

## 2.5. LGBTIQ individuals

### 2.5. LGBTIQ individuals

Nigerian laws criminalise same-sex relationships, prohibit same-sex marriages and the registration of LGBTIQ organisations.<sup>472</sup> Federal, state, customary or religious laws each contribute in different ways to the criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts.<sup>473</sup> The country experienced a rise in discriminatory laws and violent actions targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>474</sup> Those found guilty of engaging in same-sex relationships can face up to 14 years in prison, <sup>475</sup> while 12 northern states still impose the death penalty for same-sex activity.<sup>476</sup> For instance, in May 2024, sources reported a sharia court in Bauchi state sentenced a man to death by stoning for engaging in homosexual acts.<sup>477</sup> Religious courts in these states have also sentenced people to flogging.<sup>478</sup>

Discrimination by both authorities and society towards LGBTIQ individuals is described as ‘pervasive’.<sup>479</sup> Police officers often carry out abuses against LGBTIQ individuals,<sup>480</sup> including arrests, extortion attempts, and discriminatory actions.<sup>481</sup> In 2024, the Initiative for Equal Rights (TIER)<sup>482</sup> documented 89 cases of extortion, 118 incidents of harassment and more than 20 unlawful detentions of LGBTIQ individuals by law enforcement officials.<sup>483</sup> Victims avoid reporting such incidents or do not seek help because of stigma, fear of being ‘outed in the course of investigations’,<sup>484</sup> ‘exploited by the police,<sup>485</sup> or concern that law enforcement might target,<sup>486</sup> or prosecute them instead of their attacker.<sup>487</sup> In January 2025, the Nigeria Police Force issued a statement ordering the arrest of individuals in a viral video who had identified as LGBTIQ, framing their self-identification as a violation of laws against ‘unnatural offences’ and same-sex marriage.<sup>488</sup>

Widespread discrimination against sexual minorities in Nigeria persists.<sup>489</sup> Hate speech against LGBTIQ persons remains common. In June 2024, a disinformation campaign falsely claiming Nigeria had legalised same-sex relations under the EU-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific States) Samoa Agreement sparked a wave of hate speech against LGBTIQ individuals.<sup>490</sup> Religious and societal norms influence homophobia attitudes,<sup>491</sup> with religious institutions reportedly promoting homophobic messages.<sup>492</sup> LGBTIQ persons face frequent harassment by passerby, area boys and neighbourhood vigilante groups through hate speech, verbal abuse, physical and sexual assault, mob violence, and extortion.<sup>493</sup> In some instances, LGBTIQ individuals face deadly violence.<sup>494</sup> In August 2024, Nigerian transgender TikToker Ifeanyi Orazulike, known online as Abuja Area Mama, was found dead with signs of beating, months after alleging a stabbing by an unidentified person.<sup>495</sup> In July 2025, two students at a Kano boarding school were killed after being violently attacked by senior classmates who accused them of engaging in ‘unnatural offences’, a term often used to imply homosexuality.<sup>496</sup>

LGBTIQ individuals are also subjected to attacks - mostly by non-state actors - through a practice known as *Kito*.<sup>497</sup> Victims of such practice are lured via social media or dating apps into meetings only to be attacked, extorted, and assaulted, sometimes filmed for blackmail. <sup>498</sup> TIER reported 84 *Kito* incidents against LGBTIQ people across Nigeria in 2024.<sup>499</sup> However, actual figures on *Kito* incidents are likely much higher across Nigeria, especially among queer women, who face greater stigma for defying societal expectations around marriage and motherhood.<sup>500</sup>

LGBTIQ individuals are also facing discrimination when accessing private and public services,<sup>501</sup> including healthcare, justice, employment and housing.<sup>502</sup> In healthcare settings, provider bias and legal barriers can result in denied or substandard care.<sup>503</sup> Transgender people, in particular, turn to self-prescription due to the lack of access to specialised medical support.<sup>504</sup> Gender-affirming care remains scarce due to criminalisation, discrimination<sup>505</sup> and stigma.<sup>506</sup> Practices to change a person's sexual orientation are reportedly common in Nigeria,<sup>507</sup> including medical and religious therapies.<sup>508</sup> TIER noted that family members may subject their LGBTIQ relatives to conversion practices, including forced confinement, starvation, torture, sexual assault, or 'talk therapy'.<sup>509</sup> Reports indicated that surgeries have occasionally been performed on intersex children without their consent.<sup>510</sup>

472

HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

473

ILGA Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

474

EPRS, LGBTIQ+ in Africa, May 2025, [url](#), p. 11

475

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

476

EPRS, LGBTIQ+ in Africa, May 2025, [url](#), p.2; HRW, World Report 2025 (Events of 2024), Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

477

Daily Post, Sharia court sentenced Bauchi man to death by stoning for homosexuality, 11 May 2024, [url](#); Daily Trust, Bauchi Man To Die By Stoning For Engaging In Homosexuality, 14 May 2024, [url](#)

478

ILGA Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

479

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

480

Human Dignity Trust, Nigeria, 11 March 2025, [url](#); Context, LGBTQ+ Nigerians recount police abuses under 'weaponised' law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

481

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

482

The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs) is a Nigerian-based organisation that promotes and protects the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals in Nigeria and West Africa and have various programs including mental health initiatives. See Mental Health and Human Rights Info, The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERs), n.d., [url](#)

483

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 24

484

Context, LGBTQ+ Nigerians recount police abuses under ‘weaponised’ law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

485

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

486

Vijesti, Police extortion and violence against LGBTQ+ people in Nigeria, living in fear under homophobic law, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

487

Context, Job losses, rising attacks: 10 years of Nigeria’s anti-LGBTQ law, 14 August 2024, [url](#)

488

Nigeria, Nigeria Police Force, Press Release, Unnatural offences, same sex marriage illegal in Nigeria, 25 January 2024, [url](#)

489

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); Alabi, O. J. and Adebisi, T., Navigating shadows: the lived experiences of sexual minorities in Nigeria, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

490

BBC News, Nigeria-EU deal sparks false claims over LGBT rights, 11 July 2024, [url](#); EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

491

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 12

[492](#)

No Strings, Gay-obsessed Nigerian pastor calls homosexuality a propaganda, 20 February 2024, [url](#); Peace, A. E., A discursive attempt toward the political economy of homophobia in Nigeria, 12 November 2024, [url](#), p. 5

[493](#)

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

[494](#)

EEAS, 2024 Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country profiles) 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 127

[495](#)

CNN, Nigerian transgender TikToker found dead, 9 August 2024, [url](#); VOA, Fear grips Nigeria's LGBTQ+ community after popular cross-dresser killed, 9 August 2024, [url](#)

[496](#)

Tribune, Kano govt to probe death of two students, 16 July 2025, [url](#); Daily Trust, Alleged Homosexuality: 11 Arrested Over Killing Of 2 Students in Kano School, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

[497](#)

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22. *Kito* is a term in Nigerian internet slang referring to an individual who pretends to be queer, typically on social media platforms or dating applications, with the intent of luring others into meeting in person. The encounter is not genuine but rather a scheme designed to extort money, inflict physical harm, or otherwise exploit the targeted individual. See Mail & Guardian, What it means to be a kitoed, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

[498](#)

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

[499](#)

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 24

[500](#)

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

501

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Nigeria, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

502

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 23; Alabi, O. J. and Adebisi, T., Navigating shadows: the lived experiences of sexual minorities in Nigeria, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

503

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 35

504

DNB Stories Africa, Surviving Nigeria as a transgender woman: Boma’s experience, 21 May 2024, [url](#); ICIR, LGBTQ+: walking the tightrope of social exclusion in Nigeria, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

505

Folayan, M. O. et al., Socioeconomic inequality, health inequity and well-being of transgender people during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, 12 August 2023, [url](#),

506

Afya na Haki, A Human Rights Framework for addressing barriers to Gender-Affirming Care for transgender and Gender Diverse Adults in Selected African Countries, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 28; Folayan, M. O. et al., Socioeconomic inequality, health inequity and well-being of transgender people during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, 12 August 2023, [url](#)

507

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#)

508

CNN, A life in fear: The dangers of finding love online as a queer woman in Nigeria, 29 January 2024, [url](#); CHEVs and TIER, Rights Under Arrest, Impact of the SSMPA on LGBTQI+ Individuals and Organisations (A Decade of Resilience), 2024, [url](#), p. 6

509

TIER, 2024 Human Rights Violations Report, January 2025, [url](#), p. 23

510

Outright International, Embracing Realities of Sex Development: Challenges and Achievements of Intersex Activism in Nigeria and Beyond, 28 October 2024, [url](#); RM Times, In Nigeria, Intersex Newborns Leave Parents in Dilemma Over Gender Choice, 6 January 2024, [url](#)