

LGBTQIA+ life challenges in Burundi



Legal Challenges

Same-gender sexual activities for both men and women are criminalized in Burundi since 2009 with a penalty from 3 months to 2 years imprisonment and a fine from 50,000 to 100,000 francs (€22-44). The new law was introduced under pressure from President Pierre Nkurunziza, an outspoken anti-gay figure. Burundi does not recognize same-gender marriages or civil unions - banned by the Burundi Constitution since 2005. LGBTQIA+ individuals are regularly prosecuted by the government. Transgender people are not legally recognized and they are not allowed to change their name or gender. Single people are eligible to adopt children but not same-gender couples.

Societal Challenges

Since the 2009 amendment to the penal code, discrimination against homosexuals has increased, however as of the end of 2010, no one had been prosecuted under the new provision. LGBTQIA+ persons additionally face stigma from the broader population in Burundi. Acts of violence, discrimination, and other abuse based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity have been reported. LGBTQIA+ persons face discrimination and marginalization by the community. Families sometimes disown homosexual children who refuse to deny their homosexuality and any homosexual people enter heterosexual marriages due to social pressure. Members of the LGBTQIA+ communities experience being fired from their jobs, beaten by family and neighbors, and evicted from their homes.

Resources

- [1] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/BDI/INT_CCPR_CSS_BDI_18263_E.pdf
- [2] https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2019.pdf
- [3] <https://www.refugeelaidinformation.org/burundi-lgbti-resources>
- [4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Burundi
- [5] <https://www.equaldex.com/region/burundi>

Activism

The government neither supported nor hindered the activities of local LGBTQIA+ organizations or the center.

Humure is a young non-profit organization under Burundian law which has assigned itself the mission of helping to improve the situation of minority groups, especially sexual minorities since 2009. www.humure.wordpress.com

Other organizations which are registered through ILGA from Burundi are:

**APDEI, Centre Population et
Developpement Sanitaire au
Burundi/Ceped-Burundi, Jeunes Actifs
Developpement des LGBT Burundim,
MUCO, Mouvement pour les Libertes
Individuelles – MOLI, NDIKUMANA&NIBIZI
Libre Ensemble, Rainbow Candle Light,
URUMURI**

Mostly, LGBTQIA+ associations or initiatives are forced to work under the umbrella of HIV prevention or other.

Displacement

LGBTQIA+ people forced escape Burundi to other countries and seek asylum in other countries. The main destination are neighboring countries such as Kenya or Uganda, which cooperate with the UNHCR. Some of families have the means to send their children to European or North American countries.