**BELARUS**

**RIGHT OF PERSONS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY TO HEALTH, IN RELATION TO SDG3**

Submission prepared by the Belarusian Helsinki Committee for the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity



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# Introduction

This report is prepared by the Belarusian Helsinki Committee in the framework of the call issued by the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity on the topic “The realisation of the right of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in relation to SDG3”.

Founded in 1995, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee (BHC) is one of the oldest human rights defenders’ organization in Belarus. The list of its founders includes the nation’s most prominent leaders such as Vasil' Bykau, Sviatlana Alexievich (Nobel prize in literature 2015).

BHC works mainly on six major human rights topics, such as: discrimination (BHC carries out research and promotes the introduction of special anti-discrimination legislation), human rights based approach (BHC promotes incorporation of human rights instruments in project development at various levels), international human rights mechanisms (BHC promotes the use of the mechanisms by non-human rights organizations and develops electronic resources for assisting these organizations), national human rights mechanisms (BHC examines the legislation and addresses its gaps in order to provide as many protective measures as possible), business and human rights (the topic has never been widely discussed in Belarus, and BHC, in fact, is pioneering business and human rights), death penalty (BHC carries out research and opens new aspects of death penalty such as overall brutalization of societies in which death penalty is practiced, for those interested).

BHC has a huge experience in expertise in the topic of human rights. The organization has prepared hundreds of proposals to state bodies on improving legislation and practice in the field of human rights. Dozens of reports and communications to the UN Special Procedures, treaty bodies were sent in order to strengthen the rule of law and good governance. For many years, BHC reinforces the ability of CSOs to effectively work further on reporting to UN mechanisms and on advocacy in dialogue with the government. Among other things, BHC also helps NGOs to use UN mechanisms through training, support and creating special web resources for NGOs.

# 1. Understanding the health care needs of LGTBI+ and GNC people

***Does the state (or other stakeholders) gather data, including data disaggregated by sexual orientation and/or gender identity, on:***

*Data on access to and/or delivery of health services*

It should be noted, that in the state, state bodies, legislation, official state statistics *there is no awareness of the term “gender”. By gender they mean “biological sex”, not a social construct* that is an internal sense of self, whether an individual sees themselves as a man or a woman, or another gender identity. Therefore, it is almost impossible to find official statistics[[1]](#footnote-1), only if some NGO, international or national, gathers some information as a part of the research. The Belarusian legislation does not operate on criteria such as “sexual orientation” and “gender identity”. Moreover, the lack of understanding what is gender, gender identity leads to exclusion of the LGBTI+ community as well as all who are not defined themselves in the binary terms, from the state policies, state statistics, political life and any influence and representation. People belonging to such groups are in the “grey” zone for the state. Moreover, these categories of the population are not covered by the state in any regulations, reports, official statements, etc. They are outside of the focus of the state as they are seen as “defect”, which is ignored by the majority “norm”[[2]](#footnote-2).

Statistical data on healthcare are collected on the page "Demographic and Social Statistics" at Belstat[[3]](#footnote-3). There are several statistical documents describing the main health indicators, as well as the incidence of certain diseases in the population of Belarus. There is no information about the access and receipt of medical services by the population here. Therefore, the state itself is not actively taking measures to collect information on the availability of medical services. Nevertheless, it should be noted that at the time of 2019, according to the infographic of Belta, based on the Human Development Report, Belarus took 1st place (together with Canada and Brunei) in the world ranking of public access to medical services[[4]](#footnote-4).

As for representatives of the LGBTI+ community and GNC, there are no official state statistics on them. There is also a web portal "Gender statistics", created by Belstat with the support of the UN-Women and UNICEF[[5]](#footnote-5). It also contains some statistics on the incidence of certain diseases in the population, but there is no information about the LGBTI+ community and GNC.

As for transgender people, it is worth noting, that there is stigma and discrimination from the society. There is an opportunity to make the transition, but it is accompanied by degrading procedures. In 2017, the Eurasian Men's Health Coalition prepared an analysis of the National Legislation of the Republic of Belarus related to LGBT rights and HIV. According to this Report, the medical indication for “sex reassignment” is the established diagnosis of "Transsexualism". After a person has received it, he is obliged to undergo a comprehensive medical and psychological examination to exclude other sexual, mental and somatic disorders. Such procedures can affect the mental health of transgender people. Moreover, in the “Passport” (database maintained by the Ministry of Internal Affairs), “Change of gender” is indicated as the basis for issuing a passport after changing the gender marker. This information is available to any policeman. NGOs note that this circumstance may lead to discrimination, denial of assistance and further dissemination of information about the fact of transgenderness[[6]](#footnote-6). Gender marker could also be a barrier for seeking health care, job, adopting children, etc.

*Data on the number of new HIV infections per 1000 uninfected population?*

On the above-mentioned web portal "Gender Statistics" there is information about the number of newly diagnosed HIV-infected people per 1000 uninfected[[7]](#footnote-7). The data are differentiated by gender (male and female), as well as by regions, Minsk and the Republic of Belarus in general. There are also Belstat statistics with data up to 2020 on the primary incidence of HIV infection, the data in which are differentiated by gender and age[[8]](#footnote-8). There is no separate information about representatives of the LGBTI+ community and GNC. Nevertheless, “men who have sexual relations with other men”, according to the state, are at risk for HIV infection.

*Data on the suicide mortality rate?*

There are no official statistics concerning suicides in the country on the portal "Gender Statistics" (it is noteworthy that you can select the option "suicide", but no information is provided on it[[9]](#footnote-9)). However, there are official statistics of Belstat on suicide deaths per 100,000 people of the population[[10]](#footnote-10). The breakdown can be carried out by gender, age and regions. Despite this, the site provides statistical data only until 2019. The approximate number of suicides for a certain quarter is periodically announced by the President. For example, for the first quarter of 2020, he announced the number as "about 400"[[11]](#footnote-11). Nevertheless, according to the Suicide in the world report compiled by WHO in 2019, Belarus ranks 10th in the world in terms of the number of suicides[[12]](#footnote-12).

There are no statistics concerning the LGBTI+ community and GNC.

*Data on coverage of treatment interventions for substance use disorders?*

The Belstat website has statistical data on the incidence of drug addiction and substance abuse among the population, up to 2020[[13]](#footnote-13). The data are differentiated only by regions, Minsk and the Republic of Belarus in general. On "Gender Statistics" there is information about the total number of people who have sought medical help from a health organization due to the use of psychoactive substances . There is no official data on the LGBTI+ community and GNC.

It is also worth noting here that the main vulnerable group that uses drugs is minors. However, there are no official statistics, as well as prevention mechanisms by the state except long-term criminal sentences.

*Data on Harmful use of alcohol?*

The Belstat website has statistical data on the incidence of alcoholism and alcoholic psychoses in the population, up to 2020. The data are differentiated only by regions, Minsk and the Republic of Belarus as a whole[[14]](#footnote-14).

There is no official data on the LGBTI+ community and GNC.

Belarusian polyclinics also actively post information on the dangers of alcohol and the negative consequences of its use on their websites.[[15]](#footnote-15)

But at the same time the “Onliner” media notes, that at the time of 2019, 158 thousand people have a diagnosis “alcoholism”. About 95 thousand more are under preventive supervision. Moreover, men drink the most in Belarus - they account for 18 liters of pure alcohol, women - about 5.5 liters[[16]](#footnote-16).

According to Belstat statistics, as of 2020, life expectancy for women in Belarus was 78 years, and for men - 64 years.[[17]](#footnote-17) This is primarily due to the fact that men are much less likely to go to the doctor for health problems. Medical Center "MedAvenue" conducted an anonymous survey of Minsk residents, as a result of which it turned out that during the year only 12.8% of men seek medical help.[[18]](#footnote-18) The Center itself notes that this is due to the fact that "women are more responsible for their health", but patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes, which are quite strong in Belarusian society, also play a role here.

*Data on access to sexual and reproductive health care?*

“Gender Statistics” has data on the prevalence of contraception, but only women participated in the study[[19]](#footnote-19). This is due to the fact that, in general, men and their reproductive health are not in the focus of attention of the state.

Youth Health Centers have been opened and are functioning in different cities of Belarus. One of the most important tasks of these Centers is to provide highly qualified medical and psychological assistance to adolescents in the field of reproductive health[[20]](#footnote-20). Gynecologists, psychologists and andrologists work in the Centers. Special training of such doctors was organized by UNFPA and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus. Counseling of adolescents and young people, as well as medical examination is carried out “free of charge, friendly and confidential”[[21]](#footnote-21). However, such counseling (like the entire healthcare system in Belarus) is heteronormative, so LGBTQ+ youth do not have access to relevant up-to-date and inclusive information. Among Belarusian doctors, there is still an outdated judgment that homosexuality is a disease, which leads to even greater stigmatization and discrimination against LGBTI+ people. Moreover, the confidentiality rule does not always work, because often doctors notify parents about the early sexual life of children, especially girls. In accordance with the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of December 18, 2014 No. 1192, doctors can disclose medical secrets to law enforcement agencies if there are grounds to believe that harm to the patient's health was caused as a result of crimes. Among such grounds are “the presence of signs of rape or other sexual acts", as well as "the fact of pregnancy of persons under the age of 16”.[[22]](#footnote-22) However, in fact, doctors often simply disclose medical secrets if they establish that their patients under the age of 16 are sexually active, even if there was no rape against them. And because of this, going to the gynecologist often causes stress and anxiety for young girls.

In 2019, Belarus launched a project to improve reproductive health services for people with disabilities with the help of UNFPA, one of the stages of which was the transfer of a gynecological chair adapted to the needs of women with disabilities to the Clinical Maternity Hospital of the Minsk region[[23]](#footnote-23). By 2022, there are still only 2 such chairs for the whole country. The state itself does not fulfill obligations to respect, to protect, and to fulfill human rights of people with disabilities even though Belarus ratified the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2016[[24]](#footnote-24). However, it has not been implemented by 2022. Consequently, it could be concluded that, in principle, the state does not see people with disabilities and if it is not the case – the state sees them as objects not subjects, as asexual and “incapacitated” of bearing and raising children.

There is also no information about representatives of the LGBTI+ community and GNC.

To conclude, it's worth saying that there is access to services and reproductive health care, but in fact it is lower in the regions, because there is a big gap between the capital, regional capitals and other localities. For example, even based on the information provided by the Ministry of Health about reproductive health and IVF centers, one can see that all these centers are mainly located in Minsk, where not everyone has the opportunity to travel.[[25]](#footnote-25)

*Data on coverage of essential health services*

According to the report of the Eurasian Men's Health Coalition, "LGBTI+ people rarely file reports about hate crimes, few reports are very rarely brought to judicial review"[[26]](#footnote-26).

The motive of hatred is also not included in the definition of circumstances aggravating responsibility for committing criminal offenses against the person.

Accordingly, effective investigation of criminal cases of hate speech against members of the LGBTI+ community is not carried out. For example, the case of Mikhail Pishchevsky, who was hospitalized in a coma in May 2014 after he was beaten by former physical education teacher Dmitry Lukashevich. According to witnesses, the reason for the beating was sexual orientation of the guy. The court found Lukashevich guilty of causing injury and sentenced him to 2 years and 8 months in prison in prison for hooliganism and causing grievous bodily harm through negligence (there was no reference for hatred motivated crime). On August 20, 2015, he was released from the colony under an amnesty. In October 2015 Mikhail died[[27]](#footnote-27).

***What steps have been taken to research and understand the health care needs of LGTBI+ and GNC people of all ages at the national level?***

The state does not collect any data on LGBTI+ community and GNC people, as well as discrimination and violence against its representatives, as the state does not “see” them[[28]](#footnote-28)[[29]](#footnote-29)[[30]](#footnote-30). Therefore, the state does not understand health needs of these groups. NGOs and civil initiatives do the state’s job, they research[[31]](#footnote-31) and make projects to eliminate discrimination of the groups in the health systems[[32]](#footnote-32). Among them are New Regions, tender for gender, Women in Politics: New Approaches to the Political, Identity and Law, CLOSET FREE, Cultural Educational Institution DOTYK, Community Centre for LGBTQ+ people and their loved ones, Journalists for tolerance, MAKEOUT, Delo Pi\_.

There is no anti-discrimination law[[33]](#footnote-33), if there was it would be easier for community to claim their rights, protect them and the state would bring legislation in line with this law.

***Is this data analyzed through an intersectional lens, such as by disaggregating data by sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as intersecting identities including social or geographic origin, ethnicity, socio-economic status, nationality or migration status, minority, disability, and indigenous or other identity or status?***

As was mentioned above, the State does not conduct any research that would concern the LGBTI+ community, only NGOs and civil initiatives do. Its research and projects are intersectional in its nature[[34]](#footnote-34).

# 2. Inclusion: LGTBI and GNC people in the decision-making process

***I. What measures have been put in place to consult with and include persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in law and policy making in relation to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and in relation to realising the SDGs?***

There has never been any productive dialog between the state and the community. Before 2021 there was hypothetical opportunity to lobby their rights through registered NGOs. After the political crises started after the presidential elections in August 2020, repressions against civil society, activists, NGOs and human rights organisations, there is no opportunity and impulse to have any connection with the state and its bodies. The community stays silent due to the fear of repressions.

There are currently no registered LGBT organisations or human rights centres in Belarus which can communicate with the authorities in a permanent and open manner. The last human rights organisation, the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, was dissolved by the Supreme Court on 1 October 2021. Informal LGBT initiatives were persecuted even before the political crisis of 2020[[35]](#footnote-35). The website of the National Coordinator for the SDG Target 3 does not contain[[36]](#footnote-36) any information about the LGBTQ+ community as the most vulnerable in the provision and delivery of health services. In other words, the National Coordinator of the SDGs in Belarus does not outline the problems of the LGBTQ+ community in the general context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

***To what extent are persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity included in policies and practice around sexual and reproductive health care?[[37]](#footnote-37)***

The services provided by facilities under the Ministry of Health are generally gender-normative and binary. This category of victims is not included in any way in sexual and reproductive health policies and practices. As a general rule, the services of health care facilities are provided without specifications.

On 27 December 2010, a rather progressive Ministry of Health Order No. 1369 was adopted, which approved a clinical protocol based on the WHO protocol on "Supporting the Sexual and Reproductive Health of People Living with HIV". This protocol defines 'sexual and reproductive health'. According to the protocol, respect for human rights and non-discrimination are the basic principles of sexual and reproductive health. However, any "gender" aspect is understood to be binary, e.g. questionnaires for women and men have been developed. The Protocol uses the terms "heterosexuality", "homosexuality" and "bisexuality" in a non-discriminatory manner.[[38]](#footnote-38) This protocol does not focus on transgender and non-binary persons in any way.

***What support or technical assistance is needed to ensure that the health care needs of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity people are comprehensively addressed and included in relevant laws, policies, and practices?***

The first thing to do is to adopt a general anti-discrimination law that will operate with sufficient definitions and indications of discrimination. This law can serve as a basis for the development of various policies and programmes, including those of the Ministry of Health. The law will be the first instance of "anti-discrimination" cases[[39]](#footnote-39) to be brought before the courts in Belarus. A correction of university courses for medical professionals on the nature of gender, sexual orientation and sexual health is definitely needed. The health care system should thus realise and acknowledge that persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are a special group that has its own needs and rights. All of the above will only be possible in Belarus if the government respects fundamental human rights.

***What are the main barriers, in law or practice, for persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to receive care that meets their physical and mental health needs and rights?***

The ignorance and lack of up-to-date education of the current regime in Belarus is a major barrier to understanding the medical needs of the LGBTQ+ community. Homophobic behavior among officials is socially acceptable and not condemned. The state's homophobia has become a political tool of repression after August 2020. Belarusian police and other security bodies force Belarusian citizens they have detained to record outing videos[[40]](#footnote-40), where they ought to say out loud that they are gay. Then, these videos are spread through pro-regime telegram channels, some videos are shown on TV, the goal of the dissemination of such videos on the one hand is to stigmatize the LGBTI+ community even more, spread the hate in the society, divide Belarusian society and on the other hand, shout the mouth of any person who belongs to the community or is ally, mentally abuse such people and make them think that they are not safe.

# 3. Access: ensuring that LGTBI and GNC people have access to health care

***What measures have been taken to ensure access to affordable non-discriminatory health care services for persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity?***

No measures have been taken by the State. The Health Care Act does not contain a single principle that guides the health care system towards human rights standards, non-discrimination and respectful treatment. At the NGOs level there is inclusive physiological help and the access to free legal advice.

***What policies or programmes exist to address the mental health care needs of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, specifically around depression and anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse?***

The Ministry of Health states that in the general context of the fight against domestic violence, the ministry provides the following assistance. Primary prevention of violence, provision of specialized mental health care for victims of violence, secondary prevention of violence - passing on information to the competent authorities to take the necessary measures[[41]](#footnote-41). All other programmes are organized by informal communities and LGBT Friendly Private Practitioners.[[42]](#footnote-42) In September 2017, psychological support groups for LGBTQ persons opened in Minsk. The groups are based at the Community Centre for Comprehensive Support for LGBTQ+ persons and their relatives[[43]](#footnote-43).

***What policies or programmes exist to assist the health care needs of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity following the experience of assault or gender-based violence?***

At the state level, there is general legally prescribed assistance in the case of gender-based violence. If a victim does not say that he or she is gay, probably state actors will help. However, there is no specific policies or programmes for state’s actors how to deal with gender-based violence if it was conducted against member of LGBTI+ community. There is some help from the NGO sector. The Radislava Association has been active since 2002. The organisation helps women victims of violence, including by providing shelter. Radislava provided assistance to women of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Much of the work is done by activists and volunteers. Officials intend to liquidate the association in March 2022[[44]](#footnote-44), its leaders and activists are being persecuted. The manager of Radislava, Olga Gorbunova, became a suspect in a fabricated criminal case of gross misconduct (Article 342 of the Criminal Code) - she is charged with leading "women's marches" in August 2020.[[45]](#footnote-45)[[46]](#footnote-46) The “Identity and Law” Initiative also assists victims of violence, works with discrimination against the LGBTI+ community and refers them to vetted health professionals, psychologists and lawyers.

***Have adequate human and financial resources been allocated to implement those policies and/or programmes?***

The Belarusian government has never supported the implementation of such programmes. There is no public discussion about budget allocations for the development of such policies and programmes.

# 4. Training and Education: health care professionals and educational institutions

***Are sexual orientation and gender identity, and the specific health needs of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, included in training and education of health care professionals?***

No, there is no evidence of such trainings and courses for health care professionals in the public access[[47]](#footnote-47).

***What measures are being taken to provide age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education inclusive of sexual and gender diversity in educational institutions?***

The idea of sex education in the Belarusian society still does not find wide support at the state’s level.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In January 2019, the Ministry of Education approved an elective program for high school students in grades 9-11 on the basics of family life. This program does not cover many basic questions about sexual and reproductive health. Great emphasis is made on the “cultural and national traditions of the Belarusian people”, which in principle can be understood as typically patriarchal attitudes. Thus, “non-traditional” same-sex relationships and family building between LGBT people are excluded from the agenda.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Given that sex education is, in general, a debatable issue for the Belarusian population and the state, it is very difficult to talk about its accessibility for all ages. The problem is that discussions are mainly conducted around sexual education of children and adolescents[[50]](#footnote-50). No one raises the question of sex education of adults and the elderly (not to mention focusing on various gender minorities).

Issues of sexual education, as well as socially significant issues, are often dealt with by non-governmental organizations and activists. For example, Belarusian activist Milana Levitskaya wrote an article on homophobia in Belarus, where she described in detail her experience as a lesbian and LGBTI+ activist, and also spoke about the importance of activism in the life of every person belonging to a vulnerable group[[51]](#footnote-51).

***Are evidence-based and up-to-date guidelines that include SOGI issues available? How are they used to influence health related decisions on policy, programming, services including diagnostic manuals, and practices within the health care institutions?***

As noted above, the State does not seek to make members of the LGBTI+ community visible to the public, and also makes no attempt to approve guidelines that include SOGI issues.

# 5. Sustainable Development Goals

First of all, it should be said that according to the Sustainable Development Report in 2021, Belarus took 24th place among 165 countries in the ranking of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.[[52]](#footnote-52) However the objectivity of the state’s report is a question.

***Where the State measures its progress against SDG3, does it make reference to the health outcomes and needs of persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity?***

According to the 2020 Sustainable Development Report, Belarus has made some progress in achieving goals such as gender equality and reducing inequality, but there are still problems.[[53]](#footnote-53) The question also arises whether such official statistics can be trusted, because in fact it is clearly visible that the Belarusian society is still deeply patriarchal, where gender is seen as biological sex excluding LGBTI+ community and GNC people from the society and official statistics.

There is a progress report on the issue of achieving SDG-3 on the Belstat website[[54]](#footnote-54), but nowhere is there any mention of people who have been subjected to violence or discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. There are even no data on some of the indicators here. For example, 3.8.1. Coverage of basic health services[[55]](#footnote-55).

***Does the State measure progress against any of the following SDG3 indicators for persons affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity? If so, please comment on whether health outcomes are improving or declining.***

We are not able to measure the progress as the state do not count LGBTI+ community and GNC people in the statistics in general and in particular, when it comes to measuring the progress towards SDG3.

1. All official statistics for the country are collected on the website of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat). Some of the information is published through the “Belta” media, but it is pro-regime media and the information posted there cannot be completely trusted. NGOs can secretly conduct social surveys and polls, collect statistics, but they will not be published anywhere in the state media. Due to recent changes in legislation, it is now impossible to publish such data even in independent media due to the tightening of laws on media in 2021, where the ban on the publication of the results of public polls of any scale (related to the socio-political situation in the country, republican referenda, elections of the President of the Republic of Belarus etc.) was introduced. New articles 10.21 Illegal conduct of public opinion polls and 23.5 Violation of the legislation on mass media were introduced into the Code of Administrative Offenses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For further information see the block “*ii.What steps have been taken to research and understand the health care needs of LGTBI and GNC people of all ages at the national level?”* in the report below. <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=3871&p0=h10800427> ; <https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=HK2100091&p1=1> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://rgazeta.by/ru/health/1-e-mesto-v-mire-v-rejtinge-dostupa-naseleniya-k-medicinskim-uslugam.html>tat.gov.by/health [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://gender.belstat.gov.by/health> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://ecom.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BELARUS_RUS.compressed.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://gender.belstat.gov.by/health/93?type=lineChart&reg=(T/F/M):(T)> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <http://gender.belstat.gov.by/health/103?type=table&reg=(T/F/M):(T):(CHD):(S):(T)> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://sdgplatform.belstat.gov.by/sites/belstatfront/index-info.html?indicator=3.4.2> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://euroradio.fm/ru/okolo-400-samoubiystv-za-kvartal-eto-mnogo-dlya-belarusi> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <https://nonews.co/directory/lists/countries/suicide-rate> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2/> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/solialnaya-sfera/zdravoohranenie_2/> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <https://ivacemed.by/novosti/1060-o-vrede-alkogolya>; <https://www.37gp.by/informatsiya/shkola-zdorovogo-obraza-zhizni/547-vred-alkogolya-i-ego-vliyanie-na-organizm-cheloveka>; <http://29gp.by/informatsiya/novosti/621-alkogol-vred-zdorovyu> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://people.onliner.by/2019/07/11/alkogolism_press> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minzdrav-prodolzhitelnost-zhizni-zhenschin-v-belarusi-78-let-muzhchin-64-408884-2020/> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <https://medavenu.by/mini-issledovanie-1/> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <http://gender.belstat.gov.by/health/109?type=columnChart&reg=(F):(T)> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. This includes: training in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies, STIs and HIV; promotion of a healthy lifestyle and responsible behavior of young people in relation to their reproductive health. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [https://belarus.unfpa.org/ru/topics/репродуктивное-здоровье](https://belarus.unfpa.org/ru/topics/%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8C%D0%B5) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <https://cpmvd.by/informatsiya/novosti/679-vrachebnaya-tajna-kogda-ee-mozhno-raskryt> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-startuet-proekt-po-uluchsheniju-uslug-v-sfere-reproduktivnogo-zdorovjja-ljudej-s-346016-2019/> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=16&Lang=EN> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. <http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/dlya-belorusskikh-grazhdan/uchrejdenia-zdravoohranenia/tsentry-reproduktivnogo-zdorovya-i-eks.php> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. <https://ecom.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/BELARUS_RUS.compressed.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. <https://euroradio.fm/ru/umer-silno-izbityy-mihail-pishchevskiy> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Indicative in terms of the state's opinion about LGBT is the statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of May 17, 2018. On this day, in honor of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, a rainbow flag was hung on the building of the British Embassy in Minsk. To date, the text of the statement has already been removed from the website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but an excerpt of their statement has been preserved online, in which the Ministry of Internal Affairs says that "same-sex relationships are a fake, with the aim of devaluing the truth." The Ministry of Internal Affairs declares that they are “for the genuine” and LGBT people “will not pass”, <https://humanlibrary.by/kak-obstoyat-dela-u-lgbt-soobshhestva/> [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Human rights activists also note that situations often occur when Interior Ministry employees invite gays to fake dates through dating sites. This is done “in order to identify the facts of pedophilia and to train representatives of the LGBT community” <https://www.bbc.com/russian/media-55059877> [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Moreover, during the detentions after the presidential elections in August 2020, many Belarusians were exposed to outing: "penitential" videos in which protesters made a coming-out on camera got into the network. Thus, the state demonized the protests and the LGBTI+ community, since the alleged voters of A. Lukashenko are adherents of “traditional values”. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. In 2019, the public campaign "Delo Pi\_" conducted a study among LGBTI+ women, during which some statistical data were collected: One of the main problems (27.7% of respondents named it) of LGBTI+ women is the lack of information about LGBTQ+, including health problems (reproductive, psychological). 24.7% of LGBT women faced incompetence of medical staff in matters of gender and sexuality. 16.6% of respondents experienced fear of outing during a doctor's visit. In the course of the study, 296 women were interviewed, but none of them is a member of a political party. According to the Womenplatform, “this indicates the extreme exclusion of LGBTQ women from civil and political processes in Belarus”, <https://delopi.by/news/26-nevidimoe-nasilie-lbtq-women-results.html?fbclid=IwAR3QBjv9-W-3GOkdF7pwWJOtCwtt4_2nvPtIGNehKUObsIR5_CDBMsJqFPk>; <https://womenplatform.net/region/nevidimoe-nasilie-opyt-lbtk-zhenshhin-v-belarusi/> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For instance, UNFPA and gynecological chairs for women with disabilities, see above. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. According to the OHCHR Report of February 27, 2020, Belarus has not yet taken effective measures to develop comprehensive legislation to combat discrimination. The UN notes that “the national legal and judicial systems do not have sufficient capacity to accept and consider discrimination cases, and, apparently, none of these cases have been successfully considered by the courts”. Based on the above-mentioned Report, the following measures were recommended to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity

(a) The direct inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity among the prohibited grounds of discrimination specified in comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation;

(b) Providing adequate training on combating discriminatory attitudes towards lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals for law enforcement officers and other officials;

(c) Appropriate suppression of such behavior, including by conducting prompt and effective investigations of any reports of violence or hatred based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and bringing perpetrators to justice. **However, no measures have been taken yet.** <https://makeout.by/2014/10/08/kazhdyy-chetvertyy-gey-v-belarusi-sostoit-v-partnerstve.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For instance, there is a project "My Step to freedom", which appeared in connection with the political situation in Belarus. This project highlights the problems women faced under the regime of A. Lukashenko. There are also stories of LGBTI+ women who have been discriminated against and abused based on their orientation or gender identity. For example, the story #27 of a transgender girl, Maria, who was abused during the protests. This project is intersectional in itself, because it contains stories in which people were discriminated against not only on the basis of gender or gender identity, but also on political beliefs. <https://belaruswomen.org/en/component/gridbox/my-step-to-freedom/27-maria?Itemid=0> [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. <https://spring96.org/ru/news/96431> [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. <https://sdgs.by/targets/target3/> [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. For more information on women's right to health, see the commentary on the 2019-2020 National Human Rights Index peer review on the right to health: <https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/13._pravo_na_zdorove_2019.pdf> <https://belhelcom.org/sites/default/files/13._pravo_na_zdorove_2020.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. <http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/dlya-spetsialistov/standarty-obsledovaniya-i-lecheniya/infektsionnye-zabolevaniya.php?sphrase_id=387432> [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. There is no case law on discrimination for about 30 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. For instance, in December 2021, Nikolai Bredelev, A1 company's press secretary, was detained. The security forces published a "outing" video where Nikolai says he is gay, they also posted personal photos and correspondence of the man. He was accused of spreading information about the data of the telecom operator's customers which is fabricated. <https://reform.by/285760-vlasti-hotjat-chtoby-u-arestovannogo-ne-bylo-shansov-na-zashhitu-gomofobija-v-belarusi-stala-instrumentom-repressij> [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. <http://minzdrav.gov.by/ru/novoe-na-sayte/aktsii-dom-bez-nasiliya/> [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. <https://makeout.by/2019/02/14/spisok-lgbtk-frendli-psihoterapevt_ok-v-belarusi.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. <https://citydog.by/post/zaden-lgbtk-gruppy/> [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. <https://reform.by/254751-vlasti-hotjat-likvidirovat-obshhestvennoe-obedinenie-radislava-pravozashhitniki> [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. <https://mediazona.by/news/2021/11/10/radislava> [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. <https://imenamag.by/pages/about> [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. <https://belmapo.by/perepodgotovka-i-povyishenie-kvalifikaczii.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For example, in 2019 on the Petitions website.by created a petition against "gynecological denunciations", one of the proposals of which was the introduction of sex education courses for students in grades 5-7. In this regard, the Deputy Minister of Education Raisa Sidorenko expressed her opinion. She explained that there is no need to create a separate course on sex education for children and adolescents in Belarus, because the course "Fundamentals of Life Safety" and Orthodoxy cope with its tasks, <https://www.belnovosti.by/obshchestvo/minobrazovaniya-shkolnikam-ne-nuzhno-polovoe-vospitanie-potomu-chto-est-obzh-pravoslavie> [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. <https://pravo.by/novosti/novosti-pravo-by/2019/january/32231/> [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. One of the few initiatives is the Youth Health Centers mentioned above and another is Y-PEER, youth-led initiative, which operates in Belarus and is engaged in sexual education of adolescents, as well as covers issues of reproductive health of young people. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. <https://makeout.by/2018/08/22/da-ya-lgbt-aktivistka-net-ya-ne-pravozaschitnica.html>; <https://womenplatform.net/region/yes-i-am-an-lgbt-activist-no-im-not-a-human-rights-activist/> [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. <https://www.sdgindex.org/reports/sustainable-development-report-2021/#report-rankings> [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. <https://thinktanks.by/publication/2020/07/08/kak-belarus-dostigaet-tsur-7-problem-8-znachitelnyh-problem-i-1-dostizhenie.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/SDG/Naz_perechen_pokas_SDG/tsel-3/> [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. <https://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/SDG/Naz_perechen_pokas_SDG/tsel-3/> [↑](#footnote-ref-55)