry are not admitted to these units. Additionally, in the absence of specific policies for lesbian and bisexual women, they often face bullying when placed in these units.

Recommendations

- Increase the number of quality state dormitories.
- Develop inclusive and equitable policy documents for state and private student dormitories.
- Design state and private student dormitories and shelters to ensure the safety of LGBT+ individuals.
- Remove legal provisions in university disciplinary regulations that violate freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly.
- Re-sign the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and make legal arrangements in domestic law that comply with the convention.

E. Freedom of Expression^{xxviii}

26. In the previous cycle, Türkiye took note of recommendations on legislative amendments to address discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education foresees disciplinary action for discriminatory behaviors by faculty members during their duties, but the grounds for discrimination are limited and do not include sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Similarly, Article 54, which regulates disciplinary provisions for students, does not foresee sanctions for students' discriminatory words or actions.^{xxix}
27. Displaying rainbow and other LGBT+ flags in public spaces has become nearly impossible. Even images and spaces containing rainbow colours are targeted by public officials.^{xxx} This situation is similar in campuses. During graduation ceremonies or on

campus, students who unfurl flags symbolizing LGBT+ identities or wear medical masks that say "The Istanbul Convention Saves Lives" have faced physical intervention from security personnel.^{xxxix} Additionally, these students have been subjected to disciplinary investigations and penalties. In a statement made by Uşak University on social media, the term "LGBT rag" was used to describe the rainbow flag.^{xxxix}

28. On April 19, 2024, the Constitutional Court annulled certain articles among the disciplinary provisions directed at students in Law No. 2547 on Higher Education, following a cancellation lawsuit filed by the main opposition party, published in the Official Gazette.^{xxxix} These articles included vague provisions that disrupt the order and peace, prohibit the distribution of unauthorized leaflets or hanging posters, and organizing unauthorized meetings, which violate fundamental rights and freedoms in practice. The Constitutional Court has granted a nine-month period for the legislative body to make a new legal regulation regarding the annulled provisions. As of yet, no new legal regulation has been enacted.

Recommendations

- Protect students' rights to engage in individual and collective actions defending LGBT+ rights at universities.

F. Freedom of Assembly

29. There are 208 universities in Türkiye. Only 12 of these universities have officially recognized LGBT+ student clubs by their respective university administrations. Of the 12 universities, only two are state universities. Official recognition is important as it provides student clubs the opportunity to benefit from the university's financial, logistical, and visibility resources. Official recognition depends on the approval of university administrations. Despite meeting the requirements stipulated in the legislation, LGBT+ student clubs are not recognized by university administrations.
30. At Ege University and Middle East Technical University (METU), student clubs have applied to become official clubs. At Ege University, this request was rejected by the university administration. A lawsuit was filed in the İzmir Administrative Court to annul this decision, but the case was dismissed on the grounds that it was "the discretion of the administration". The appellate examination of the case is ongoing. At METU, it has been left unanswered, contrary to the right to petition regulated in Article 74 of the Constitution and the freedom to seek rights regulated in Article 36. However, the public administration is legally required to respond to requests within thirty days.
31. At Boğaziçi University^{xxxix} and Hacettepe University,^{xxxix} existing LGBT+ student clubs have been shut down without legitimate justification. The lawsuit filed to annul the administrative decision of Boğaziçi University was rejected by administrative judicial authorities, and the decision has become final. Similarly, the lawsuit filed to annul Hacettepe University's administrative decision was also rejected in the court of first

instance, and the appellate examination is ongoing. These examples are discouraging for the organization of other LGBT+ student communities.

Recommendations:

- End discriminatory attitudes regarding the official recognition of LGBT+ student clubs at universities.
- Ensure the re-establishment of shut-down LGBT+ student clubs.
- Guarantee equal access for LGBT+ student clubs to university resources.

G. Freedom of Peaceful Protest

32. The recommendations made during the third cycle regarding the protection of LGBT+ individuals' freedom of peaceful assembly have not been fulfilled.^{xxxvi} One of the most severe human rights violations faced by LGBT+ individuals in Türkiye is denial of the right to peaceful assembly. For a long time, many gatherings and demonstrations featuring LGBT+ individuals, especially pride marches, have been banned by local authorities. For instance, the Kadıköy District Governorate banned a simple event consisting solely of gathering for tea, claiming it was “against public morality and would provoke social unrest”.^{xxxvii} In 2022 alone, ten separate bans were issued regarding pride marches, resulting in at least 582 people being detained.^{xxxviii} In 2023, at least 11 pride month events were banned, with at least 237 individuals detained.^{xxxix}
33. In 2024, the Istanbul Governorate referred to LGBT+ rights defenders and organizations organizing pride week as “illegal groups”.^{xl} However, being LGBT+ and advocating for LGBT+ rights is not illegal under Turkish law. Similarly, the Governor of Gaziantep used the term “deviant events” in a social media post referring to pride week events. When Türkiye's Human Rights and Equality Institution examined the issue, it rejected the application due to the absence of “discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity” in the institution's law.^{xli}
34. The situation is similar on campuses. Between 2022 and 2024, at least 10 pride marches or pride month events intended to be held at 7 universities were blocked by rectors and law enforcement officials. Some human rights defenders at these events have been detained and subjected to police violence. Even events without interventions can occur under pressure and amidst deep concern. Court rulings on this matter have also been ineffective. For instance, in the cases filed against the rectorate's decisions to ban pride marches at METU in 2019, 2022, and 2023, courts ruled that the bans were unlawful. Nonetheless, the rectorate continues to ban pride marches each year and no authority is ensuring the rectorate complies with court decisions, illustrating that even when LGBTI+ individuals achieve legal victories, such rulings often go unenforced. Furthermore, there is a lack of judicial mechanisms for civil society to implement these court decisions or to hold rectorates accountable for their failure to adhere to legal rulings.

35. When students are detained during pride marches, disciplinary investigations are initiated at their universities, and scholarships and student loans they receive from the Ministry of Youth and Sports are unlawfully revoked. This practice often occurs even when the pride marches do not take place on university campuses.^{xlii} However, Article 18 of the Scholarship Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports regulates limited circumstances that can lead to scholarship revocation. Similarly, Article 17 of the Credit Regulation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports outlines limited circumstances that can result in the termination of student loans. Among these, situations such as a student's detention or the initiation of an investigation or lawsuit against them are not listed as reasons for scholarship revocation. Despite this, students whose scholarships or loans have been unlawfully revoked remain deprived of financial support until they win the administrative cases they file. This undermines the presumption of innocence and creates pressure that deters the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly and protest. This sanction is also applied based on a clause stating that students expelled from dormitories will have their scholarships and loans cut off.
36. Families of young individuals detained for participating in pride marches are often contacted by the police (often the Counter-Terrorism Branch). During these calls, the police inform families that their children have participated in an illegal act, that this act is a pride march, that it will negatively affect their future, and that they should advise those around them to be cautious. The police contact families of individuals over the age of 18, even though they have no legal obligation to do so.^{xliii} Complaints made to the public prosecutor's office regarding this practice have resulted in decisions of non-prosecution. This violates the right to respect for private life and means that some LGBT+ individuals' identities are revealed to their families. It is highly probable that LGBT+ individuals will face bullying and violence at home due to being outed by the police. This can sometimes even lead to attacks on the right to life. Additionally, this practice has a deterrent effect on the LGBT+ community and allies regarding the exercise of their right to assemble.

Recommendations:

- Cease statements from public institutions that criminalize LGBT+ individuals.
- Re-evaluate the notification procedure, locations, routes, time, prohibition, and penalties of Law No. 2911 on Meetings and Demonstrations in favor of freedoms, in accordance with the objectives and spirit of Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Respect gatherings, demonstrations, and pride marches defending LGBT+ rights at universities.
- Implement court decisions that annul administrative actions banning pride marches.
- Abandon retaliatory practices against university human rights defenders using their rights to expression, organization, and peaceful assembly, such as disciplinary investigations, expulsion from dormitories, and scholarship revocations that could deter students' participation in peaceful activities.
- Investigate practices by law enforcement that lead to the outing of LGBT+ rights defenders' families.

H. Stigmatization and Vilification

37. There are systematic discourses produced that stigmatize, marginalize, vilify, or criminalize LGBT+ individuals, advocates, and supporters. Politics and media are among the primary places where these discourses are produced. In the third cycle, the recommendations on condemnation,^{xliv} effective investigation and prosecution of hate speech^{xlv} (noted recommendations) were not fulfilled. There is no effective policy being developed regarding hate speech against LGBT+ people. Instead of taking actions to reduce prejudice and discriminatory attitudes towards LGBT+ individuals, politicians and public officials are engaged in exactly the opposite in their discourse and actions.
38. One significant development during this period was the constitutional amendment proposal submitted to parliament by members of the ruling party.^{xlvi} This proposal aimed to constitutionally prohibit the already unrecognized right to marriage equality for LGBT+ individuals. In justifying the proposal, it was stated that “The aim is to protect the institution of family and marriage against all forms of danger, threats, and attacks, as well as the impositions of perverse movements”. Thus, for the first time, this language, which criminalizes and marginalized LGBT+ individuals while fueling discrimination, was intended to be included in the constitutional text, marking a troubling shift in legislative intent.
39. While the constitutional amendment proposal directly related to LGBT+ individuals was discussed in the Constitution Commission, LGBT+ organizations were not invited to the commission.^{xlvii} In fact, no person or institution that exhibits a stance in favor of LGBT+ rights was invited or heard. However, public officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and experts known for their anti-LGBT+ views were invited to the commission and were given the opportunity to make statements targeting LGBT+ advocacy.^{xlviii}
40. ÜniKuir monitors and reports on the parliamentary and general elections in the context of LGBT+ rights. Looking at these reports, it is clear that the President and the country's leading politicians are targeting LGBT+ people and LGBT+ rights intensively.
41. According to the “Monitoring Report on LGBT+ Rights in the Context of the Presidential and 28th Term Parliamentary General Elections”,^{xlix} President Erdoğan made 57 speeches containing hate, discrimination, and hostility towards LGBT+ individuals at 139 different events (rallies, opening ceremonies, public meetings, press conferences, and TV programs). Fatih Erbakan, the leader of the party known for its opposition to LGBT+, made 57 discriminatory speeches at 65 events, despite this coalition recently coming to an end while continuing its anti-LGBT+ policies. Representatives of opposition parties, on the other hand, mostly remain silent. The political parties of the People's Alliance have promised in their election manifestos to close LGBT+ organizations and to obstruct pride marches and other events. A similar trend continued in the 2024 Local Elections.¹
42. According to the “Monitoring Report on LGBT+ Rights in the Context of the 27th Term 5th Legislative Year (2022-2023)”,^{li} a total of 26 MPs from the Justice and Development Party, Nationalist Movement Party, Great Unity Party, Democracy and Progress Party, and Republican People's Party reported 42 activities against LGBT+ rights. It is also

noteworthy that even half of the LGBT+ rights violations during the same period were not brought to the agenda of the parliament.

43. During the current cycle, the visibility and activities of the anti-LGBT+ movement in Türkiye have increased. The Great Family Platform, consisting of approximately 200 NGOs, organized a rally in Istanbul to demand a “law banning LGBT imposition”.^{lii} In these rallies, demands to obstruct LGBT+ advocacy, close down associations, and censor visibility in fields such as culture, arts, and sports are raised. Moreover, the call video for this rally was approved for broadcast as a public service announcement on radio and television by the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), a public institution.^{liii} Thus, the anti-LGBT+ rally's call video was aired on televisions without any payment. The lawsuit filed to annul this decision was rejected by the Ankara Administrative Court.^{liv} The Workers’ Party of Türkiye filed a criminal complaint against RTÜK members regarding incitement of hatred and hostility towards the public and abuse of office. The prosecutor's office did not process the complaint on the grounds that the rally mentioned in the public service announcement was “aimed at protecting the institution of family”.^{lv} On the other hand, the “Hand in Hand Against Hate” themed video shot by the Kaos GL Association in the metro had to be removed following social media targeting and a criminal complaint filed by the Turkish State Railways.^{lvi} Additionally, one of the individuals involved in the rally organization was nominated as a first candidate for the ruling party. This politician has been elected and is currently serving as the deputy group chairperson of the ruling AKP in the parliament.^{lvii}
44. From time to time, LGBT+ organizations become direct targets of hate speech. For instance, civil society organizations, including ÜniKuir, were targeted in the media with the claim that “LGBT organizations collude with terrorist organizations” due to a campaign they organized.^{lviii} Additionally, institutions such as Aydınlık Newspaper, National Channel, Türkiye Youth Union, and Üsküdar University published claims that ÜniKuir was “attacking the family institution and the moral values of society, promoting LGBT propaganda, cooperating with terrorist organizations, and serving imperialism”.^{lix} Furthermore, the Executive Director of ÜniKuir, Özgür Gür, was targeted by name in these publications for receiving the “Courage Award” from the Roosevelt Foundation and was accused of being “an agent and mercenary of global imperialism”.^{lx}
45. Unfortunately, these stigmatizing discourses about LGBT+ individuals find resonance among some segments of society. In collaboration with the Youth Organizations Forum and KONDA, a “Research on the Political Preferences of Youth” was published. According to this research, a significant portion of young people in Türkiye maintain a distance from LGBT+ individuals, and this distance becomes more pronounced with increasing religiosity among the youth. LGBT+ individuals emerge as the most distanced social group after Syrian and Afghan migrants.^{lxi}

Recommendations:

- Condemn hate speech against LGBT+ individuals by politicians and public officials; promote equality, pluralism, peace, and tolerance in politics, public administration, and the media.
- Conduct effective investigations and prosecutions regarding hate speech against LGBT+ individuals.
- Combat media content that targets and demonizes LGBT+ organizations.
- Put an end to the support of anti-LGBT+ demonstrations with public resources.
- Improve public perception by tackling entrenched prejudices, stereotypes and myths about LGBT+ people in public statements and public campaigns.
- Revert steps taken to amend the Constitution against LGBT+ rights.
- Involve LGBT+ organizations in decision-making mechanisms at both central and local levels.

ⁱ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/14/turkey-end-ankara-ban-lgbti-events>

ⁱⁱ <https://bianet.org/haber/council-of-state-board-upholds-decision-on-withdrawal-from-istanbul-convention-272303>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/according-to-the-development-plan-lgbti-s-are-harmful>

^{iv} <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2024/05/20240515-18.pdf>

^v <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/a-strategy-document-targeting-lgbti-community-will-be-prepared-as-part-of-the-action-plan-for-the-protection-and-strengthening-of-the-family>

^{vi} <https://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-kuresel-guc-odaklarinin-ozen-16333147/>

(Only in Turkish)

^{vii} <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkeys-new-curriculum-emphasizes-values-morals-criticize-education-unions-news-64271> ; Book: https://tegm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2023_11/23174104_turksosyalhayatindaailedop.pdf

^{viii} <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ThsmHwHms1ZOBcedepZauEHFbcdgpARk/view?usp=sharing>

^{ix} https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J_Ao7YCEM3Bu_8Ql3DhOM2jvF7fZ3vju/view?usp=drive_link

^x https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ExZnmJHv2aployMdzLyQPFRHtYtB0znh/view?usp=drive_link

^{xi} https://drive.google.com/file/d/16iMf-N5COq_-WUokGsAx1z_BcS5jnMW2/view?usp=drive_link, p.6. (Only in Turkish)

^{xii} <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ltHoQnxtLZ67gesC7wLfoP2CYKk6WsOg/view?usp=sharing>

^{xiii} https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mlSH0yq_WB_YwJyW68CVUJQ_4zobzvmc/view?usp=sharing

^{xiv} <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkeys-prestigious-medical-schools-dean-removes-sexual-identity-from-hippocratic-oath-news-62602> ; <https://www.duvarenglish.com/dean-of-turkish-medical-school-removes-sexual-orientation-from-hippocratic-oath-news-64559> ; <https://www.duvarenglish.com/med-school-admin-removes-sexual-orientation-ethnicity-pride-from-hippocratic-oath-news-64522>

- ^{xv} The Turkish Medical Association (TTB), in a letter sent to the deans of medical faculties, stated that altering the Hippocratic Oath constitutes an ethical violation and a disciplinary offense.
https://www.ttb.org.tr/haber_goster.php?Guid=4eb29f80-1e70-11ef-8028-d6698b7cce93
- ^{xvi} <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/bogazici-mezunlari-karara-ragmen-kampuse-alinmadi-2027046> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xvii} Cycle 3 recommendations 45.179 Peru and 45.209 Haiti were supported by the government. However, no action has been taken to implement these recommendations.
- ^{xviii} For example: <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/483829/kadir-has-universitesindeki-toplumsal-cinsiyet-ve-kadincalismalari-merkezinin-adi-kadin-ve-aile-olarak-degistirildi> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xix} <https://www.duvarenglish.com/pro-govt-newspaper-targets-turkish-doctors-over-scientific-article-on-gender-dysphoria-news-62898>
- ^{xx} Üsküdar University is a foundation university. Foundation universities are private universities in Türkiye that are established by foundations rather than the state and operate under state supervision.
<https://uskudar.edu.tr/en/icerik/8625/they-wrote-the-book-titled-gender-and-the-perception-of-media>
- ^{xxi} <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/the-diyaret-continues-to-issue-hate-fatwas>
- ^{xxii} The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) considers the failure to reflect the gender identity of individuals who have completed the gender transition process in official documents as a violation of rights. Additionally, the Court views the practice of adding annotations (remarks) to these documents as a rights violation. (Rees v. United Kingdom, No. 9532/81), (B. v. France, No. 13348/87).
- ^{xxiii} <https://kaosgl.org/en/rainbow-forum-opinion-column/universities-approach-to-the-requests-of-trans-people-to-change-their-university-documents>
- ^{xxiv} <https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/2021-06/pandemi-surecinde-lgbtilarin-sosyal-hizmetlere-erisimi-arastirma-raporu.pdf> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxv} <https://kaosgl.org/haber/genel-ahlak-bahane-edilerek-yurttan-atilmaya-calisildim-ve-akabinde-yurttan-ayrildim> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxvi} <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/bogazici-universitesi-nde-yurtlar-yonetmeligi-yururlukten-kaldirildi-02-03-2023> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxvii} <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/metu-rules-and-regulations-governing-the-dormitories-which-protects-the-public-morality-was-found-unlawful-by-the-court>
- ^{xxviii} In Cycle 3, no action was taken to implement recommendations 45.147 Iceland and 45.154 Italy, which were supported by the government.
- ^{xxix} 3rd Cycle; 45.39 Finland, 45.64 Honduras, 45.70 Italy, 45.74 Sweden, 45.82 Myanmar, 45.83 Norway; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1
- ^{xxx} <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/disciplinary-investigation-against-the-student-with-rainbow-flag-at-bogazici-university>
- ^{xxxi} <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/istanbul-sozlesmesi-maskesi-takan-ve-bi-bayragi-acan-ogrenciye-universiteden-ceza-21-01-2022> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxxii} <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/usak-universitesi-lgbt-pacavراسi-acan-ogrenci-hakkinda-islem-baslatildi-19-07-2023> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxxiii} The decision of the Constitutional Court dated 22/2/2024 with the reference number 2023/78 and Decision: 2024/55.
- ^{xxxiv} <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/melih-bulu-shut-off-the-bogazici-lgbti-studies-club>
- ^{xxxv} <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/hacettepe-universitesi-lgbti-ogrenci-toplulugunu-kapatti-21-09-2023> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxxvi} The decision of the Constitutional Court dated February 22, 2024, with the application number 2023/78 and decision number 2024/55.
- ^{xxxvii} <http://www.kadikoy.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi-15062023> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxxviii} <https://kaosgl.org/haber/onur-yuruyusleri-bilancosu-artiyor-582-gozalti-sokakta-iskence-bitmeyen-isyan> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xxxix} <https://tihv.org.tr/ozel-raporlar-ve-degerlendirmeler/bilgi-notu-2023-onur-ayi-ihlaller/> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xl} https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-govt-locks-down-istanbul-for-second-time-in-week-due-to-lgbti-pride-march-news-64586#google_vignette
- ^{xli} <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/the-court-acquitted-tihk-and-the-governor-of-discrimination>
- ^{xlii} <https://www.birgun.net/haber/kyk-onur-yuruyusu-ne-katilan-lgbti-ogrencinin-kredisini-kesti-355017> ; <https://www.ilerihaber.org/icerik/onur-yuruyusunda-saldiri-yetmedi-katilan-ogrenciler-yurttan-atildi-burslari-kesildi-130712> (Only in Turkish)
- ^{xliii} <https://kaosgl.org/haber/iktidarın-kadın-ve-lgbti-dusmani-politikalarla-varligini-korumaya-calistigi-surecte-kadın-ve-lgbti-lar-siddetin-hedefi-oluyor> (Only in Turkish)

-
- xliv 3rd Cycle; 45.76 Iceland, 45.78 Malta; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1
- xliv 3rd Cycle; 45.76 Iceland; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1
- xlvi Proposal for a Law Amending the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye (2/4779 Main). 27/6.
<https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/Yasama/KanunTeklifi/f72877c2-29e9-037b-e050-007f01005610>
- xlvii This situation is one of the examples indicating that the recommendation to include LGBTI+ organizations in decision-making mechanisms provided in the third cycle has not been followed. 3rd Cycle; 45.80 Malta; A/HRC/44/14/Add.1
- xlviii <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/anayasa-komisyonu-nda-yok-artik-dedirten-lgbti-karsitliklari-27-01-2023> ; <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/anayasa-komisyonu-nda-yasanalar-yok-artik-dedirtmeye-devam-ediyor-31-01-2023> (Only in Turkish)
- xliv https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nU3GO_mSSCaKjSIAS8t7Z7pGSSlkm_xI/view?usp=drive_link
- i <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IEtf-0jued8CnH4b3w0D9mYhcDXUjsg0FePnU5CIDw/edit?usp=sharing>
- ii <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GBMekXHnPVpkhyU2g83pou9E-ZvqrmMF/view?usp=sharing>
- iii <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/turkey-ap-people-istanbul-netflix-b2169911.html>
- liii <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkeys-media-watchdog-to-support-anti-lgbti-rally-news-62966>
- liv <https://www.memurlar.net/haber/1069897/rtuk-u-dava-eden-lgbti-lilere-mahkemededen-emsal-olacak-karar.html> (Only in Turkish)
- lv <https://www.ilerihaber.org/icerik/lgbtilari-hedef-alan-kamu-spotu-rtuk-hakkindaki-suc-duyurusu-isleme-konulmadi-160022> (Only in Turkish)
- lvi <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/kaos-gl-hedef-gosterilen-el-ele-videosunu-yayindan-kaldirdi-elimizi-uzatmaya-devam-edecegiz-haber-1639478> (Only in Turkish)
- lvii <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/from-hate-rallies-to-candidacy-from-akp>
- lviii <https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/dem-parti-lgbt-terror-orgutlerine-hak-arayisinda-480787>
- lix <https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/universitelerde-ab-fonlariyla-lgbti-projesi-324861> ; <https://uskudar.edu.tr/tr/icerik/8128/devlet-universitelerine-lgbt-dayatmasi> ; <https://tgb.gen.tr/turkiye/devlet-universitelerine-lgbt-dayatmasi-32065> (Only in Turkish)
- lx <https://www.ulusal.com.tr/video/11316945/oncu-genclik-universitelerde-lgbt-projesine-gecit-yok#> (Only in Turkish)
- lxi <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/young-people-expressed-a-notable-sense-of-detachment-from-lgbti-s-compared-to-other-social-groups>