



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, discrimination[505](#) 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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