

# A Global Outlook on LGBTI Social Exclusion through 2030



## A summary of the report



**Social exclusion affects a range of development indicators for the LGBTI population which can prevent them from participating in social, economic, and/or political life.** As a result, they may not have access to basic physical needs like sustainable livelihoods, income, housing, education, and healthcare and may also be denied intangibles like human rights, legal protections, and basic dignities.

### The purpose

The purpose of this report is to support planning on international LGBTI issues. It is intended to be used to raise the profile of this ongoing crisis and highlight the significant implications for these groups which stem from their ongoing exclusion in many societies across the globe. Additionally, its findings serve to support policy formation, country strategies, and advocacy, underpinning the “leave no one behind” agenda, working to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) realize their potential as a vehicle to advance equality.

### A protracted humanitarian crisis

There are hundreds of millions of LGBTI individuals around the world, most of whom are at a greater risk of “death, disease, or disruption of their livelihoods” than the rest of the population. Furthermore, LGBTI individuals are more likely to experience poverty, lack healthcare, attempt suicide, and be subjected to physical or sexual violence, even in societies that are considered to be more accepting. As such, this situation should be characterized as a **protracted humanitarian crisis** and receive greater attention from the humanitarian sector.

Humanitarian attention is generally focused on crises that affect many people within a specific area. As a result, it is too easy for this crisis to be overlooked by the sector as LGBTI individuals are spread around the world, representing a small proportion of the population in any given area. Yet together they represent a large body of people who face a significant crisis.

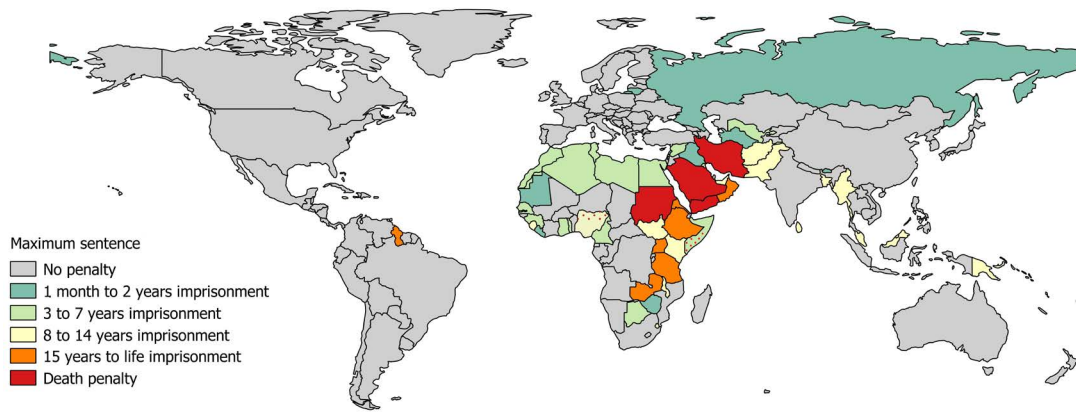
### The SDGs an opportunity for inclusivity

However, the “leave no one behind” agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals provides a framework and an opportunity for humanitarian actors to take action on their commitments to inclusivity, moving beyond rhetoric to close the gap between commitments and implementation that can foster real change for the lived reality of LGBTI individuals around the world. Progress on LGBTI social exclusion by 2030 is essential to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and tackling the causes of this protracted crisis that affects hundreds of millions of individuals worldwide.

### Key drivers

We identified 5 key drivers of change which will shape the evolution of LGBTI social exclusion through to 2030.

- **Media representation**
- **Stigmatization**
- **Religious acceptance**
- **Criminalization**
- **Political scapegoating**



Laws against same-sex practice by maximum sentence

All of the above factors have a high impact and high level of uncertainty over the period to 2030 and each could unfold in more than one possible way in the future. Furthermore, these factors are at the center of the system of interactions that contribute to the social exclusion of LGBTI individuals. Influencing them will affect many other down-stream factors that have a more immediate impact on people's lives like: workplace discrimination, rejection by family, and marriage rights. Criminalization and media representation are identified as key areas to target to influence the system as a whole.

Media representations are a leading force in the creation of stereotypes about LGBTI individuals. Stereotypes link stigmas to negative perceptions that lead to the devaluation and social exclusion of individuals so marked. The nature of these stereotypes is therefore an important determinate in how individuals will be viewed and treated within their society.

The state holds, arguably, the greatest normative power of any social institution. The criminalization of an act is to define it as a threat to the wellbeing of the society and shapes the norms surrounding it. So while criminalization is a direct form of exclusion, it also serves to legitimize and promote a broader social exclusionary environment.

#### 4 scenarios to 2030

We identified 4 possible scenarios for the future, each describing how LGBTI social exclusion might look, from the perspective of a given country, in the year 2030. As there is great variation around the world in how countries treat their LGBTI population, different scenarios can play out at the same time.

##### 1. Slow going

Gradual progress is being made towards the social inclusion of LGBTI individuals as they become more visible in their communities. However, structural barriers remain that prevent more substantive improvements, resulting in limited overall improvement in the development indicators for this vulnerable population.

##### 2. Progress and persecution

Social inclusion of LGBTI individuals is increasing, they are becoming less stigmatized via greater acceptance in communities and have more positive media portrayals, but the government is reactively persecuting them by passing vague laws criminalizing 'immoral' or 'unnatural' acts.

##### 3. Hollow victories

Many of the objectives believed necessary to promoting LGBTI social inclusion have been accomplished from greater visibility and media portrayals to the repeal of discriminatory laws. However, domestic institutions, from the government to religious organizations, are silent on the issue neither promoting social exclusion or inclusion. As a result, social stigmas against LGBTI individuals stubbornly persists and real change may not be realized until there is a generational shift in values.

##### 4. Institutions as leaders

Social institutions, from the government to religious organizations, actively work to promote the social inclusion of their LGBTI population. National campaigns and education programmes are used to engage the public. Changing social attitudes is still a slow process, but the framework is in place for sustained progress towards equality.

##### Crisis resolution

A long-term outlook is necessary to resolve this protracted crisis. It will not be quickly resolved and successfully challenging the drivers of social exclusion requires sustained leadership and investment. The resolution of the crisis - where all persons are treated equally and with dignity regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, requires structural changes in many societies legally, culturally, and socially.

The "leave no one behind" agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals will not be achieved until the structural inequalities that systematically disenfranchises LGBTI individuals are addressed.

#### About IARAN

The Inter-Agency Regional Analysts Network (IARAN) is a consortium of worldwide aid organisations and academics. We operate to support NGOs in managing future uncertainty using techniques like scenario analysis, to examine the different ways it could unfold over the next one to fifteen years, allowing them to be more responsive, resource efficient and impactful.

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