

## 2.5. LGBTIQ individuals

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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 TikTok star 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>

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