

Director

## *Some Thoughts and Information for Traveling Abroad*

### *as Someone who Identifies as LGBTIQ:*

Suggested questions for you and your advisor to address as you think about a destination that might be right for your Study Abroad or Internship:

- What is the expected tolerance level in the host country for those who openly identify as LGBTIQ! (*The key word here is “expected”—remember that tolerance may be just as varied among regions, communities, families and individuals in a foreign country as it is in the United States or elsewhere!*)
- What local and traditional laws govern the LGBTIQ community?
- Are there customs, social norms and behavioral expectations that might impact public acknowledgement of LGBTIQ orientation?
- What resources and support are available in my host country? In my host institution? With an international program Study Center or office? Is there a LGBTIQ office at my host institution?
- Are there generally LGBTIQ tolerant establishments in the host country?
- Are there any LGBTIQ newspapers, magazines, or local online resources available that will help me research concerns and find support if needed?
- Is it safe for me to be “out” as a member of the LGBTIQ community when I am abroad?
- How open do I want to express my sexuality and gender identity while abroad?
- Do I want to be open about my sexuality and/or gender identity with my host family, professors, local friends, or others that I meet in the host country?
- Are topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity openly discussed or do they remain taboo in public conversation in my host country?
- At this destination, will I likely be staying with a host family who may not be accepting of my gender or sexual identity?
- Can the host country and/or study abroad program accommodate special housing requests such as single rooms, private baths or certain roommates?
- If transgender and in need of specific medical support, will this be available/accessible in the host country in a manner that will suit my interests and needs?

## **Host Country Laws and Cultural Norms**

Attitudes, tolerance, support, and laws regarding sexual orientation, same-sex sexual contact, and gender expression vary widely around the world. There are also wide ranges when it comes to human rights and anti-discrimination laws. Cultures define and understand sexual orientation and gender identities differently. Some countries are more liberal on these matters than the U.S., while some may not acknowledge (or may even deny) that homosexuality exists at all. Even within a nation or city, there may be variations as vast as those between two different countries. Some countries offer many legal protections while other countries criminalize same-sex sexual activity.

*Local gender norms in a host city abroad may be different from your own understanding of gender norms, as well as those norms embraced by many in your community, institution or social circle.*

Director

UW-Madison urges all participants to obey the laws of the host country, and respect and abide by local cultural norms and practices. Before selecting a country, be well acquainted with a host country's laws and tolerance levels. Research your destination thoroughly and make a decision that does not project your own attitudes and tolerance onto foreign cultures. There will be an international experience that is just right for you.

Consider how a potential host country defines and views interpersonal relationships and what it views as appropriate behaviors. A Global Attitudes Project survey by the Pew Research Center, [The Global Divide on Homosexuality](#), found many differences around the world as to how homosexuality is viewed by various societies. For example, in countries like the Netherlands, a wide range of gender identities and expressions are visible and accepted, whereas many nations in Africa reject homosexuality.

Below is advice that--however disappointing within the context of increasingly progressive social tolerance and acceptance in the United States and many other countries--may help LGBTIQ travelers to less tolerant locations as well as others remain clear of local laws and undue interest by authorities:

- If asked by someone you do not know well or someone in authority, avoid discussing sexual orientation or identify..
- Do not engage anyone in conversations about sexuality or LGBTIQ issues.
- Do not publicly display physical affection under any circumstances.
- Do not engage in any behaviors that may draw unwanted attention.
- If harassed by police or any authority figures, immediately contact your program director, the U.S. Embassy or your diplomatic mission.
- Avoid using sexually-related terms while using the internet and writing emails.
- Do not use the internet to meet members of the LGBTIQ community while in countries where LGBTIQ orientation is not supported or legally accommodated.

There is a list of annotated online resources at the end of this document that will help you research attitudes and social norms related to sexual orientation and gender identify in specific locations abroad.

## **Destinations that are Tolerant toward LGBTIQ Identity**

The below entries are NOT an attempt to offer a complete list of nations according to an index of social tolerance. They are included based solely on recognition of same-sex unions and the public acknowledgement and existence of human rights laws prohibiting discrimination against gay individuals. This resource considers potential risks as they specifically affect members of the LGBTIQ community, and not necessarily the overall threats posed to all students traveling and studying abroad.

*Attitudes and tolerance toward LGBTIQ persons vary from country to country and of course also regionally within a country, just as they vary within the United States and your own community. Please keep in mind that public policies or dominant social attitudes do not conveniently translate to individual attitudes or perspectives—a point that is just as true abroad as it is at home.*

### **Argentina**

The recognition of LGBTIQ rights in Argentina are among some of the most advanced in Latin America.

Director

## Australia

There are no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by law in a wide range of areas, including in employment, housing, family law, taxes, child support, immigration, pensions, and social security.

## Canada

Same-sex marriage became legal in Canada nationwide in 2005. The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the criminal code provides penalties for crimes motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation.

Manitoba and the Northwest Territories prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity, and Ontario and Nova Scotia prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations operate independently and without restriction. There is no official discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment and occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care.

There have been occasions of violence and abuse against individuals based on sexual orientation, but the government generally implements the law criminalizing such behavior effectively.

## Costa Rica

LGBTIQ individuals enjoy full rights in Costa Rica. The LGBTIQ community is protected by anti-discrimination laws, and there are no legal or governmental impediments to the organization of LGBTIQ events.

## Czech Republic

Prague has a large gay community, centered in the city's *Vinohrady* district, with several openly gay venues. In contrast, outside of Prague—particularly in small towns—views are still relatively conservative and open displays of affection between same-sex couples are less common. LGBTIQ travelers should use discretion when traveling in these areas.

There are some reported instances of discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity. For example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTIQ) couples may not adopt a child, nor may a gay or a lesbian individual in a partnership adopt his or her partner's biological child, although single LGBTIQ individuals may adopt. Antidiscrimination and hate-crime legislation exists, but does not specifically cover LGBTIQ individuals.

## Denmark

Same-sex marriage became legal in Denmark in 2012. The LGBTIQ community organized the 2009 World Outgames in Copenhagen to promote homosexual rights worldwide.

Director

## France

France has both sexual orientation and gender identity anti-discrimination laws in place and is generally considered one of the most LGBTIQ-friendly places in the world. In May 2013, President Francois Hollande signed a landmark gay marriage and adoption bill into law—an action that even in France was not met with universal approval.

## Germany

Germany has progressed quickly on LGBTIQ issues in the last 20 years. Although same-sex marriage is not legal, registered partnerships have been available since 2001. Anti-discrimination laws exist to protect LGBTIQ people in the workplace, and the public is generally supportive of equal rights.

## Ireland

There are no laws that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults and the law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation with respect to employment, goods, services, and education. In May 2015, Ireland passed a constitutional amendment that will legalize marriage between same-sex couples. By doing so, it became the first country to take this action in national vote.

## Israel

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the government generally enforces these laws, although discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity persists in some parts of society. *The Aguda*, the National Association of LGBTIQ in Israel, reports cases of discrimination in the private sector. According to *The Aguda*, Israel today is one of the world's most progressive countries in terms of equality for sexual minorities.

In recent years, Israel has produced more progressive legislation and court decisions in the areas of sexual orientation and gay and lesbian rights than many Western countries. Israel has an active gay community and it is by far the most tolerant Middle Eastern country towards homosexuals.

*The Aguda* began collecting data on violence against LGBTIQ individuals in mid-2012. In the first six months, *The Aguda* received 28 such reports. A survey of teenagers found that 20 percent of LGBTIQ teens reported they had attempted suicide, with a higher rate among religiously observant LGBTIQ youth.

## Italy

Urban centers such as Rome, Bologna, and Florence, are generally tolerant of LGBTIQ individuals. Students may face isolated incidents of discrimination throughout the country, particularly in more conservative, rural areas. Smaller communities may be less welcoming, and residents may be more likely to articulate their disapproval. Isolated cases of anti-gay hate crimes are also possible, though unlikely.

## Director

Students may face social discrimination in a variety of situations. Students living with host-families should exercise discretion, as acceptance of LGBTIQ persons may vary from family to family. Consider options for alternative living arrangements if it becomes necessary to move. While public displays of affection may be common and accepted among heterosexual couples, same-sex couples – even in more liberal cities – may elicit odd glances and occasional comments by passers-by.

With its minimal protections or laws supporting its LGBTIQ community, Italy's legal situation is very similar to many states in the United States. The fact that openly LGBTIQ persons are active in Italy's political system underscores a growing acceptance in the country.

## Japan

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), no law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and there are no penalties associated with such discrimination and no related statistics available.

Japan is one of the few countries in Asia that does not criminalize same-sex relations. Acceptance can vary from place to place, and situation to situation, but, overall the country tends to be tolerant of LGBTIQ persons. The safety and security of LGBTIQ persons is unlikely to be a concern. Japan has one of the lowest levels of violent crime in the world.

In Japan, LGBTIQ persons are highly unlikely to experience any particular safety and security risks. However, traditional Japanese society stigmatizes homosexuality, often discouraging an open expression of identity. Despite some occasional social discomfort, the LGBTIQ community enjoys a high degree of freedom and increasing levels of support from communities and the government.

## Mexico

Legally, LGBTIQ persons enjoy relatively strong protections in Mexico. Same-sex relations have been legal in Mexico since 1871, although homosexuals occasionally were prosecuted under immorality laws. In 2001, a constitutional amendment officially banned discrimination based on sexual orientation. Same-sex marriages or civil unions are performed in five states and the Federal District. Cosmopolitan areas like Mexico City and the states of Jalisco and Quintana Roo, and agrarian Oaxaca recognize same-sex marriage, while the conservative ranching state of Coahuila offers civil unions.

Many parts of Mexico offer a sense of community for LGBTIQ individuals. In Mexico City, same-sex couples routinely seen in public areas around the *Angel de la Independencia* monument and along the *Avenida de la Reforma* thoroughfare, as well as in the nearby *Zona Rosa* nightlife district. The *Condesa* neighborhood, long known as an artists' colony, is also a popular destination, with many gay-friendly establishments.

## Netherlands

LGBTIQ individuals enjoy full rights and are protected by anti-discrimination laws. There are no legal or governmental impediments to the organization of LGBTIQ events. A new law, that will take effect on July

## Director

1, 2014, will allow transgender people to change the gender marker in their official identity papers to their preferred gender. It does away with previous requirements for taking hormones and surgery, including irreversible sterilization.

In April 2001, the Netherlands became the first country in modern times to legalize same-sex marriage and grant full marriage and registered partnership rights to same-sex couples. The Dutch Justice Ministry has reported a rise in reporting of harassment (mostly verbal abuse) of LGBTIQ individuals as a result of government campaigns urging victims to report incidents.

## **New Zealand**

In June 2013, the country became the 13th in the world and the first in the Asia-Pacific region to legalize same-sex marriage. Since 2005, New Zealand has allowed civil unions, which confer many legal rights to gay couples.

## **Spain**

Since 2005, gay and lesbian couples have had full rights to marry and adopt children. According to Spanish gay associations, around four million residents identify as LGBTIQ. Spain became Europe's third nation to legalize same-sex marriage, following the Netherlands and Belgium, and the fourth in the world after Canada, which passed its law in June 2005.

## **Sweden**

Same-sex couples have been legally allowed to adopt in Sweden since 2003. In 2009, gay and lesbian couples were granted the right to legally marry.

## **Thailand**

No laws criminalize sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults. The law does not permit transgender individuals to change their gender on identification documents.

Nonetheless, in August the Interior Ministry allowed an intersex person to change her listed gender from male to female, the first such decision. In addition, on May 27, voters elected to the Nan Provincial Administration the country's first transgender provincial council member, sparking public debate about identification policy due to civil service dress code requirements.

In September 2011 Bangkok's Central Administrative Court ordered the Ministry of Defense to stop classifying transgender persons as disabled in conscription records. The military complied, and personnel records reportedly indicate "current sexual status contrary to sexual status at birth." Some rights advocates considered this a significant step toward reducing the harmful effects on future employment opportunities caused by the terms formerly used in such records.

For the first time, university rectors permitted five transgender students to participate in the August 30 commencement ceremony for Thammasat University's graduating class while wearing gender-specific

Director

uniforms of their choice. This decision set a precedent followed by several other educational institutions during the year. Such permissions remained voluntary for each school.

## United Kingdom

The law prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, although individuals report sporadic incidents of homophobic violence. It encourages judges to impose a greater sentence in assault cases where the victim's sexual orientation is a motive for the hostility, and many local police forces demonstrate an increasing awareness of the problem and train officers to identify and moderate these attacks.

In Scotland, racial, sexual, or other discriminatory motivation can be an "aggravating factor" in crimes.

In March 2012, the UK government published *Challenge it, Report it, Stop it*, a new strategy to combat hate crime through more effective prevention, reporting, and response.

## Destinations Where Extra Caution is Advised for members of the LGBTIQ Community

Exercise particular caution when traveling or studying in the following locations. Although not comprehensive, this list includes some of the locations where (1) the rights of LGBTIQ persons are less definitive or (2) there are restrictions on the freedom of expression and association of LGBTIQ individuals. As noted, social tolerance varies by region and often even by community. (Sources include: [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012](#), U.S. Department of State.)

### Brazil

Moderate risks exist in both the Brazilian states of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. The threat of harm (physical/verbal harassment or discrimination) is lower in larger cities, such as Rio de Janeiro city, where the local population tends to be more accepting of different ways of life. In more conservative areas, such as the heavily religious northeast, LGBTIQ individuals continue to face a risk of violence.

A large portion of Brazilian society still strongly opposes homosexuality, and LGBTIQ individuals in Brazil may encounter greater risks of violence. Maintain a low profile when out and about, and be especially cautious when visiting rural areas or lower-income districts. Same-sex couples in particular should exercise discretion with public displays of affection.

### Chile

The Chilean [de y Homosexual](#) *Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual* (MOVILH) noted a worsening in the acts of violence against LGBTIQ individuals between 2011 and 2012, including three killings, 20 acts of physical or verbal aggression, six incidents involving aggression and/or arbitrary police arrest, nine incidents of employment discrimination, 10 incidents of education discrimination, and 12 acts of violence or forced community segregation by family or friendship circles.

## Director

On March 4, 2012, four alleged neo-Nazis attacked and tortured a 24-year-old gay man because of his sexual orientation. The victim died on March 28 from his injuries. At year's end, the alleged perpetrators were charged with murder and remained in detention. On July 20, 2012, seven individuals attacked a 16-year-old female in her home in Santa Juana and again in the hospital, leaving the victim with numerous injuries to her scalp and face. The attackers consisted of family and friends of the victim's former girlfriend. The perpetrators told police that they attacked the girl for "turning" their relative into a lesbian. A police investigation continued at year's end.

## China

Urban Chinese tend to be accepting of homosexuality, but in deeply conservative rural areas, homosexuality is neither discussed nor socially accepted. The result is a complex risk environment that has few clear social guidelines but little overt threat of violence or abuse.

According to the United Nations Development Program UNDP report, discrimination against LGBTIQ people is still rampant in China, where many people hold negative attitudes toward diversity of sexual orientation, particularly in schools and workplaces. Discrimination against openly gay people in Chinese workplaces is common, and there are no laws protecting LGBTIQ individuals.

In 2001, China removed homosexuality and bisexuality from the list of mental disorders and in 2012 changed its blood donation policy from banning homosexual donors to only "men who have sex with men" in line with international practice.

Socially, homosexuality is seldom discussed. Large generational, educational, and societal gaps persist, with older generations tending to be less accepting toward same-sex relationships.

## Dominican Republic

Treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTIQ) individuals ranges from ambivalent tolerance to staunch homophobia. No specific law protects individuals against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and NGOs report widespread social discrimination in areas of society including health care, education, and the workplace. LGBTIQ individuals often face intimidation and harassment. Transgender individuals are particularly at risk of discrimination. NGOs report that LGBTIQ persons are reluctant to file official charges or complaints due to fear of reprisals or humiliation.

According to various reports, LGBTIQ individuals have been arrested without reason, not hired, denied access to rent/own homes, and denied access to health services. During the first half of 2012, NGOs reported that two LGBTIQ persons were detained by police in *Villa Mella* without charges. They were subsequently released after 24 hours. Members of the LGBTIQ community reported at least six cases in which individuals were denied health services in both private and public hospitals. The transgender community reported widespread discrimination and violence against transgender persons.

Although official permits have been granted for LGBTIQ individuals to carry out activities in public spaces, these permits often include special conditions that prevent LGBTIQ organizations from holding their events. In 2012, formal activities of LGBTIQ organizations were generally subjected to approval by the



Director

Community Board of Neighbors, an institution influenced by the Catholic Church and its conservative views on LGBTIQ issues.

## **Korea, Republic of**

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), LGBTIQ groups keep a very low profile because same-sex relationships are not widely accepted in the country. During 2012, there were no known cases of violence against LGBTIQ persons. However, concern about stigmatization likely prevents some victims from reporting incidents of discrimination and abuse.

## **Singapore**

Singapore remains conservative regarding LGBTIQ rights. Social acceptance of homosexuality varies, with the majority of the population opposed to decriminalization of anti-gay laws. The LGBTIQ community faces legal challenges and restrictions, as well as overt and implicit discrimination. While such laws are rarely enforced and there is a grassroots movement to abolish them, currently the government and Parliament show no indication of repealing restrictions.

Multiple laws criminalize homosexual behavior in Singapore. Men are a particular target of the law, which criminalizes homosexual relations between men. Solicitation of sex between men is characterized as "gross indecency" and carries a punishment of imprisonment up to two years.

## **South Africa**

South Africa presents a moderate risk to the LGBTIQ community due to its uneven provision of legal protections and a largely intolerant society. Although South Africa has a progressive legal stance toward LGBTIQ rights, compared to other African nations, application is not consistent. Many South Africans perceive homosexuality to be "un-African," and there have been numerous reports of attacks targeting homosexuals. Despite discrimination by some of the population, the South African LGBTIQ community is strong. With a history dating back to the apartheid period the LGBTIQ community has been campaigning for equal treatment in South Africa, and is working to draw attention to the issue of homophobia prevalent throughout all of Africa. Johannesburg has a particularly vibrant LGBTIQ community.

## **Taiwan**

There are no laws prohibiting consensual same-sex sexual activity. According to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTIQ) rights activists, violence against LGBTIQ persons with HIV/AIDS is a problem, but instances of police pressure on LGBTIQ-friendly bars and bookstores declined during 2012.

## **Turkey**

Although no laws ban homosexuality, Turkey poses moderate-to-high risk to students. Throughout the country, there is a general air of intolerance, which is most publicly promoted by legal and religious authorities. LGBTIQ individuals are not protected by anti-discrimination laws.

Director

Authorities in Turkey recently canceled plans to begin teaching LGBTIQ issues in the elementary and junior school curriculums, in accordance with the 2004 Gender Equity Education Act, because of a “lack of social consensus.”

## **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

Although the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the more socially tolerant countries in the Gulf region, the legal and social climate in the UAE presents a very high risk to LGBTIQ travelers.

Homosexuality in the Emirates, along with all other sexual acts outside of heterosexual marriage, is illegal under Sharia law, and may be punishable by fines, deportation, lengthy imprisonment, flogging, and death. In some cases, convicted LGBTIQ individuals have faced government-ordered psychological treatment. Sentences vary somewhat throughout the Emirates, as the UAE has a federal court system with each emirate maintaining secular and Islamic codes for civil, criminal, and high courts. In Dubai, punishment for consensual homosexual acts includes imprisonment for up to ten years; in Abu Dhabi, punishment includes imprisonment for up to 14 years. Although the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate General are not aware of any recent arrests or prosecutions for such activities, they remain illegal. Cross-dressing is also a punishable offense and there have been reports that the government took action against cross-dressing individuals.

Some reports assert that the UAE’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) actively entraps LGBTIQ individuals. In the past, convicted foreigners have been imprisoned and/or deported. There have been no known instances of the death penalty being applied in cases involving LGBTIQ foreigners.

As in much of the Middle East, prevalent social attitudes in the UAE reject the rights of LGBTIQ individuals to express their sexual orientation. As result, LGBTIQ individuals in the Emirates must generally live clandestinely, due to fear of social condemnation or prosecution. There are no LGBTIQ organizations or nightclubs in the Emirates.

Authority figures in the Emirates have publically spoken out against homosexuality. In 2008, the UAE was among the co-signers of a statement read in the General Assembly of the United Nations rejecting sexual orientation as a genetic predisposition.

## **Vietnam**

The law does not address prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2012, there was no reported official discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but societal discrimination and stigma remained pervasive.

No laws criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct, although by decree, individuals may not change their gender.

A lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTIQ) community exists but is largely underground. Most LGBTIQ persons chose not to tell family of their sexual orientation for fear of being disowned, and a 2011

Director

online survey, conducted by the Information Sharing and Connecting Group with more than 1,000 LGBTIQ respondents, noted that their families forced more than 20 percent into counseling.

On August 5, more than 100 individuals demonstrated in Hanoi for equal rights in the country's first gay pride parade. Organizers requested but did not receive permission, and there were no incidents.

## **Destinations that are Potentially Intolerant of LGBTIQ Orientation and Identity**

Students traveling or studying abroad in certain locations face unique, and sometimes significant, safety and security challenges. Ambiguous legislation and legal restrictions banning same-sex relationships may incite persecution ranging from verbal harassment, stalking, intimidation, and even violence. Simply disclosing alternative gender and sexual identities can have dangerous consequences, and some countries threaten to impose fines, long jail sentences, or even the death penalty for those accused of engaging in sexual activity with same-sex partners. In general, LGBTIQ students studying and living in Africa and the Middle East regions face the highest levels of risk.

### **Barbados**

According to the U.S. Department of State's [Human Rights Report](#), Barbados' law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults and does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, education, or healthcare. A recent study of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians among local university students found that stigma against LGBTIQ persons continues to exist. While study participants demonstrated a broad range of attitudes toward gay men and lesbians, overall participants' feelings were moderately negative.

### **Botswana**

LGBTIQ individuals should exercise extreme caution in expressing affection in public. Although Botswana does not explicitly criminalize homosexuality, same-sex sexual activity is prohibited by criminal law. It appears that the law has not been used to prosecute LGBTIQ individuals; nor do police generally target same-sex individuals. The U.S. Embassy is also unaware of any reports of violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Nonetheless, societal stigmatization is common.

### **Egypt**

Homosexuality is not explicitly illegal in Egypt, but authorities are known to use other statutes of the penal code to detain and arrest LGBTIQ persons. Reports of raids on large LGBTIQ gatherings and sting operations entrapping homosexuals are common. Homophobic sentiments are rampant, forcing most LGBTIQ individuals to keep their sexual identity a secret for fear of rejection by family and friends, or even arrest. No official LGBTIQ activism organizations exist.

LGBTIQ persons are frequently arrested and prosecuted for violating laws of sexual conduct, on charges of prostitution, debauchery, or "violating the teachings of religion." Men are far more likely to be arrested for homosexual acts than women. Discrimination against LGBTIQ individuals is widespread. LGBTIQ

Director

Individuals are frequently verbally and physically harassed by both civilians and police. As a result, many LGBTIQ individuals continue to be discrete about their sexual orientations out of fear of prosecution and social stigma. According to a Pew Research Center poll in 2013, only 3 percent of Egyptian respondents agreed that society should accept homosexuality. There are currently no government efforts to address discrimination.

## Ghana

As in many West African countries, same-sex relations are illegal in Ghana. Political leaders and the general public tend to disapprove of homosexuality. Participating in consensual same-sex sexual activity is a misdemeanor in Ghana. Although the U.S. Embassy is not aware of any recent arrests or prosecutions for such activity, they remain illegal under some interpretations of the country laws. LGBTIQ students should exercise caution in expressing affection in public.

## India

On December 11, 2013, India's Supreme Court issued a ruling reinstating the criminal ban on homosexual activity. The decision, which reversed a 2009 ruling by a Delhi High Court, makes homosexuality illegal once again. Members of the LGBTIQ community in India, including Indian nationals, expatriates, and travelers, can be arrested on suspicion of engaging in same-sex relations and face a sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

The nation's Supreme Court issued a verdict on April 15 requiring federal and state governments to begin providing equal benefits to transgender persons as well as requiring all documents to have a third choice, in addition to male and female. The court specified the ruling does not apply to gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.

## Indonesia

The 2008 Pornography Law bans consensual same-sex sexual activity. In addition, local regulations across the country criminalize same-sex sexual activity. For example, the province of South Sumatra and the municipality of Palembang have local ordinances criminalizing same-sex sexual activity together with prostitution. Under a local ordinance in Jakarta, security officers regard any transgender person found in the streets at night as a sex worker. According to media and NGO reports, a number of transgender individuals were abused and forced to pay bribes following detention by local authorities. According to NGOs, many persons consider LGBTIQ issues as socially taboo.

In 2012, the government took almost no action to prevent discrimination against LGBTIQ persons, and in some cases, it failed to protect LGBTIQ individuals from societal abuse. Police corruption, bias, and violence cause LGBTIQ individuals to avoid interaction with police. Sharia police in Aceh reportedly harass transgender individuals. NGOs report that religious groups, family members, and the general public sometimes ostracize LGBTIQ individuals.

LGBTIQ groups maintained a lower profile throughout 2012 compared with previous. Police generally did not investigate cases that involved police intervention during assaults by hardline groups against LGBTIQ

## Director

gatherings. Formal complaints by victims and affected persons were usually ignored. Transgender individuals faced discrimination in obtaining services, including health and other public services. The provincial government of the Aceh Province introduced a new by-law punishing consensual same-sex relations with 100 lashes. The law is applicable to both Muslim and non-Muslim individuals.

## **Jordan**

Although homosexuality is not illegal in Jordan, societal discrimination against LGBTIQ persons is prevalent. In 2012, a number of citizens reported sporadic police mistreatment of suspected or actual LGBTIQ persons.

Homophobic sentiments in Jordan are pervasive. According to the 2013 Pew Research Center's poll, 97 percent of Jordanian respondents disagreed that "society should accept homosexuality." Given such overwhelmingly negative perceptions of homosexuality, LGBTIQ activism is limited. There are no officially recognized LGBTIQ organizations operating in Jordan. Fears of social exclusion, as well as the overwhelming pressure to marry a member of the opposite sex, leads many LGBTIQ individuals to engage in heterosexual relationships.

## **Morocco**

The conservative Moroccan government enforces a ban on homosexual acts, making it dangerous for LGBTIQ individuals in most of the country. Social pressure forces most LGBTIQ individuals to conceal their orientation, though an advocacy group works unofficially to help serve the needs of the LGBTIQ community.

As in most African countries, homosexuality is illegal in the kingdom. LGBTIQ issues are not publicly discussed, and there is no recognition of transgenderism. Both men and women convicted of homosexuality are subject to a fine or imprisonment for up to three years. There have been relatively few incidents of enforcement over the past five years. Anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals arrested have been locals, and most have been given short sentences.

The culture tends to be more accepting of male homosexuality in private, but female homosexuality is uncommon and unacknowledged. Female homosexuals are viewed as weak and incapable of fulfilling their societal role as child-bearers. Both male and female homosexuals face exclusion and harassment. Most LGBTIQ individuals conceal their sexual orientation and engage in heterosexual marriages.

## **Russia**

For the LGBTIQ community, Russia is one of the most socially intolerant countries in Eurasia, and public opposition to gay rights is increasing.

Russian cities continue to pass laws to subvert the free expression of the LGBTIQ community, going so far as to ban all Gay Pride parades for the next 100 years in Moscow.

Director

In other parts of the region and in all of the Commonwealth of Independent States, intolerance is widespread, even in countries that have decriminalized homosexual behavior and signed UN human rights petitions against discrimination. Sentiment appears slightly less intolerant in larger urban areas; however, most societies in the region are unaccepting of the LGBTIQ community.

Many in Russia view LGBTIQ individuals as being the victims of disease, affliction, or satanic possession, forcing LGBTIQ individuals to live in secrecy, even within their own families.

## Senegal

According to the U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report, consensual same-sex activity is a criminal offense punishable by fine and/or imprisonment for one to five years. LGBTIQ persons often face arrest, widespread discrimination, social intolerance, and acts of violence.

Senegalese NGOs work actively on LGBTIQ rights issues, but because of laws against homosexuality and social stigma, they maintain an exceedingly low profile. The media rarely reports acts of hatred or violence against LGBTIQ persons.

## Tanzania

Tanzania is a traditional society where consensual same-sex sexual relations are criminalized. Public displays of affection between persons of the opposite gender garner serious disapproval; those between persons of the same gender could risk violence. Consensual same-sex activity is illegal on the mainland and in Zanzibar. On the mainland same-sex activity between persons of the same sex are punishable by up to five years in prison. Same-sex intercourse carries a prison sentence of 30 years to life.

The law in Zanzibar establishes a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment for men who engage in same-sex sexual activity and five years for women. In the past, individuals perceived to be gay or lesbian have been charged with loitering or prostitution. LGBTIQ persons face societal discrimination that restricts their access to health care, housing, and employment. There is no openly gay community in Tanzania; discretion will greatly reduce the risk of confrontation with local authorities.

Recently, the Tanzanian government has started a crack-down on the gay community and has made several arrests (Fall 2017). Additionally, it has stated that it will deport foreigners who engage in activities supporting or advocating for LGBTIQ rights or promoting homosexuality. This prohibition and intention includes employees of various NGOs or other organizations.

### Resources for this document:

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Director

Thanks to the University of California Education Abroad Program for sharing the foundations for this document. The annotation on each site below is provided by the UW-Madison ISSD and is a personal evaluation of the contents in an effort to help the reader in a search for information. Each reader will of course find varying degrees of utility for each resource depending on individual needs and interests.

- [UW-Madison's International Academic Programs \(IAP\)](#) – *The IAP page nicely complements this document with its discussion of LGBTIQ needs from the perspective of the cultural experience itself. I highly recommend going to the page and also making an appointment to discuss your plans with an IAP Study Abroad advisor.*
- [Diversity Abroad](#) – *An online commercial enterprise that was founded as a sort of international education network node that connects “students and professionals with international opportunities that will prepare them for future education and career opportunities.” The site is primarily dedicated to linking prospective students with programs. There is some good information here about potential programs and destination countries but there is not any attempt to present information of specific interest to the LGBTIQ community. UW Madison’s International Academic Programs has access to country notes on specific countries and their related LGBTIQ acceptance through the Diversity Abroad Network. Contact your IAP Study Abroad Advisor for more information.*
- [GlobalGayz](#) – *This site is dedicated to LGBTIQ life in countries around the world. This site has a “first-person” character in its description of the LGBTIQ environment but also posts an analytical summary of each country as well as several op-ed styled articles that discuss various issues and concerns specific to destinations and regions. A strong resource for its accessible style and very usable information presented in the first-person.*
- [Human Rights Watch](#) – *Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. The organization attempts to investigate abuses, expose its conclusions via public sites and other media, and pressure those in authority to respect rights and restore justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works to energize a broader movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all. As expected, given the organization’s mission, the site is focused on current news and events that inform the public on human rights-oriented issues. The site’s search function will allow users to find news stories relevant to a specific country, location or issue that are relevant to those considering study abroad or educational travel.*
- [International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission](#) – *is an international organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of those who experience discrimination or abuse on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. The site has much good information on LGBTIQ-related issues and events abroad and has a very accessible country-specific index that is searchable by region.*

Director

- [International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association](#) ILGA - *Information on LGBTIQ rights around the world. Information on the website primarily presents the summary legal status for the LGBTIQ community in each country. Good information and a great resource, but may be more detailed than is necessary for the prospective student traveler.*
- [LGBTIQ Rights, Amnesty International](#) – *Amnesty’s work concerns the promotion of a global movement of to fight injustice and promote human rights. One of these areas is the status and progress of LGBTIQ rights around the world. The site is specific to Amnesty’s mission but offers up-to-date reports and news specific to LGBTIQ rights that may be of interest to those planning travel. This is not a primary instrument for helping you plan educational travel as a member of the LGBTIQ community but it is certainly a strong secondary resource to learn about current events and issues in your country or region of interest.*
- [LGBTIQ Travel Information, U.S. Department of State](#) – *If you visit just one site to help you plan your trip abroad with an interest in LGBTIQ status, go to the State Dept’s site linked here. It offers factual, objective information that will help prepare you for travel overseas generally and of course also as a member of the LGBTIQ community specifically. There also other useful links on the site that you will want to visit and consider.*
- [Lesbian and Gay Rights in the World \(IGLA\) Interactive Map](#) – *a simple but useful/interesting non-interactive pdf-file map that shows various countries’ status with regard to protection, persecution and recognition via color-coded legend and symbol annotation. Not certain how often this resource is updated to accurately reflect circumstances.*
- LGBTIQ Rights [Interactive Map of Worldwide Legislation](#) - *an interactive map that allows the user to select various countries for further information about legislative actions there specific to sexual orientation and gender identity*
- [National Center for Transgender Equality](#) - *Travel information for transgender individuals that specifically addresses various techniques, regulations and policies during airport screening processes; most information only reflects Transportation Security Administration (TSA) practices in the United States, but may also be of interest for international travel.*
- [Rainbow Special Interest Group \(NAFSA\)](#) - *NAFSA’s (Association of International Educators) own web page to provide information and encouragement to LGBTIQ students who considering a study abroad experience. The linked bibliography for further reading is a very valuable resource for anyone who is interested in more deeply researching various subjects related to LGBTIQ study abroad.*
- [United Nations Free & Equal](#) –*A United Nation’s web page that serves as a sort of table of contents for various articles and other sites on global LGBTIQ issues and subjects. While this material likely will not specifically help you plan a trip overseas, it offers some very strong informative content that may be of great interest to you as you prepare for your encounter with an unlike culture.*