
THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MSM & HIV

SERVICES UNDER SIEGE

The Impact
of Anti-LGBT
Violence on HIV
Programs

Services Under Siege: The Impact of Anti-LGBT Violence on HIV Programs

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2013, a rash of attacks rocked the LGBT community in Cameroon. On June 16, the offices of LGBT rights lawyer Michel Togué were ransacked, resulting in the theft of confidential legal files. On June 26, unidentified assailants set fire to the offices of Alternatives-Cameroun, a community-based organization (CBO) that provides HIV services to LGBT people. Numerous LGBT rights defenders and service providers received death threats against themselves and their families.¹

Then on July 15, the body of Eric Lembembe was found at his home in Yaoundé. His neck and feet had been broken, and his face, hands, and feet had been burned with a clothing iron. He had recently been named Executive Director of CAMFAIDS, a civil society organization working to defend the rights of LGBT people and provide HIV services.²

Following these attacks, four community-based organizations that provided HIV services to LGBT people in Cameroon shut down. “The associations have decided to stop working because of the climate of insecurity that prevails in Cameroon,” said Yves Yomb, Executive Director of Alternatives-Cameroun. “It was urgent that we stop so we not be further exposed to danger.”³

According to a joint statement published by Alternatives-Cameroun, CAMFAIDS, Humanity First Cameroon, and Affirmative Action, “The pursuit of our various missions (prevention of STIs/HIV, medical care, advocacy for rights, support of people imprisoned for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity) requires a minimum level of security, institutional support and financial support.”

“Because of the dangers of the current situation, in cities of Yaoundé and Douala we are forced to suspend immediately the projects we have with USAID through Care Cameroon and with the Global Fund through CAMNAFAW,” the statement continued. “We reject a partnership that reduces our associations to simply a labor force that must work in precarious, dangerous conditions.”⁴

“It was urgent that we stop so we not be further exposed to danger.”

In many countries, LGBT-led CBOs provide the highest-quality HIV services for LGBT people in the safest environment possible. Often they are the only organizations providing health services tailored to the needs of LGBT populations. Beyond direct service provision, LGBT activists are the driving force behind efforts to promote LGBT rights, working to create an environment where LGBT people can access health services without discrimination or imprisonment.

Due to their increased visibility, LGBT rights defenders and service providers are at increased risk for violent attacks. Not only are these incidents violations of basic human rights, they have a devastating impact on HIV services for LGBT populations. This policy brief focuses on the connection between anti-LGBT violence and HIV, attempting to convey a sense of the frequency of these attacks, their exceptional brutality, and their impact on HIV prevention and treatment services.

"efforts to prevent, mitigate, and document anti-LGBT violence are indispensable to all HIV-related work."

Taken together, the evidence makes a powerful argument that efforts to prevent, mitigate, and document anti-LGBT violence are indispensable to all HIV-related work. Not only are HIV funders ethically obligated to protect the safety of frontline activists and service providers, their support of anti-violence measures is essential for securing provision of and access to HIV services for LGBT people.



Eric Lembembe, Executive Director of CAMFAIDS. (Photo: AP)



Arsonists set fire to the office of Alternatives-Cameroun, destroying patients' medical records and the organization's computers. (Photo: Alternatives-Cameroun)

METHODS

The information presented in this report was gathered through a desk review of civil society reports, government reports, media reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles focused on violence against LGBT people in different countries around the world. To supplement the desk review, the Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) invited member organizations to submit documentation of anti-LGBT violence they have produced over the past five years. The report also includes data on anti-LGBT violence gathered from the 2014 Global Men's Health and Rights survey.

PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE

The section below includes data on prevalence of violence against LGBT people across all regions. In many countries, no data exists on the frequency of anti-LGBT violence. Where data does exist, most cases have been documented and compiled by local LGBT-led CBOs. These are supplemented by reports from research organizations and the handful of governments that track data on anti-LGBT violence.



A mob of thousands chased three gay men in Kingston, Jamaica, shouting death threats and hurling stones.*

* Angry Mob of 2,000 Jamaicans Attack, Stone Three Gay Men. Rod 2.0 website. http://rodonline.typepad.com/rodonline/2007/02/angry_mob_of_20.html. Accessed October 29, 2015.

Challenges Documenting Anti-LGBT Violence

Determining the frequency of anti-LGBT violence is extremely difficult, due both to underreporting by survivors and quality of police response. Underreporting of anti-LGBT violence has been linked to fear of secondary abuse from police, including additional violence and arrest of the victim.

A handful of studies have examined rates of underreporting anti-LGBT violence. A CBO in the United Kingdom has reported that more than three-quarters of LGBT people who experienced hate crimes in 2013 did not report them to the police.⁵ In the United States, a CBO study from the same year revealed that only 45% of survivors reported incidents to the police, and 32% of survivors reported hostile police attitudes.⁶ Another CBO report from Georgia indicated that 73% of victims did not report incidents to police; of those who reported, 46% experienced a hostile police response.⁷

Anecdotal reports indicate that police frequently fail to investigate violence against LGBT people, even when ample evidence exists.^{8 9 10 11} For example, in 2014 Human Rights Watch interviewed 78 victims of homophobic violence and aggressive harassment in Russia. According to their report, victims “commonly said that police officers who handled their complaints were dismissive about the attacks, verbally expressed reluctance to start preliminary investigations, used homophobic slurs, and often blamed the victims for ‘bringing it [the violence] upon themselves.’”¹²

Beyond being unproductive, reporting anti-LGBT violence to police can often make matters worse for the victim. Police frequently refuse to acknowledge the possibility of anti-LGBT motivations for crimes, instead investigating and arresting other members of the LGBT community.^{13 14 15 16} In some cases, police arrest the victim themselves.¹⁷ In the 75 countries that currently criminalize homosexuality, victims cannot report anti-LGBT violence without risking arrest.¹⁸ Once in custody, LGBT people have reported additional violence from police, prison officials, and fellow inmates (see page 17-18).

Due to low reporting, poor police investigation, and anti-LGBT bias among authorities, accurate statistics on anti-LGBT violence are difficult if not impossible to find. For the same reasons, it is not possible to confirm anti-LGBT motives or other specific details in every case. The fact remains that LGBT people are attacked in high numbers across all regions. The attacks are characterized by brutal ferocity, and they are often carried out with impunity.¹⁹

“Underreporting of anti-LGBT violence has been linked to fear of secondary abuse from police...”

Asia

A number of CBOs and researchers have looked at violence among different subsets of LGBT populations in several countries across Asia. The methodology used to obtain this data varies from case to case. Results are presented in the table below:

Country	Population	Violence	Sample	Year	Source
China	Male Sex Workers, Other MSM	51% experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse	n = 404	2013	Emory University
India	MSM, Transgender	18% experienced sexual violence in last year	n = 543	2012	University of Manitoba
Japan	LBT	56% experienced sexual violence	n = 50	2012	International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Malaysia	LBT	20% experienced physical violence, 28% experienced sexual violence	n = 45	2012	International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Singapore	LGBT	20% of men, 29% of trans women experienced sexual violence	n = 448	2012	Oogachaga Counseling & Support
Singapore	LGBT	11% of men, 24% of trans women experienced physical violence	n = 448	2012	Oogachaga Counseling & Support
Sri Lanka	LBT	79% experienced physical violence, 55% experienced sexual violence	n = 33	2012	International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission
Sri Lanka	LGBT	90% of trans people, over 60% of gay men experienced police violence	n = 109	2013	EQUAL GROUND
Vietnam	LGBT	19% experienced physical violence	n = 520	2012	Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population

Table 1. Studies of experiences of violence among LGBT people in Asia.^{20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27}

In addition to these studies, local CBOs reported 47 cases of anti-LGBT violence and abuse in Indonesia in 2013,²⁸ 145 cases of anti-LGBT violence in Pakistan in 2014,²⁹ and 141 hate-motivated murders of LGBT people in the Philippines between 1996 and 2012.³⁰

Caribbean

During a 15-month period from January 1st 2013 to March 31st 2014, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) documented violence against LGBT people and people perceived to be LGBT by monitoring a combination of media reports, civil society reports, and a few rare instances of State reporting.

According to IACHR, at least 16 people were murdered in the Caribbean during this period by perpetrators who perceived the victims to have transgressed accepted gender norms, either through gender expression or sexual orientation. An additional 24 were subjected to serious non-lethal attacks.

IACHR emphasizes that this data is by no means exhaustive, as most Caribbean governments do not collect data on anti-LGBT violence and many cases go unreported.

In addition to IACHR's report, a CBO in Jamaica documented 231 reports of anti-LGBT assaults, physical attacks and displacement from homes (2009-2012).³² A CBO in Haiti reported 47 anti-gay attacks in a single week in 2013,³³ and the U.S. Department of Justice estimated that at least 18 LGBT people had been murdered in Puerto Rico (2010-2011).³⁴

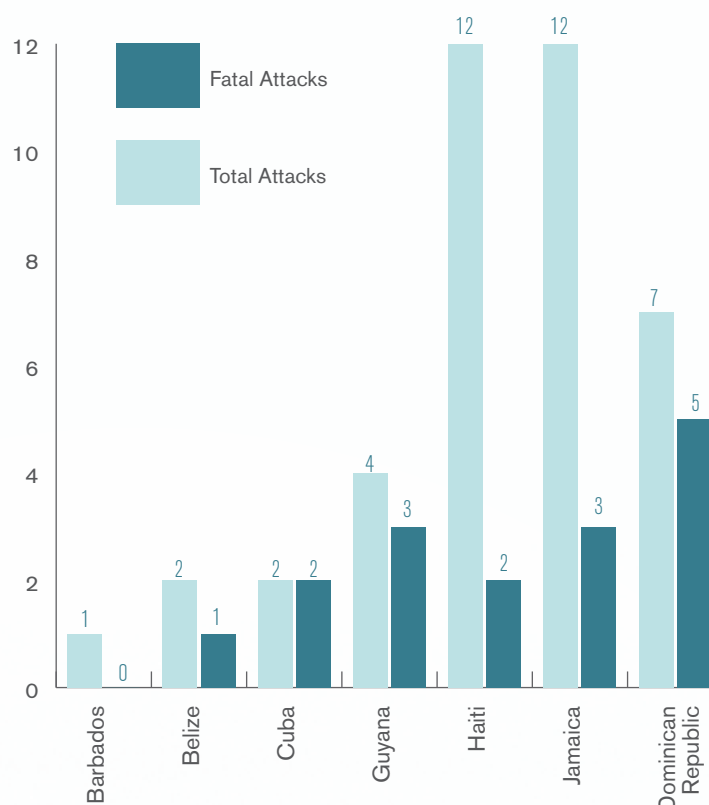


Figure 1. Number of violent attacks in Caribbean countries from January 1st 2013 to March 31st 2014.³¹

Eastern Europe & Central Asia

CBOs have conducted studies on rates of violence against LGBT people in several countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia:

Country	Population	Violence	Sample	Year	Source
Armenia	LBT	24% physically assaulted, 12% sexually assaulted	n = 70	2007	We For Civil Equality
Azerbaijan	LGBT	27% experienced physical harassment	n = 100	2012	Gender & Development
Georgia	GBT	44% experienced physical violence	n = 109	2013	Identoba
Kyrgyzstan	LGBT	65% experienced physical or sexual violence	n = 43	2004	HIVOS & COC Netherlands
Russia	LGBT	15% experienced violence	n = 2007	2013	Russian LGBT Network

Table 2. Studies of experiences of violence among LGBT people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.^{35 36 37 38 39}

In addition to these studies, CBOs reported 298 anti-LGBT attacks and 16 attempted murders in Kazakhstan (2011-2012),⁴⁰ 21 cases of anti-LGBT violence in Moldova (2012),⁴¹ 40 hate crimes against LGBT people in Ukraine (2014),⁴² and 22 anti-LGBT attacks in Russia with a total of 210 victims (2012).⁴³

Latin America

According to IACHR, at least 549 people were murdered in the region between January 2013 and March 2014 by perpetrators who perceived the victims to have transgressed accepted gender norms, either through gender expression or sexual orientation. An additional 124 were subjected to serious non-lethal attacks:

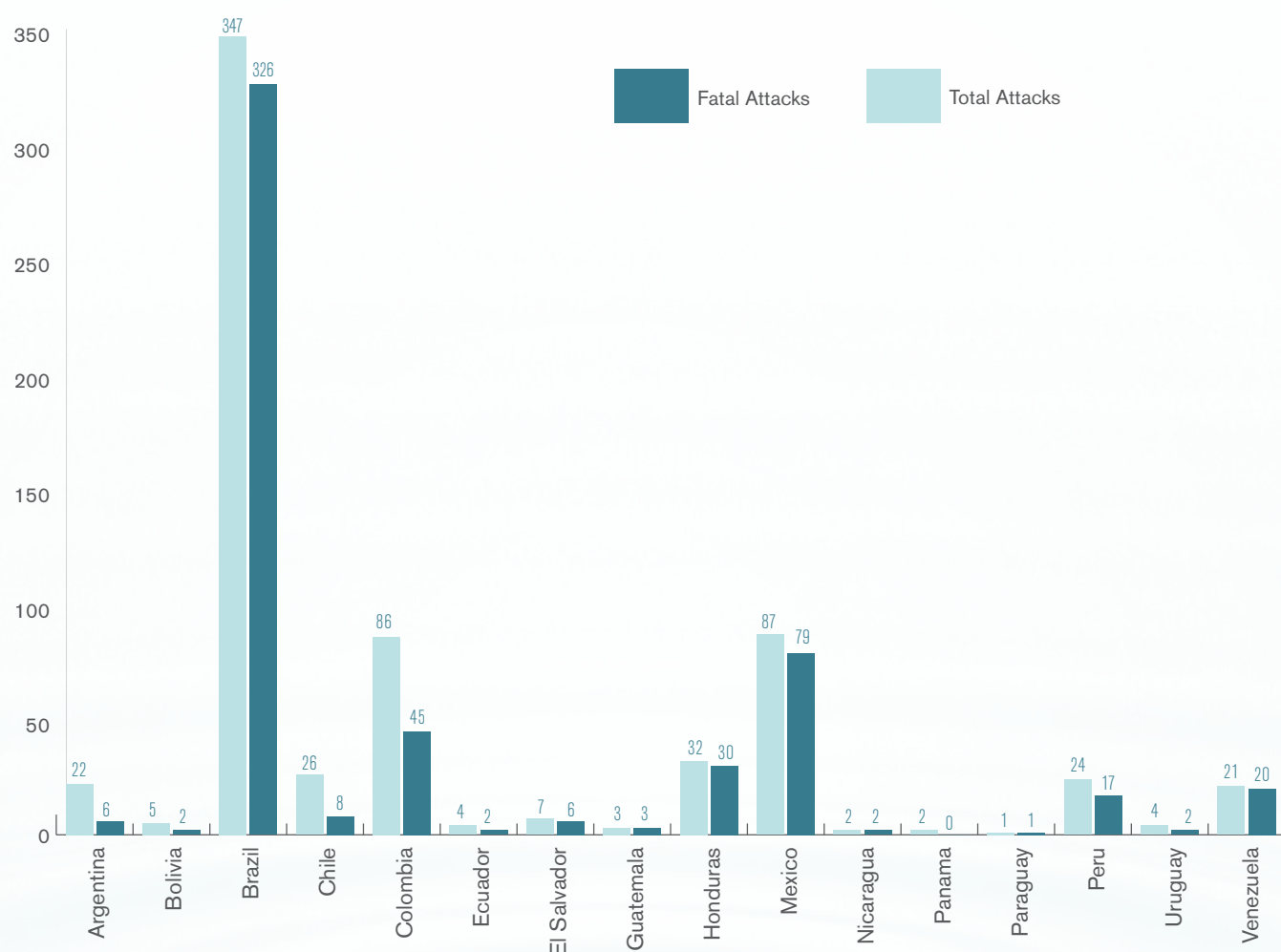


Figure 2. Number of violent attacks in Latin American countries from January 1st 2013 to March 31st 2014.⁴⁴

In addition to IACHR's report, LGBT organizations have documented the murders of 30 transgender people in Guatemala (2009-2011),⁴⁵ 82 LGBT people in Honduras (2009-2012),⁴⁶ 16 LGBT people in Peru (2009-2010),⁴⁷ and an average of 60 LGBT people per year in Mexico (2001-2009).⁴⁸

Middle East & North Africa

While individual cases of violence have been recorded in many countries across the Middle East and North Africa, very few countries have numbers that reflect aggregated data on violence against LGBT people. A few exceptions are listed in the table below.

Country	Murders	Timeframe	Source
Iraq	720	2003-2009	Iraqi LGBT
Turkey	41	2010-2014	Kaos GL
Yemen	34	2013-2014	U.S. State Department

Table 3. Murders of LGBT people in the Middle East and North Africa by country.^{49 50 51}

Additional reports indicate that ISIS has executed at least 12 men accused of sodomy in Iraq and Syria thus far in 2015;⁵² 100% of 40 trans women interviewed by Human Rights Watch in Kuwait suffered sexual abuse at the hands of the police (2011);⁵³ and an Israeli LGBT violence prevention center documented 250 reports of violence and discrimination between August 2013 and August 2014.⁵⁴

North America & Western Europe

Between April and July of 2012, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a regional survey of over 93,000 LGBT people living across Europe. Prevalence of hate-motivated violence is listed by country below:

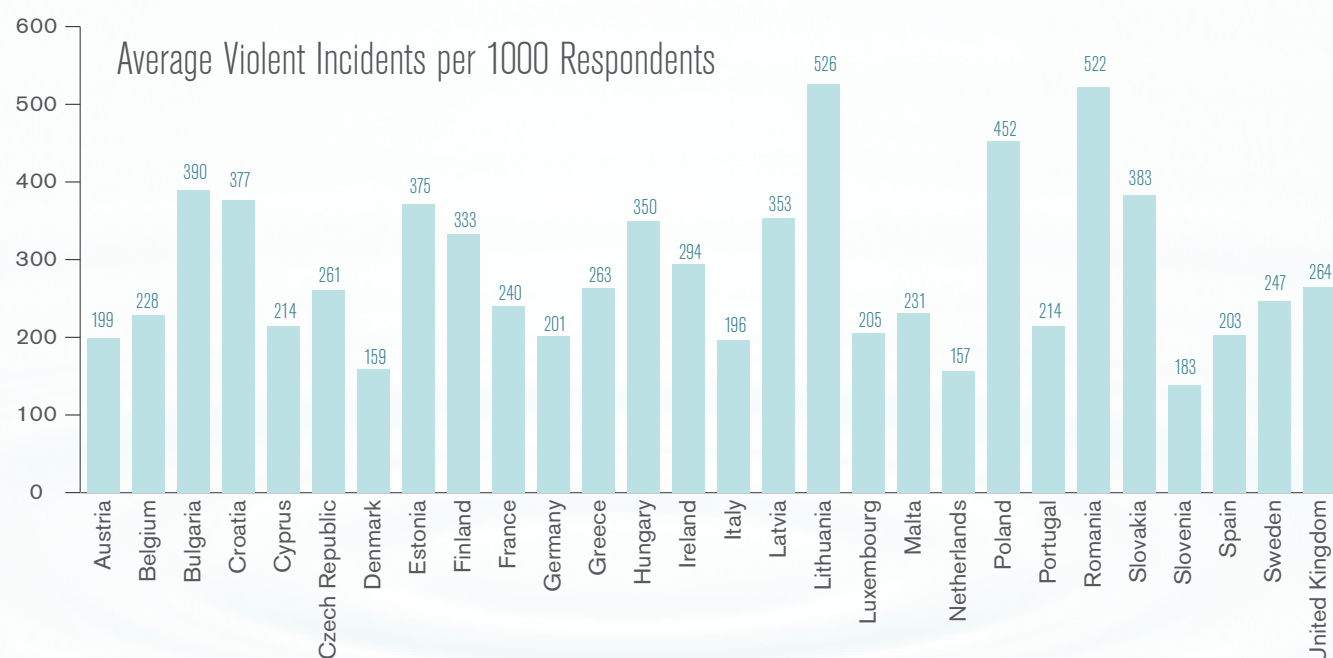


Figure 3. Average number of violent incidents in the previous 12 months per 1,000 respondents, listed by country.⁵⁵

According to Canadian government statistics, 185 anti-LGBT hate crimes were reported in 2012.⁵⁶ In the U.S., the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) documented 1,359 incidents of anti-LGBT violence and 20 homicides across 14 states in 2014.⁵⁷ In the United Kingdom, London's metropolitan police recorded 1,073 violent homophobic offences between January and October 2014.⁵⁸

Oceania

We were unable to find any reports that speak to frequency of violence against LGBT people in Oceania at the country level. However, the Trans Murder Monitoring Project reported that 5 transgender people were murdered in Oceania between 2008 and 2014.⁵⁹

Sub-Saharan Africa

In a 2005 working paper entitled, "Sexual Minorities, Violence and AIDS in Africa,"⁶⁰ the World Bank cited a study on discrimination and violence against LGBT people in the region. Sourced from the All-Africa Symposium on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights, the study examines prevalence of physical and sexual violence in several African countries:

	General Violence	Police Violence	Rape (Ever)	Police Rape (Ever)
Senegal	>33%	>20%	>30%	>10%
Kenya	>33%	1%-20%	3%-30%	1%-10%
Zimbabwe	>33%	>20%	3%-30%	1%-10%
Uganda	>33%	>20%	>30%	1%-10%
Tanzania	5%-33%	<1%	>30%	<1%
Nigeria	>33%	1%-20%	3%-30%	<1%
Sierra Leone	>33%	<1%	<3%	<1%
Namibia	5%-33%	<1%	<3%	<1%
Rwanda	<5%	<1%	<3%	<1%

Table 4. Violence against LGBT people in selected Sub-Saharan African countries.⁶¹

Peer-reviewed journal articles and CBOs provided additional statistics on violence in several countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. According to a PEPFAR-funded study in Côte d'Ivoire, 9% of MSM reported physical abuse and 21% reported forced sex (2012).⁶² In addition, CBOs reported 76 human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Malawi in 2013;⁶³ 24 physical attacks against LGBTI people in Uganda between December 2013 and May 2014, including 4 cases of prolonged torture;⁶⁴ and 43 cases of human rights violations against LGBT people in Zambia during a 6-month period in 2013.⁶⁵

2014 GLOBAL MEN'S HEALTH AND RIGHTS SURVEY

In 2014, the MSMGF conducted the third biennial Global Men's Health and Rights Study (GMHR). Designed to assess numerous indicators for health and human rights among men who have sex with men (MSM) around the world, the 2014 GMHR included a series of questions focused on experiences of anti-LGBT violence.



Activists participate in a Speaking Out advocacy training held by the MSMGF in Nairobi, Kenya.

A total of 2,314 participants answered questions on anti-LGBT violence. Prevalence of violence is listed by region in the table below.

Have you ever been physically assaulted because you are gay/MSM?									
Region	Asia (n=155)	Caribbean (n=39)	E. Europe & Central Asia (n=128)	Latin America (n=359)	Middle East & North Africa (n=26)	Oceania (n=95)	Sub-Saharan Africa (n=101)	N. America & W. Europe (n=1358)	Overall (n=2314)
Yes-once	10%	21%	16%	20%	27%	18%	20%	16%	17%
Yes-2 to 3 times	3%	8%	16%	9%	12%	7%	14%	12%	11%
Yes-4 to 5 times	1%	0%	4%	2%	0%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Yes more than 5 times	1%	3%	15%	3%	0%	6%	7%	3%	4%
Have you ever been sexually assaulted because you are gay/MSM?									
Region	Asia (n=155)	Caribbean (n=39)	E. Europe & Central Asia (n=128)	Latin America (n=359)	Middle East & North Africa (n=26)	Oceania (n=95)	Sub-Saharan Africa (n=101)	N. America & W. Europe (n=1358)	Overall (n=2314)
Yes-once	10%	10%	8%	7%	12%	8%	13%	8%	8%
Yes-2 to 3 times	5%	3%	2%	2%	8%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Yes-4 to 5 times	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Yes more than 5 times	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Has someone you know ever been physically assaulted because he is gay/MSM?									
Region	Asia (n=155)	Caribbean (n=39)	E. Europe & Central Asia (n=128)	Latin America (n=359)	Middle East & North Africa (n=26)	Oceania (n=95)	Sub-Saharan Africa (n=101)	N. America & W. Europe (n=1358)	Overall (n=2314)
Yes	42%	69%	80%	62%	77%	77%	79%	72%	69%

Table 5. Prevalence of violence against MSM by region, taken from the 2014 GMHR dataset.⁶⁶

CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE

Examining quantitative data on anti-LGBT violence tells only half the story, failing to convey the heinous nature of these crimes. In many cases the violence is extreme, and the perpetrators are often people in authority—effectively cutting victims off from vital social resources including systems for protection, justice, and healthcare.

Extreme Violence

In its 2015 report on anti-LGBT violence, the United Nations states that “violence motivated by homophobia and transphobia is often particularly brutal, and in some instances characterized by levels of cruelty exceeding that of other hate crimes.”⁶⁷ Studies from Canada and the U.S. have found that hate crimes against LGBT people are more likely to be violent and that the violence is often more extreme, when compared to other hate crimes.^{68 69}

“violence motivated by homophobia and transphobia is often particularly brutal, and in some instances characterized by levels of cruelty exceeding that of other hate crimes.”

The cases below provide an illustration of just some of the extreme violence inflicted on LGBT people. It is important to note that these cases are not isolated instances; rather they are representative of the savagery reflected in many of these crimes.

Seda Tan worked with Sonke Gender Justice, which advocates for justice in cases of gender-based violence in South Africa, when 21-year-old David Olyn was murdered in 2014. Tan reported:

Media reports indicated that a group of youths were drinking near a local dam when they were called by a man to watch him murder a ‘moffie’ (a derogatory slang term used to describe a gay or effeminate man). Forensic reports reveal that David was raped, tied up with wire and had his head smashed in with a brick, before being stamped on and set on fire.⁷⁰

The 2011 United Nations report on violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity cites reports on violence against transgender women made to the Special Rapporteur:

It is also reported that male-to-female transsexual women have been beaten intentionally on their breasts and cheek-bones which had been enhanced by silicone implants, causing the implants to burst and as a result releasing toxic substances into their bodies.^{71 72}

In Iraq in 2009, 24-year-old Tayyib told Human Rights Watch that his friend Mustafa had been thrown off the top of a building then shot and killed. He also told the story of man named Khaldoun:

The Mahdi Army killed Khaldoun in Baghdad al-Jadida. I heard that Khaldoun was tortured, beaten and disfigured, and finally hung on the street. One of the tortures they used on him was a very strong glue to close his anus, after which he was given a laxative causing diarrhea that killed him.⁷³

The Role of Police

In many countries the police contribute to anti-LGBT violence by allowing it to happen without repercussions or by committing acts of violence themselves.

Police have been documented ignoring anti-LGBT violence at every point in the sequence of an incident: before, during, and after violence takes place. Police have failed to respond to threats of violence, in some cases forcing CBOs to cancel LGBT campaigns and events due to lack of protection.^{74 75 76} In other cases, LGBT events have taken place only to be attacked by mobs as police stand by and do nothing.⁷⁷

After failing to protect Kyrgyz activists from a violent attack during a demonstration marking the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT), Bishkek police held activists as witnesses at the police station for over 5 hours without access to medical aid, toilet, food, or water:

The police demanded from several participants to reveal their genitals in search for transgender people. During the time of the stay at the police department police officers swore at and threatened the activists and refused them legal representation.

Law enforcement officers showed the testimonies of the witnesses to the attackers, who attempted to note down personal information of the activists. The attitude of the police was very different to the [attackers], as they could get up, move around the police station, to eat and drink.⁷⁸

In some cases, police have refused to document anti-LGBT attacks or ridiculed LGBT people when they report cases of abuse.^{79 80} In others, police have warned activists that they will be arrested for speaking out against human rights abuses.⁸¹ In one case, a transgender woman in Turkey had been shot in the head and police sexually harassed her while she waited at the hospital to have the bullet removed.⁸²



Organizers of IGLA's 2010 conference in Indonesia struggle to manage threats from religious organizations after police refused to issue a recommendation for the event. The conference was cancelled a few hours after it began to protect the safety of participants.⁷⁶ (Photo: Sylvia Tan, Fridae.com)

Beyond ignoring anti-LGBT violence, police are often the perpetrators. Depending on the legal environment, police have arrested LGBT people on charges ranging from homosexuality, sex work, and pornography to loitering and disturbing the peace.^{83 84 85 86 87} Police violence can take place both during arrest^{88 89} and once a person is in custody, taking the form of beatings, rape, torture, and various forms of humiliation and extortion. In some cases, LGBT individuals have died in police custody.^{90 91}

Jamaican activist Maurice Tomlinson describes a police raid that took place in 2011:

Four police pickups... descended on the only gay club along the Hip Strip in Montego Bay. About 20 heavily armed policemen jumped from the vehicles, aggressively accosting patrons, kicking in doors, beating and pistol-whipping indiscriminately, and chasing everyone from the venue. All the while, the officers hurled homophobic slurs which encouraged patrons of other clubs nearby to join in the melee by throwing bottles, stones and other missiles as individuals fled for their lives.... At least 10 persons were reported to have been treated at hospital for injuries sustained during the raid....⁹²

Becley Aigbuza describes his experience in custody after being arrested for homosexuality in Nigeria in 2008:

After being forced to admit to them I was gay, the police tied me up, burned my forehead with cotton wool soaked in acid and took turns sodomizing me with a beer bottle for hours. I woke up in the hospital in Benin City with a dislocated shoulder, a broken hand, bruises and wounds all over my body and a mutilated testicle.⁹³

Prison Violence

If convicted of a crime, LGBT people face the possibility of additional violence in prison. Violence can be physical, sexual, or medical in nature, and it can be perpetrated by either guards or fellow inmates.

Thirteen of 24 LGBT people interviewed by the UN special rapporteur in Iran said that security officers had subjected them to “torture or physical abuse in detention, including punches, kicks, baton strikes, sexual assault, or rape.”⁹⁴ According to a 2008 survey of former prisoners in the United States, 39% of gay male inmates had been assaulted by a fellow inmate compared to 3.5% of heterosexual male inmates.⁹⁵

A CBO in Georgia has relayed reports from GBT prisoners that they have been kept in separate living quarters, where material conditions are significantly worse. According to these reports, GBT prisoners have also served as forced “prostitutes” for the general prison population, including one man who reported that he performed approximately 150 nonconsensual sex acts per month.⁹⁶

Medical Violence

LGBT people experience numerous types of medical violence, ranging from denial of necessary medical treatment to forced procedures that are medically unnecessary.

Reports from around the world document cases of hospitals and clinics refusing treatment to LGBT people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.^{97 98} A CBO in Kazakhstan reported 115 cases of LGBT people being denied health care between 2011 and 2012.⁹⁹ In Armenia, two transgender people died from injuries sustained in a car accident after physicians refused to treat them.¹⁰⁰ Some mainstream health facilities are so hostile to LGBT people that individuals would rather stay home than access care, in some cases leading to their deaths.¹⁰¹

Forced procedures that are medically unnecessary can take many forms, including anal exams falsely believed to reveal sexual orientation,^{102 103} unnecessary hormone and psychological treatment,^{104 105 106} and “conversion therapy” designed to change one’s sexual orientation.¹⁰⁷ All of these procedures constitute human rights abuses, and some can be deadly. In South Africa, three youths lost their lives while attending a camp designed to turn effeminate boys into “men.” Raymond Buys, the most recent casualty, was admitted to a hospital in 2013, his body severely emaciated, with skull fractures, brain damage, a broken arm, and cigarette burns all over his body. He had allegedly been forced to eat his own feces.¹⁰⁸

Violence Incited by the Media

Frequently the media plays a role in inciting anti-LGBT violence, publishing salacious stories of LGBT people and fueling anti-LGBT sentiment.^{109 110}

In some cases media reports include identifying information that can be used by vigilantes to hunt down LGBT people. Numerous newspapers have published the names of LGBT individuals and activists, sometimes including their photographs and addresses.^{111 112 113} Often this information is published alongside incendiary declarations about LGBT people, sometimes including explicit calls to violence.^{114 115} In some cases the articles have been followed by violent anti-LGBT attacks.^{116 117}

The case of George Freeman, Denzil Kargbo, and Ephraim Bernard Wilson provides an illustrative example. The three men served in Sierra Leone as officers of the CBO Pride Equality, which offers HIV prevention, treatment, and care services, as well as legal



Ugandan tabloid *Rolling Stone* published names, photographs, and addresses of alleged “homos” under a headline that read, “Hang Them!” (Photo: AP)

representation for LGBT people whose rights had been violated. In May 2013, a local newspaper featured a photograph of the three activists on the front page and included information about where one of them lived. On the day of publication, Freeman was attacked by two men on motorbikes that cut him with broken glass and metal before he escaped. Following numerous additional death threats, the three activists were forced to flee to Spain.¹¹⁸

In addition to reporting anti-LGBT news, sometimes the media attempts to create it. In several cases, journalists have invaded the homes and gathering places of LGBT people, calling the police in order to secure exclusive footage of LGBT arrests.^{119 120} Often these reports include identities of LGBT individuals and reveal intimate personal details. Such exposure has resulted in at least one attempted suicide.¹²¹

State-Sanctioned Violence

As of 2015, 75 countries around the world criminalize homosexuality. Laws that criminalize homosexuality increase vulnerability to anti-LGBT violence, as victims cannot report violence without risking arrest themselves. Perpetrators can attack LGBT people with impunity, knowing they are unlikely to be reported.

Haneen, a transgender woman in Kuwait, spoke to Human Rights Watch about her experience in 2008 after a man had stalked her for several months:

*One night he broke down the door of my apartment and stabbed me in the shoulder with a knife. He raped me brutally in my own home. When he was finished, he took me in his car to the marina. I thought he was going to take me to the hospital because I was bleeding and in a great deal of pain, but instead he stopped near a police patrol and dared me to report him. We both knew that I wouldn't, because the police would arrest me instead for "imitating the opposite sex."*¹²²

Criminalization of homosexuality also has the effect of legitimizing anti-LGBT violence by defining LGBT people as criminals who do not deserve full human rights.

In 2010, Ugandan tabloid "Rolling Stone" published the names and photos of 100 alleged "homos" under the tagline "Hang Them!" Within two weeks, at least four people featured in the article had been attacked.¹²³ The publication's managing editor defended the decision, describing the individuals included in the article as "self-confessed criminals" and stating that "hanging is done after the due process of the law has been followed."¹²⁴

When serial killer Muhammed Ejaz confessed to murdering gay men in Pakistan, where homosexuality is illegal, some portrayed him as a national hero. "It is illegal to indulge in any homosexual activity and the government has failed to stop such obscenity," said a student interviewed about the crimes in Pakistan. "As a result, pious people like Ejaz are forced to eliminate evil themselves."¹²⁵

CBOs in several countries that recently passed anti-homosexuality legislation have reported that anti-LGBT attacks increased after passage of the laws.^{126 127 128}

Even in countries where homosexuality is not criminalized, police often use other pretexts to harass and arrest LGBT people. Suspicion of sex work is frequently used to detain LGBT people,¹²⁹ and carrying condoms has been used as evidence of sex work.¹³⁰ Police have also used regulations on loitering, vagrancy, public urination, and disturbing the peace to target LGBT people.^{131 132 133}

“When violence is directed at LGBT activists and CBOs, the effects extend well beyond the damage to the individual and the organization.”

CONNECTION TO HIV

LGBT activists and CBOs often provide the only support structure for LGBT communities. Activists advance legislation and social understanding to create an environment where the human rights of LGBT people are protected and respected, and CBOs provide services and support that are unavailable to LGBT people in mainstream institutions. These roles are especially important in contexts where the police, medical establishment, and media are hostile to LGBT people.

As HIV rates continue to soar among MSM and transgender people globally, activists and CBOs provide the best – and often only – HIV information and health services tailored to the needs of LGBT populations. High-quality services are offered in a safe space where clients can get the information and services they need without risking rejection, exposure, violence, or arrest. Due to these activities, activists and community-based service providers are often the most visible members of the LGBT community. As a result, they frequently become targets for anti-LGBT violence.

When violence is directed at LGBT activists and CBOs, the effects extend well beyond the damage to the individual and the organization. The vital services offered by activists and CBOs are interrupted, and individuals who need services cannot access them. In some cases, numerous local organizations have shut down, leaving entire communities without access to safe and reliable HIV prevention and treatment resources. Even when CBOs continue to offer services after an attack, clients may become too afraid to visit their office, and the CBO may be unable to attract new staff or volunteers to support its work.

The cases below provide just a few examples of the damage done to the LGBT health infrastructure by violence targeting LGBT activists and CBOs. This account far from exhaustive.

Violence Targeting LGBT Activists & Service Providers

FannyAnn Eddy

Sierra Leone

FannyAnn Eddy founded the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association in 2002. The organization provided social and psychological support to LGBT people, and Eddy advocated with Sierra Leone's government to address LGBT health and human rights. While working late one night in 2004, unknown assailants broke into her office and raped her repeatedly, stabbing her and ultimately breaking her neck. Her body was found in her office the next morning.¹³⁴



(Photo: Lorena Espinoza)

Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera

Mexico

Quetzalcoatl Leija Herrera served as Director of the Center for Study and Projects on Integrated Human Development (CEPRODEHI), a civil society organization that promotes the human rights of sexual minorities in Chilpancingo, Mexico. After he and his colleagues received death threats in previous years warning not to hold the city's annual Gay Pride march, he was found beaten to death on May 4, 2011.¹³⁵



(Photo: La Crónica Diaria S.A. de C.V.)

David Kato

Uganda

David Kato served as advocacy officer for the LGBT organization Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG). His name and address were published by a Ugandan tabloid as one of Uganda's 100 "Top Homos," with Kato's photo appearing on the front page under a banner that read "Hang Them!" He received numerous death threats following the publication. Two months later, in January 2011, Kato was bludgeoned to death with a hammer in his home.^{136 137 138}



(Photo: AP)

Brandy Martell

United States

Brandy Martell served as a peer advocate for Tri-City Health Center, conducting HIV outreach for the transgender community in Fremont, California. On a Sunday night in May 2012, Martell was sitting in her parked car socializing with two other trans women when two men approached the vehicle. The men spoke with the women briefly, leaving upon learning that the women were transgender. They returned two hours later with guns, firing into the car and killing Martell.¹³⁹



(Photo: Tiffany Woods)

Erick Martínez

Honduras

Erick Martínez served as Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist at Asociación Kukulcan, a respected LGBT rights and HIV service organization in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. A renowned LGBT activist and journalist, he had announced his intentions to advocate for LGBT human rights as Congressional candidate just weeks before his body was found in a roadside ditch, strangled to death, on May 7, 2012.^{140 141}

**Alberto Osorio**

Peru

Alberto Osorio founded the community-based organization VIH DARTE Centro de Desarrollo Participativo Para Los Derechos y La Salud in 2001. He was serving as president of the organization, which promotes the rights of people living with HIV, in 2010 when he was found by his mother in his apartment, tied to the bed with a cable, beaten and strangled to death.¹⁴²

**Francela Méndez Rodríguez**

El Salvador

Francela Méndez Rodríguez served on the board of Salvadoran transgender advocacy group Colectivo Alejandría since it was founded in 2010. She was also a member of the Salvadoran Human Rights Defenders Network and carried out local HIV prevention work. Méndez was murdered in May 2015 while visiting the home of a friend, Consuela Flores Martínez, who was also killed in the attack.¹⁴³

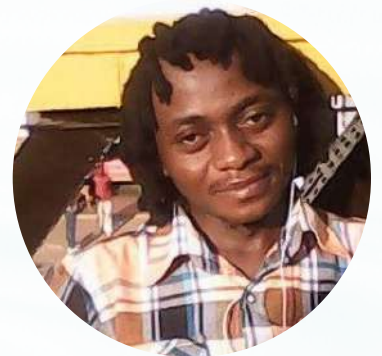


(Photo: Diario La Página)

Joseph Saidi

Democratic Republic of Congo

Joseph Saidi founded the LGBT-rights organization Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko. In May 2013, Saidi was arrested on charges of promoting homosexuality. According to a report from Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko, Saidi was “detained for four days, during which time he was tortured and beaten by police, then beaten and raped by fellow inmates while a police investigator looked on.” Saidi was released after paying the arresting officer \$400.¹⁴⁴

**“Saman”**

Sri Lanka

“Saman” was a graduate student doing research on safer sex among MSM in 2011 when he was accosted by police officers dressed in plain clothing. The men he was interviewing were arrested and

beaten, and the transgender woman he had interviewed was sodomized with a wooden stick. Saman was held in jail for several days, where he was physically assaulted by the police.¹⁴⁵

Walter Trochez

Honduras

Walter Trochez served as General Coordinator for the Sexual Diversity Advocacy Group and co-founder of the Committee of Auditors, an organization focused on ending violence and discrimination against people living with HIV. He was working to document murders of LGBT resistance members after the coup when he was shot to death in downtown Tegucigalpa in December 2009.^{146 147}



Ahmet Yildiz

Turkey

Twenty-six year old Ahmet Yildiz was a gay activist and journalist who wrote for Turkish gay publications. After receiving numerous death threats from his family, Yildiz was shot to death in the streets of Istanbul in 2008. Gay rights groups claim prosecutors neither investigated the threats nor provided increased protection. Prosecutors charged his father with the murder, stating he traveled more than 900 kilometers from his hometown to kill his son in what was dubbed as Turkey's first gay honor killing.¹⁴⁸



Names Withheld

Tunisia

Two members of the LBT advocacy organization Chouf were attacked within a single week in 2015. According to a statement from the organization, "one of the members of our office was raped by a man who threatened her with a knife to her throat, and another member was beaten by a group of men because of her sexual orientation. The attackers asked her to 'show how she could fight if she wanted to marry a woman.'"¹⁴⁹

Names Withheld

Nigeria

Four young men who volunteered with a local gay organization in the Federal Capital Territory were attacked in 2011. According to a shadow report to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, "A crowd invaded their houses vandalizing their properties, stripped them naked, whipped them with cutlasses, took their belongings out of the house and burnt it with fire, and after molesting them, they marched them to the chief's (community head) palace in that area threatening to kill them. The four men were able to escape but could not return to their houses."¹⁵⁰

Violence Targeting LGBT CBOs & Services

Belarus

Following an unsuccessful attempt to register an LGBT-focused CBO in January 2013, LGBT activist Ihar Tsikhanyuk was “questioned, beaten, and subjected to threats of abuse for being gay by the Belarusian police.”¹⁵² Following the attempted registration, members of the LGBT community reported that police summoned them for questioning, raided clubs, and physically assaulted at least one individual.¹⁵³

Côte d’Ivoire

Alternatives Côte d’Ivoire, which provides HIV services and advocates for LGBT rights, was attacked four separate times during a single week in 2014. According to Frontline Defenders, “Laptops and desktop PCs were stolen and everything else in the office destroyed, including the electricity supply lines and emergency food supplies for people living with AIDS.” The organization was forced to suspend its activities and many of its members went into hiding for their personal safety.¹⁵⁴



The office of Cameroonian LGBT organization CAMEF was vandalized in December 2013. Cameras and laptops were stolen and threatening messages were left stating “Next time we will padlock and burn all of you inside.” All programs were suspended following the attack.¹⁵¹ (Photo: CAMEF)

Kenya

On February 12, 2010, a mob of several hundred people surrounded a clinic at the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) that ran an HIV program for MSM in a town outside Mombasa. The police arrived and attempted to disburse the crowd, but not before a man approaching the health center was beaten severely, doused in gasoline and nearly set on fire. The next day, a mob attacked and severely injured a volunteer who worked at the clinic. The clinic suspended all activities due to the attacks.^{155 156}

Kyrgyzstan

On April 3, 2015, unknown assailants attacked the offices of the Bishkek-based LGBT-rights organization Labrys. Three bottle-explosives were thrown into the organization’s yard, causing an open fire.¹⁵⁷ Just one month later, Labrys and a second LGBT organization Kyrgyz Indigo were accosted by anti-LGBT activists following a dinner held to raise money for a Kyrgyz

Indigo safehouse. The next day, the same anti-LGBT activists attacked members of Labrys and Kyrgyz Indigo at an IDAHOT gathering, photographing attendees while shouting anti-gay slurs and physically assaulting at least one woman.¹⁵⁸

Moldova

In March of 2008, the staff of GenderDoc-M arrived at their office to find the windows had been smashed with rocks the previous night. Two months later, the office manager arrived at the office to discover a two-liter bottle of gasoline on the windowsill with a fuse attached. It appeared the fuse had been lit but was extinguished by a street cleaner before the bomb went off.¹⁵⁹



Dmitry Chizhevsky lost sight in his left eye as a result of an attack on LaSky's office in St. Petersburg in 2013. (Photo: Misha Friedman)

Russia

In November 2013, two masked attackers stormed the St. Petersburg offices of LaSky, an HIV and STD information and treatment clinic that serves LGBT people. Wielding a baseball bat and a gas gun, the attackers interrupted a weekly meeting of between 25 and 30 young LGBT people and allies, firing into the crowd and beating participants while shouting anti-gay slurs. Two attendees were injured, including one who lost his eye in the attack.^{160 161}

Sri Lanka

In 2011, a journalist for the Sinhala newspaper Rivira posed as a gay man seeking services in order to gain access to an LGBT CBO in Sri Lanka. He then published an exposé on condom and lubricant distribution to gay men, explicitly naming the organization and providing its address. Due to the sensational media coverage and public response, several CBOs closed down their operations and others shut down their websites and Facebook pages.¹⁶²

“People used to get their antiretrovirals at KEMRI. While it’s been closed, there is no provision of condoms and lubricant, no medical services for this community. Some of these things, like lubricant, aren’t available anywhere else.... Some of the men who were attacked are not sure they will be able to go back to work as peer educators.”

—Kenyan activist Peter Njane, speaking after KEMRI’s MSM clinic suspended services following an attack¹⁴⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anti-LGBT violence constitutes an urgent global human rights crisis that must be addressed immediately by stakeholders at all levels. The United Nations' 2015 report on anti-LGBT violence provides numerous recommendations for governments and human rights councils, including the repeal of harmful laws, conducting prompt and thorough investigations into incidents of violence, and tracking and publishing data on cases of anti-LGBT violence.¹⁶³

The devastating impact of anti-LGBT violence on HIV services demands that it be addressed by the HIV infrastructure as well. While numerous arguments have been made for the importance of an HIV response based in human rights,^{164 165} rarely are anti-violence measures incorporated into budgets for HIV programs targeting LGBT people.

As violence ravages the people and institutions that form the frontlines of the fight against HIV among LGBT people worldwide, HIV funders and public health institutions must recognize that addressing violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity is an indispensable part of successful HIV prevention and treatment for LGBT populations.

Below we make several recommendations for HIV funders, public health institutions, and community-based HIV service providers that work with LGBT people.

HIV FUNDERS

- **HIV funders must support local LGBT-led community-based organizations** to continue their important HIV prevention and treatment work for LGBT populations. In nearly every country around the world, these organizations offer the highest-quality services, in the safest context, with the most community buy-in.
- **HIV funders must include a budget line item for security** when supporting LGBT-led community-based organizations. Funding to support security measures is not a luxury; it is an absolute requirement. LGBT-led community-based organizations cannot be expected to work in the current context of violence without adequate protection.
- **HIV funders must support anti-violence programs** focused on anti-LGBT violence prevention, response, and documentation. Violence severely undermines the HIV response among LGBT people, and anti-violence programs must be viewed as an integral part of comprehensive HIV prevention and treatment for LGBT populations.
- **HIV funders must support advocacy efforts aimed at decriminalizing homosexuality, gender identity, and sex work.** Laws that criminalize LGBT people and sex workers create an environment where LGBT people and organizations are abused by the police and private citizens.

with impunity. This abuse constitutes a grave violation of human rights, and it disrupts access to and provision of quality HIV services for LGBT people.

HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

- **Health institutions must train leadership and staff** to recognize and respond to the needs of LGBT people. LGBT people must not be denied urgent medical care simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Conversely, LGBT people must not be subjected to medically unnecessary procedures that violate their human rights and put their health at risk.
- In the U.S. the National LGBT Health Education Center has developed a series of online trainings on LGBT health that can be completed to achieve status in a Healthcare Equality Index developed by Human Rights Campaign.*
- In a global context, the MSMGF and Johns Hopkins University have developed a training curriculum designed to help healthcare providers in all settings improve their knowledge, skills, and sensitivity regarding LGBT health.¹⁷³

LGBT-LED COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- **Demand funding for security measures from HIV funders**, including both physical security and cyber security. Several resources exist to help inform security measures for LGBT human rights defenders. Examples include Protection International's "Protection Manual for LGBTI Defenders,"¹⁶⁶ and Benetech's data security programs for human rights defenders.¹⁶⁷
- **Demand funding for LGBT-violence prevention programs.** Include LGBT-violence prevention programs as part of proposals to funders with their own budget line items. Examples of anti-violence prevention programs can be categorized by target stakeholder:
 - **Police:** community-based organizations have had some success in producing sensitization initiatives targeting local police.



SWING's internship program matches each police cadet with a SWING staff "buddy" for the duration of the three week training. Here, cadets pose with their SWING staff buddies on graduation day.¹⁷⁰ (Photo: APCOM & SWING)

* Healthcare Equality Index. The National LGBT Health Education Center website. <http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/training/hrc-hei/>. Accessed October 29, 2015.

- In Suriname, St. Lucia, and Barbados, AIDS-Free World has provided sensitization trainings for local police, which have “enabled local LGBT communities to form closer working relations with the police, resulting in improvements in their interactions as well as an increased responsiveness of officers to reports of homophobic violence.”¹⁶⁸
- In Thailand, Service Workers in Group Foundation (SWING) invites third-year police cadets to intern at their organization, aiming to educate a new generation of police regarding issues faced by gay male sex workers in Thailand.^{169 170}
- Police departments with designated diversity units and diversity programs in the U.S. and U.K. have resulted in increased ties and trust between LGBT communities and the police.^{171 172}
- **Healthcare Providers:** community-based organizations are well-positioned to implement training programs for local healthcare providers to improve the quality and safety of the services they provide to LGBT communities.
 - The curriculum developed by the MSMGF and Johns Hopkins University was designed for use by community-based organizations to train local hospitals, clinics, and individual practitioners in high-quality healthcare for LGBT people.¹⁷³
- **Media:** community-based organizations in numerous countries have developed guidelines and trainings to help the media report on LGBT issues more responsibly.
 - In 2010, British Council Armenia offered a 3-day media workshop for journalists and LGBT activists, which resulted in positive exchange and relationship building between the two groups.^{174 175}
 - In 2014, JFLAG released “Reporting on LGBT Issues: A Guide for Jamaican Journalists,” which includes an overview of media ethics and specific guidelines on terminology and interview methods.¹⁷⁶
- **Demand funding for anti-LGBT violence response programs.** Include anti-LGBT violence response programs as part of proposals to funders with their own budget line items. In many locations, organizations already exist to support LGBT people and human rights defenders in crisis. Referral systems can help ensure LGBT community members, activists, and service providers have fast access to services provided by existing emergency response organizations, including safe houses, legal support, and emergency relocation funds.

The Global Fund has committed to protecting and promoting human rights in its 2012-2016 Investing for Impact strategy. It has released an information note that recommends a number of specific human rights interventions that governments can include in their concept notes or applications for funding, including interventions to address discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.¹⁷⁷

- African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHer) provides an example of a sophisticated emergency referral system, developed in 2013. The organization has compiled a database of legal defenders and emergency support organizations operating in countries across Africa. Each time an incident is reported to AMSHer, the organization activates a detailed protocol to document the incident and refer survivors to the appropriate parties for support.¹⁷⁸
- **Demand funding to systematically document anti-LGBT violence.** Making a case to fund anti-LGBT violence interventions has been difficult in part because the data documenting anti-LGBT violence is patchy. As trusted stakeholders in the LGBT community, LGBT-led community-based organizations are well positioned to document incidents of violence when they occur.
- In the U.S., the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) collects data on anti-LGBT violence from 16 member organizations across 14 states. Survivors of violence report incidents to member organizations in person, by calling a hotline, or by making a report online. Member organizations record each incident using NCAVP's Uniform Incident Reporting Form, allowing NCAVP to collect aggregate data on anti-LGBT violence across participating states.¹⁷⁹
- **Build ties with women's advocacy and support groups** to address sexual and gender-based violence. Violence against women remains widespread and must be urgently addressed. Misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia are intersecting issues, and collaborative efforts toward a broader social justice agenda are needed.
- **Advocate for the repeal of anti-homosexuality and anti-sex work legislation.** Laws against homosexuality and sex work are commonly used by the police to arrest and abuse LGBT people. These laws also create an environment where anti-LGBT violence can take place with impunity. Advocacy initiatives should target these laws in order to help create an environment of accountability for anti-LGBT violence.

It must be noted that even in countries where homosexuality and sex work are legal, authorities have used other regulations such as loitering and disturbing the peace to harass LGBT people. For this reason, legislative advocacy must be paired with anti-violence prevention programs targeting police and others in authority.

CONCLUSION

This year the United Nations celebrated the achievement of “15 by 15,” its target set in 2011 to reach 15 million people with HIV treatment by 2015. Now, the United Nations has turned its attention to a new target: “90-90-90.” By 2020: A) 90% of all people living with HIV will know their status; B) 90% of all people with an HIV diagnosis will receive sustained HIV treatment; and C) 90% all people receiving HIV treatment will achieve viral suppression.¹⁸⁰

As we consider UNAIDS' new accelerated global HIV targets, we must also address factors that undermine these goals. For example, governments, multi-lateral organizations, and funders fail to responsibly/sensitively collect and report data concerning LGBT people. It is difficult to monitor progress with incomplete data or data that tells just part of the HIV story. Based on survey findings from the Global Men's Health and Rights Study, condoms were completely accessible to less than half of MSM surveyed and lubricant was completely accessible to only 28%; HIV testing was completely accessible to 50%; and HIV treatment was completely accessible to 43%.¹⁸¹

If we are to achieve the 90-90-90 targets by 2020, we must engage LGBT-led activists and CBOs in a way that accounts for: A) their primary role in HIV service provision among LGBT populations worldwide; and B) the true contexts in which they work, including high levels of violence. The HIV sector must not only account for this violence by recognizing its existence in white papers and academic reports, we must acknowledge it by funding initiatives for prevention, response, and documentation.

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The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) has worked since 2006 to encourage targeted, tailored, better-resourced, and rights- based sexual health services for gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM) worldwide through its advocacy and technical support work. As a global network, MSMGF has successfully influenced HIV responses at the local level through shifts in global-level policies and has effectively utilized public health as an entry point for advancing the human rights of LGBT people. MSMGF currently supports programs in 15 countries.

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Services Under Siege

The Impact of Anti-LGBT Violence on HIV Programs

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