



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Ghana: Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE)

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Contents

Executive summary	5
Assessment	6
About the assessment	6
1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals	6
1.1 Credibility.....	6
1.2 Exclusion	7
2. Convention reason(s)	7
3. Risk	7
3.1 Risk from the state	7
3.2 Risk from non-state actors.....	9
4. Protection.....	11
5. Internal relocation	11
6. Certification	12
Country information	13
About the country information	13
7. Demography	13
8. Legal framework	14
8.1 Constitution	14
8.2 Criminal Code.....	14
8.3 Other legislation	16
9. The anti-LGBTI bill 2021	18
9.1 Social and political background	18
9.2 The bill and its main provisions	19
9.3 Domestic and international criticism of the bill	21
9.4 Status of the bill.....	22
10. General treatment by state and non-state actors	23
10.1 Violence, intimidation, discrimination and extortion	23
10.2 Meetings and demonstrations	24
10.3 Removal of billboards promoting LGBTI tolerance	24
10.4 Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals	25
11. State attitudes and treatment.....	27
11.1 Government and political leaders.....	27
11.2 Arrests and prosecutions under the Criminal Code	28
11.3 Other arrests and prosecutions	29
11.4 Violations by police	29

11.5	Treatment by military officers.....	32
12.	Societal attitudes and treatment.....	32
12.1	Public opinion.....	32
12.2	Violence and discrimination - general	34
12.3	Violence and discrimination: lesbians and bisexual women.....	37
12.4	Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men	38
12.5	Violence and discrimination: trans people.....	41
12.6	Violence and discrimination - intersex people.....	43
12.7	LGBTI activists and advocates	43
12.8	Anti-LGBTI groups	44
12.9	Media.....	45
12.10	Social media	46
12.11	Attitude of religious leaders and institutions	48
12.12	Attitude of traditional leaders.....	50
12.13	Treatment by traditional leaders.....	52
12.14	Traditional and religious ‘conversion practices’	53
12.15	Family treatment and societal norms	53
13.	State protection.....	55
13.1	Police response.....	55
13.2	Prison authorities’ response to abuse against LGBTI people	58
13.3	Court hearings, convictions and settlements	58
13.4	Civil redress for alleged human rights violations.....	59
13.5	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)	60
14.	Access to services and employment.....	61
14.1	Protection from discrimination	61
14.2	Healthcare and HIV/AIDS	61
14.3	Employment	63
14.4	Education.....	64
14.5	Housing	67
14.6	Legal services	67
15.	Visibility, activism, support and events	67
15.1	Registration and operation of civil society organisations.....	67
15.2	Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community.....	70
15.3	Pride events and activities	72
15.4	Online advocacy, networking and support	72
15.5	LGBTI representation in the arts	73
16.	Internal relocation	74

Research methodology	75
Terms of Reference	76
Bibliography	78
Sources cited	78
Sources consulted but not cited	84
Version control and feedback	85
Feedback to the Home Office.....	85
Independent Advisory Group on Country Information	85

Executive summary

In general, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people are likely to be subject to treatment by state actors and/or non-state actors that is sufficiently serious by its nature or repetition, or by an accumulation of measures, that it amounts to persecution or serious harm.

The Criminal Code contains a provision that is usually interpreted as criminalising consensual sex between males. It may also criminalise consensual sex between a man and a trans woman. The provision carries a prison term of up to 3 years. Prosecutions under the provision are rare, but the police use it to harass LGBTI people through arbitrary arrest, detention and extortion. There are also reports of violence by police against LGBTI people.

The Constitution provides for equality and non-discrimination but does not specifically refer to sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTI people report discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, including barriers in accessing basic services and employment.

At the time of writing, Parliament had passed a bill that would further restrict LGBTI rights, but the bill was awaiting presidential assent to become law. If the bill is enacted, identifying as LGBTI will become a crime punishable by up to 3 years in prison. Being an ally of the LGBTI community, or promoting LGBTI identities or activities in the media or on social media, will also be criminalised, and LGBTI groups will have to disband.

Parliament passed the bill unanimously and it has the support of traditional chiefs, most religious leaders and, reportedly, a majority of the public. The bill itself and statements by political and community leaders have stirred up homophobic sentiment and triggered a recent rise in levels of societal violence against the LGBTI community. This includes violent attacks that are widely shared on social media. LGBTI people who are 'outed' are frequently ostracised by friends and family.

Where a person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state and/or non-state actors, they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection.

Internal relocation is not viable where the state is the persecutor. Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from a non-state actor, given the widespread societal hostility towards and discrimination against LGBTI people, internal relocation is unlikely to be reasonable.

Where a claim is refused, it is not likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Each case must be considered on its facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they are at risk.

[Back to Contents](#)

Assessment

About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is information in the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of whether, **in general** a person:

- faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by state or non-state actors because of the person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression
- can obtain effective protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- can relocate within Ghana to avoid persecution or serious harm
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

This note provides an assessment of the situation for gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people, as well as those perceived as such. Sources often refer to LGBTI people collectively, but the experiences of each group may differ. Where information is available, the note will refer to and consider the treatment of each group discretely.

For general guidance on considering claims made by LGBTI people, decision makers must refer to the Asylum Instructions, [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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[Back to Contents](#)

2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 LGBTI people in Ghana form a PSG within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic, or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identify or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it **and** have a distinct identity in Ghana because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.3 Although LGBTI persons in Ghana form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person will face a real risk or has a well-founded fear or persecution on account of their membership of the group.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3. Risk

3.1 Risk from the state

- 3.1.1 Actual or perceived LGBTI people are likely to face treatment by state actors that amounts to persecution or serious harm.

- 3.1.2 The Constitution provides for equality and non-discrimination but does not specifically refer to sexual orientation or gender identity (see [Constitution](#)).
- 3.1.3 The Criminal Code criminalises consensual ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ of someone aged 16 or over. This is categorised as a misdemeanour and carries a sentence of up to 3 years’ imprisonment. The law does not explicitly refer to same-sex activity between men or women, but ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ is usually interpreted as applying to same-sex activity between males only. There is no law that directly applies to same-sex sexual relationships between women (see [Criminal Code](#)).
- 3.1.4 Trans persons’ rights are not acknowledged in the law; legal gender recognition is not available (see [Other legislation](#)). One source, a visiting professor at Harvard University, suggests that intercourse between a trans woman and a man might also fall within the scope of ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ because under the law gender is determined at birth and cannot be changed (see [Criminal Code](#)).
- 3.1.5 ‘Conversion therapy’ – a range of actions which try to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity – is not banned and is reportedly on the rise (see [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)).
- 3.1.6 There is no provision in the law for same-sex marriages or civil partnerships (see [Other legislation](#)).
- 3.1.7 There is no provision in the law specifically for intersex people (see [Other legislation](#)). Intersex persons are likely to be regarded as corresponding to the sex that was assigned to them at birth. The law does not provide restrictions on non-vital medical interventions aimed at modifying the sex characteristics of intersex minors without their informed consent, and surgeries have reportedly been performed on intersex children (see [Other legislation](#) and [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)).
- 3.1.8 In 2021, Parliament unanimously passed a private members’ bill, the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill (anti-LGBTI bill 2021), which at the time of writing was awaiting presidential assent to become law (see [Status of the bill](#)). The bill applies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and pansexual people as well as allies (see [The bill and its main provisions](#)).
- 3.1.9 If enacted the bill would, among other things, criminalise: identifying as a member or ally of the LGBTI community; supporting or promoting LGBTI identities or activities in the media or on social media; gender-affirming treatment for trans people; funding of LGBTI groups, and such groups would be required to disband. These offences would carry a variety of prison terms ranging from 6 months to 10 years. The bill also advocates medical intervention for intersex children, a clause described in the memorandum to the bill as helping support those who are ‘easy prey’ for ‘lifestyle’ LGBTI people. The bill would also require citizens to report LGBTI people to the authorities (see [The bill and its main provisions](#) and [Violence and discrimination - general](#)).
- 3.1.10 Sources indicate the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 has generated negative interest in LGBTI people and is widely supported by politicians and in society generally, although international and domestic organisations have expressed concerns

and opposition to it (see [The bill and its main provisions](#)).

- 3.1.11 Government and public figures have made anti-LGBTI remarks which have contributed to a climate of increasing homophobia and violence (see [Government and political leaders](#) and [Violence and discrimination – general](#)). The speaker of Parliament reportedly compared LGBTI activities to a pandemic (see [Government and political leaders](#)). Some members of parliament reportedly called on LGBTI people not to seek medical services and for medical providers to refuse to treat them (see [Healthcare and HIV/AIDS](#)).
- 3.1.12 Sources report prosecutions and convictions under the criminal code are rare. One source, the nongovernmental organisation Rightify Ghana, stated that 5 LGBTI people were charged with consensual ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ in October 2021, but there were no other examples in the sources consulted. However, police reportedly use the provision to harass the LGBTI community, particularly, though not exclusively, gay men through arbitrary arrest, detention, blackmail, extortion or physical or verbal attacks, or to ‘out’ them. Detail on the scale, frequency and nature of police actions is limited but Human Rights Watch and the US State Department report more than 50 arrests of LGBTI people between 2021 and 2023 including cases where LGBTI victims of attacks were arrested instead of their assailants (see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#) and [Police response](#)).
- 3.1.13 Sources report prison conditions for LGBTI people have included psychological abuse and medical examinations, threats of rape and harassment by inmates, demands for bribes and being ‘outed’ to inmates and family members, as well as failure to investigate such occurrences (see [Violations by police](#) and [Prison authorities’ response to abuse against LGBTI people](#)).
- 3.1.14 The government permits the operation of a number of civil society groups that support LGBTI people although, in order to register, such groups cannot specify that their missions relate to the LGBTI community. The government is reportedly reluctant to engage with these organisations (see [Registration and operation of civil society organisations](#)). There are reports of 21 people attending a paralegal training workshop for the protection of human rights of sexual minorities having been arrested and detained for 22 days in May 2021. The sources consulted do not provide further examples of direct harassment or arrests made against the groups (see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#)).
- 3.1.15 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

3.2 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.2.1 Actual or perceived lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and trans people are likely to face treatment by non-state actors that amounts to persecution or serious harm.
- 3.2.2 There is limited information about the treatment of bisexual women and intersex people by non-state actors, but given there is no general indication

of positive treatment, and in the wider context of prevailing societal attitudes, bisexual women and intersex people are likely to face the same risk as lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and trans people.

- 3.2.3 The population of Ghana is almost 34.6 million, around 70% of whom are Christian (almost half are Pentecostals/Charismatic) and around 20% Muslim. The number of LGBTI people is not known (see [Demography](#)).
- 3.2.4 Ghana is a culturally and religiously conservative country, where most people hold negative views of same-sex relations (see [Public opinion](#)). Many, though not all, Christian and Muslim religious leaders are opposed to LGBTI rights and have garnered significant policy influence and perpetuated stigmatisation of same-sex relations, including in some cases by inciting violence towards LGBTI people (see [Attitude of religious leaders and institutions](#)). There are reports of traditional leaders having used anti-LGBTI rhetoric, punished members of the LGBTI community and honoured members of parliament who sponsored the anti-LGBTI bill (see [Attitude of traditional leaders](#) and [Treatment by traditional leaders](#)).
- 3.2.5 LGBTI people face a range of discriminatory treatment from societal actors because they are perceived to be different. Rightify Ghana reports having recorded 2 to 3 human rights violations a day in October 2021 and having documented 70 cases of abuse, ranging from discrimination in school to violent attacks, during the period January to September 2023, but states this is likely a small percentage of the total because of under-reporting (see [Violence and discrimination - general](#)).
- 3.2.6 LGBTI people reportedly face discrimination in accessing services, including denial of educational opportunities and difficulties in accessing healthcare generally and in relation to HIV/AIDS specifically (see [Education and Healthcare and HIV/AIDS](#)). There are reports of some doctors having promoted 'conversion therapy' and reports of this practice are increasing (see [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)). Employment discrimination is reportedly widespread (see [Employment](#)). Landlords reportedly evict LGBTI persons or impose unfair rent increases (see [Housing](#)).
- 3.2.7 There are recent and increasing reports of death threats, lethal violence, mob attacks, blackmail and kidnapping. Several sources observe that violence has become more frequent and widespread since the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 was introduced to Parliament (see [Violence, intimidation, discrimination and extortion](#) and [Violence and discrimination – general](#)). Videos of attacks are posted online, which adds to victims' shame (see [Social media](#)). Some LGBTI people conceal their sexual orientation and/or gender identity out of fear, shame and/or stigma (see [The anti-LGBTI bill](#) and [Societal attitudes and treatment](#)).
- 3.2.8 There are reports of people known or perceived to be LGBTI being subject to threats by family and members of their communities and attempts at forced conversion, forced 'outing', physical violence and forced marriage. They also face harassment, intimidation, blackmail, eviction and loss of property from family and community actors (see [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals, Traditional and religious 'conversion practices'](#),

[Societal attitudes and treatment](#) and [Family treatment and societal norms](#)).

- 3.2.9 Sources report there are a number of non-governmental organisations operating in Ghana, providing assistance and support to LGBTI people. However, it is increasingly difficult for them to maintain their operations effectively because landlords refuse to rent meeting rooms to them, and some now meet online (see [Registration and operation of civil society organisations](#) and [Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community](#)).
- 3.2.10 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Protection

- 4.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution by the state they will not, in general, be able to obtain protection.
- 4.1.2 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution by non-state actors, including 'rogue' state actors, the state is likely to be able but is not generally willing to offer effective protection.
- 4.1.3 The criminal justice system is generally able to provide effective protection where individuals fear non-state actors (see [Country policy and information note, Ghana: Actors of protection](#)). However, police treatment of LGBTI people is variable. There are some signs that police attitudes to LGBTI people are improving and that police have assisted people who have been victims of crime because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In one case, there is a report of the NGO Rightify Ghana having praised the police for their rapid response to an anti-LGBTI attack (see [Police response](#) and [Violations by police](#)).
- 4.1.4 However, factors such as fear of intimidation, harassment or extortion deter LGBTI victims from reporting abuse, and for those who do come forward, sources report there is a risk of being arrested instead of the perpetrators (see [Violations by police](#)). There are also reports of police reluctance to investigate claims of assault or violence against LGBTI people.
- 4.1.5 Some sources report that those suspected of attacks against LGBTI people have been bailed by courts and of victims having accepted out-of-court settlements. No source consulted documents convictions or sentencing of perpetrators of anti-LGBTI attacks (see [Court hearings, convictions and settlements](#) and [Bibliography](#)).
- 4.1.6 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Internal relocation

- 5.1.1 LGBTI people fearing state or non-state actors are not likely to be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 5.1.2 Ghana is medium-sized country with a diverse population of around 34.6 million, most of whom live in urban areas concentrated in the south where the 3 largest cities of one million or more are sited. The government permits

freedom of movement which is sometimes hindered by poor infrastructure and criminality but is generally viable (see the Country and Policy Information Note [Ghana: Internal relocation](#)).

- 5.1.3 However, official and societal hostility towards and discrimination against LGBTI people is widespread, and it is unlikely to be reasonable for them to relocate (see [Internal relocation](#)).
- 5.1.4 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#), [Sexual identity issues in the asylum claim](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

6. Certification

- 6.1.1 Ghana is listed as a designated state under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (NIAA 2002) in respect of men only.
- 6.1.2 However, where a claim from an LGBTI person, including by males or those who are perceived to be or identify as male, is refused it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the NIAA 2002.
- 6.1.3 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **17 June 2024**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

[Back to Contents](#)

7. Demography

- 7.1.1 Ghana has an estimated population of almost 34.6 million (2024)¹.
- 7.1.2 The attitude of religious organisations and their members towards LGBTI people varies (see [Attitude of religious leaders and institutions](#) below). The US CIA World Factbook provided the following data on religious demography: 'Christian 71.3% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 31.6%, Protestant 17.4%, Catholic 10%, other 12.3%), Muslim 19.9%, traditionalist 3.2%, other 4.5%, none 1.1% (2021 est.)'².
- 7.1.3 Independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, in a publication 'Draft bill on "Proper Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021" – An analysis by UN Independent Human Rights Experts' (UN experts' analysis 2021) published 12 August 2021 by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), based on various sources, stated that 'targeting intersex persons could impact more than 300.000 [sic] Ghanaians'. The figure represented an estimate based on academic research on the general frequency of intersex traits³.
- 7.1.4 HRW, in an article 'Homophobia is a Feminist Issue' (HRW women article 2022), dated 8 March 2022, stated: 'There are no official government statistics about LBQ women in Ghana.'⁴
- 7.1.5 There were no population data relating specifically to other groups in the LGBTI community, or to the LGBTI community as a whole, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 7.1.6 For more information on the demography of Ghana, see the Country Policy and Information Note [Ghana: Internal relocation](#).

¹ CIA, '[Ghana - The World Factbook](#)' (People and Society), updated 17 June 2024

² CIA, '[Ghana - The World Factbook](#)' (People and Society), updated 17 June 2024

³ OHCHR, '[Draft bill ... - An analysis ...](#)' (page 8), 9 August 2021

⁴ HRW, '[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)', 8 March 2022

8. Legal framework

8.1 Constitution

8.1.1 Chapter 5 of the [Constitution of the Republic of Ghana](#) (1996) provides for equality and non-discrimination, but makes no reference to sexual orientation or gender identity⁵.

8.1.2 Human Rights Watch (HRW), in an article ‘Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention’ (HRW hardships article 2021), dated 20 September 2021, based on findings of a research mission in July 2021 and other sources, stated:

‘Article 17 (1) and (2) guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds of “gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.”

‘Article 17 also provides for the right to equality and non-discrimination for all. The constitution further ensures respect for human dignity under article 15, protection of personal liberty under article 14, and the right to privacy for all under article 23, rights that should be understood to extend to everyone, including LGBT people.’⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

8.2 Criminal Code

8.2.1 The Criminal Code (Act 29) of 1960, amended in 2003, in chapter 6 on sexual offences, states in section 104 that:

‘(1) Whoever has unnatural carnal knowledge— ...

 ‘(b) of any person of sixteen years or over with his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour; or

 ‘c) of any animal is guilty of a misdemeanour.

‘(2) Unnatural carnal knowledge is sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal.’⁷

8.2.2 In accordance with Article 296(4) of the Criminal Procedural Code, which deals with punishments for misdemeanours, ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ of any person of 16 years or over with his consent is punishable by up to 3 years’ imprisonment⁸.

8.2.3 HRW, in a report “‘No choice but to deny who I am”: Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Ghana’ (HRW LGBT report 2018) dated January 2018, based on field research in Ghana between December 2016 and February 2017, stated:

‘In principle, this offense [unnatural carnal knowledge] could apply to oral or anal sex between a man and a woman, as well as to sex between men. Ghana’s Constitution Review Commission has recognized as much, stating

⁵ Parliament of Ghana, ‘[Constitution of the Republic of Ghana](#)’ (Chapter 5, Article 12(2)), 1996

⁶ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

⁷ Parliament of Ghana, ‘[Criminal Code 1960 \(Act 29\)](#)’ (section 104), 1961

⁸ WIPO Lex, [Ghanaian Criminal Procedure Code](#), 1961

that “Unnatural carnal knowledge is defined at common law to involve penile penetration of anything other than a vagina,” adding: “... the law only anticipates the situation where a man has unnatural carnal knowledge of a woman or another man, but does not envisage the situation where a woman engages in unnatural carnal knowledge of another woman.” ...⁹

8.2.4 Citing general recommendations to all state parties made in a global report by the UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2015, the same HRW report observed that: ‘While section 104(1)(b) of the Criminal Offences Act in Ghana does not expressly criminalize same-sex conduct between females, Human Rights Watch found that this law impedes lesbian and bisexual women’s ability to seek justice and legal redress.’¹⁰ HRW did not provide further information with regard to this statement.

8.2.5 Raymond A Atuguba, Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and Dean of the University of Ghana School of Law, in a paper ‘Homosexuality in Ghana: Morality, Law, Human Rights’, published in the Canadian Center of Science and Education’s Journal of Politics and Law in September 2019, based on various sources, stated that while ‘consensual same-sex relations between two men is a criminal offence’ within section 104(1)(b):

‘ ... it is argued that Ghana’s criminal statute does not outlaw “homosexuality” or “homosexual expression” in general. Homosexuality could mean the mere sexual attraction to a person of the same gender, and not necessarily unnatural carnal knowledge or sodomy. This implies that a person who identifies as “gay”, but does not engage in unnatural carnal knowledge would not be caught by Ghana’s criminal laws. Nevertheless, a heterosexual person who engages in “unnatural carnal knowledge” commits an offence, although (s)he is not homosexual. It may, therefore, be reasonably proposed that, a person belonging to the LGBT community is permitted by the confines of Ghanaian law, to live openly as a homosexual—with the opportunity at will to publicly show affection to another person of the same-sex, and engage in all acts attendant to such affection, and which fall short of the requisite degree of penetration.’¹¹

8.2.6 The article further stated:

‘[Because] “penetration” is an essential element in proving carnal knowledge, ... sexual intercourse cannot be established in law where penetration is wanting... It follows that acts associated with lesbianism would ordinarily not meet the “penetration” test.

‘... [T]he laws of Ghana do not directly address the issue of sex-change or trans-sexualism. It is therefore probable that a biological male who transforms his sex to a female may have sexual intercourse with a male and should, by law, be liable to be apprehended by the authorities, unless the sexual intercourse fell below the requisite level of penetration. This is because the law in Ghana fixes the gender of a person at birth and for all time, and granted the requisite level of penetration, will consider such intercourse as occurring between two biological males.

⁹ HRW, “[No Choice but to Deny Who I Am: Violence ...](#)” (section II), January 2018

¹⁰ HRW, “[No Choice but to Deny Who I Am: Violence ...](#)” (section V), January 2018

¹¹ Atuguba, R, JPL, ‘[Homosexuality in Ghana: Morality, Law ...](#)’ (pages 113-114), September 2019

'The laws of Ghana also have no express position on the sexual activities of hermaphrodites [intersex people]. It, however, seems that a hermaphrodite can identify with only one of the sexes, which sex is usually the one he or she is identified with at birth or the sex that has chromosomal, gonadal and genital congruence. On this footing, it is suggested that a hermaphrodite who is identified at birth as male, or who is biologically categorized male, would not violate the criminal laws of Ghana if (s)he engages in sexual activity with a woman, through their vagina.'¹²

- 8.2.7 The same source stated: 'A bi-sexual does not commit a crime in Ghana if his or her sexual activity does not involve unnatural carnal knowledge.'¹³
- 8.2.8 Human Dignity Trust, 'an international organisation using the law to defend the human rights of LGBT people'¹⁴, in the Ghana section of their website, updated 2023, commented that the 'unnatural carnal knowledge' provision 'only criminalises same-sex relations between men'¹⁵.
- 8.2.9 The US State Department's 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (USSD human rights report 2023), dated 23 April 2024, based on various sources, provided a slightly different interpretation, noting: 'The [Criminal Code] ... criminalizes the act of "unnatural carnal knowledge," which is defined as "sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal." The offense covers only people engaged in same-sex male relationships and those in heterosexual relationships.'¹⁶
- 8.2.10 For information on enforcement of this provision, see [Arrests and prosecutions under the Criminal Code](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

8.3 Other legislation

- 8.3.1 The ILGA (International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association) World Database stated:

'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Ghana do not offer protection against discrimination based on "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics" in the following areas:

- provision of goods and services
- healthcare
- education
- employment
- housing¹⁷

- 8.3.2 For more information on discrimination in practice, see [Violence, intimidation, discrimination and extortion](#), [Societal attitudes and treatment](#)

¹² Atuguba, R, JPL, '[Homosexuality in Ghana: Morality, Law ...](#)' (page 114), September 2019

¹³ Atuguba, R, JPL, '[Homosexuality in Ghana: Morality, Law ...](#)' (page 115), September 2019

¹⁴ HDT, '[Who We Are](#)', no date

¹⁵ HDT, '[Country profile - Ghana](#)', updated 2023

¹⁶ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁷ ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, sections 5 to 7, 9, 10), no date

and [Access to services and employment](#).

- 8.3.3 With regard to hate crime and incitement to hatred, the same source stated: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Ghana neither aggravate penalties for crimes committed on the basis of "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics" nor do they explicitly consider such crimes as "hate crimes". It further stated: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Ghana do not prohibit incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation", "gender identity", "gender expression" or "sex characteristics".'¹⁸
- 8.3.4 In relation to same-sex unions and adoption, the database stated that the following were 'unavailable':
- same-sex marriage
 - same-sex civil union
 - adoption by same-sex couples (joint adoption or second-parent adoption)¹⁹
- 8.3.5 With regard to regulation of conversion practices, the same source stated: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Ghana do not regulate or restrict sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression change efforts (SOGIECE), regularly known as "conversion therapies".'²⁰
- 8.3.6 For more information on 'conversion therapies' in practice, see [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#) and [Traditional and religious 'conversion practices'](#).
- 8.3.7 The database stated that there were no restrictions on 'non-vital medical interventions aimed at modifying the sex characteristics of intersex minors without their free, prior and full informed consent'²¹.
- 8.3.8 For information on provisions regarding intersex children in the anti-LGBTI bill 2021, see [The bill and its main provisions](#).
- 8.3.9 With regard to legal gender recognition, the database stated: 'To the best of ILGA World's knowledge, laws in force in Ghana do not allow for changes in the name of a person in their identification documents.' It reported that a gender marker change is 'Not Possible' and that a non-binary gender marker is 'Not available'²². Similarly, the USSD human rights report 2023 noted: 'Legal gender recognition was not available.'²³
- 8.3.10 For information on provisions regarding gender in the anti-LGBTI bill 2021, see [The bill and its main provisions](#).
- 8.3.11 With regard to laws concerning freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the USSD human rights report 2023 stated: 'There were no laws restricting individuals from speaking or reporting on LGBTQI+

¹⁸ ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, sections 5 to 7, 9, 10), no date

¹⁹ ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, sections 14-15), no date

²⁰ ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, section 13), no date

²¹ ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, section 16), no date

²² ILGA World Database, '[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)' (Area 1, section 17), no date

²³ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

matters, forming associations, registering organizations, or convening events.’²⁴

8.3.12 For information on:

- freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in practice, see [Meetings and demonstrations](#), [Other arrests and prosecutions](#) and [Visibility, activism, support and events](#)
- provisions in the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 relating to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, see [The bill and its main provisions](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

9. The anti-LGBTI bill 2021

9.1 Social and political background

9.1.1 Outright International, a New York-based NGO whose stated mission ‘is to ensure human rights for LGBTIQ everywhere through advocacy, support and research’²⁵, in its 2022 Pride Around the World Report (Outright International Pride report covering events in 2021), dated 22 June 2022, based on various sources, stated:

‘The socio-political and legal environment in Ghana has been marked by homophobia since the enactment of the Criminal Offences Act of 1960. Over the years, this atmosphere has become increasingly hostile against persons of non-conforming sexual orientations and gender identities or expressions. Fundamentalists’ efforts to clamp down on human rights have led to targeted attacks against LGBTIQ persons, activists, and organizations in Ghana.

‘... The political atmosphere took a turn for the worse in 2019, after the World Congress of Families, a right-wing anti-LGBTQ group based in the US, held its regional conference there ... It worsened further in 2021, when Parliament introduced the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill.’²⁶

9.1.2 The Guardian, in an article dated 3 August 2022, stated:

‘[The bill] was put forward by a cross-party group of MPs led by Sam George, an opposition MP and one of the most prominent anti-gay figures in parliament. Support has come from a powerful conservative group called the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values – an umbrella group of religious and conservative groups. It is led by Moses Foh Amoaning.

‘Amoaning’s group has also been linked to rightwing conservative groups in the US and Europe, such as the US-registered World Congress of Families ...’²⁷

9.1.3 HRW, in an article ‘Homophobic Ghanaian “Family Values” Bill is Odious and Beggars Belief’ (HRW bill article 2021), dated 10 August 2021, stated: ‘There is political currency in this bill — for the lawmakers who proposed it. All but

²⁴ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁵ Outright International, ‘[Publications](#)’, no date

²⁶ Outright International, ‘[2022 Pride Around the World Report](#)’ (page 27), 22 June 2022

²⁷ The Guardian, ‘[Explainer: what makes Ghana’s anti-gay bill so extreme?](#)’, 3 August 2022

one of the bill's sponsors are from the opposition National Democratic Congress party ...

'Proponents of this law are positioning themselves as moral warriors. But these are no warriors. They are self-serving politicians, attacking the weakest and most vulnerable for short-term political gain.'²⁸

- 9.1.4 For more information on the World Congress of Families and the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, see [Attitudes of religious leaders and institutions](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

9.2 The bill and its main provisions

9.2.1 The Ghanaian Parliament, in an entry on its website dated 12 November 2021, stated that the object of the [Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021](#) (referred to in this note as the 'anti-LGBTI bill 2021'), according to a memorandum accompanying the bill, 'is to provide for proper human sexual rights and Ghanaian family values, proscribe LGBTQ+ and related activities, propaganda of, advocacy for or promotion of LGBTTQQAAP+ and related activities'²⁹. The bill states: "LGBTTQQAAP+" includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Ally, Asexual, Pansexual and any other sociocultural notion of sex and sexual relationship that is contrary to the sociocultural notion of male and female assigned at birth.'³⁰

9.2.2 The BBC, in an article 'Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal' (BBC passage of the bill article 2024), dated 28 February 2024, stated: 'The bill approved by lawmakers is a watered-down version of an earlier draft – for instance, jail terms have been shortened and a controversial clause on conversion therapy has been removed.'³¹

9.2.3 Among the bill's provisions are:

- 'a prison sentence of up to three years for anyone convicted of identifying as LGBTQ+'³²
- 'imprisonment ranging from six months to three years' for 'same sex relations'³³
- 'a maximum five-year jail term for forming or funding LGBTQ+ groups'³⁴, and a requirement for existing groups to disband³⁵
- 'a jail term of up to 10 years for anyone involved in LGBTQ+ advocacy campaigns aimed at children'³⁶

9.2.4 The bill also imposes custodial sentences for:

²⁸ HRW, '[Homophobic Ghanaian 'Family Values' Bill is Odious ...](#)', 10 August 2021

²⁹ Parliament of Ghana, '[House Select Committee Begins Public Hearings ...](#)', 12 November 2021

³⁰ Parliament of Ghana, '[Promotion of Proper ...](#)', 29 June 2021

³¹ BBC, '[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)', 29 February 2024

³² BBC, '[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)', 29 February 2024

³³ Guardian, '[Ghana intensifies crackdown on rights of LGBTQ ...](#)', 28 February 2024

³⁴ BBC, '[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)', 29 February 2024

³⁵ Parliament of Ghana, '[Promotion of Proper ...](#)' (section 15), 29 June 2021

³⁶ BBC, '[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)', 29 February 2024

- being an ally of the LGBTI community³⁷
- “propaganda”, “promotion”, and “advocacy” for any of the activities and identities prohibited within the bill’, including in the media or on social media³⁸
- ‘gross indecency’, which includes displays of affection involving people of the same sex or trans people, and cross-dressing³⁹

9.2.5 The BBC passage of the bill article 2024 stated that the bill ‘encourages the public to report members of the LGBTQ+ community to authorities for “necessary action”.’⁴⁰

9.2.6 With regard to gender-affirming treatment and intersex ‘realignment’, the AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 stated:

‘The bill restricts transgender people from accessing gender affirming treatment ...

‘The bill, if enacted into law, also places medical professional at risk of criminal penalties between three to five years imprisonment for providing medical services for gender affirmation procedures. This is deeply worrying because it makes it impossible for transgender people to access gender affirming care they need from health professionals.

‘Additionally, in clause 23, titled “Assistance for Questioning or Intersex People,” the Ghanaian government is vested with the authority to establish partnerships with accredited service providers for the provision of support to individuals who are in the process of questioning their gender identity, as well as parents of intersex children. The objective of this provision is to offer necessary guidance and assistance, which may encompass therapeutic interventions and other relevant support mechanisms.

‘Specifically, this clause allows for the potential “realignment” of intersex children to conform to the “appropriate” binary gender designation as determined by a qualified medical practitioner. However, certain aspects of this clause are ambiguous and open to varying interpretation. One notable point of ambiguity pertains to the question of whether these interventions, including “corrective therapy” or surgical procedures, could be mandated or enforced by the state.’⁴¹

9.2.7 In relation to clause 23, the memorandum to the bill states: ‘By identifying persons designated as “questioning” and “intersex” for special treatment, the provision reflects the policy to provide support and assistance to persons who, for psychological or biological reasons may become easy prey to lifestyle LGBTTTQQAAP+ persons.’⁴²

9.2.8 With regard to ‘conversion therapy’, the AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 stated:

³⁷ Parliament of Ghana, ‘[Promotion of Proper ...](#)’ (section 6(1)(e)(i)), 29 June 2021

³⁸ ILGA World Database, ‘[LGBTI Rights in Ghana](#)’ (Area 1, section 2), no date

³⁹ Parliament of Ghana, ‘[Promotion of Proper ...](#)’ (section 10), 29 June 2021

⁴⁰ BBC, ‘[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)’, 29 February 2024

⁴¹ AI, ‘[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)’ (pages 20, 21), 9 January 2024

⁴² Parliament of Ghana, ‘[Promotion of Proper ...](#)’ (Memorandum), 29 June 2021

'The latest version of the Bill has undergone changes, and the clause [promoting "conversion therapy"] has been replaced with a broader definition of "medical treatment." According to the new definition, "medical treatment" encompasses various services aimed at helping individuals overcome any biological, psychological, or emotional challenge related to a sexual activity prohibited under the Act. This revised approach has effectively removed the specific mention of "conversion therapy" and has introduced a more generalized framework. However, it remains important to carefully monitor how this alteration might impact the protection of individuals from harmful practices and ensure that the new definition doesn't inadvertently permit or enable any form of harmful conversion therapy under the guise of medical treatment.'⁴³

- 9.2.9 For information on access to general healthcare, see [Healthcare and HIV/AIDS](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

9.3 Domestic and international criticism of the bill

- 9.3.1 Outright International, in a report "'We Deserve Protection": Anti LGBTIQ Legislation and Violence in Ghana' (Outright International protection report 2022), dated 29 August 2022, based on various sources including interviews conducted with 44 LGBTI people in Ghana between January and June 2022, commented: 'It is remarkable that the proponents of the Bill coined the LGBTTQQAAP acronym to capture every person possibly associated with gender and sexual diversity, including intersex persons with innate biological differences.'⁴⁴
- 9.3.2 The UN experts' analysis 2021 commented: '[The draft bill] describes a system of State-sponsored discrimination and violence of such magnitude that its adoption, in its current or in any partial form, would appear to constitute an immediate and fundamental breach of the State's obligations under international human rights law.'⁴⁵
- 9.3.3 The HRW bill article 2021 described the bill as 'so onerous it beggars belief', adding: 'Russia, Nigeria, Uganda and Hungary have all passed odious laws in recent years that discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Ghana's proposed legislation takes bad parts from all of these and adds some.'⁴⁶
- 9.3.4 After the bill was passed by Parliament, Amnesty International described the proposed legislation as 'one of the most draconian anti-LGBTI rights bills in the continent'⁴⁷
- 9.3.5 Al Jazeera, 'an independent news organisation funded in part by the Qatari government'⁴⁸, in an article dated 28 February 2024 quoted Founder and director of the organisation LGBT+ Rights Ghana Alex Donkor as having said "'The passing of this bill will further marginalise and endanger LGBTQ

⁴³ AI, '[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)' (pages 20, 21), 9 January 2024

⁴⁴ Outright International, '["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)' (page 15), 29 August 2022

⁴⁵ OHCHR, '[Draft bill... - An analysis...](#)' (page 23), 9 August 2021

⁴⁶ HRW, '[Homophobic Ghanaian 'Family Values' Bill is Odious ...](#)', 10 August 2021

⁴⁷ AI, '[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)' (page 19), 9 January 2024

⁴⁸ Al Jazeera, '[About Us](#)', no date

individuals in Ghana.”

“It not only legalises discrimination but also fosters an environment of fear and persecution,” he said.

“With harsh penalties for both LGBTQ individuals and activists, this bill threatens the safety and wellbeing of an already vulnerable community.”⁴⁹

9.3.6 For information on:

- religious leaders’ opinions on the bill, see [Attitudes of religious leaders and institutions](#)
- public opinion on the bill, see [Public opinion](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

9.4 Status of the bill

9.4.1 The BBC, in an article ‘Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal’ (BBC passage of the bill article 2024), dated 28 February 2024, stated: ‘Ghana’s parliament has passed a tough new bill ... [that] will come into effect only if President Nana Akufo-Addo signs it into law. He previously said that he would do so if the majority of Ghanaians want him to.’⁵⁰

9.4.2 3News.com, the online news outlet of privately-owned holding company Media General Ghana Ltd, which owns media companies across Ghana and West Africa⁵¹, in an article ‘Anti-LGBTQ+ bill currently in consideration stage’ (3News.com bill article 2024), dated 10 February 2024, stated: ‘Ultimately, the fate of the bill will be determined by President Nana Akufo-Addo, who will have the authority to either give assent to the bill, send it back to parliament for further consideration, or reject it altogether.’⁵²

9.4.3 The 3News.com bill article 2024 additionally stated that, in a joint news conference with US Vice President Kamala Harris during her visit in March 2023, Akufo-Addo ‘shared that “substantial elements” of [the bill] had been altered following government intervention’ and ‘clarified that the proposed legislation ... was not initiated by his administration but rather introduced as a private members’ bill in August 2021.’⁵³

9.4.4 Reuters, in an article ‘Ghana moves closer to passing bill that would crack down on LGBT rights’, dated 21 February 2024, stated: ‘President Nana Akufo-Addo has not confirmed if he would sign the bill into law.’⁵⁴

9.4.5 The Guardian, in a February 2024 article stated: ‘... observers believe [presidential assent] is unlikely before a general election in December [2024].’⁵⁵

9.4.6 Reuters, in an article ‘Ghana parliament reconvenes, approves World Bank loan and appointees’, dated 17 May 2024, stated:

⁴⁹ Al Jazeera, ‘[Ghana’s parliament passes anti-LGBTQ bill](#)’, 28 February 2024

⁵⁰ BBC, ‘[Ghana passes bill making identifying as LGBTQ+ illegal](#)’, 29 February 2024

⁵¹ 3News.com, ‘[About Us](#)’, no date

⁵² 3News.com, ‘[Anti-LGBTQ+ bill currently in consideration stage](#)’, 10 February 2024

⁵³ 3News.com, ‘[Anti-LGBTQ+ bill currently in consideration stage](#)’, 10 February 2024

⁵⁴ Reuters, ‘[Ghana moves closer to passing bill](#)’, 21 February 2024

⁵⁵ Guardian, ‘[Ghana intensifies crackdown on rights of LGBTQ ...](#)’, 28 February 2024

'Lawmakers in February unanimously passed one of Africa's most restrictive anti-LGBT bills, but President Nana Akufo-Addo has not yet signed it into law. His office said it would wait for the outcome of two legal challenges to the bill before it passes to the president for assent.

'The delay sparked a backlash from supporters of the bill and has hobbled parliamentary procedures in Ghana ...

'Speaker Alban Bagbin, who adjourned parliament in March, said the president's refusal to sign the bill was unconstitutional ...

'The president's decision to hold off on signing the anti-LGBT bill came after a finance ministry warning that it could jeopardise \$3.8 million [GBP3.0 million⁵⁶] in World Bank financing and derail a \$3-billion [GBP2.37 billion] International Monetary Fund loan package.

'The Supreme Court asked lawyers battling over the legality of the anti-LGBT bill to amend their motions due to insulting language in their submissions and then postponed the case without setting a new date.'⁵⁷

- 9.4.7 At the time of writing, the president had not given his assent, and the bill had not become law (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

10. General treatment by state and non-state actors

This section contains information that refers generally to the treatment of LGBTI people or does not clearly identify whether the actions and/or attitudes are those of the state or of non-state actors. For information on treatment that can be ascribed explicitly to either state or non-state actors, see the relevant sections below.

[Back to Contents](#)

10.1 Violence, intimidation, discrimination and extortion

- 10.1.1 Radio France Internationale (RFI), a French state-owned international radio news station⁵⁸, in an article dated 26 August 2023, reported that Alex Kofi Donkor, director of LGBT+ Rights Ghana, a movement that champions the freedom of LGBT+ people in Ghana⁵⁹, 'shared that he has personally received death threats ...'⁶⁰. The article did not provide further details.

- 10.1.2 Freedom House, in their report 'Freedom in the World 2024', Ghana, covering events in 2023 (FH report covering events in 2023), stated: 'LGBT+ people face significant discrimination ... LGBT+ people and advocacy groups have reported rising levels of harassment, intimidation, and sometimes lethal violence in recent years.'⁶¹

- 10.1.3 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated '... extortion, denial of financial

⁵⁶ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), converted 17 May 2024

⁵⁷ Reuters, '[Ghana parliament reconvenes, approves World Bank loan ...](#)' 17 May 2024

⁵⁸ RFI, '[Who are we?](#)', no date

⁵⁹ LGBT+ Rights Ghana, '[LGBT+ Rights Ghana home page](#)', no date

⁶⁰ RFI, '[Gay rights activists fear for their safety ...](#)', 26 August 2023

⁶¹ FH, '[Ghana: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report](#)' (section F), 2024

services, public humiliation, and community ostracism were common.⁶²

- 10.1.4 The same source further reported: ‘Increased harassment compelled many members of the LGBTQI+ community to relocate from their homes ...’ It observed: ‘Civil society groups reported several LGBTQI+ community members permanently left the country because of increasing hate speech and harassment.’⁶³

[Back to Contents](#)

10.2 Meetings and demonstrations

- 10.2.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘LGBTQI+ persons ... were unable to meet in public or demonstrate, and landlords closed many private spaces community members used for meetings ...’⁶⁴

- 10.2.2 For information on unlawful assembly arrests, see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#) and [Police response](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

10.3 Removal of billboards promoting LGBTI tolerance

- 10.3.1 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated: ‘In June community leaders and local politicians illegally removed billboards in Accra and Tamale promoting LGBTQI+ tolerance.’⁶⁵

- 10.3.2 In an apparent reference to the same incident, the FH report ‘Freedom in the World 2023’, Ghana, covering events in 2022, gave a slightly different account, stating: ‘In June 2022, a billboard that promoted tolerance of the LGBT+ people was pulled down by Ghanaian security forces who were ordered to do so by members of Parliament that sponsored the 2021 bill.’⁶⁶

- 10.3.3 Also reporting on the billboards, Voice of America (VoA), a US state-owned news network⁶⁷, in an article dated 17 June 2022, stated:

‘... [A] crowd, urged on by a member of parliament, tore down a billboard that promoted tolerance toward the LGBTQ community ...

‘To mark Pride month, LGBTQ activists mounted billboards in the capital Accra and two other cities with the inscription “Love, Tolerance and Acceptance.”

‘However, the giant posters, positioned to catch the attention of commuters, sparked public uproar, prompting conservative MPs to call for their destruction.

‘Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, an opposition MP representing the Muslim-dominated constituency of Tamale, said he would not entertain activities of the LGBTQ+ community in his jurisdiction.

“They deliberately attempted to cause pain within Muslims in the northern region and that is why they placed it here,” Muhammed said. “We would not

⁶² USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁶³ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁶⁴ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁶⁵ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

⁶⁶ FH, ‘[Ghana: Freedom in the World 2023 Country Report](#)’ (section F), 2023

⁶⁷ VoA, ‘[Mission and Values - Voice of America Office of Public Relations](#)’, no date

allow this to happen within our jurisdiction. So we called the youth, we came together and pulled it down and burned it ...”

‘Sam George, another MP, is one of the sponsors of a proposed law seeking to criminalize LGBTQ+ advocacy ... George led a coalition last week to mount pressure on the police to tear down the billboard in Accra. That billboard was removed last Sunday.

‘George hailed Wednesday’s act led by his colleague MP by tweeting: “So long as they mount those billboards, we would bring them down.”’⁶⁸

10.3.4 Mamba Online, a privately-owned South African LGBTI news and information website⁶⁹, in an article dated 15 June 2022, reported that the Accra billboard was ‘pulled down by an unknown person’. It stated that this occurred after opposition politician Elikem E K Kotoko drew attention to the billboard on social media and after a subsequent visit to the billboard site by members of the anti-LGBTI group the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, accompanied by proponents of the anti-LGBT bill⁷⁰.

10.3.5 For more information on:

- potential implications of the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 for freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, see [The bill and its main provisions](#)
- Pride events, see [Pride events and activities](#)
- Muslim leaders’ attitudes to LGBTI people, see [Attitude of religious leaders and institutions](#)
- the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, see [Social and political background](#), [Anti-LGBTI groups](#) and [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

10.4 Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals

10.4.1 OpenDemocracy, an independent international media platform⁷¹, in an article ‘Top Ghanaian doctors use misinformation to train nurses in ‘conversion therapy’, dated 28 July 2022, based on various sources, stated:

‘Leading Ghanaian doctors provided anti-LGBTIQ health misinformation and promoted controversial “conversion therapy” practices at a workshop for medical professionals, openDemocracy has discovered.

‘The two-day workshop in the capital, Accra, on providing “treatment, care and support” for LGBTIQ people was run by the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association and aimed at nurses, psychologists, counsellors and midwives.

‘LGBTIQ people were described as “persons with sexual orientation and gender identity disorder”, and one speaker asked if homosexuality should be

⁶⁸ VoA, [‘LGBTQ Tolerance Billboards Destroyed in Ghana’](#), 17 June 2022

⁶⁹ Mamba Online, [‘Terms of Use & Privacy Policy’](#), no date

⁷⁰ Mamba Online, [‘Ghana | Uproar over LGBTQ+ billboards’](#), 15 June 2022

⁷¹ OpenDemocracy, [‘About openDemocracy’](#), no date

“rejected” as a vice or treated “as a disease”.⁷²

10.4.2 The article stated, ‘The event was organised by the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values (aka “The Coalition”), an anti-LGBTIQ campaign group in Ghana that is behind [the anti-LGBTI bill 2021] ...’ and further reported:

‘... [S]everal prominent Ghanaian doctors pushed outdated, discredited or entirely untrue theories about LGBTIQ people and their health during sessions at the workshop ...

‘Professor Afua A J Hesse, a lecturer in paediatric surgery at the University of Ghana’s medical school, gave a presentation on the “health impacts of LGBTQQA+ [sic] lifestyles” as “seen by paediatricians” ...

‘openDemocracy has seen a copy of her presentation; it contains graphic pictures of anal prolapse and lists bestiality as one of the “effects of LGBTIQ lifestyles”.

‘Professor Akwasi Osei, chief exec of Ghana’s Mental Health Authority, claimed that homosexuality is “an abnormality and a mental disorder” and anal sex is “disobedience to what God has said”. He also claimed that “some homosexual tendencies can be corrected through socialisation” and that “hormonal recreational therapy” can be used to “alter the unnatural balance in homosexual people”. Hormone therapy is commonly promoted as a type of ‘conversion therapy’.

‘The Mental Health Authority was set up by parliament in 2012 to “provide culturally appropriate humane and integrated mental health care throughout Ghana”.⁷³

10.4.3 The same source further stated:

“I think their views are mostly personal and do not represent the official position of mental health personnel in Ghana,” Sammy Ohene, a lecturer of psychiatry at the University of Ghana’s medical school, said of the health professionals who led sessions at the workshop ...

‘openDemocracy approached several regulators and health personnel authorities but none responded – to dispel or otherwise comment on the claims or conduct of their peers ...

‘However, a marketing brochure for the Accra workshop suggests it had official endorsement. It promises that participants will receive continuing professional development (CPD) certificates recognised by medical regulators. The Nursing and Midwifery Council renews its members’ licences annually and one of the requirements for renewal is CPD training ...⁷⁴

10.4.4 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘There were an increasing number of reported instances of so-called conversion therapies or practices, including by religious organizations, pressuring LGBTQI+ persons to “recant” their identity and reveal the identities of others in the LGBTQI+ community.’⁷⁵

⁷² OpenDemocracy, ‘[Ghana’s top doctors train nurses in anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’, 28 July 2022

⁷³ OpenDemocracy, ‘[Ghana’s top doctors train nurses in anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’, 28 July 2022

⁷⁴ OpenDemocracy, ‘[Ghana’s top doctors train nurses in anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’, 28 July 2022

⁷⁵ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

The report did not give further information in relation to this statement, including details about the number or nature of reports.

10.4.5 The same source stated: ‘There were reports of surgeries performed on intersex children. There were no reports of surgeries performed on nonconsenting adult intersex persons.’⁷⁶

10.4.6 For information on:

- the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, see [Social and political background](#) and [Anti-LGBTI groups](#)
- conversion practices in general, see the [2020 report](#) of the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- the legal position on conversion practices, see [Other legislation](#)
- conversion practices by traditional authorities, see [Traditional and religious ‘conversion practices’](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

11. State attitudes and treatment

11.1 Government and political leaders

11.1.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘Activists noted great difficulty in engaging officials on problems facing the LGBTQI+ community because of social and political prejudice.’⁷⁷

11.1.2 With regard to statements made by leaders, the same report 2023 stated: ‘For the third year in a row, there was a notable increase of anti-LGBTQI+ statements by high-ranking political figures and by religious and community leaders ... Most activists believed the presence of an anti-LGBTQI+ bill in parliament encouraged the statements.’⁷⁸

11.1.3 The HRW democracy article 2023 stated: ‘Some parliament members have been actively provoking anti-LGBT sentiment and practices ...’ Referring to Member of Parliament Sam George, one of the sponsors of the 2021 anti-LGBTI bill, the article reported: ‘Statements, by George and allies, claiming that sexual and gender equality are incompatible with African culture attract the support of religious and traditional leaders, and many Ghanaians.’⁷⁹

11.1.4 Citi Newsroom, the online news portal of Ghanaian privately-owned network Citi TV⁸⁰, in an article dated 29 June 2021, referred to statements made by the Speaker of Parliament, Alban Bagbin, when he was presented with the anti-LGBTI bill 2021. It stated:

‘Describing LGBTIQ activities as a pandemic, Alban Bagbin said it “must be fought by all of us.”

“I can tell you that it is more than COVID-19, and I am happy that our

⁷⁶ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁷⁷ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁷⁸ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁷⁹ HRW, ‘[Ghana’s Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)’, 12 December 2023

⁸⁰ Citi Newsroom, ‘[About Us](#)’, no date

beloved country, Ghana, is together in this.”⁸¹

- 11.1.5 MyJoyOnline, an online news outlet and part of the Ghanaian independent, privately-owned Multimedia Group⁸², in an article ‘I prefer to die than to see LGBTQ legalised – Alban Bagbin’, dated 13 June 2023, quoted the Speaker as saying: ‘For all you to participate in it [legalising LGBTQ activities], count me out of Ghana because I will prefer to join my maker than to live.’ It also reported that he told a press conference: ‘They [western countries] have the repercussions in their country and I can tell you that in the next 50 years, there will be no indigenous European [sic] in the world [because of a lack of procreation]’.⁸³
- 11.1.6 With regard to leaders’ dissemination of misleading information, the Washington Blade, a US privately-owned online and print LGBT news outlet⁸⁴, in an article ‘Ghanaian man assaulted for being gay’ (Washington Blade assault article 2024), dated 5 February 2024, stated: ‘Although President Nana Akufo-Addo has not signed the bill, many politicians and religious leaders have given Ghanaians the impression that it is now law.’⁸⁵
- 11.1.7 With regard to MPs’ support for the 2021 bill, CNN, in an article ‘Ghana’s parliament passes anti-homosexuality bill’ (CNN anti-homosexuality bill article 2024), dated 28 February 2024, reported that the bill was ‘unanimously passed’ by Parliament⁸⁶.
- 11.1.8 For information on:
- statements by members of parliament about medical services for LGBTI people, see [Healthcare and HIV/AIDS](#)
 - Sam George, see [Removal of billboards promoting LGBTI tolerance](#)
 - religious and traditional leaders, see [Attitude of religious leaders and institutions](#), [Attitude of traditional leaders](#) and [Treatment by traditional leaders](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

11.2 Arrests and prosecutions under the Criminal Code

- 11.2.1 For details of the ‘unnatural carnal knowledge’ law, see [Criminal Code](#).
- 11.2.2 Rights Africa, the website of the African Human Rights Media Network, a privately-owned network that publishes articles and videos to educate readers and viewers on the struggles of minorities⁸⁷, in an article ‘Ghana’s anti-LGBTQ bill leads to surge in anti-LGBTQ violence’ (Rights Africa surge in violence article 2021), dated 5 November 2021, quoted Rightify Ghana, a Ghanaian NGO whose stated mission is ‘to educate, empower and engage LGBTQI+ persons ...’⁸⁸, as reporting:

⁸¹ Citi Newsroom, ‘[LGBTQI “worse” than COVID-19 ...](#)’, 29 June 2021

⁸² Multimedia Group, ‘[Home](#)’, no date

⁸³ MyJoyOnline, ‘[I prefer to die than to see LGBTQ legalised - Alban Bagbin](#)’, 13 June 2023

⁸⁴ Washington Blade, ‘[About The Washington Blade](#)’, no date

⁸⁵ Washington Blade, ‘[Ghanaian man assaulted for being gay](#)’, 5 February 2024

⁸⁶ CNN, ‘[Ghana’s parliament passes anti-homosexuality bill](#)’, 28 February 2024

⁸⁷ Rights Africa, ‘[About](#)’, no date

⁸⁸ Rightify Ghana, ‘[About Us](#)’ no date

'Earlier today (Nov. 4), a court granted bail to 5 LGBTQ+ persons who were arrested on October 19 [2021], and charged with "unnatural carnal knowledge". They were remanded for two weeks and have been released today on bail. They are to reappear before the court on November 24 ... However, in this particular case, none of the accused were caught committing that offense. A mob attacked an initial two [and] got one to mention names of the other 3.'⁸⁹

11.2.3 ILGA, in a report 'Our Identities under Arrest' (ILGA report 2023), dated 30 November 2023, stated in relation to the same case: 'The five reportedly appeared in court on several occasions before the charges were finally dropped on 21 February 2022 due to a lack of evidence against them.'⁹⁰

11.2.4 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: 'There were no reports of adults prosecuted or convicted for consensual same-sex sexual conduct, but police used the law to harass the LGBTQI+ community through detention, extortion, and arbitrary arrest. Police and local leaders also used false arrests to "out" members of the LGBTQI+ community to humiliate and alienate them.'⁹¹

[Back to Contents](#)

11.3 Other arrests and prosecutions

11.3.1 The HRW hardships article 2021 stated:

'On May 20, 2021, Ghanaian police in Ho, in the Volta region, assisted by security forces, raided and unlawfully arrested 21 people, including a technician, during a paralegal training workshop about how to document and report human rights violations against LGBT people. They were detained for 22 days, then released on bail, and charged with unlawful assembly, a misdemeanor. The case was later dismissed for lack of evidence of a crime.'⁹²

11.3.2 For information on:

- treatment of the 21 people while in detention, see [Violations by police](#)
- lawsuits filed on behalf of the 21, see [Civil redress for alleged human rights violations](#)

11.3.3 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated: 'In Cape Coast, police detained two lesbian community members at a house that had served as a gathering spot for LGBTQI+ community members.' No explanation was provided in the report of the reasons for the arrests⁹³.

11.3.4 For information on arrests of LGBTI people following assaults perpetrated against them, see [Police response](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

11.4 Violations by police

11.4.1 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated: 'While arbitrary

⁸⁹ Rights Africa, '[Ghana's anti-LGBTQ bill leads to surge in anti-LGBTQ violence](#)', 5 November 2021

⁹⁰ ILGA, '[Our Identities under Arrest](#)' (pages 77, 78), 30 November 2023

⁹¹ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁹² HRW, '[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)', 20 September 2021

⁹³ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 20 March 2023

arrests and abuses were not unheard of in previous years, Ghanaian LGBTIQ activists report that heightened scrutiny of LGBTIQ people in 2021 resulting from the bill means that human rights violations by the police are more prevalent and concerted.’ The report, however, did not provide any detail of the prevalence and/or nature of these violations⁹⁴.

- 11.4.2 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated: ‘The LGBTQI+ community reported police violence against LGBTQI+ persons.’⁹⁵ It did not, however, provide details of the prevalence and/or nature of the violence.
- 11.4.3 Referring to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the national human rights ombudsman, OpenDemocracy, in an article ‘The queer hate crime case testing the limits of Ghana’s justice system’ (OpenDemocracy justice system article 2023), dated 26 September 2023, stated: ‘Ghana’s police service has ... been accused by the human rights commission of discriminating against queer people. In 2020, for example, 16 of the 38 incidents of anti-LGBTIQ abuse reported to the commission were against the police, including for blackmail, extortion and physical or verbal assaults.’⁹⁶
- 11.4.4 For more information on the CHRAJ and data on complaints about anti-LGBTI abuse by unspecified actors, see [Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice \(CHRAJ\)](#).
- 11.4.5 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) community were at particular risk for arbitrary arrest.’⁹⁷
- 11.4.6 With regard to specific cases, the HRW hardships article 2021, describing the [arrest of 21 activists](#) in Ho in the Volta region in May 2021 (see previous subsection), stated:
- ‘The activists said that eight police officers, accompanied by three journalists, forced their way into the conference room, physically assaulted some participants, and confiscated training materials, laptops, and diaries. Several heavily armed members of the Special Weapons and Tactics Unit (SWAT) were waiting outside the hostel for nurses and midwives, where the meeting was held, to assist with the arrests. The activists were taken to the Ho police headquarters, then back to the hostel, where their rooms were searched for “evidence” that they were committing a crime.
- ‘The people arrested were held in various detention sites for 22 days...
- ‘A.G., a 25-year-old lesbian, described the conditions in the cell where she was held with four other women, as being dungeonlike, with no window or light. Activists brought them the only food and drinking water she and fellow inmates received ...’⁹⁸
- 11.4.7 The article explained that families and friends are usually expected to bring food and water to those in pre-trial detention, but that families in this case did

⁹⁴ Outright International, ‘[“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 17), 29 August 2022

⁹⁵ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

⁹⁶ OpenDemocracy, ‘[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)’, 26 September 2023

⁹⁷ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

⁹⁸ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

not help because many were ‘angry that the detainee’s sexual orientation had been revealed’⁹⁹.

11.4.8 The HRW hardships article 2021 also stated:

‘H.T., whose full name as with the others is not being used for her protection, said that police officers humiliated her and other lesbians in detention. She said that police officers guarding them would sometimes enter their cell with their friends and say, “Come and look at the lesbians, they were the ones who were caught at the hotel doing lesbianism.”

‘... E.A., a 35-year-old gay man from Hohoe, a municipality in the Volta region, said that being detained left him feeling humiliated, though the visit of a sympathetic pastor mitigated the situation. The pastor explained sexual orientation and gender identity to other inmates, leading to better treatment by police and other detainees.’¹⁰⁰ The article reported that on the first night of her detention, A.H., aged 21 and the only intersex person among those arrested, ‘was detained in a cell with male detainees because the police insisted that she was not female’. It quoted her as saying:

‘... They told me to take off my clothes in front of everyone, so that they could check my genitals. I had no choice. One of the police officers took pictures of my body, and genitals. Later that day, a female officer took me into the washroom to also check my body and genitals physically. They told me if I insist that I am a female, they will get some of the male inmates to rape me to prove it. The first night I stayed in a male cell, I did not sleep at all. I stood in the corner all night because I was afraid of being raped.’¹⁰¹

11.4.9 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated: ‘During the immediate leadup to the Bill’s introduction in June 2021, Peace, an activist, reported that her organization handled a case in which police detained a gay man for five days and “beat him up, stripped him and took pictures of him.” Peace’s organization paid the bribe that police demanded in exchange for David’s release and took him to the hospital. Peace told OutRight, “The beating had caused David to have problems with his eyes. His entire face was swollen.”’¹⁰²

11.4.10 The same report, referring to the treatment of a non-binary person called Yafeu and their friend Frank, who were both arrested, stated:

‘Yafeu said the police commander demanded “bail” - meaning a bribe - but that officers in the Criminal Investigation Department did not allow a paralegal from an LGBTIQ rights organization “who is a bit effeminate, to bail [them].” ... They also told Outright the police did not want bail from a representative of a non-governmental organization (NGO) because they would ask for a receipt ... Instead, police asked for their family members to come and put forth the bribe, forcing the detained persons to out themselves to family members ...

‘While in detention, Frank said that police allowed members of the public to

⁹⁹ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

¹⁰⁰ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

¹⁰¹ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

¹⁰² Outright International, ‘[“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (pages 16-17), 29 August 2022

come to the cell and take pictures of him and Yafeu.’¹⁰³

11.4.11 The ILGA report 2023 stated: ‘The Head Pastor of a Church in the Central Region was arrested on 27 March 2022, apparently by means of vigilante entrapment though details remain unclear. The Pastor had approached a 25-year-old man for sex, and the pair seemingly arranged to meet at a building under construction nearby. The man in question claims to have then arranged for two of his friends to walk in on them so that the trio could apprehend the Pastor in the act. They handed the Pastor over to police, who later confirmed to media that he would be arraigned at the Kasoa District Court.’¹⁰⁴

11.4.12 With regard to police permission for holding events, the Outright International Pride report covering events in 2021 stated that an activist had reported that police would not grant permission ‘to host an event known to be an LGBTIQ event’.¹⁰⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

11.5 Treatment by military officers

11.5.1 GhanaWeb, in an article dated 6 March 2023, stated:

‘On Saturday evening, March 4, 2023, armed military men stormed and disrupted a birthday party organized in Gamashie (James-Town) by two young men claiming to be members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer community.

‘The reasons for the storming of the party are unknown, but according to eyewitnesses, some partygoers were injured.

‘Following the military officers’ attack, some of them bled.

‘Hajia Akita, a gay man from Jamestown, was said to have organized the party.

‘According to eyewitnesses, the party drew people claiming to be gay from various communities to the party grounds.

‘According to eyewitnesses, although it was a party, it was on the verge of becoming a wedding ceremony if it hadn’t been for the intervention.’¹⁰⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

12. Societal attitudes and treatment

12.1 Public opinion

12.1.1 The IGLA-RIWI [International LGBTI Association and a global survey technology company¹⁰⁷] 2016 Global Attitudes Survey on LGBTI people in partnership with LOGO [a logo designer¹⁰⁸] received a complete answer set from 96,331 respondents in 53 states across 5 continents. It did not report how many responses were received in Ghana specifically, but an undated

¹⁰³ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 17), 29 August 2022

¹⁰⁴ ILGA, ‘[Our Identities under Arrest](#)’ (page 78), 30 November 2023

¹⁰⁵ Outright International, ‘[2022 Pride Around the World Report](#)’, 22 June 2022

¹⁰⁶ GhanaWeb, ‘[Military men storm and disrupt birthday party of alleged gay men](#)’, 6 March 2023

¹⁰⁷ RIWI, ‘[RIWI - Global Trend-Tracking and Prediction Technology](#)’, no date

¹⁰⁸ LOGO.com, ‘[Free Logo Maker](#)’, no date

ILGA press release stated that the survey ‘only counted countries where over 700 people responded during the 60 days the survey was live’¹⁰⁹. The survey results for Ghana were as follows:

- Being LGBTI should be a crime:
 - Strongly agree – 43%
 - Somewhat agree – 11%
 - Neither – 21%
 - Somewhat disagree – 5%
 - Strongly disagree – 20%
- How would you feel if your neighbour was gay or lesbian?
 - No concerns – 46%
 - Somewhat uncomfortable – 18%
 - Very uncomfortable – 21%¹¹⁰

12.1.2 For more information on the survey methodology, see the ILGA [press release](#).

12.1.3 Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network registered as a non-profit corporation¹¹¹, whose team in Ghana, led by not-for-profit think tank Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)¹¹², interviewed 2,400 adult Ghanaians between 16 September and 3 October 2019¹¹³. In a July 2021 report on the outcome of these interviews and other research, Afrobarometer stated:

‘While unfair treatment based on ethnicity, religion, and economic status are not rare occurrences, most Ghanaians express tolerant attitudes toward their neighbours from different ethnic groups, religions, and nationalities. But very few extend the same level of tolerance to people in same-sex relationships.

‘... [F]ewer than one in 10 (7%) say they wouldn’t mind living next door to someone in a same-sex relationship ... The 93% who say they would “somewhat dislike” or “strongly dislike” having homosexual neighbours place Ghana near the top in terms of intolerance across 23 African countries surveyed between late 2019 and early 2021, well above the 80% average ... Intolerance toward people in same-sex relationships is pervasive across age groups, religious affiliations, and urban as well as rural locations. Citizens with no formal education are slightly less likely to express intolerance (88%) than their more educated counterparts (91%-95%) ...’¹¹⁴

12.1.4 Reuters, in an article ‘One trans woman’s fight against a bill that would criminalise Ghana’s LGBT+ community’ (Reuters woman’s fight article 2022), dated 3 February 2022, stated: ‘Homophobia is pervasive in the West

¹⁰⁹ ILGA, ‘[ILGA releases global research of attitudes towards LGBTI people](#)’, no date

¹¹⁰ ILGA, ‘[The ILGA-RIWI 2016 Global Attitudes Survey on LGBTI People ...](#)’, May 2016

¹¹¹ Afrobarometer, ‘[What we do](#)’, no date

¹¹² CDD-Ghana, ‘[Homepage](#)’, no date

¹¹³ Afrobarometer, ‘[... Ghanaians are united and hospitable but intolerant ...](#)’ (page 1), 1 July 2021

¹¹⁴ Afrobarometer, ‘[... Ghanaians are united and hospitable but intolerant ...](#)’ (page 1,6), 1 July 2021

African country and trans people are generally considered to be gay.¹¹⁵

- 12.1.5 Francis Acquah, Charles Owusu-Aduomi Botchwey, Prince Owusu Adoma and Emmanuel Kumah of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana, in a research article ‘Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and its legalisation in Africa: Insights from tertiary-level students in Ghana’, published 7 July 2023 on the Plos One website, presented results of a survey of 1,001 students in tertiary education in Ghana conducted in December 2022. The article stated that the ‘majority of the respondents (81%) were in support of the passage of anti-LGBTI and related legislations’. The article also observed ‘People’s level of support for the passage of anti-LGBTI legislation is influenced by several factors including religious beliefs, cultural values, and the perceived health implications of LGBTI.’¹¹⁶
- 12.1.6 With regard to public opinion specifically on the anti-LGBTI bill 2021, the Reuters debate article 2021 stated: ‘There have been no national opinion polls on the bill ... But supporters say the legislation has broad backing in the largely Christian West African country.’ The article provided no information on how opponents regarded the level of support for the bill¹¹⁷.

[Back to Contents](#)

12.2 Violence and discrimination - general

- 12.2.1 There were no official violence or discrimination statistics relating specifically to LGBTI people, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 12.2.2 The Rights Africa surge in violence article 2021 quoted Rightify Ghana as having stated on X (then Twitter): ‘Oct. 30 [2021] – While there used to be 3-4 cases per week, the cases have more than doubled since the far-reaching anti-LGBTQ bill was sent to Parliament. Now, we are 2-3 of human rights violations against LGBTQI persons per day[.] Unfortunately, the victims are sent to the police afterwards.’¹¹⁸
- 12.2.3 For more information on arrests of LGBTI people following assaults perpetrated against them, see [Police response](#).
- 12.2.4 The Reuters debate article 2021 stated: ‘LGBT+ rights groups in Ghana said they have seen a spike in homophobic attacks since the draft law was introduced in August.’¹¹⁹
- 12.2.5 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated: ‘There have been several mob attacks and public beatings of persons believed to be gay, especially in 2021.’¹²⁰
- 12.2.6 The same source stated: ‘Activists in Ghana report a rise in the instances of death threats targeting sexual and gender minorities since the Bill was introduced.’ It also reported: ‘Many interviewees reported that blackmail is increasing in prevalence since the Bill’s introduction.’¹²¹

¹¹⁵ Reuters, ‘[One trans woman's fight against a bill that would criminalise ...](#)’, 3 February 2022

¹¹⁶ Acquah, F, and others, Plos One, ‘[Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex ...](#)’, 7 July 2023

¹¹⁷ Reuters, ‘[Supporters and opponents face off over Ghana's anti-LGBT law](#)’, 12 November 2021

¹¹⁸ Rights Africa, ‘[Ghana's anti-LGBTQ bill leads to surge in anti-LGBTQ violence](#)’, 5 November 2021

¹¹⁹ Reuters, ‘[Supporters and opponents face off over Ghana's anti-LGBT law](#)’, 12 November 2021

¹²⁰ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (pages 18), 29 August 2022

¹²¹ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (pages 24, 25), 29 August 2022

12.2.7 Rightify Ghana, in an article ‘Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge in Bono and Ahafo regions, paralegals tell Rightify Ghana’, dated 28 May 2022 (Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022), commented that both the bill and ‘homophobic statements from religious, traditional, political and media personalities’ had contributed to the increase in cases of abuse¹²².

12.2.8 For more information on such statements, see [Attitude of religious leaders and institutions](#), [Attitude of traditional leaders](#), [Government and political leaders](#) and [Media](#).

12.2.9 The same article stated: ‘Information from both victims and paralegals have indicated that Mim, Goaso, Wenchi, Sunyani, Nkoranza and Techiman, as well as Tepa which is located in the Ashanti region but by proximity is near some of these areas in Bono Ahafo, Bono East and Ahafo regions, have recorded [a] troubling rise in abuse cases against LGBTQ people.’¹²³

12.2.10 The HRW democracy article 2023 reported that ‘... since 2021, debate around The Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021 has heightened attacks against LGBT people’¹²⁴.

12.2.11 CNN, in an article ‘A proposed law in this country would require citizens to report LGBTQ people to authorities’ (CNN citizens article 2023), dated 13 September 2023, quoted the executive director and co-founder of gender activist group One Love Sisters Ghana, using the pseudonym Lariba ‘for safety reasons’, as saying that when they were growing up in Accra coastal neighbourhood of James Town, ‘they never felt criticized for living the life they wanted to live, they said, even as an LGBTQ person’.¹²⁵

12.2.12 The article continued:

‘Of course, there were certain areas in Accra they couldn’t go, like some religious communities that wouldn’t be friendly to presumed LGBTQ people, said Lariba ... But there were also areas where anyone could go and be themselves, they said, neighborhoods where nobody ever questioned why someone may be dressed in a certain way or behaving in a certain manner.

‘Now, all that has changed, said Lariba ... If someone suspects that you, or someone you’re with, is gay — either from your gait, the way you dress, or who you may be holding hands with — you could be attacked, kidnapped or even lynched.’¹²⁶

12.2.13 For information on:

- treatment of activists, see [LGBTI activists and advocates](#)
- One Love Sisters Ghana, see [Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community](#)

12.2.14 The OpenDemocracy justice system article 2023 stated:

‘Backers of the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill, including Ghana’s government, have not acknowledged the increasing violence the

¹²² Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

¹²³ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

¹²⁴ HRW, ‘[Ghana’s Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)’, 12 December 2023

¹²⁵ CNN, ‘[A proposed law in this country would require citizens ...](#)’, 13 September 2023

¹²⁶ CNN, ‘[A proposed law in this country would require citizens ...](#)’, 13 September 2023

queer community has been facing since its announcement. Notably, at the UN Human Rights Office's Universal Periodic Review in February 2023 to assess human rights records, Ghana's attorney general Godfred Dame said: "There is no known record of the infliction of violence in Ghana against LGBTIQ+ persons."¹²⁷

12.2.15 The article further reported:

'The attorney general's denial of such incidents is one of the reasons a rights group, Rightify Ghana, stepped up efforts to document cases. In 2023 alone, Rightify has tracked close to 70 cases of abuse, ranging from discrimination in schools to violent attacks. The organisation believes these cases represent a small percentage of the actual instances of abuse against queer Ghanaians. Many LGBTIQ victims of violence, it said, do not report their cases to the police for fear of further victimisation.'¹²⁸

12.2.16 In an apparent reference to the same NGO, the USSD human rights report 2023 stated: 'Attacks by private citizens on LGBTIQ+ people were frequent and growing in number. The attacks were increasingly well organized ... A local civil society organization tracking violence against the LGBTIQ+ community reported more than 76 such attacks during the year. In January, assailants disrupted a traditional celebration with a homophobic attack against the chief celebrant ...'¹²⁹

12.2.17 For information on online harassment following the attack against the chief celebrant, see [Social media](#).

12.2.18 The USSD human rights report 2023 further stated: 'Verified attacks against LGBTIQ+ persons occurred in March, June, July, August, and October.'¹³⁰ It did not provide further details.

12.2.19 Solace Initiative, a non-governmental organisation founded in 2012¹³¹, in an undated entry on its website, stated it had supported 100 LGBT people via its hotline 'with issues ranging from partner abuse to blackmail and violence attack'. It did not provide information on whether its hotline was established in the same year the NGO was founded, when the incidents occurred or a breakdown by type of incident¹³².

12.2.20 Hivos, an international development organisation guided by humanist values¹³³, in an article 'Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana' (Hivos LGBTIQ+ article 2023), dated 16 November 2023, quoted activist Adisa Musah as saying: 'Anytime this bill is discussed in parliament, there's a huge backlash against the queer community, from targeted discrimination to physical abuse. But when the issue quiets down, so does the negativity towards our community.'¹³⁴

12.2.21 Reuters, in an article 'Ghana LGBTQ+ activists see church blessings as

¹²⁷ OpenDemocracy, '[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)', 26 September 2023

¹²⁸ OpenDemocracy, '[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)', 26 September 2023

¹²⁹ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹³⁰ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹³¹ Solace Initiative, '[Who We Are](#)', no date

¹³² Solace Initiative, '[What We Do](#)', no date

¹³³ Hivos, '[Key facts](#)', no date

¹³⁴ Hivos, '[Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana](#)', 16 November 2023

distant luxury’ (Reuters church blessings article 2024), dated 7 February 2024, stated: ‘There is no comprehensive data on the abuse LGBTQ+ people face in Ghana, but local news is filled with reports of suspected gay and transgender people suffering mob justice countrywide.’¹³⁵

12.2.22 With regard to treatment of LGBTI prisoners, the USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘LGBTQI+ persons in prison were vulnerable to harassment, as well as sexual, mental, and physical abuse ...’¹³⁶

12.2.23 For information on the prison authorities’ response, see [Prison authorities’ response to abuse against LGBTI people](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

12.3 Violence and discrimination: lesbians and bisexual women

12.3.1 The HRW hardships article 2021 reported that after her release, a lesbian woman among the 21 LGBTI people detained in Ho in the Volta region in May 2021 faced ‘[s]peculations about my sexual orientation and some people were saying they cannot work with a lady lesbian because we are Africans.’¹³⁷

12.3.2 For more information on the detention of the 21 people in Ho, see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#).

12.3.3 The CNN crackdown article 2021 stated that, according to activists, lesbians were among the victims who featured in anti-LGBTI abuse videos posted online¹³⁸.

12.3.4 For more information on the posting of abuse videos online, see [Social media](#).

12.3.5 Modern Ghana, a privately-owned online media portal¹³⁹, in an article ‘Man arrested for defiling alleged lesbian at Yilo Krobo’ (Modern Ghana Yilo Krobo article 2021), dated 29 October 2021, reported that a 25-year-old man had been arrested in the Eastern region after he and his friend allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl he suspected of being a lesbian.’¹⁴⁰

12.3.6 For information on the police response to the Yilo Krobo case, see [Police response](#).

12.3.7 The Outright International protection report 2022 quoted Rebecca, an LBQ activist in Accra, as saying her organisation had been dealing with a case in which ‘a woman’s husband raped the woman he caught her with’.¹⁴¹

12.3.8 The report quoted the same activist as saying that her organization had also been handling a case of rape of two “masculine-presenting women” who were gang-raped in 2021 by 6 men, “trying to force them to change their sexual orientation.”¹⁴²

¹³⁵ Reuters, ‘[Ghana LGBTQ+ activists see church blessings as distant luxury](#)’, 7 February 2024

¹³⁶ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹³⁷ HRW, ‘[Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention](#)’, 20 September 2021

¹³⁸ CNN, ‘[Ghana’s LGBTQ: How a US group with links to the far-right ...](#)’, 8 October 2021

¹³⁹ Modern Ghana, ‘[About Modern Ghana](#)’, no date

¹⁴⁰ Modern Ghana, ‘[Man arrested for defiling alleged lesbian at Yilo Krobo](#)’, 29 October 2021

¹⁴¹ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 22), 29 August 2022

¹⁴² Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 23), 29 August 2022

12.3.9 The Reuters church blessings article 2024 stated:

‘Ghanaian couple Kay and Naa Shika fear more for their lives and safety than whether a church will bless their same-sex union.

‘They have lived together for eight months, hiding their relationship by pretending to be sisters, even as they face gossip that risks spilling into hostility due to suspicions about their sexual orientation.

“‘We are not safe,” said 27-year-old Kay, a lesbian woman who spoke to Reuters in the capital Accra on condition that her and her partner's real names were not used ...

“‘Even when we don’t identify openly, some people, based on rumours, can harm us mentally or even physically [The article did not provide further information on this statement]”¹⁴³.

12.3.10 For information on the treatment of lesbian women by traditional chiefs, see [Treatment by traditional leaders](#).

12.3.11 There was no information on societal treatment of bisexual women in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

12.4 Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men

12.4.1 CNN, in an article ‘How a US group with links to the far-right may have influenced a crackdown on Ghana’s LGBTQ community’ (CNN crackdown article 2021), dated 8 October 2021, stated that in videos of anti-LGBTI harassment and attacks posted on social media, the victims were mostly men perceived to be gay¹⁴⁴.

12.4.2 For more information on the posting of attack videos online, see [Social media](#).

12.4.3 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 reported on an attack on a gay man, stating:

‘According to a victim’s account, the four (4) men who beat and robbed him two weeks ago at Mim in the Ahafo region, showed him several videos of how they had abused their previous victims.

‘They also disclosed their links to other violent anti-LGBTQ groups in some towns; telling him that “they are our friends” and also mentioned to him the names of people who beat up a gay person at Techiman, and which the videos of the violent attack was released on social media.’¹⁴⁵

12.4.4 The article stated that the gay man attacked in Techiman had been beaten and pulled through sand naked. It further reported that a gay man had been stripped naked and beaten in Odumase in the town of Sunyani in the Bono region and that a video of that attack had also been posted on social media. The article did not give dates of the Techiman and Odumase incidents¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ Reuters, ‘[Ghana LGBTQ+ activists see church blessings as distant luxury](#)’, 7 February 2024

¹⁴⁴ CNN, ‘[Ghana's LGBTQ: How a US group with links to the far-right ...](#)’, 8 October 2021

¹⁴⁵ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

¹⁴⁶ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

- 12.4.5 For more information on the posting of these and other attack videos on social media, and on the luring of LGBTI people via the internet with the intention of harming them, see [Social media](#).
- 12.4.6 Rightify Ghana, in an article dated 2 July 2022 (Rightify Ghana Nungua article 2022), reported that a gay man was slapped, subjected to homophobic name-calling and threatened in Nungua in the Greater Accra Region on 2 July 2022 by 2 men, who were then joined by an unspecified number of other people. They beat him and took his phone and he had to pay them to return it, according to the article¹⁴⁷. The same source stated: ‘Expressing concern on the rising intolerance and discriminatory behaviours against LGBTQI+ Ghanaians, he said he is 32 years old and “this is my first time I have been harassed, this is my first time I have been beaten, this is my first time I have been blackmailed. I’m afraid ...”¹⁴⁸
- 12.4.7 The HRW article 2023 reported that an activist investigating the dismissal of a 17-year-old from a boys’ boarding school in Accra discovered ‘other forms of homophobic acts against the child, including a death threat, because he appeared effeminate’¹⁴⁹.
- 12.4.8 For more information on the boarding school case, see [Education](#).
- 12.4.9 The CNN citizens article 2023 cited a Rightify Ghana post on X (formerly Twitter) reporting that in April 2023, ‘four men were allegedly beaten in Kumasi, one of the largest cities in the country, because attackers thought they were gay ...’¹⁵⁰
- 12.4.10 The Ghana Report, a website that provides news and information ‘from diverse angles across the globe’¹⁵¹, in an article ‘3 Persons Remanded For Allegedly Assaulting Man On Suspicion of Being Gay’ (Ghana Report Kentikrono assault article 2023), dated 28 April 2023, reported that a group of 5 men ‘viciously attacked’ a 22-year-old man. It stated that the group ‘allegedly abused, robbed, sprayed a substance into the victim’s eyes, and demanded a ransom from his family because they claimed he was gay’ and that he was ‘left with glass louver blade wounds on Saturday [22 April 2023] at Kentikrono, in Kumasi after one of the accused invited him [there].’¹⁵²
- 12.4.11 For information on the authorities’ response to the Kentikrono incident, see [Police response](#) and [Court hearings, convictions and settlements](#).
- 12.4.12 The Ghana Report, in a May 2023 “‘Gay Helper” In Trouble’ stated: ‘An auto mechanic at Adenta in Accra is in trouble after saving the life of a gay client, who was being attacked by a group of homophobic youth.’ The article reported that after mechanic Mamudu Iddrisu helped his gay client escape, the gang of youths that had been attacking his client accused Iddrisu of being a member of the ‘secret gay community which various youth groups in Ghana are fighting to eradicate’. The group attacked Iddrisu’s home, and ‘as

¹⁴⁷ Rightify Ghana, ‘[AUDIO: ‘I am not safe’ – Gay man details harassment ...](#)’, 2 July 2022

¹⁴⁸ Rightify Ghana, ‘[AUDIO: ‘I am not safe’ – Gay man details harassment ...](#)’, 2 July 2022

¹⁴⁹ HRW, ‘[Ghana’s Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)’, 12 December 2023

¹⁵⁰ CNN, ‘[A proposed law in this country would require citizens ...](#)’, 13 September 2023

¹⁵¹ The Ghana Report, ‘[About Us](#)’, no date

¹⁵² The Ghana Report, ‘[3 persons remanded for allegedly assaulting man ...](#)’, 28 April 2023

at the time of filing this story, he was nowhere to be found.¹⁵³

12.4.13 GhanaWeb, in an article ‘Alleged gay man attacked at Sowutuom, stabbed more than six times’ (GhanaWeb Sowutuom article 2023), dated 19 July 2023, stated that a young man was ‘violently attacked and beaten’ in Sowutuom, Accra, by an unidentified group. It stated: ‘Bystanders reportedly refused to intervene, claiming that the victim was gay and had deliberately gone to the area for a sexual encounter.’ The article quoted a report by privately-owned radio station Rainbow Radio¹⁵⁴ as suggesting the victim was stabbed more than 6 times¹⁵⁵.

12.4.14 For information on the posting of footage of the attack, see [Social media](#).

12.4.15 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘In May, three persons assaulted and robbed a man after contacting him on social media, justifying the assault because they believed the victim was gay.’¹⁵⁶

12.4.16 For information on the police and prosecutors’ response to the May 2023 case, see [Police response](#) and [Court hearings, convictions and settlements](#).

12.4.17 The Washington Blade assault article 2024 reported:

‘Four people last week assaulted a Ghanaian man who they accused of being gay.

‘According to the Queer Ghana Education Fund, the four men who attacked the man in Zuarungu in the country’s Upper East Region referenced the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill, an anti-LGBTQ bill that is currently before MPs. The assailants, according to QuGEF, told the 25-year-old man, who the group identified as Francis, that the measure had become law.

“They ambushed and accused him of homosexuality and told him that the bill had been passed into law and that they were acting according to the law,” said QuGEF in a press release.¹⁵⁷

12.4.18 For information on the police response to this assault, see [Police response](#).

12.4.19 With regard to bisexual men, the Outright International protection report 2022 quoted Moses, a bisexual man living in the Ashanti region, as saying, ‘Before the Bill, it was normal. But now, people look at us like we’re satanic. Like, we are the cause of the issues happening in Ghana. We used to have safe places to go to, but now we don’t.’¹⁵⁸

12.4.20 The report stated that in December 2021, a group of 8 people came to Moses’ home and took his phone and laptop, threatening to out him unless he paid them 1,000 cedis [GBP67.80¹⁵⁹]. He gave them what he could but they returned the following month. The report continued:

‘He asked another man in his shared house for help, but when he explained

¹⁵³ The Ghana Report, ‘[Gay helper in trouble](#)’, 11 May 2023

¹⁵⁴ Rainbow Radio, ‘[Rainbow Radio Accra and London](#)’, no date

¹⁵⁵ GhanaWeb, ‘[Alleged gay man attacked at Sowutuom, stabbed more than six times](#)’, 19 July 2023

¹⁵⁶ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁵⁷ Washington Blade, ‘[Ghanaian man assaulted for being gay](#)’, 5 February 2024

¹⁵⁸ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 5), 29 August 2022

¹⁵⁹ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), converted 16 February 2024

that he was being harassed because of his bisexuality, the housemate refused to assist ...

'Outright received information in June 2022 that Moses' neighbors had attacked him again, beating him in March and April 2022 ...'

12.4.21 The same source also reported:

'Kwame, a bisexual man who works in the Central Region, was set up by a close friend that knew his sexual orientation:

“He [the friend] told me that he had a gay friend and arranged for us to meet. I didn't know it was a set-up. I met up with the guy. We were talking when three other guys came to meet us and started questioning me. 'Are you the one that is gay?' And they beat me up. I was trying to talk and defend myself, but they beat me. I was so afraid of what they could do to me.”

'On another occasion, Kwame said neighbors harassed and provoked a fight with him, forcing him to leave his neighborhood.'¹⁶⁰

12.4.22 The report further stated that when Kwame moved to a new region, he received death threats from his new neighbours¹⁶¹.

[Back to Contents](#)

12.5 Violence and discrimination: trans people

12.5.1 The CNN crackdown article 2021 stated that, according to activists, trans people were among the victims who featured in anti-LGBTI abuse videos posted online¹⁶².

12.5.2 For more information on the posting of abuse videos online, see [Social media](#).

12.5.3 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated:

'Solomon, a trans woman who lives around Ghana's Central region, ... suffered violence in her neighborhood. She was standing in front of an apartment with a new friend when the friend got a phone call. Within a few minutes, Solomon said: I saw six guys coming towards us. One of them asked me how I was doing, and I said I was fine. The next thing was a slap on my face. They all pounced on me and beat me mercilessly ... They used belts and wires to flog me. They poured water on me, and they tore my knicker. They recorded me and said they would make the video go viral, if I didn't bring 2000 Ghana cedis ... [GBP127.60¹⁶³].'¹⁶⁴

12.5.4 The report further stated:

'Blue is an activist with an LBQ organization, and when Outright interviewed him he was working to secure justice for a trans man raped by four men in a market in 2021 ...

Donald, a paralegal, told Outright he received a case in which six men, after

¹⁶⁰ Outright International, "["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)" (page 23), 29 August 2022

¹⁶¹ Outright International, "["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)" (page 24), 29 August 2022

¹⁶² CNN, '[Ghana's LGBTQ: How a US group with links to the far-right ...](#)', 8 October 2021

¹⁶³ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), converted 16 February 2024

¹⁶⁴ Outright International, "["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)" (page 22), 29 August 2022

repeatedly harassing a trans woman in their neighborhood in Accra, saw her coming out of a bath house and gang-raped her ...¹⁶⁵

12.5.5 The Hivos LGBTIQ+ article 2023 stated:

‘Before 2021, when the discussions around the bill started, things were not so bad. Adisa used to wear his traditionally masculine Ghanaian outfit in public without a problem, but this is no longer the case.

“Right now, for my own safety and sanity, I’d better not wear those clothes out on the street. As someone who was assigned female at birth, I’m less likely to be attacked by a mob. But the verbal abuse is terrible. Luckily, I have a car, but I’ve heard from other masculine-presenting women that they haven’t been allowed on public transportation because of their appearance. Even taxis refuse them. For feminine-presenting men and trans women, the situation is worse. They’re usually attacked physically. People either follow them in the streets or ask them to meet up through social media as if it’s a date. Then they are attacked or even stabbed. We’ve seen community members get killed this way.”¹⁶⁶

12.5.6 Modern Ghana, in an article ‘University of Ghana denounces assault on “gay stranger” on campus’ (Modern Ghana campus article 2024), dated 17 January 2024, quoted a statement issued by the University of Ghana reporting that a young man ‘dressed like a female’ had been assaulted on its Legon campus. The article reported:

‘The statement said perceiving him to be a woman, some women in the area accommodated him.

‘The statement said at night, the women realised that the stranger was a man and physically assaulted him.

‘It said a refuse collector, who thought the young man was a woman, intervened and took him to a refuse collection site ... on the University of Ghana campus.

‘Realising the true gender of the young man the following morning, the refuse collector also assaulted the stranger and instructed him to leave the area before the University of Ghana Security Personnel were alerted by students to intervene, the statement said.’¹⁶⁷

12.5.7 Referring to the same incident, MyNewsGh.com, a privately-owned non-partisan news outlet¹⁶⁸, reported that the man had been ‘manhandled’ and ‘paraded through the streets of the university naked over claims that he was a member of the LGBTQI+ community’. It added: “While he was being paraded, he was being given some lashes by some students ...”¹⁶⁹

12.5.8 For more information on:

- the posting of footage of the above attack online, see [Social media](#)

¹⁶⁵ Outright International, ‘[“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 23), 29 August 2022

¹⁶⁶ Hivos, ‘[Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana](#)’, 16 November 2023

¹⁶⁷ Modern Ghana, ‘[University of Ghana denounces assault on “gay stranger” ...](#)’, 17 January 2024

¹⁶⁸ MyNewsGh.com, ‘[About Us](#)’, no date

¹⁶⁹ MyNewsGh.com, ‘[CDD urges UG Authorities to punish students ...](#)’, 16 January 2024

- the university's policy and response to the attack, see [Education](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.6 Violence and discrimination - intersex people

12.6.1 There was no information on instances of societal violence and discrimination against intersex people, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

12.6.2 For information on:

- traditional leaders' treatment of intersex people, see [Attitude of traditional leaders](#)
- treatment by police of an intersex detainee, see [Violations by police](#)
- surgeries performed on intersex people, see [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.7 LGBTI activists and advocates

12.7.1 News Ghana, a privately-owned online news outlet^{170 171}, in an article dated 19 February 2022, reported:

'The troubles of a gay rights advocate is [sic] far from over.

'A year after he was attacked and chased out of Aboabo, a suburb of Kumasi in the Ashanti region, Safowan Awudu is still receiving threats of death from residents especially the youth.

'The Watchdog Committee of the Aboabo township, has branded Safowan Awudu as a traitor and a disgrace to the community and Islam as a whole.

'They had threatened to make Kumasi and Ghana a living hell for not only Safowan but anyone found to be an LGBTQ+ practitioner or sympathizer.

'In a latest development, the youth stormed Safowan Awudu's residence after they received an information that the runaway gay sympathizer had been deported back from the USA where he was said to be seeking for asylum.

'According [to] an eye witness, the group stormed Safowan's residence in a rambo style wielding sharp and offensive weapons.

"They entered the house brandishing machetes and some weapons and shouting were is the traitor [sic]," the source said.

'The source who spoke on the condition of anonymity pointed out that he was in the compound when the scary dressed watchdog group members came into the house.

"They told us that they had information that Safowan had returned to the area and he is hidden in the house so they have come to teach him a lesson but we mustered courage and told them that Safowan has never been seen since the last time he was attacked and beaten."

¹⁷⁰ News Ghana, '[About Us](#)', no date

¹⁷¹ GhanaWeb, '[News Ghana, Russia's Sputnik Information Agency ...](#)', 21 April 2021

“The Youth who were more than fifteen asked if we were also aware of his whereabouts and when last we saw him”, he added.

‘They threatened to kill him anytime they will get him for sympathizing with and advocating for LGBTQI.’¹⁷²

12.7.2 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 stated that when its executive director attempted to negotiate with an anti-LGBTI group for the release of a gay man attacked in Mim in the Ahafo Region, the executive director was threatened by a man he believed to be the leader of the group, who he heard say ‘ ... [L]et’s go after him later’¹⁷³.

12.7.3 For more information on the Mim case, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#).

12.7.4 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated that attacks by private citizens on LGBTI+ individuals ‘in some cases targeted outspoken activists ...’¹⁷⁴

12.7.5 The USSD also stated: ‘In August [2022] unknown assailants in the Ashanti Region kidnapped, assaulted, and blackmailed a prominent human rights advocate because of their LGBTQI+ advocacy.’¹⁷⁵

12.7.6 Pink News, a privately-owned news outlet that campaigns for LGBTI rights¹⁷⁶, reported in an article ‘Violent homophobic thugs held Ghanaian LGBTQ+ activist hostage: “Annoy us and we’ll kill you”’, dated 28 August 2022 (Pink News hostage article 2022), that on that occasion, too, the advocate in question was the executive director of Rightify Ghana and that his attackers belonged to an ‘anti-gay group’¹⁷⁷.

12.7.7 For more information on:

- civil society organisations, see [Registration and operation of civil society organisations](#) and [Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community](#)
- the activities of anti-LGBTI groups, see [Anti-LGBTI groups](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.8 Anti-LGBTI groups

12.8.1 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 noted that ‘[a]nti-LGBTQ groups have been emboldened’ by the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 going through the Parliamentary process and by public statements made by religious, traditional and political leaders and media personalities¹⁷⁸.

12.8.2 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 reported that when a traditional leader, the Chief of Dormaa, threatened to storm Parliament to get the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 passed, a Bono youth group released a statement backing him, stating: ‘We’re a Bono united behind Dormaahene in this battle for our soul and sovereignty. We’re numbered not only in our tens of

¹⁷² News Ghana, ‘[Aboabo Residents On Manhunt For Gay Activist](#)’, 19 February 2022

¹⁷³ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

¹⁷⁴ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

¹⁷⁵ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

¹⁷⁶ Pink News, ‘[A unique career](#)’, no date

¹⁷⁷ Pink News, ‘[Violent homophobic thugs held Ghanaian LGBTQ activist ...](#)’, 28 August 2022

¹⁷⁸ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

thousands but in our millions, snaking about all the streets of Ghana to wage this war.¹⁷⁹

- 12.8.3 For more information on the Chief of Dormaa’s statement, see [Attitude of traditional leaders](#).
- 12.8.4 The Pink News hostage article reported that Rightify Ghana had tweeted that the group responsible for attacking their executive director in the Ashanti region in August 2022 was a ‘notorious and organised anti-gay group’. The article quoted the executive director as saying that the group, which Rightify Ghana did not name, told him they carry out a ‘highly organised campaign of violence against LGBTQ+ Ghanaians’¹⁸⁰.
- 12.8.5 For more information on the 2022 Ashanti attack, see [LGBTI activists and advocates](#) and [Police response](#).
- 12.8.6 The AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 quoted an unnamed source interviewed online by the organisation in October 2023 as ‘accus[ing] [US evangelical groups] of being behind the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021 as well as resourcing the local groups and personalities in Ghana to attack the LGBTI people.’¹⁸¹ The report quoted the same source as saying: ‘This is an imported hate which is coming. Before there were people that hated gay people, but they were not organized[,] they were not resourced until these evangelical anti-LGBTI group[s] started coming into our country.’¹⁸²
- 12.8.7 For information on:
- attacks perpetrated by small groups of men, see [Social media](#), [Violence and discrimination: lesbians and bisexual women](#), [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#) and [Violence and discrimination: trans people](#)
 - a local watchdog group’s response to the return of an LGBTI activist asylum seeker, see [LGBTI activists and advocates](#)
 - an anti-LGBTI group of journalists, see [Media](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.9 Media

- 12.9.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘Media coverage of LGBTQI+ matters was usually negative.’¹⁸³
- 12.9.2 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated:
- ‘Media outlets in Ghana bear significant responsibility for sharing disinformation and inciting anti-LGBTQ bias since the Bill’s introduction. Media houses have published inciting statements by religious and political leaders on various platforms, presented as “news” without any fact-checking or presentation of different perspectives. The Bill’s proponents capitalize on

¹⁷⁹ Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

¹⁸⁰ Pink News, ‘[Violent homophobic thugs held Ghanaian LGBTQ activist ...](#)’, 28 August 2022

¹⁸¹ AI, ‘[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)’ (page 22), 9 January 2024

¹⁸² AI, ‘[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)’ (page 22), 9 January 2024

¹⁸³ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

the purported erosion of traditional family and cultural values as a result of gender and sexual diversity. Much of the local media coverage advances anti-LGBTIQ sentiments “to build engagement on their sites,” while little attention is devoted to human rights abuses against LGBTIQ people.¹⁸⁴

12.9.3 The report further stated: ‘Outing of LGBTIQ people by media outlets has also contributed to abuses.’¹⁸⁵

12.9.4 With regard to journalists, the Washington Post, in an article dated 8 September 2021, stated:

‘Following the shutdown of the LGBTQI resource center in February [2021], a group that calls itself Journalists Against LGBTQ Plus added its voice to the ongoing polarizing discussions in the media about queer and trans people. This action is in direct contravention of the Ghana Journalists Association Code of Ethics, which stipulates that journalists may not produce material that can fuel hatred on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. But the GJA and the regulatory body, the National Media Commission, have been silent on the violations.’¹⁸⁶

12.9.5 For information on other anti-LGBTI groups, see [Anti-LGBTI groups](#).

12.9.6 Pink News, in an article dated 16 July 2021, stated that Rightify Ghana had ‘hit out at Kantanka TV, a Ghanaian television station, saying the news anchor and reporter “glorified” [a mob attack on a gay man in Wa] and failed to condemn it.’ Quoting from a Rightify Ghana post on social media, the article stated: ‘The video we [Rightify Ghana] shared highlights how the Ghanaian media covers LGBTQ issues in Ghana. Even when a victim has his rights taken away in a life threatening situation, you see how the anchor and reporter glorified the violent attack, saying gays should be beaten.’¹⁸⁷

12.9.7 With regard to a disparity in media coverage among different groups within the LGBTI community, the HRW women article 2022 stated: ‘... [M]uch of the queerphobic violence reported in the media has focused on violence against gay men and transgender women. The harm experienced by lesbian, bisexual and queer women has received much less attention.’¹⁸⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

12.10 Social media

12.10.1 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 stated: ‘Many blackmailers and anti-LGBTQ people (including organised violent groups, normally about 3-5 people in number) continue to use social media to lure and harm gay people. Whilst these hate crimes were usually recorded at places in Accra (Christian Village and nearby communities) and Kumasi (Asuofia, Barekese road), it is now wide spread in many Ghanaian cities and towns.’¹⁸⁹

12.10.2 GhanaWeb, in an article ‘Police intervention saves suspected gay man from lynching at Bibiani Zongo’ (GhanaWeb Bibiani Zongo article 2023), dated 1

¹⁸⁴ Outright International, [“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 31), 29 August 2022

¹⁸⁵ Outright International, [“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 31), 29 August 2022

¹⁸⁶ Washington Post, [‘An anti-LGBTQI bill in Ghana is the outcome ...’](#), 8 September 2021

¹⁸⁷ Pink News, [‘Gay man ‘beaten to a pulp’ by ‘homophobic mob’](#), 16 July 2021

¹⁸⁸ HRW, [‘Homophobia is a Feminist Issue’](#), 8 March 2022

¹⁸⁹ Rightify Ghana, [‘Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...’](#), 28 May 2022

July 2023, reported that a man drove from Bogoso to Bibiani Zongo to meet someone he had encountered on Facebook and had agreed to have sex with. Upon arrival, he was 'ambushed' and interrogated by an angry mob that had been assembled by the man he met on Facebook. The man had suspected he was gay based on his messages and questions and had 'purposefully invited him over to expose him because what he was doing was evil'¹⁹⁰.

12.10.3 For information on the police response to the incident, see [Police response](#).

12.10.4 With regard to online harassment, Freedom House, in a report 'Freedom on the Net 2023, Ghana' (FH Internet report 2023), dated 4 October 2023, covering the period 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023, based on various sources, stated: 'LGBT+ people in Ghana experience harassment and intimidation ... online ... Online harassment and threats received by LGBT+ activists increased after the introduction of the 2021 Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values bill.'¹⁹¹

12.10.5 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated that following a homophobic attack against the chief celebrant at a traditional celebration in January, 'Social media harassment continued following the incident, until the victim left the country.'¹⁹²

12.10.6 With regard to the sharing of footage of attacks, the CNN crackdown article 2021 stated that attacks recorded on camera had formed 'a pattern of abuse seen in Ghana over several years', adding: 'Video after video show Ghanaians – mostly men perceived as being gay – being harassed and beaten on camera, sometimes stripped naked by their assailants. Lesbian and trans Ghanaians are also targeted, say activists ...'¹⁹³

12.10.7 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated attacks by private citizens were '... sometimes shared on social media to further humiliate and ostracize LGBTQI+ persons.'¹⁹⁴

12.10.8 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 reported that videos of attacks on gay men in Techiman in the Bono East Region and Sunyani in the Bono Region, respectively, as well as the beating and 'cleansing' of a gay man in Nkoranza in the Bono East Region, 'went viral on social media.'¹⁹⁵

12.10.9 For more information on the Techiman, Sunyani and Nkoranza incidents, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#) and [Treatment by traditional leaders](#).

12.10.10 The Modern Ghana campus article 2024 stated that an attack on a man dressed in women's clothing at the University of Ghana 'was videoed and widely share on social media.'¹⁹⁶

12.10.11 For more information on the university case, see [Violence and](#)

¹⁹⁰ GhanaWeb, '[Police intervention saves suspected gay man from lynching](#)', 1 July 2023

¹⁹¹ FH, '[Ghana: Freedom on the Net 2023 Country Report](#)' (section C7), 4 October 2023

¹⁹² USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁹³ CNN, '[Ghana's LGBTQ: How a US group with links to the far-right ...](#)', 8 October 2021

¹⁹⁴ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

¹⁹⁵ Rightify Ghana, '[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)', 28 May 2022

¹⁹⁶ Modern Ghana, '[University of Ghana denounces assault on "gay stranger" ...](#)', 17 January 2024

[discrimination: trans people](#) and [Education](#).

12.10.12 The GhanaWeb Sowutuom article 2023 stated that when a man was attacked by a group in Sowutuom, ‘disturbing footage’ of the incident was shared on Twitter¹⁹⁷.

12.10.13 For information on:

- the Sowutuom attack, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#)
- social media used for pro-LGBTI support, see [Online advocacy, networking and support](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.11 Attitude of religious leaders and institutions

12.11.1 The Washington Post, in an article ‘An anti-LGBTQI bill in Ghana is the outcome of institutionalized homophobia’, dated 8 September 2021, stated:

‘... [E]fforts to embed homophobia in Ghana’s education, religious, health and political institutions have ramped up in recent years. This rise in anti-LGBTQI attitudes and discourses has worked hand in hand with the growth of evangelical religious groups that have gained institutional power and garnered tremendous influence to shape policy.

‘Religious institutions have been the biggest opinion leaders and sponsors of homophobic discourse in the public sphere. In the past decade, the Christian Council of Ghana has spearheaded campaigns to set the agenda on sexualities in Ghana. The Ghana Christian Council and the Office of the National Chief Imam have repeatedly expressed open support for the criminalization of LGBTQI people. Groups such as the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, which is supported by white-supremacist and American Christian-right groups such as the World Congress of Families, piggyback off existing patriarchal values to promote anti-gay rhetoric. It is therefore unsurprising that this is the group after which today’s anti-LGBTQI bill is named.

‘That religion occupies an integral part of everyday life in Ghana makes these pronouncements by religious institutions alarming and emboldens homophobes to attack LGBTQI people.’¹⁹⁸

12.11.2 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated that for the third year running, there was a ‘notable increase’ in anti-LGBTI statements by, among others, religious leaders, which activists believed were spurred on by ‘the presence of an anti-LGBTQI+ bill in parliament.’¹⁹⁹

12.11.3 With regard to the Anglican Church, Pink News, in an article dated 4 February 2022, stated:

‘In a blistering joint attack, Ghana’s Anglican bishops have condemned a roughshod anti-LGBT+ bill following an intervention by British archbishops ...

“‘We agreed that, though human dignity is always dominant, LGBTQI+

¹⁹⁷ GhanaWeb, ‘[Alleged gay man attacked at Sowutuom, stabbed more than six times](#)’, 19 July 2023

¹⁹⁸ Washington Post, ‘[An anti-LGBTQI bill in Ghana is the outcome of ...](#)’, 8 September 2021

¹⁹⁹ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

activities are frowned upon by the Ghanaian ethnicity and therefore, traditions, values, cultural and social frameworks must not also only be regarded but, respected and appreciated,” the statement said according to the Church Times.

“Nevertheless, Ghanaian citizens must not use the bill as an avenue to assault persons with homosexual orientation but show love to them as the Church of Jesus Christ is called to demonstrate the love of God by protecting all vulnerable people and groups.”

‘It added: “We further agree that the criminalisation of sections of the bill are severe and must be reviewed. Rather we propose a transformational agenda.”²⁰⁰

12.11.4 The article commented: ‘It’s a stunning about-face for the Anglican Church of Ghana, where leaders had previously signalled support for the so-called Family Values Bill, prompting international outcry.’²⁰¹

12.11.5 In relation to the Presbyterian Church, MyJoyOnline, in an article dated 10 March 2022, stated: ‘The Presbyterian Church has condemned the activities of the LGBTQIA+ and their advocates in the country. During a public hearing on the Anti-LGBTQ + Bill on Thursday [10 March 2022], Dr. Adu-Okoree, who spoke on behalf of the Church said the activities of LGBTQI+ persons and their advocates are inimical to the existence of the human race and a threat to Christian values.’²⁰²

12.11.6 With regard to the Catholic Church, MyJoyOnline, in an article dated 12 December 2023, stated: ‘The Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference (GCBC) has thrown its weight behind the passage of the LGBTQ+++ Bill, saying it must be passed into law to protect authentic Ghanaian family values which are under threat from homosexual acts.’²⁰³

12.11.7 The BBC, in an article dated 27 November 2023 about Cardinal Peter Turkson, a Ghanaian cardinal now based at the Vatican²⁰⁴, reported:

‘Homosexuality should not be a criminal offence and people should be helped to understand the issue better, a top cardinal from Ghana has told the BBC ...

His views are at odds with Roman Catholic bishops in Ghana, who say homosexuality is “despicable”.

‘Last month, Pope Francis suggested he would be open to having the Catholic Church bless same-sex couples.’²⁰⁵

12.11.8 The article further stated: ‘Cardinal Turkson said he thought that what had led to the current efforts to pass strict anti-gay measures in several African countries were “attempts to link some foreign donations and grants to certain positions ...”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ Pink News, [‘Bishops in Ghana condemn harrowing anti-LGBT bill ...’](#), 4 February 2022

²⁰¹ Pink News, [‘Bishops in Ghana condemn harrowing anti-LGBT bill ...’](#), 4 February 2022

²⁰² MyJoyOnline, [‘LGBTQIA+ activities are inimical to the existence ...’](#), 10 March 2022

²⁰³ MyJoyOnline, [‘Catholic Bishop’s Conference throws weight ...’](#), 12 December 2023

²⁰⁴ America Magazine, [‘Pope Francis picks popular Ghanaian cardinal ...’](#), 4 April 2022

²⁰⁵ BBC, [‘Ghana Cardinal Peter Turkson: It’s time to understand ...’](#), 27 November 2023

²⁰⁶ BBC, [‘Ghana Cardinal Peter Turkson: It’s time to understand ...’](#), 27 November 2023

12.11.9 With regard to the attitude of specific individual churches, Reuters news agency, in an article ‘One trans woman’s fight against a bill that would criminalise Ghana’s LGBT+ community’ (Reuters trans artist article 2022), dated 3 February 2022, stated that Ghanaian artist and LGBT+ activist Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi used to be a Christian pastor but was ‘no longer welcome at the churches where she used to preach.’²⁰⁷

12.11.10 With regard to Muslim leaders, the Outright International protection report 2022 stated that in December 2021, Rightify Ghana had reported on social media: ‘In the Kumasi Central Mosque ... the Chief Imam reportedly called for homosexuals to be arrested and killed, quoting Bible texts while stating that if the Bill is passed, it would cause an uprising because it does not go far enough.’²⁰⁸

12.11.11 For information on:

- the effect of statements by religious leaders, see [Violence and discrimination - general](#)
- international human rights organisations’ views on the bill, see [Domestic and international criticism of the bill](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.12 Attitude of traditional leaders

12.12.1 The UN experts’ analysis 2021 observed: ‘The introduction to the draft legislation endorses a statement of the National House of Chiefs of 26 February 2021 referring to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse persons as “inhuman”, taboo and alien to Ghanaian society.’²⁰⁹

12.12.2 The USSD human rights report 2023 observed that the number of anti-LGBTI statements by community leaders had increased for the third year running, spurred on, activists believed, because of the introduction of the anti-LGBTI bill of 2021. It did not provide further information on the prevalence or nature of these statements²¹⁰.

12.12.3 GBC Ghana Online, the website of state-owned broadcaster Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, in an article dated 30 July 2021, stated:

‘The Overlord of the Waala Traditional Area [one of 18 traditional areas in the Upper West region of Ghana²¹¹], Naa Seidu Fuseini Pelpuo has described the activities of persons in the LGBTQ+ community as unnatural and perverse. He said the actions of such a person go against both traditional and religious systems.

‘Naa Fuseini Pelpuo has as such placed a ban on the activities of such persons in the Waala Traditional Area. The Overlord, in a speech read on his behalf said punishments for persons found engaging in such acts would be firm and swift.’²¹²

²⁰⁷ Reuters, ‘[One trans woman's fight against a bill ...](#)’, 3 February 2022

²⁰⁸ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 25), 29 August 2022

²⁰⁹ OHCHR, ‘[Draft bill ... - An analysis ...](#)’ (page 3), 9 August 2021

²¹⁰ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

²¹¹ COLANDEF, ‘[Data on Traditional Areas in Ghana](#)’, June 2019

²¹² GBC Ghana Online, ‘[Waala Traditional Area bans LGBTQ+ activities ...](#)’, 30 July 2021

12.12.4 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 stated: 'In October 2021, the Chief of Dormaa in the Bono region, Osagyefo Oseadeeyo Agyemang Badu II, who is also a Justice of the High Court, came out strongly in support of the anti-LGBTQ bill and also threatened to storm parliament with 10,000 anti-LGBTQI+ people to ensure that the bill is passed.'²¹³

12.12.5 For information on a youth group's declaration of support for the Chief of Dormaa, see [Anti-LGBTI groups](#).

12.12.6 With regard to honours and gifts bestowed by traditional leaders on anti-LGBTI MPs, Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 stated:

'... [I]n the Bono region is the Paramount Chief of the Suma Ahenkro Traditional Area, Odeneho Dr. Afram Brempong III, who doubles as an Elder of the Church of Pentecost in Berekum area and Suma District, who in December 2021 honoured eight (8) lawmakers and the Speaker of Parliament for "championing the true African values" by proposing and sponsoring an anti-LGBTQI bill. Each lawmaker received a golden sword and a citation at a special durbar organised at Suma Ahenkro.'²¹⁴

12.12.7 State-owned²¹⁵ Ghana News Agency, in an article dated 27 November 2023, reported:

'The Chiefs and people of Suma-Ahenkro in the Jaman North District of the Bono Region at the weekend enstooled Mr Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, the Speaker of Parliament as the "Adasuokohene" of the Suma Traditional Area.

'He was enstooled under the name Nana Adasuokohene (a god possessing strength to resist external powers) Alban Bagbin I [.]

'His new chieftaincy title, according to Odeneho Dr Afram Brempong III, the Paramount Chief of the Suma Traditional Area was to recognize and acknowledge his immeasurable contribution in the fight against LGBTQI in the country ...

'The Paramount observed that the Speaker of Parliament had demonstrated to the people the "power to defend Ghana from the invasion of LBGTQI [sic] community despite the ... threats from the western powers".'²¹⁶

12.12.8 With regard to traditional leaders' attitude to intersex people, Key Watch Ghana, a non-governmental organisation that aims to raise awareness and create a safe space for intersex people in Ghana²¹⁷, in a blog entry on its website dated 7 December 2023, reported:

'Queen Mothers Engagement Zone 1

'In partnership with the Queen Mothers Platform Ghana, we held a Sensitization Workshop for Selected Queen Mothers from Greater Accra, Eastern, Volta and Oti Region on Being Born Intersex ...

²¹³ Rightify Ghana, '[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)', 28 May 2022

²¹⁴ Rightify Ghana, '[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)', 28 May 2022

²¹⁵ GNA, '[About Ghana News Agency](#)', no date

²¹⁶ GNA, '[Speaker Bagbin earns chieftaincy title](#)', 27 November 2023

²¹⁷ Key Watch Ghana, '[What We Do](#)', no date

‘Queen Mothers Engagement Zone 2

‘It’s an Honor to have [traditional leader] Nana Tetrete Okuamoa Sekyim II, Omanhene, Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area chairing the Sensitization program for Zone 2 Queen Mothers (Central, Western and Western North) program on Intersex.’²¹⁸

12.12.9 For more information on:

- the role of queen mothers and other traditional leaders, see the Queen Mothers Platform Ghana’s website entry [The issue at hand](#) and the Country Policy and Information Note [Ghana: Internal relocation](#)
- Key Watch Ghana, see [Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community](#)
- attitudes of political leaders, see [Government and political leaders](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.13 Treatment by traditional leaders

12.13.1 MyJoyOnline, in an article dated 19 October 2021, reported: ‘The Choggu Chief in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region, Naa Alhassan Mohammed, has fined four suspected gays ₵1200 [GBP76.56²¹⁹] and a ram each for desecrating his land’ and ‘... handed them over to the police.’²²⁰

12.13.2 Referring to the same incident, the Outright International protection report 2022 stated that when a man called Aminu, who was one of the 4 ‘suspected gays’, was taken to the chief’s palace, he found that the other 3 had already been ‘detained, paraded, and beaten.’²²¹

12.13.3 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 stated: ‘At Nkoranza in the Bono East region, the Traditional Council of the region “banished” a 21-year-old man who was allegedly caught engaging in what they call “homosexual activity.” According to media reports, “he was banished after being ordered to procure some items to appease the gods of the area. The items, which include sheep and Schnapps, were not only to drive away bad omen from the area, but also exorcise the gayism [sic] from the young man.”’²²²

12.13.4 For more information on the exorcism in the Nkoranza case, see [Traditional and religious ‘conversion practices’](#).

12.13.5 Ghana News Agency, in an article dated 8 February 2022, reported that 6 men gang-raped 3 women in Accra after being ‘mobilised’ by a traditional chief to attack the women for ‘allegedly engaging [in] lesbianism.’²²³

12.13.6 For more information on societal treatment of lesbian women, see [Violence and discrimination: lesbian and bisexual women](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

²¹⁸ Key Watch Ghana, ‘[Our Blog](#)’, 7 December 2023

²¹⁹ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), converted 16 February 2024

²²⁰ MyJoyOnline, ‘[Choggu Chief fines 4 suspected to be gay](#)’, 19 October 2021

²²¹ Outright International, ‘[“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 17), 29 August 2022

²²² Rightify Ghana, ‘[Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...](#)’, 28 May 2022

²²³ GNA, ‘[Two remanded for assaulting three women over lesbianism ...](#)’, 8 February 2022

12.14 Traditional and religious ‘conversion practices’

12.14.1 The HRW hardships article 2021 quoted a lesbian woman in her 20s who was among the 21 people arrested in Ho in the Volta region in May 2021 as saying, “While in detention, I learned that my uncle was looking for me and insisting that the family needs to call a spiritual person to drive these demons (me being a lesbian) out of me.”²²⁴

12.14.2 For information on the above case, see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#) and [Violations by police](#).

12.14.3 The Rightify Ghana Bono and Ahafo article 2022 noted that when a gay man in Nkoranza in the Bono East region was ordered by the region’s Traditional Council to procure certain items, the purpose was not only to drive away bad luck but also to ‘exorcise’ his homosexuality. It stated that their actions were ‘a form of so-called conversion therapy, as they poured libation on him and asked him to beg the gods for forgiveness and to change his sexual orientation’²²⁵.

12.14.4 For more information on the Nkoranza case, see [Treatment by traditional leaders](#).

12.14.5 The Outright International protection report stated: ‘Christian, a young gay university student, said his family members have attempted conversion through preaching and prayers: “They have called me a demonic influence. They say I am an enemy to the family and the Lord. They said God’s judgement would soon be on me. But they are worried that this ‘judgement’ may affect them, so they say I need to cleanse myself and reconcile with God.”’²²⁶

12.14.6 For more information on:

- ‘conversion practices’, see [Other legislation](#), [The bill and its main provisions](#) and [Conversion therapies and attitudes of medical professionals](#)
- family treatment of LGBTI people, see [Family treatment and societal norms](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

12.15 Family treatment and societal norms

12.15.1 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated: ‘Increasing harassment forced many members of the LGBTQI+ community to ... sever familial relationships.’ It reported that divorce among LGBTI people was ‘common’ but did not detail the circumstances or prevalence²²⁷.

12.15.2 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘... [S]ome family members publicly revealed their LGBTQI+ relatives’ identities.’²²⁸

12.15.3 The HRW hardships article 2021 reported that after 21 LGBTI people were

²²⁴ HRW, [‘Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention’](#), 20 September 2021

²²⁵ Rightify Ghana, [‘Abuse cases against LGBTQ people surge ...’](#), 28 May 2022

²²⁶ Outright International, [“‘We Deserve Protection’: Anti-LGBTIQ ...”](#) (page 29), 29 August 2022

²²⁷ USSD, [‘Ghana’](#) (section 6), 20 March 2023

²²⁸ USSD, [‘Ghana’](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

arrested in Ho in the Volta region in May 2021, 9 were disowned by their families. The parents of one of those arrested refused to allow her to see her child. The same article reported that 3 of the 21 were unable to continue with their studies following their detention because their parents refused to pay their school fees. It did not specify how many of the 21 people arrested were students²²⁹.

12.15.4 For more information on the detention of the 21, see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#) and [Violations by police](#).

12.15.5 The Reuters trans artist article 2022 stated: ‘Advocates say LGBT+ people ... who come out or are outed are frequently ostracised by friends and family. “There are some of my siblings and cousins who, for over five years, we never spoke, even though I love and miss them so much,” said [trans artist and LGBT+ activist Va-Bene Elikem] Fiatsi. “Most of them think I’m just a demon.”’²³⁰

12.15.6 The same article stated:

‘Shortly after the bill was introduced, [Fiatsi] travelled for a funeral to her family’s village, her first time back in 20 years.

‘She stood nervously in her dress and heels. Some people exchanged pleasantries, while others darted their eyes and quietly sniggered.

‘Before too long, the awkwardness gave way to familial warmth. A relative patted her back. Another asked how life was going. When someone made a snide comment, Fiatsi playfully stuck her tongue out before continuing her conversation.’²³¹

12.15.7 Rightify Ghana, in an article dated 11 December 2022, reported:

‘At Sekondi in the Western region of Ghana, a 25-year-old man’s life was threatened by his family ... over his perceived sexual orientation.

‘According to the victim (name withheld), he was at work when his aunt called to question him about his sexual orientation.

“My aunt told me that my uncles had a conversation with her to let her know that I am gay ... ,” he narrated in a telephone interview with Rightify Ghana.

‘... [H]e shared that his aunt warned that “you know we are the heirs to the Imamship in this region, so a lot of people look up to us. You will not be the reason why we lose our family image as good Muslims by bringing shame to us. Even if you are our own son, you will be killed as the Qur’an directs us to do to gays.”

‘He said that he was challenged by his aunt to “swear an oath with the Qur’an by the name of Allah, if I am not gay”; which he refused ...

‘He said he is terrified as his aunt stressed that he will be punished to serve as a deterrent to other gay people and to warn especially those in the Muslim communities.’²³²

²²⁹ HRW, [‘Ghana: LGBT Activists Face Hardships After Detention’](#), 20 September 2021

²³⁰ Reuters, [‘One trans woman’s fight against a bill ...’](#), 3 February 2022

²³¹ Reuters, [‘One trans woman’s fight against a bill ...’](#), 3 February 2022

²³² Rightify Ghana, [‘Man’s life threatened by Muslim family ...’](#), 11 December 2022

- 12.15.8 The Hivos LGBTQ+ article 2023 quoted activist Adisa Musah as saying with regard to members of the LGBTI community in general: ‘People are being thrown out of their homes, forced into (straight) marriages ...’ It also quoted him as saying: ‘A lot of us no longer speak to our families; we’re ostracized.’²³³
- 12.15.9 With regard to the effect of the anti-LGBTI bill 2021, the AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 quoted an unnamed Ghanaian LGBTI activist as saying in an interview with the organisation in October 2023: ‘Many people are going to be evicted from their homes [if the bill passes into law]. In some families, they are already throwing out their own relatives or kids because they don’t want to be a family which has a gay or a lesbian child ...’²³⁴
- 12.15.10 With regard to social norms relating to sexual minority women, the HRW women article 2022 commented that sexual minority women should be ‘prioritiz[ed] ... in the fight against gender inequality and homophobia’ because they ‘live at the intersection of multiple oppressions’. It stated: ‘Unfortunately, most of Ghana’s mainstream gender advocacy and feminist initiatives fail LBQ women by centring cisgender heterosexual women’s issues. Anti-domestic violence efforts, for example, typically prioritize services for (assumedly heterosexual) women experiencing violence in their relationships with men. National campaigns to promote girls’ access to education rarely show how structural discrimination and school expulsions prevent students perceived as lesbians from accessing their constitutional right to education.’²³⁵
- 12.15.11 The article referenced the [HRW LGBT report 2018](#), which stated: ‘LBQ women face violent persecution within their families in Ghana. They are denied access to financial support, forced into marriage, and experience physical violence from family members and discrimination within broader Ghanaian society.’²³⁶
- 12.15.12 The HRW women article 2022 further reported: ‘Pressure from family members and others effectively forces some lesbian women to marry men, exposing them to threats or harm, blackmail, and violent reprisals, if outed.’²³⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

13. State protection

13.1 Police response

- 13.1.1 Information about the criminal justice system, including the police, generally is available in the Country Policy and Information Note [Ghana: Actors of protection](#)).
- 13.1.2 The AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 stated that in an online interview conducted in October 2023, an unnamed NGO ‘... told Amnesty International that in most of the cases when LGBTI people are victims of

²³³ Hivos, ‘[Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana](#)’, 16 November 2023

²³⁴ AI, ‘[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)’ (page 21), 9 January 2024

²³⁵ HRW, ‘[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)’, 8 March 2022

²³⁶ HRW, ‘[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)’, 8 March 2022

²³⁷ HRW, ‘[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)’, 8 March 2022

attacks or abuses, physical or on social media, they don't report it to the police. They are scared. They know that if they report the aggression to the police, they will most likely be intimidated and accused of being homosexual. Sometimes the victims go to the police to report what happened and they feel intimidation, the police say to them "So does it mean that you are gay? Do you know that we can arrest you?"²³⁸

- 13.1.3 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: 'Civil society organizations and activists reported police were reluctant to investigate claims of assault or violence against LGBTQI+ persons. Stigma, intimidation, and the perceived bias of some police against LGBTQI+ persons dissuaded survivors from reporting abuse.' It reported that police arrested the 3 perpetrators of an attack on a gay man in May 2023, but that '[p]olice never identified the perpetrators' of 'verified attacks against LGBTQI+ persons' that occurred in March, June, July, August and October.²³⁹
- 13.1.4 With regard to women, the HRW women report 2022 stated: 'Reporting violations to the police as a queer woman may expose them to detention and secondary trauma.'²⁴⁰
- 13.1.5 Similarly, in relation to LGBTI people in general, the OpenDemocracy justice system report 2023 stated:
- 'The director of advocacy at the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, Kojo Asante, has been critical of formal processes at Ghana's police stations because they offer no protection to queer people filing complaints.
- "The way the system is set up now, first of all, nobody will report it if it happens because they feel like they will be victimised for a second time," he told openDemocracy.'²⁴¹
- 13.1.6 The article further stated: 'Beyond outright wrongdoing by police, systemic challenges within the justice system present multiple hurdles to vulnerable sections of Ghanaian society, while a lack of police resources has hampered prosecutions, according to at least one criminologist [Edgar Tachie Akunnor, lecturer at the University of Cape Coast²⁴²].'²⁴³
- 13.1.7 The article stated that a group of activists, who wanted to remain anonymous, were helping victims in multiple cases, 'but none has yet been resolved in court. In some cases, victims have decided against legal action', while in one case a victim had encountered 'suspected corruption and police extortion of queer people at police stations. "If this [anti-LGBTIQ] bill comes into play, look, there will be more extortion than justice," said one of the activists with the group.'²⁴⁴
- 13.1.8 With regard to specific cases about which more details of the crimes are known, the Modern Ghana Yilo Krobo article 2021 reported that a 15-year-old girl who was raped in the Eastern region by a man and his friend who

²³⁸ AI, '[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)' (page 22), 9 January 2024

²³⁹ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁴⁰ HRW, '[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)', 8 March 2022

²⁴¹ OpenDemocracy, '[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)', 26 September 2023

²⁴² University of Cape Coast, '[Directory](#)' (Dr Edgar Takyi Akonnor), no date

²⁴³ OpenDemocracy, '[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)', 26 September 2023

²⁴⁴ OpenDemocracy, '[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)', 26 September 2023

suspected she was a lesbian reported the attack to a police Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit ([DOVVSU](#)) and the man was arrested. His friend remained on the run²⁴⁵.

- 13.1.9 For more information on the Yilo Krobo case, see [Violence and discrimination: lesbians and bisexual women](#) and [Court hearings, convictions and settlements](#).
- 13.1.10 The Pink News hostage article 2022 reported that after the executive director of Rightify Ghana was kidnapped and attacked in the Ashanti Region in August 2022, the group ‘work[ed] with the Ghana Police Service’, noting that ‘[i]f the men are arrested and charged, it could represent a turning point in the handling of crimes against LGBTQ+ people in Ghana’²⁴⁶. The USSD human rights report 2022 stated with regard to the same case: ‘Police never identified the perpetrators.’²⁴⁷
- 13.1.11 For more information on the 2022 Ashanti attack, see [LGBTI activists and advocates](#).
- 13.1.12 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated that when LGBTI billboards were removed in Accra and Tamale in June 2022, ‘Police did not conduct investigations.’²⁴⁸
- 13.1.13 For more information on removal of the billboards, see [Removal of billboards promoting LGBTI tolerance](#).
- 13.1.14 The Ghana Report Kentikrono assault article 2023 reported that the day after 5 men in Kentikrono attacked a 22-year-old man believed to be gay ‘... the crime was reported to police, and three of the suspects were apprehended and processed for court.’²⁴⁹
- 13.1.15 For more information on the above attack, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#) and [Court hearings, convictions and settlements](#).
- 13.1.16 The GhanaWeb Bibiani Zongo article 2023 reported that when a gay man was apprehended by an angry mob in Bibiani Zongo, he ‘would have been lynched if police had not intervened quickly.’²⁵⁰
- 13.1.17 The Washington Blade assault article 2024 stated that following an assault on a man in Zuarungu by 4 men who incorrectly told him the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 had become law, ‘Rightify Ghana ... commended the police’s swift response’. The article quoted Rightify Ghana as commenting: ‘[It’s] Good that two out of four of the perpetrators have been arrested by the police in Bogatanga, following a report made by QuGEF [Queer Ghana Education Fund].’²⁵¹
- 13.1.18 With regard to cases where police have reportedly sided with those who attacked LGBTI people, the USSD human rights report 2022 stated:
‘On June 26 [2022], police arrested 30 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

²⁴⁵ Modern Ghana, ‘[Man arrested for defiling alleged lesbian at Yilo Krobo](#)’, 29 October 2021

²⁴⁶ Pink News, ‘[Violent homophobic thugs held Ghanaian LGBTQ activist ...](#)’, 28 August 2022

²⁴⁷ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

²⁴⁸ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 20 March 2023

²⁴⁹ The Ghana Report, ‘[3 persons remanded for allegedly assaulting man ...](#)’, 28 April 2023

²⁵⁰ GhanaWeb, ‘[Police intervention saves suspected gay man from lynching](#)’, 1 July 2023

²⁵¹ Washington Blade, ‘[Ghanaian man assaulted for being gay](#)’, 5 February 2024

queer, or intersex (LGBTQI+) community members in Accra on spurious unlawful assembly charges after unidentified assailants attacked a birthday party. After learning the party was for members of the LGBTQI+ community, police released the assailants and arrested the 30 community members in attendance. Police released the activists on June 28 after the intervention of defense attorneys, later dropping the charges due to lack of evidence.²⁵²

13.1.19 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated: ‘Williams, an activist in the Ashanti Region, said he encouraged two victims of a mob violence - a gay man and a woman – to report to the police, “but the police were trying to side with the community [that beat them up], the abusers.”²⁵³

13.1.20 The ILGA report 2023 stated:

‘In March 2023, a video surfaced on the internet, revealing a pastor in Somanya propositioning a sexual encounter with another man, culminating in an arrangement to meet at a remote location. When the pastor arrived at the agreed spot, he was confronted by the young man and two accomplices, who subjected him to assault and demanded a sum of money that he was unable to provide.

‘Subsequently, the Eastern Regional Police intervened, assuming control of the investigation, which ultimately led to the arrest of both the pastor and the other individual involved. Both individuals were subsequently released on bail pending further legal proceedings.²⁵⁴

13.1.21 For other violations by the police, see [State attitudes and treatment](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

13.2 Prison authorities’ response to abuse against LGBTI people

13.2.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 noted that when LGBTI people in prison were subjected to harassment or abuse, ‘authorities generally did not investigate.’²⁵⁵

[Back to Contents](#)

13.3 Court hearings, convictions and settlements

13.3.1 GhanaWeb, in an article dated 14 June 2023, stated that when an attack on a 22-year-old man in Kumasi was reported to the police, ‘The defendants were remanded in custody for three weeks by the [Asokore Mampong District] court on April 27, 2023, before being granted bail on May 18, 2023.’²⁵⁶

13.3.2 The article reported that on 12 June 2023, the same court ‘adjourned the case ... to July 10, 2023’ and stated: ‘As the victim seeks justice, plans are being made for the trial to begin.’²⁵⁷

13.3.3 There was no information on further developments in the case in the sources

²⁵² USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 1D), 20 March 2023

²⁵³ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ...](#)’ (page 17), 29 August 2022

²⁵⁴ ILGA, ‘[Our Identities under Arrest](#)’ (page 78), 30 November 2023

²⁵⁵ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁵⁶ GhanaWeb, ‘[Court adjourns case involving suspects who assaulted a man ...](#)’, 14 June 2023

²⁵⁷ GhanaWeb, ‘[Court adjourns case involving suspects who assaulted a man ...](#)’, 14 June 2023

consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

- 13.3.4 The Modern Ghana Yilo Krobo article 2021 reported that one of the men accused of raping a 15-year-old suspected of being a lesbian pleaded not guilty and was granted bail with sureties²⁵⁸.
- 13.3.5 For more information on the Yilo Krobo case, see [Violence and discrimination: lesbian and bisexual women](#) and [Police response](#).
- 13.3.6 The OpenDemocracy justice system article 2023 stated: ‘Sometimes victims [of anti-LGBTI attacks] ... get offered out-of-court settlements by suspects’ families to cover treatment and lost property, offering suspects a way to avoid trial without accepting guilt ... “Victims normally prefer to take that and just go away rather than pursue cases,” said Rightify [Ghana].’²⁵⁹
- 13.3.7 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated that after police arrested the 3 perpetrators of an assault and robbery of a gay man in May 2023, ‘the prosecutor repeatedly delayed the case in court’²⁶⁰.
- 13.3.8 For more information on the May 2023 case, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#).
- 13.3.9 The Reuters church blessings article 2024 reported: ‘Few such incidents [of mob justice against suspected gay and transgender people] make it to the courts.’²⁶¹
- 13.3.10 There was no information on convictions or sentencing of perpetrators of attacks against LGBTI people in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

13.4 Civil redress for alleged human rights violations

- 13.4.1 Human Rights Watch, in an article dated 22 June 2022, reported:

‘Last week, a group of [LGBTI] organizations filed lawsuits against the Inspector General of Police and the Attorney General of Ghana to get justice for 21 activists unlawfully arrested by the police last year ...

‘The group, including the Queer Ghana Education Fund (QuGEF) and the Coalition for SupportGH, filed the case with Ghana’s High Court to obtain redress for the suffering they endured while in detention ...

‘The group has filed two separate cases: the first one challenges the government’s actions as a violation of the victims’ constitutional “right to freedom of assembly, discrimination, unlawful arrest and detention,” and the second seeks redress for the harassment and discriminatory treatment of one participant who was singled out by prison guards for being an intersex woman ... The group wants the court to declare the unlawful arrests violated their rights to legal protection, access to information and equality, and freedom from gender-based discrimination ... ’²⁶²

- 13.4.2 The AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 stated that the lawsuits are

²⁵⁸ Modern Ghana, ‘[Man arrested for defiling alleged lesbian at Yilo Krobo](#)’, 29 October 2021

²⁵⁹ OpenDemocracy, ‘[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)’, 26 September 2023

²⁶⁰ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁶¹ Reuters, ‘[Ghana LGBTQ+ activists see church blessings as distant luxury](#)’, 7 February 2024

²⁶² HRW, ‘[LGBTI Activists in Ghana Sue Over Abusive Arrest and Detention](#)’, 22 June 2022

‘currently pending’ without providing of details of how many, against whom and what for²⁶³.

13.4.3 For information on:

- the 21 activists’ treatment while in detention, see [Violations by police](#)
- other NGOs, see [Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

13.5 Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

13.5.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘Established as an autonomous agency, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) had offices across the country and mediated and settled cases brought by individuals against government agencies or private companies. CHRAJ operated with no overt interference from the government ...’²⁶⁴

13.5.2 The CHRAJ website stated that one of the commission’s 3 mandates is human rights, and that ‘As the National Human Rights Institution of Ghana, the Commission has a duty to promote and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms in Ghana.’²⁶⁵

13.5.3 The HRW LGBT report 2018 stated:

‘Several interviewees told Human Rights Watch that they are aware of the mandate of CHRAJ and that they feel comfortable to approach the institution for legal support.

‘For instance, Simon, a 30-year-old gay man from Kumasi told Human Rights Watch that after his ex-partner of three years reported him to the police for being gay, they were both arrested and detained from January 16-18, 2016 at Kumasi Central Police Station. Simon said that they were released after the CHRAJ Kumasi regional office intervened by “explaining the situation to the police—told them that being gay is not a crime—that only unnatural carnal knowledge is a crime”. They each paid 200 CEDIS (approximately US\$46) [GBP12.75²⁶⁶] at the police station and went home.’²⁶⁷

13.5.4 The OpenDemocracy justice system article 2023 stated:

‘Limited resources mean the commission can only currently deal with complaints by “key populations”, which include LGBTIQ people, in 20 of Ghana’s 216 districts. But in those 20, it handled 52 cases of abuse against queer Ghanaians between 2019 and 2021, according to a Right to Information request. Complaints made to the commission by queer Ghanaians over the last four years include allegations of assault, extortion, blackmail and privacy breaches.’²⁶⁸

13.5.5 For information on complaints made to the CHRAJ specifically against the

²⁶³ AI, ‘[We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...](#)’, 9 January 2024

²⁶⁴ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 5), 23 April 2024

²⁶⁵ CHRAJ, ‘[History](#)’, no date

²⁶⁶ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), converted 16 February 2024

²⁶⁷ HRW, ‘[“No Choice but to Deny Who I Am”: Violence ...](#)’ (section IV), January 2018

²⁶⁸ OpenDemocracy, ‘[The queer hate crime case testing the limits ...](#)’, 26 September 2023

police, see [Violations by police](#).

- 13.5.6 With regard to comments made by CHRAJ about the anti-LGBTI bill 2021, Citi Newsroom, in an article ‘Engage LGBTQ community before passing anti-gay bill – CHRAJ urges Parliament’, dated 5 September 2023, stated:

‘[In a speech] Deputy CHRAJ Commissioner, Mercy Larbi, representing Commissioner Joseph Whittal, emphasized the need for Parliament to conduct extensive consultations before passing the [2021] bill, with the aim of protecting the interests of all parties involved.

“It is in recognition of this reality that CHRAJ, as part of its contribution to the LGBT debate... submitted a memorandum to Parliament and strongly recommended to the House to embark on extensive engagements with all stakeholders, including the LGBT community, to arrive at outcomes that secure the dignity of everyone.”²⁶⁹

- 13.5.7 There was no information on whether such engagements took place, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 13.5.8 MyJoyOnline, in an article ‘Some aspects of anti-LGBT bill are ‘quite problematic – CHRAJ’, dated 11 December 2023, stated: ‘Commissioner Joseph Whittal, in an interview with JoyNews, expressed reservations about sections of the bill targeting individuals who sympathise with the LGBT community, deeming them unfair. He suggested that this particular aspect of the bill should be amended before it progresses to law ...’²⁷⁰
- 13.5.9 There was no information on amendments made to provisions in the bill regarding LGBTI sympathisers, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

14. Access to services and employment

14.1 Protection from discrimination

- 14.1.1 For information on constitutional and legal provisions relating to discrimination, see [Constitution](#) and [Other legislation](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

14.2 Healthcare and HIV/AIDS

- 14.2.1 For information on healthcare in general, see the Country Information Note [Ghana: Medical treatment and healthcare](#).
- 14.2.2 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘Some members of parliament called on LGBTQI+ people to not seek medical services and for medical providers to refuse to treat them.’²⁷¹
- 14.2.3 For more information on the attitude of members of parliament, see [Government and political leaders](#).
- 14.2.4 With regard to HIV/AIDS, Reuters, in an article ‘Ghana LGBT+ bill would threaten fight on HIV and AIDS, says UNAIDS’, dated 5 August 2021, reported that enactment of the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 ‘could set back a decade

²⁶⁹ Citi Newsroom, [‘Engage LGBTQ community before passing anti-gay bill ...’](#), 5 September 2023

²⁷⁰ MyJoyOnline, [‘Some aspects of anti-LGBT bill are “quite problematic” ...’](#), 11 December 2023

²⁷¹ USSD, [‘Ghana’](#) (section 6), 23 April 2024

of progress fighting HIV/AIDS in the West African nation, according to the United Nations.²⁷²

14.2.5 The same source reported:

‘Some 60% of the 350,000 Ghanaians living with HIV currently get anti-retroviral therapy. This drops to 3.7% for the estimated 55,000 men who have sex with men who are living with HIV in Ghana, data shows.

‘[Patrick] Brenny [of UNAIDS] said ... the bill would create “strong headwinds” against forging future progress.

“If passed, this legislation will have the certain effect of driving people further away from HIV prevention, care and treatment services and endanger the advances made,” he said.²⁷³

14.2.6 The Outright International protection article 2022 stated: ‘People have lost access to safe-sex commodities and preventative care because they fear harassment from associating with LGBTIQ organizations. John [a paralegal in the Ashanti Region interviewed by Outright in January 2022] added: “They will [also] not go to hospitals where medical professionals may be able to tell the kind of sexual activity they have undertaken.”²⁷⁴

14.2.7 The HRW democracy article 2023 stated:

‘In February 2021, police raided and closed down an LGBT resource center which, among other things, provided community-based interventions services and information about HIV/AIDS. It has since been increasingly difficult to provide health services to marginalized groups disproportionately affected by HIV and related infections. As Nasser, a community leader, told Human Rights Watch, “Even spaces that were opened before are now closing doors for us because of what is happening. It is extremely difficult to operate properly.”²⁷⁵

14.2.8 The CNN anti-homosexuality bill article 2024, stated:

‘... UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima warned that if the bill did become a law it would “affect everyone” and hamper the country’s fight against HIV and AIDS.

“Approaches rooted in inclusion of all people have been crucial to Ghana’s progress in the HIV response,” Byanyima said in a statement.

“To achieve the goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, it is vital to ensure that everyone has equal access to essential services without fear, stigma or discrimination, and that providers of life-saving HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care services are supported in their work,” she said.²⁷⁶

14.2.9 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated:

‘Discrimination against persons with HIV and AIDS was a problem. Fear of

²⁷² Reuters, ‘[Ghana LGBT+ bill would threaten fight on HIV/AIDS, says UNAIDS](#)’, 5 August 2021

²⁷³ Reuters, ‘[Ghana LGBT+ bill would threaten fight on HIV/AIDS, says UNAIDS](#)’, 5 August 2021

²⁷⁴ Outright International, ‘[“We Deserve Protection”: Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 35), 29 August 2022

²⁷⁵ HRW, ‘[Ghana’s Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)’, 12 December 2023

²⁷⁶ CNN, ‘[Ghana’s parliament passes anti-homosexuality bill](#)’, 28 February 2024

stigma, and fear that getting tested would mean immediate labeling as gay, discouraged persons from getting tested for HIV infection. Many of those who tested positive avoided seeking timely care ... The government and NGOs subsidized many centers providing free HIV testing and treatment for citizens, although high patient volume and the physical layout of many clinics often made it difficult for the centers to protect confidentiality. The country's AIDS Commission raised concerns regarding how discrimination and high levels of stigma contributed to the spread of HIV in the country.²⁷⁷

14.2.10 With regard to lesbian, bisexual and queer women, the HRW women article 2022 stated: 'The funding priority within LGBT space has been on HIV/AIDS prevention and health services and men who have sex with men. This has created a resource gap for LBQ women, and dangerously, a perception that LBQ women do not face comparable harm.'²⁷⁸

14.2.11 For information on provisions in the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 relating to medical and other treatment, see [The bill and its main provisions](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

14.3 Employment

14.3.1 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated: 'Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to ... LGBTQI+ people ...' It described loss of employment as 'common.'²⁷⁹

14.3.2 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated that 'LGBTQI+ persons faced widespread discrimination' in employment²⁸⁰.

14.3.3 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated:

'Maxie, a 36-year-old lesbian, works in a government agency in Accra. She told Outright her superiors suspect her sexual orientation, and pressure her to get married and give birth: "My boss told me that if I don't give birth by my next interview for promotion, it will affect me." ... She had already experienced discrimination in hiring because of her gender presentation: Some persons think that studs ['Black or Latinx masculine-presenting lesbian women or nonbinary lesbians'²⁸¹] are cursed and so if they employ them, their businesses will collapse. Other times, they feel that you will teach other people to be lesbians. They rejected me in my first job search as a teacher because I was a 'footballer.' They wouldn't call you 'stud' or 'lesbian' directly.'²⁸²

14.3.4 The USSD human rights report 2022 stated that when 30 LGBTI community members were arrested and detained on 'spurious unlawful assembly' charges in June 2022, '[t]he arrest and detention process publicly identified a number of LGBTQI+ people and cost several their jobs ...'²⁸³.

14.3.5 For more information on the arrest of the 30, see [Police response](#).

²⁷⁷ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁷⁸ HRW, '[Homophobia is a Feminist Issue](#)', 8 March 2022

²⁷⁹ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 20 March 2023

²⁸⁰ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁸¹ Outright International, '["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)' (page 3), 29 August 2022

²⁸² Outright International, '["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)' (page 27), 29 August 2022

²⁸³ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 20 March 2023

14.4 Education

- 14.4.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated: 'LGBTQI+ persons faced widespread discrimination in education ...'²⁸⁴. It did not give examples.
- 14.4.2 Rightify Ghana, in an article "Left Behind": Discriminatory School Policies, Violence Cut Short Education of Ghanaian LGBTQI Students' (Rightify Ghana education article 2022), dated 31 March 2022, stated: 'Within the LGBTQ community, school dropout is a significant issue that has not received much attention. Gathering from personal experiences shared by some LGBTI+ people, the senior high school level is where most dropouts are normally recorded. This is partly because some of these students were publicly outed and punished in schools by their mates and authorities; whilst at home their parents cut support for their education.'²⁸⁵
- 14.4.3 For more information on family treatment of LGBTI individuals, see [Family treatment and societal norms](#).
- 14.4.4 The Rightify Ghana education article 2022 further reported: 'Since 2013, at least 68 students suspected to be LGBTQI+ have been suspended or expelled by authorities in various schools, according to a count made by Rightify Ghana from cases that have been reported in the local media.' However, it noted that these 'only represent a fraction of cases' as many had gone unreported or been misreported²⁸⁶.
- 14.4.5 With regard to bullying, the same article stated: 'Others were forced to leave school as a result of bullying and harassments from their peers as well as authorities. Unfortunately, most of these cases have not been documented. Even though many LGBTQI+ people have shared personal experiences of discrimination and victimisation in schools, the exact number of cases may never be known.'²⁸⁷
- 14.4.6 The Hivos LGBTQ+ article 2023 quoted activist Adisa Musah as saying with regard to members of the LGBTI community: 'People are being ... chased out of their schools.'²⁸⁸
- 14.4.7 Erasing 76 Crimes, a US-based privately published news that 'focuses on the human toll of dozens of countries' anti-LGBTI laws and the struggle to repeal them'²⁸⁹, in an article 'Ghana schools adopt anti-homosexuality policy; homophobia flourishes' (Erasing 76 Crimes schools article 2024), dated 15 January 2024, quoting posts by Rightify Ghana on X (formerly Twitter), stated:
- 'In 2023, Rightify Ghana uncovered alarming cases of discrimination and violence against students in SHS [senior high school] within the Ashanti and Eastern regions. Out of approximately 100 documented human rights violation cases, 5 involved students who faced severe discrimination, with 6

²⁸⁴ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

²⁸⁵ Rightify Ghana, '["Left Behind": Discriminatory School Policies ...](#)', 31 March 2022

²⁸⁶ Rightify Ghana, '["Left Behind": Discriminatory School Policies ...](#)', 31 March 2022

²⁸⁷ Rightify Ghana, '["Left Behind": Discriminatory School Policies ...](#)', 31 March 2022

²⁸⁸ Hivos, '[Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana](#)', 16 November 2023

²⁸⁹ Erasing 76 Crimes, '[About](#)', 2022

even being hospitalised among the 19 survivors reported. Two instances in the Ashanti region prompted petitions to the regional and district GES [Ghana Education Service] offices, forcing schools to take action through discussions with parents.

‘One distressing incident involved 6 male students brutally attacked on campus by about 30 masked peers who accused them of being gay due to their perceived effeminate qualities ...

‘We have in possession a statement from a legal firm which represented some affected students at an SHS in the Eastern region. It shows how far some parents had to go to ensure that their children do not lose their right to educate.

‘In another case which Rightify Ghana followed in the Ashanti region, our investigations uncovered corruption among staff of an SHS, as they extorted monies from a student and his mother after they dismissed him and prevented him from registering for WASSCE [the West African Senior School Certificate Examination]. We found evidence of MoMo [digital] payments from the student to teachers, who promised to get him back into the school.

‘... [I]t took our [Rightify Ghana’s] intervention to get school authorities to reverse their decision which they admitted was not official and had done no investigation to prove the homosexuality claim against the student ...

‘Last year’s documented cases revealed that attacks were based on suspicion rather than evidence of inappropriate behavior.’²⁹⁰

14.4.8 The HRW democracy article 2023 reported: In September, school authorities dismissed a 17-year-old student over allegations that he was gay from a boys’ boarding school in Accra, activists told Human Rights Watch ... A petition organized by local activists was sent to the district and regional education offices, and the student was allowed to return to register for the senior school certificate examination.’²⁹¹

14.4.9 For more information on the boarding school case, see [Violence and discrimination: gay and bisexual men](#).

14.4.10 With regard to school policies, the Erasing 76 Crimes schools article 2024 stated: ‘The Ghana Education Service (GES) recently updated its Code of Conduct for Ghana schools, declaring that “Any sexual conduct between students of the same sex shall constitute misconduct.” It quoted a comment from the Mamba Online LGBTI news outlet, which noted: ‘This addition appears redundant, given that the existing code of conduct already deems it a misconduct for any student to engage in sexual relations. The new clause seemingly serves little purpose other than emphasising queer sexuality as especially problematic.’²⁹²

14.4.11 With regard to university policies, Pink News, in an article ‘Students expelled from Ghana hostel for engaging in “lesbianism” during threesome’ (Pink News student hostel article 2021), dated 25 November 2021, reported that two female students attending the University of Professional Studies, Accra

²⁹⁰ Erasing 76 Crimes, ‘[Ghana schools adopt anti-homosexuality policy ...](#)’, 15 January 2024

²⁹¹ HRW, ‘[Ghana’s Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)’, 12 December 2023

²⁹² Erasing 76 Crimes, ‘[Ghana schools adopt anti-homosexuality policy](#)’, 15 January 2024

(UPSA) were expelled from their hostel for “lesbianism”, which contravened a policy in the university’s student handbook. The article further reported: ‘The university in a statement Wednesday denied that the incident took place and that it did not “authorise” the students’ expulsion from the hostel.’²⁹³

- 14.4.12 The Rightify Ghana article education 2022 stated: ‘Whilst in most educational institutions, anti-LGBTQ policies are hidden under [an] ambiguous “sexual misconduct” offense, some institutions openly display them in their student handbooks.’ One example it cited was Ho Technical University, whose student handbook reportedly listed ‘offences’ including ‘homosexuality’ and ‘lesbianism’ punishable by sanctions such as ‘rustication and dismissal, as well as so-called conversion therapy through “counselling”’.²⁹⁴
- 14.4.13 The article further reported: ‘... [T]here are a few educational institutions which have categorically established progressive policies that include “sexual orientation.”’ These include the University of Ghana and the University of Health and Allied Sciences ...’ The article quoted these universities’ policies as warning students not to ‘engage in a course of vexatious conduct that is directed at one or more specific individuals’ based on listed characteristics that included such individuals’ sexual orientation²⁹⁵.
- 14.4.14 The Modern Ghana campus article 2024 quoted a statement issued by the University of Ghana in response to an attack on a man on its Legon campus in January 2024. In the article the university reaffirmed its ‘commitment to the safety, dignity and inclusivity of all people, as stated in its statutes ...’²⁹⁶
- 14.4.15 The article further stated: ‘The statement said: “Management, therefore, takes its commitment to the enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the University seriously, and any member of the University community identified to be involved in this cruel incident will be appropriately sanctioned.”’²⁹⁷
- 14.4.16 The same article also quoted the statement as saying: ‘The University Security Services Unit handed both the young man and the refuse collector (neither of whom is a student at the University) over to the Legon Police for investigation.’²⁹⁸
- 14.4.17 For more information on the incident, see [Violence and discrimination: trans people](#). There was no information on any further developments in the case after the men were handed over to the police, in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 14.4.18 With regard to the educational curriculum, MyJoyOnline, in an article dated 7 July 2023, stated: ‘A Deputy Education Minister, John Ntim Fordjour, has said that no element of LGBTQI+ practice will be allowed in the Ghanaian educational curriculum’. The article further stated: ‘The Deputy Education Minister is one of the eight MPs who sponsored the [anti-LGBT] legislation

²⁹³ Pink News, ‘[Students expelled from Ghana hostel](#)’, 25 November 2021

²⁹⁴ Rightify Ghana, ‘[“Left Behind”: Discriminatory School Policies ...](#)’, 31 March 2022

²⁹⁵ Rightify Ghana, ‘[“Left Behind”: Discriminatory School Policies ...](#)’, 31 March 2022

²⁹⁶ Modern Ghana, ‘[University of Ghana denounces assault on “gay stranger” ...](#)’, 17 January 2024

²⁹⁷ Modern Ghana, ‘[University of Ghana denounces assault on “gay stranger” ...](#)’, 17 January 2024

²⁹⁸ Modern Ghana, ‘[University of Ghana denounces assault on “gay stranger” ...](#)’, 17 January 2024

through a private member's bill.²⁹⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

14.5 Housing

- 14.5.1 The USSD human rights report 2023 stated that an increase in harassment forced 'many' LGBTI people to 'relocate from their homes'³⁰⁰. It did not provide further details.
- 14.5.2 Referring to the detention of 2 lesbian community members at a house used as an LGBTI meeting spot in Cape Coast, the USSD human rights report 2022 noted: 'The landlord subsequently terminated the lease, specifically citing their opposition to the LGBTQI+ community.' The report stated evictions of LGBTI people were 'common'³⁰¹.
- 14.5.3 For more information on the Cape Coast incident, see [Other arrests and prosecutions](#).
- 14.5.4 The HRW democracy article 2023 reported: 'According to activists, landlords say that they are protecting themselves and their families [by evicting LGBT tenants] or use the [2021 anti-gay] bill as a pretext to unfairly raise LGBT people's rent.'³⁰²

[Back to Contents](#)

14.6 Legal services

- 14.6.1 The Outright International protection report 2022 stated: 'Donald, a paralegal and LGBTIQ rights activist in Accra, added that it was difficult to identify lawyers willing to defend clients accused of same-sex relations.'³⁰³

[Back to Contents](#)

15. Visibility, activism, support and events

15.1 Registration and operation of civil society organisations

- 15.1.1 Outright International, in a report 'The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing: The Right to Register and the Freedom to Operate 2023' (Outright International CSO report covering 2022/2023), dated 14 September 2023, based on interviews conducted between January 2022 and March 2023 and other sources, placed Ghana in its category: 'LGBTIQ CSOs (civil society organisations) exist, but registration as openly LGBTIQ is prohibited or generally impossible.'³⁰⁴
- 15.1.2 With regard to registration, the report stated:
- 'Non-governmental organizations register in Ghana under two regulatory authorities: the Registrar-General's office, in accordance with the Companies Act, and the Department of Social Welfare. Registration with the Registrar-General requires obtaining a professional financial audit. It vests the organization with the status of a company limited by guarantee. After

²⁹⁹ MyJoyOnline, '[LGBTQ+ activities won't be tolerated in our curriculum ...](#)', 7 July 2023

³⁰⁰ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 23 April 2024

³⁰¹ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 20 March 2023

³⁰² HRW, '[Ghana's Anti-LGBT Push Will Harm Its Democracy](#)', 12 December 2023

³⁰³ Outright International, '["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)' (page 17), 29 August 2022

³⁰⁴ Outright International, '[The Global State of LGBTIQ Organizing](#)' (page 52), 14 September 2023

obtaining this status, organizations ought to register with the Social Welfare department before starting operations. Registered NGOS must file annual returns to the office of the Registrar-General ...

'The registration of civil society organizations explicitly advocating for the rights or needs of LGBTIQ people is not permitted in practice, though nothing in the currently enacted laws expressly prevents LGBTIQ organizations from registering. Ghanaian LGBTIQ organizations that have managed to legally register have done so without explicitly referring to the focus area of their work. Founders of Ghanaian LGBTIQ organizations described feeling restricted from being explicit about their work because of prevailing anti-LGBTIQ norms and the criminalization of same-sex acts ...

'They fear that attempts to register openly might lead to unnecessary exposure for the organization and activists working there. Therefore, while registering, one organization stated that its objectives focus on embracing diversity among religious women, with no reference to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) ... A second founder referenced "vulnerable groups" in their organization's registration documents ... Yet another organization referred to its target group as "key populations" because, at the time of registration, its focus was on HIV prevention initiatives ...

'A founder whose organization was able to register in 2015 told Outright that: "I knew from the beginning that if I stated anything about LGBTIQ [rights] the process wouldn't go through. So, I had to do things in a way that I would not be discriminated against. That's how I was able to get a legal document that says this is a registered organization." ...

'According to another founder, their organization had planned to apply for registration with the office of the Registrar-General, clearly citing their objectives of working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons' rights ... However, they could not find a professional auditor and company secretary in compliance with the requirements for registration: "They did not want to work with us as an LGBT organization. Now, with the entire situation in Ghana, this plan is on hold."³⁰⁵

15.1.3 With regard to the advantages and disadvantages of registration, the report stated:

'Groups in Ghana describe a range of positive and negative consequences associated with legal registration. Access to funding and donors is "the main reason why we registered." ... Without this, "challenges are enormous; you can't even get funding." ... Also, "people tend to trust registered organizations ... This gives you some credence that you're organized with structures in place." ... In addition, the legitimacy registration affords is critical for protection against hostile groups: "If you're organizing a program and somebody wants to disrupt it, you have legal documents to back the claims of your work." ...

'Registration, however, can also expose LGBTIQ organizations to monitoring by state bodies as they must meet set standards to retain and renew their

³⁰⁵ Outright International, '[The Global State of LGBTIQ ...](#)' (pages 53-54), 14 September 2023

registration, such as filing annual returns under the Companies Act ... According to activists, the Department of Social Welfare also requires CSOs to justify their implemented activities and allow the regulators to check their offices ... The executive director of an organization serving men who have sex with men explained that this department “wanted to see evidence of outreach projects and they questioned why they were not seeing any women in the pictures and reports. It created a lot of tension for us.”³⁰⁶

15.1.4 With regard to the operating environment, the report stated:

‘Presently, the introduction of the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill and media sensationalism of LGBTIQ issues have contributed to a more difficult environment for Ghanaian LGBTIQ organizations. Activists said that the debate around the Bill has already interfered with their work and has discouraged LGBTIQ persons from attending programs and accessing services.

‘In some regions, LGBTIQ activists report that they have been unable to get facility managers to rent out meeting halls for their events: “The owners or managers would want to know exactly who you are and what you want the space for. If they got to know that you are [an LGBTIQ organization], they will refuse to give you the space.” ...

‘To cope, organizations have devised alternative strategies. One organization in the Ashanti region was able to find a welcoming facility to hold meetings outside their region. “Now, we transport participants from here to the place for training sessions. That’s additional money spent. We had to strategize to enable us to execute all our activities.” ...

‘Rebecca F., an activist working with LBQ persons in Accra, told Outright: “Organizing is very difficult. Now, target persons do not want any face-to-face meetings.” As a result, she said, some organizations no longer hold meetings in person, instead adapting social media platforms to disseminate information as “no police will arrest us on virtual platforms.” ... But even meetings on virtual platforms such as Zoom had become challenging because in some instances, invitation links had been circulated beyond the intended recipients, leading uninvited persons to join these meetings and contributing to fears that the meetings were being hacked ... Virtual meetings are also difficult “because not all target persons are educated or use social media,” said another activist, Thema J ... Participation levels of rightsholders are affected: “People who can’t use the internet or don’t have access to smartphones or cannot buy data cannot participate in or benefit from our activities.”³⁰⁷

15.1.5 With regard to holding meetings and conferences, the USSD human rights report 2023 stated: ‘... [L]andlords closed many private spaces community members used for meetings ...’³⁰⁸

15.1.6 The Hivos LGBTQ+ article 2023 quoted activist Adisa Musah as saying that community organising had become more difficult: ‘Hotels that we always used for conferences no longer want to host us ... And we try to keep safe.

³⁰⁶ Outright International, ‘[The Global State of LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (pages 54-55), 14 September 2023

³⁰⁷ Outright International, ‘[The Global State of LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 55), 14 September 2023

³⁰⁸ USSD, ‘[Ghana](#)’ (section 6), 23 April 2024

So we don't host an event at the same place twice. And we can't tell anyone who we are. If we do, or they find out, they'll say the venue is fully booked.³⁰⁹

15.1.7 With regard to relocation of NGOs, the USSD human rights report 2022 stated: 'Two different LGBTQI+ NGOs, one in the Central Region and the other in the Volta Region, reported they had to relocate their operations because of community and police harassment.'³¹⁰

15.1.8 For information on:

- general treatment of individual activists, see [General treatment by state and non-state actors](#)
- societal treatment of individual activists, see [LGBTI activists and advocates](#)
- implications of the anti-LGBTI bill 2021 for civil society organisations, see [The bill and its main provisions](#)

[Back to Contents](#)

15.2 Organisations providing support to the LGBTI community

15.2.1 The list below provides an indication of the range of organisations and services available to the LGBTI community but is not intended to be exhaustive.

- The Alliance for Equality and Diversity, in an undated entry on its website, described itself as 'an LGBTIQ+ led national coalition of organization, individuals and professional allies who work and advocate for the protection and promotion of the human rights of LGBT people and other minorities groups in Ghana.'³¹¹
- The Ghana-based Interfaith Diversity Network of West Africa (IDNOWA) stated in an undated mission statement on its website that it is 'building bridges across all religions/faiths and changing attitudes towards LGBTQI people.'³¹²
- Key Watch Ghana, which 'provides support services at the national local and grassroots community level through networking and volunteerism.'³¹³ In an undated entry on the 'Our Work' section of its website, stated: 'We are a movement that is creating awareness, visibility and safe space for Intersex people in Ghana.'³¹⁴

For information on Key Watch Ghana's intersex sensitization program with traditional leaders, see [Attitude of traditional leaders](#).

- LGBT+ Rights Ghana, in an undated entry on its website, stated: 'LGBT+ Rights Ghana aims to create an inclusive society where the rights of LGBTQ+ people are respected and protected. Push against

³⁰⁹ Hivos, '[Fighting for a better future for the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana](#)', 16 November 2023

³¹⁰ USSD, '[Ghana](#)' (section 6), 20 March 2023

³¹¹ AfED, '[Who We Are](#)', no date

³¹² IDNOWA, '[About](#)', no date

³¹³ Key Watch Ghana, '[About Us](#)', no date

³¹⁴ Key Watch Ghana, '[What We Do](#)', no date

fundamentalisms by strengthening national, regional and international standards concerning legal protection of people whose rights are violated based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) through development of jurisprudence and responsive advocacy. We further believe in the potential of strategic litigation to assist in asserting the boundaries which separate religion and the law, and the secularity of the law.³¹⁵One Love Sisters Ghana, in an undated entry on its website, stated that it is ‘a Muslim LBQT and GNC [gender non-conforming] people organization working for the inclusion of diverse people to create a world governed by respect and dignity’. Its areas of focus include advocacy and lobbying, human rights education and operating a hotline for ‘reporting and documenting gender-based violations which also serves as a support system for LBQT people.’³¹⁶

- Rightify Ghana, in an undated entry on its website, stated that it works to ‘empower LGBTQI+ people through advocacy, human rights education, personal development activities, counselling, mentoring and community support activities.’³¹⁷
- Solace Initiative, in an undated entry on its website, described itself as a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation ‘committed to working for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all people specifically Lesbians, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) people in Ghana.’ It stated that it had worked with various local, international and regional organisations in Africa and that its ‘key experience is with working with the grass root LBGTQ+ people and empowering them to address the various issues that face LGBTQ+ daily.’ It was founded in 2012 and it reported having worked with 1,000 LGBT people across Ghana³¹⁸.

15.2.2 The Outright International protection report 2021 quoted an activist called Donkor as saying that when footage of attacks is shared on social media, ‘We try to trace victims of abuse in the videos. If we are able to find them, we support to them by getting health workers to attend to them or foot hospital bills and look for ally therapists to provide psychosocial support.’³¹⁹

15.2.3 The same report stated:

‘In some cases, LGBTIQ organizations find the survivors of attacks and provide temporary safe shelter for them. Joshua, the program manager of an LGBTIQ organization, said: “Sometimes other LGBTIQ persons who have a spare room let them stay for a while. We make sure they find some place to go.”’³²⁰

15.2.4 For information on the filing of lawsuits by NGOs, see [Civil redress for alleged human rights violations](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

³¹⁵ LGBT+ Rights Ghana, ‘[Our Work](#)’, no date

³¹⁶ One Love Sisters Ghana, ‘[One Love Sisters Ghana](#)’, no date

³¹⁷ Rightify Ghana, ‘[About Us](#)’, no date

³¹⁸ Solace Initiative, ‘[What We Do](#)’, no date

³¹⁹ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 20), 29 August 2022

³²⁰ Outright International, ‘["We Deserve Protection": Anti-LGBTIQ ...](#)’ (page 20), 29 August 2022

15.3 Pride events and activities

15.3.1 The Outright International Pride report covering events in 2021 referred to the worsening of the ‘political atmosphere’ in Ghana, including as a result of the anti-LGBTI bill, and stated:

‘In light of this, LGBTIQ organizations in Ghana cannot organize public Pride events as they would prefer. The activists we spoke to cited additional reasons why Pride events are either private or re-adapted. One activist who heads a large LGBTIQ organization told Outright, “We’ve not done the open and public ones because of the security issues and the risks it will bring.” Another veteran activist agreed, citing the challenges to such events to be the widespread stigma against sexual and gender diversity, discrimination, and security reasons ...’

‘In 2021, the United States Embassy in Ghana held a closed-door event for Pride and hoisted the Pride flag ... The Ghanaian media took it to mean that the embassy was “defying” Ghana. Bloggers reported it as the US Ambassador “motivating” LGBTIQ activists to “continue their rights advocacy with the full assurance of US support.” ... One activist reported to Outright that there were talks of summoning the US Ambassador to Parliament to be questioned ...

‘Another organization has used Pride month as an opportunity to hold dialogues on LGBTIQ issues. One of the organizers told Outright: “... [W]e use our social media where we have some control, to have a series of dialogues with community members, activists, advocates, and allies across fields. We started in 2020, where we used the 30 days in June to have back-to-back conversations with academics, lawyers, and activists on various topics every day, via Instagram live. We repeated that last year, and we’re looking to doing that this year.”

‘Organizations try to keep these events out of the press radar at the time they are taking place to prevent attacks on gender and sexual minorities ...’³²¹

15.3.2 The same report also stated: ‘The notion of celebrating Pride is also controversial for some activists because they view homophobia as institutionalized in Ghana ... Kplorm M., an activist in Accra, told Outright that the severity of violations makes celebrating Pride seem out of place ...’³²²

15.3.3 For information on billboards to mark Pride month in 2021, see [Removal of billboards promoting LGBTI tolerance](#).

15.3.4 The Outright International 2023 Pride Around the World Report, covering events in 2022, based on various sources, listed Ghana among 91 countries where ‘Outright did not identify any public Pride events in 2022.’³²³

[Back to Contents](#)

15.4 Online advocacy, networking and support

³²¹ Outright International, [‘2022 Pride Around the World Report’](#) (page 27), 22 June 2022

³²² Outright International, [‘2022 Pride Around the World Report’](#) (page 27), 22 June 2022

³²³ Outright International, [‘2023 Pride Around the World Report’](#) (page 54), 21 June 2023

15.4.1 Protocol, a privately-owned technology news website that ceased publication in November 2022³²⁴, in an article dated 1 June 2022, reported that Bright Ofofu Amoabeng, a volunteer with LGBT+ Rights Ghana, hosted a live weekly LGBTI-related discussion on Instagram from his home in Accra. The article stated: ‘Social media has become a crucial safe space in a country where homophobic sentiment is on the rise ... “Right now, it is unsafe, the environment is very hostile, so you cannot do advocacy in person and physically,” Amoabeng said.’³²⁵

15.4.2 The CNN citizens article 2023 reported that the director of Rightify Ghana, using the pseudonym Danny Bediako, said LGBTI community members use apps such as WhatsApp and Telegram ‘to warn others if there have been reports of attacks on presumed LGBT people in the area, and send information on what to watch out for and what actions to take’. Bediako himself had joined over 50 WhatsApp groups, some with more than 200 members³²⁶.

15.4.3 The same article stated:

“We know we are reaching (more) community members, who can also share in other WhatsApp groups and also privately with other individuals and community members who may not be in WhatsApp groups,” Bediako said. “Just to help the awareness go far, so they can also be safe.”

‘Rightify also receives reports of cases through these apps, allowing the group to then follow up and help the victim or person reporting take action. And even these safe spaces are under threat: Rightify has seen an increase in people infiltrating some LGBTQ WhatsApp groups to target gay people, in an effort to “abuse” and rob them, Bediako said.’³²⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

15.5 LGBTI representation in the arts

15.5.1 The Reuters trans artist article 2022 stated that, starting in 2017, artist and LGBT+ activist Va-Bene Elikem Fiatsi held exhibitions of photographs of her transition. The article stated: ‘Supportive audiences flocked to see the show in Ghanaian galleries. Her work reflects how LGBT+ people in Ghana have navigated legal and social constraints to carve out a space to express their identities ... Fiatsi hosts LGBT-friendly artist residency programmes [in her studio compound].’³²⁸

15.5.2 The New York Times, in an article ‘For Ghana’s Only Openly Transgender Musician, Every Day Is Dangerous’ (New York Times transgender article 2022), dated 14 November 2022, stated: ‘When Maxine Angel Opoku was still an upstart musician, ... she sang about love, romance and being sexy. Then, in August 2021, lawmakers in the country’s Parliament introduced a bill that would imprison people who identify as transgender, as Ms. Opoku

³²⁴ CNN, ‘[Protocol, the tech-news focused website, will shutter and lay off ...](#)’, 15 November 2022

³²⁵ Protocol, ‘[Big Tech faces Ghanaian anti-LGBTQ+ bill](#)’, 1 June 2022

³²⁶ CNN, ‘[A proposed law in this country would require citizens ...](#)’, 13 September 2023

³²⁷ CNN, ‘[A proposed law in this country would require citizens ...](#)’, 13 September 2023

³²⁸ Reuters, ‘[One trans woman’s fight against a bill ...](#)’, 3 February 2022

does, and her art urgently turned to advocacy.³²⁹

- 15.5.3 Reporting that in 2021 her house was ransacked, the article stated: ‘Her music began to attract both legions of new fans as well as powerful adversaries. Recently, the song “Wo Fie” went viral on TikTok outside Ghana ... Thanks in part to the L.G.B.T.Q. antipathy fomenting around the bill, Ms. Opoku said it was difficult to see a future for herself in Ghana. It’s nearly impossible for her to perform freely in public now; the bill would make it legally impossible.’³³⁰

[Back to Contents](#)

16. Internal relocation

- 16.1.1 For general information on internal relocation, including freedom of movement, see the Country Policy and Information Note [Ghana: Background information, including internal relocation](#).
- 16.1.2 Referring to attacks against LGBTI people documented by an unnamed NGO from January to September 2023, the AI LGBTI report covering 2022 and 2023 stated: ‘According to the organization, these attacks are not isolated to a specific geographic area; they are alarmingly widespread and occurring throughout the country. Previously, it was challenging to obtain information about cases in certain regions. However, with the rise of homophobic sentiments, NGOs have seen a surge in cases coming from all corners of the country.’³³¹

[Back to Contents](#)

³²⁹ New York Times, [‘For Ghana’s Only Openly Transgender Musician ...’](#), 14 November 2022

³³⁰ New York Times, [‘For Ghana’s Only Openly Transgender Musician ...’](#), 14 November, 2022

³³¹ AI, [‘We are facing extinction: Escalating anti-LGBTI sentiment ...’](#), 9 January 2024

Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal context
 - Anti-discrimination provisions and the inclusion or absence of LGBTI
 - Identifying as LGBTI
 - Same-sex sexual behaviour
 - Same-sex couples, including civil union and marriage
 - Gender affirmation/transition and recognition of gender identity of trans people
- State attitudes and treatment
 - Statements made by government figures and public officials
 - How the law is applied
 - Number of arrests and detentions
 - Number of prosecutions
 - Number of convictions/acquittals
 - Restrictions/enforcement of the law against LGBTI organisations
 - Other state treatment, including harassment, extortion, corrective therapy
- Access to public services
 - Education
 - Healthcare
 - Employment
 - Justice
- State protection
 - Response and assistance provided, including arrests and prosecutions of persecutors
 - Oversight mechanisms and organisations
- Geographical, socioeconomic or other factors affecting variation in attitudes/treatment
- Societal attitudes and treatment
 - Public opinion/surveys, including anti-LGBTI movements and public demonstrations
 - Prevailing cultural and family attitudes to male/female relationships, family and non-conforming behaviour

- Religious group attitudes, statements and actions
- Media representation, language and discourse
- Treatment by the public, including family members – stigma, shunning, harassment, violence, corrective rape
- LGBTI individuals, communities and groups
 - Size and location of LGBTI population
 - Presence and location of openly LGBTI communities
 - Services, meeting places and events
 - Operation of and restrictions on LGBT civil society and other supportive groups
- Freedom of movement
 - Legal freedoms
 - Safety of movement
 - Vulnerabilities of different groups

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version 4.0
- valid from 2 July 2024

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

For The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and new executive summary

[Back to Contents](#)

Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

[Back to Contents](#)