



Country Conditions Analysis of LGBTQI+ Human Rights in Turkey

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Introduction

The Franklin & Marshall Global Barometers® (FMGB) have four primary products: the F&M Global Barometer of Unified LGBT Rights™ (GBUR), the F&M Global Barometer of Gay Rights® (GBGR), the F&M Global Barometer of Transgender Rights™ (GBTR), and the F&M Global Barometers LGBTQI+ Perception Index™ (GBPI).

The GBGR and the GBTR track 27 and 17 items, respectively, to measure state and societal levels of persecution or protection of sexual orientation and gender identity minorities in 204 countries and territories. Both barometers assess five dimensions: *de facto* and *de jure* protections, the sanction or suppression of LGBT+ advocacy, socio-economic rights, and societal persecution of LGBT+ persons. The GBUR combines the items (39) from the GBGR and GBTR into a single score that reflects a comprehensive metric of the state of LGBT human rights.

The GBPI survey measures the lived human rights experiences of LGBTQI+ people worldwide through six questions on safety, acceptance, and experiences with discrimination and violence.

Methodology

The F&M Global Barometers (FMGB) combine a quantitative research design with a qualitative, real-world perspective. Fundamental principles of human rights inform the items on the barometers, which are operationalized using binary variables (1 or 0). Each item in the FMGB is weighted equally. A country will receive a one (1) if evidence supports the item in the affirmative and a zero (0) if in the negative. For example, the item “No death penalty for sexual orientation” would receive a one if there is no death penalty for sexual orientation; but if the country has the death penalty for sexual orientation, it would receive a zero.

Grades are calculated by summing the raw score for a particular year. The highest possible score on the **GBUR**, **GBGR**, and **GBTR**, respectively, is 39/39, 27/27, and 17/17, and while the lowest possible score is 0/39, 0/27, or 0/17. The raw score is then converted to a percentage score (0-100%) and assigned a letter grade (A-F) where 100% (A) is the most positive and 0% (F) is the most negative (see **Figure 1**).

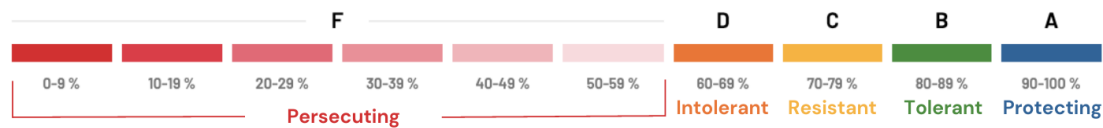


Figure 1. GBUR/GBGR/GBTR Grading Scale

GBUR/GBGR/GBTR data is collected and reviewed through a process of double-blind coding. A primary coder collects all of the sources and citations and scores each item accordingly, and then a second coder applies their own score based on the sources and citations provided by the first coder. If any discrepancies arise, the principal investigator acts as the third reviewer. This process expedites the review process and reduces the impact of human error or bias.

The GBUR/GBGR/GBTR comprise 5 dimensions:

The **De Jure Protection (DJ)** dimension measures the extent to which a country's constitution and laws protect the fundamental human rights of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) minorities. While the a priori function of the state is to protect its citizens, states may discriminate in carrying out this responsibility by criminalizing SOGI minorities and denying them the right to serve in the military or to marry, for example.

The **De Facto Protection (DF)** dimension considers the ability of a state to implement laws that ensure the protection of SOGI minorities. It is assumed that states that do not criminalize SOGI minorities will also provide legal protections, such as freedom from arbitrary arrest or the right to a fair trial. However, negative societal attitudes and the influence of anti-LGBT+ political elites may circumvent protective laws, creating conditions where SOGI minorities are deprived of legal protections.

The **LGBT Rights Advocacy (RA)** dimension captures state sanction or suppression of SOGI minority attempts to organize visibly in society. Effective LGBT organization is necessary to further SOGI human rights. States, with their monopoly on legitimate force, may use police forces to protect or impede SOGI minorities' freedom of association. Because most LGBT organizations advocate for both the LGB and transgender communities, the GBTR duplicates the scores from the GBGR LGBT Rights Advocacy dimension.

The **Socio-Economic Rights (SER)** dimension is based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the socio-economic dimension signals SOGI minorities' ability to seek and enjoy socio-economic opportunities without discrimination. Anti-discrimination

laws in employment and in access to housing and healthcare are baseline measures of a state's commitment to protecting SOGI's socio-economic rights.

The **Societal Persecution (SP)** dimension gauges whether SOGI minorities are targeted for violence or murder based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. It measures the ability of SOGI minorities to seek redress from state authorities in cases of unequal treatment or discriminatory violence. Analysis of this dimension will include commentary on the state's ability to restore justice in such cases.

GBUR/GBGR/GBTR Data on Turkey

The most recent data available on Turkey for the GBUR, GBGR, and GBTR are from 2023. In 2023, Turkey's GBUR score was an **F-Persecuting** with a grade of **23 percent**. The GBGR and GBTR were also graded as **F-Persecuting** with scores of 26 percent and 24 percent, respectively. **Table 1**, below, shows the scores for the GBUR, GBGR, and GBTR from 2011 to 2023. Data on Turkey and other countries in the world can be found on the F&M Global Barometers' website: <https://www.fandmglobalbarometers.org/countries/turkey/>.

Table 1. GBUR/GBGR/GBTR 2011-2023 - Scores for Turkey

Country	Year	GBUR % Score	GBUR Tolerance Cat	GBGR % Score	GBGR Tolerance Cat	GBTR % Score	GBTR Tolerance Cat
Turkey	2011	26%	F - Persecuting	30%	F - Persecuting	35%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2012	26%	F - Persecuting	30%	F - Persecuting	35%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2013	26%	F - Persecuting	30%	F - Persecuting	35%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2014	26%	F - Persecuting	30%	F - Persecuting	35%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2015	21%	F - Persecuting	22%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2016	21%	F - Persecuting	22%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2017	21%	F - Persecuting	22%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2018	23%	F - Persecuting	26%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2019	21%	F - Persecuting	22%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2020	23%	F - Persecuting	26%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2021	23%	F - Persecuting	26%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2022	23%	F - Persecuting	26%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting
Turkey	2023	23%	F - Persecuting	26%	F - Persecuting	24%	F - Persecuting

(Source: F&M Global Barometers database, on file with author)

It is important to note that the GBUR/GBGR/GBTR take a holistic approach in measuring how protective or persecuting a country is toward LGBT+ people. The overall GBUR, GBGR, and GBTR scores for Turkey document a government and society which are failing to protect its LGBT population. Although scores for the GBUR and GBGR recovered slightly from a decline in years 2015-2017 and 2019, the scores from 2023 on all three barometers are less than those from 2011, with the GBTR score falling by 11 percent between 2011 and 2023.

These scores depict the state and societal protections which may or may not exist in Turkey for LGBT people. To gather insight into the actual effects of human rights protections, the F&M GBPI surveys individuals to measure how they experience these protections.

F&M Global Barometers LGBTQI+ Perception Index (GBPI)

Data discussed below are based on the 2024 F&M Global Barometers LGBTQI+ Perception Index (GBPI). The GBPI examines six questions focused on safety, safety in gathering, acceptance, experiences with discrimination, fear of arrest, harassment or blackmail by security forces, and likelihood of being a victim of violence (see **Table 2** for a complete list of questions). The global survey was live from August 19, 2024 - December 19, 2024.

Table 2. 2024 GBPI Survey Questions

Question 1 (Safety): How safe do you feel living as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person in your country?

Question 2 (Safety in Gathering): How safe do you feel gathering with other lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex people in public?

Question 3 (Acceptance): How accepted do you feel as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person by your society?

Question 4 (Discrimination): How frequently have you experienced discrimination in your day-to-day life because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

Question 5 (Fear of Police): How fearful are you of being arrested, harassed, or blackmailed by security forces/police because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

Question 6 (Violence): How likely are you to be a victim of violence because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

Visibility Question: Do you share with others that you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

Intersex Question: To your knowledge, were you subjected to harmful medical practices (including medically unnecessary surgeries) as a child without your consent?

The total number of respondents from Turkey on the 2024 GBPI was **80**. This number is slightly higher than the response number from the 2022 GBPI, which collected survey entries from **73** individuals. However, the overall combined GBPI score for Turkey in 2024 was **35 percent**, which decreased from

the 2022 GBPI score of **38 percent**; both scores place Turkey in the **F-Persecuting** grade category. As such, the legislative and lived human rights experiences of LGBT+ people in Turkey reflect a persecutory environment. The human rights experiences for LGBT+ people in Turkey can further be distilled by examining the GBPI responses by individual question. The Likert scale depicted in **Figure 2**, below, summarizes the responses by question.

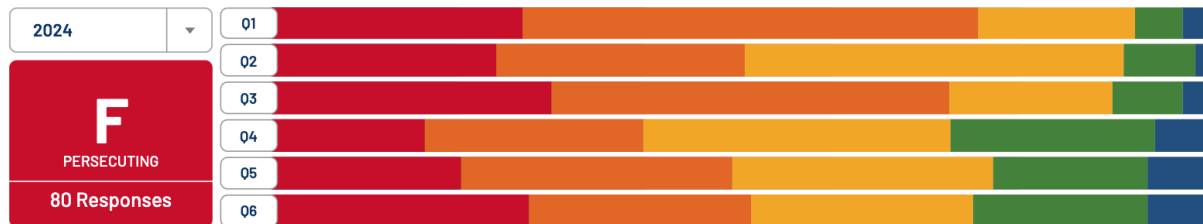


Figure 2. 2024 GBPI - Summary Responses by Question

For Question 1, gauging safety, **76 percent** of LGBT+ respondents felt very unsafe or unsafe, while only **eight percent** felt safe or very safe living as a member of the LGBT+ community in Turkey. **Seventeen percent** of survey respondents reported feeling somewhat safe (see **Figure 3**).

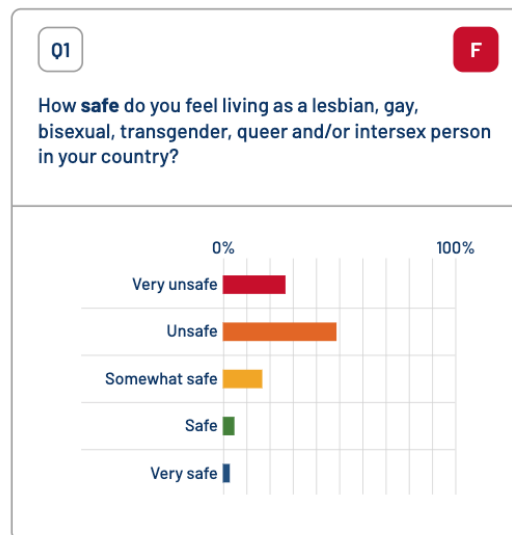


Figure 3. Question 1: How safe do you feel living as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person in your country?

For Question 2, gauging safety in gathering, **51 percent** of LGBT+ respondents felt very unsafe or unsafe, while **nine percent** felt safe or very safe gathering with other LGBT+ people in public. **Forty-one** percent of individuals felt somewhat safe (see **Figure 4**).



Figure 4. Question 2: How safe do you feel gathering with other lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex people in public?

For Question 3, gauging societal acceptance, **73 percent** of LGBT+ respondents never or rarely felt accepted, while only **11 percent** mostly or always felt accepted by Turkish society. **Eighteen percent** felt somewhat accepted (see **Figure 5**).



Figure 5. Question 4: How accepted do you feel as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person by your society?

For Question 4, **39 percent** of LGBT+ respondents always or frequently experienced discrimination in their day-to-day life because of their LGBT+ identity, while **27 percent** indicated that they rarely or never experienced discrimination. **Thirty-three percent** sometimes experienced discrimination (see **Figure 6**).

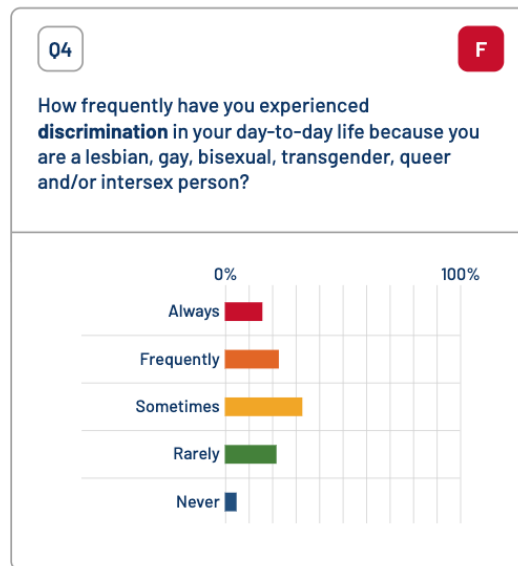


Figure 6. Question 4: How frequently have you experienced discrimination in your day-to-day life because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

For Question 5, **49 percent** of LGBT+ respondents were very fearful or fearful of being arrested, harassed or blackmailed by security forces/police because of their LGBT+ identity, while **22 percent** were not fearful or not at all fearful. **Twenty-eight percent** were somewhat fearful (see **Figure 7**).

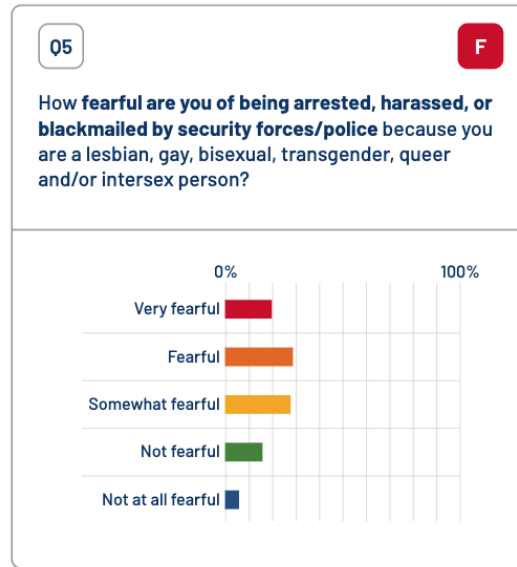


Figure 7. Question 5: How fearful are you of being arrested, harassed, or blackmailed by security forces/police because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

And finally, in Question 6, **52 percent** of LGBT+ respondents indicated that they were very likely or likely to be a victim of violence because of their LGBT+ identity. **Twenty-five percent** indicated that they were unlikely or very unlikely to be victims of violence while **24 percent** indicated that they were somewhat likely to be victims of violence (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Question 6: How likely are you to be a victim of violence because you are a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersex person?

It is also important to note how comfortable individual members of the LGBT+ community in Turkey felt about being visible, or “out” as members of the LGBT+ community. Respondents were asked to comment on whether they shared with others that they were a member of the LGBT+ community. The results in **Table 3**, below, indicate that **33 percent** of respondents never or rarely shared their LGBT+ identity with others, while **31 percent** often or always shared their LGBT+ identity with others.

Table 3. 2024 GBPI - Visibility of Respondents in Turkey

Breakdown by Visibility	# of respondents	Visibility by %
Never	8	10%
Rarely	18	23%
Sometimes	29	37%
Often	18	23%
Always	6	8%
Total Respondents	79	100%

Voices on the Ground

Many GBPI survey respondents from Turkey commented on their experiences as LGBT+ individuals. One anonymous respondent, self-identified as a lesbian woman between the ages of 26 and 35 residing in a city, reflected on her own position in society in relation to her identity:

“I would like to add that I'm part of a privileged circle and have a strong sense of self-worth, therefore I'm less affected by these issues. Most of the LGBTQ in my country aren't lucky enough to have the support of their family or friends, do not have the connections to be protected whether it is through lawful or unlawful means. That being said, I'm fully aware that I can easily be a target of violence if I'm not careful, that there are certain microaggressions which are difficult to handle even for me, I go in and out of the closet all the time in my daily life to avoid persecution and danger, and I live in a constant fear that my luck is going to run out one day. Every single person in this country knows that this place isn't safe for LGBTQ and it's getting worse day by day.”

The above respondent discloses her fear of her “luck” running out, and she reports experiencing avoiding persecution and danger, which in some instances is only enabled by reducing identity visibility. Another anonymous respondent, a gay man between the ages of 18 and 25 also living in a city, similarly responded:

“Not disclosing my orientation definitely shields me from a lot of the potential hate.”

These two examples of LGBT persons’ experiences in Turkey speak to the dearth of protections afforded to gender identity and sexual orientation minorities. These individuals lack support and safety, often resulting in being forced to conceal their identities for fear of being targets of discrimination and violence. The responses to questions two and six on the GBPI mirror this notion: On both questions, a majority of respondents reported negative perceptions of both their personal safety and likelihood of experiencing violence on the basis of identity. These personal accounts and the general sentiments of respondents of the GBPI depict dire circumstances for LGBT+ individuals in Turkey.

Conclusions

The Turkish government and society fail to protect its LGBT+ community. Both the state and society are persecutory toward members of the LBGT+ community. These conclusions are supported by evidence from the F&M Global Barometers data.