

## Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Albania: A Human Rights Perspective on Childhood Vulnerability and Systemic Discrimination

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### Abstract:

**Aim:** This study investigates the vulnerability of LGBTQ+ individuals in Albania to sexual exploitation and trafficking, highlighting how stigma, family rejection, and institutional neglect intersect as human rights violations that increase exposure to exploitation.

**Methods:** A qualitative approach was used, including semi-structured interviews with LGBTQ+ survivors (n = 6), advocacy workers (n = 7), and support professionals (n = 9), along with an analysis of 11 personal case files. Data were examined through reflexive thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2006), focusing on systemic patterns of harm.

**Results:** Five key themes emerged: (i) layered vulnerabilities, (ii) harmful family dynamics, (iii) cumulative exclusion, (iv) barriers to reintegration, and (v) psycho-emotional entrapment.

**Conclusions:** The findings call for rights-based, inclusive protection systems that address the specific risks faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. Legal recognition, trauma-informed care, and intersectional policy responses are essential to uphold the dignity and safety of LGBTQ+ communities.

### Keywords:

Lgbtq+ Rights, Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, Albania, Childhood Vulnerability, Systemic Discrimination, Human Rights.