

2.5. LGBTIQ individuals

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

Discrimination by both authorities and society towards LGBTIQ individuals is described as ‘pervasive’.479 Police officers often carry out abuses against LGBTIQ individuals,480 including arrests, extortion attempts, and discriminatory actions.481 In 2024, the Initiative for Equal Rights (TIER)482 documented 89 cases of extortion, 118 incidents of harassment and more than 20 unlawful detentions of LGBTIQ individuals by law enforcement officials.483 Victims avoid reporting such incidents or do not seek help because of stigma, fear of being ‘outed in the course of investigations’,484 ‘exploited by the police,485 or concern that law enforcement might target,486 or prosecute them instead of their attacker.487 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.488

Widespread discrimination against sexual minorities in Nigeria persists.489 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.490 Religious and societal norms influence homophobia attitudes,491 with religious institutions reportedly promoting homophobic messages.492 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’.493 In some instances, LGBTIQ individuals face deadly violence.494 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.495 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.496

LGBTIQ individuals are also subjected to attacks - mostly by non-state actors - through a practice known as *Kito*.497 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. 498 TIER reported 84 *Kito* incidents against LGBTIQ people across Nigeria in 2024.499 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.500

LGBTIQ individuals are also facing discrimination when accessing private and public services,501 including healthcare, justice, employment and housing.502 In healthcare settings, provider bias and legal barriers can result in denied or substandard care.503 Transgender people, in particular, turn to self-prescription due to the lack of access to specialised medical support.504 Gender-affirming care remains scarce due to criminalisation, discrimination505 and stigma.506 Practices to change a person’s sexual orientation are reportedly common in Nigeria,507 including medical and religious therapies.508 TIER noted that family members may subject their LGBTIQ relatives to conversion practices, including forced confinement, starvation, torture, sexual assault, or ‘talk therapy’.509 Reports indicated that surgeries have occasionally been performed on intersex children without their consent.510

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