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Protection of LGBTQ+ rights across Africa

While Africa remains the most queerphobic continent, the landscape of rights for LGBTQ+ individuals is gradually changing. Since 1990, when the first LGBTQ+ Pride took place on the African continent, 10 countries have changed laws to allow LGBTQ+ individuals to publicly express their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Although this is a sign of hope and slow progress, incidences of hate crime, violence, and prejudice are still rife and remain a threat to the wellbeing of LGBTQ individuals. Celebrating October as LGBTQ+ Pride month, this Vignette uses the latest data from the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World) and three iterations of GCRO's Quality of Life (QoL) survey to map protections for LGBTQ+ rights across Africa, and consider how attitudes towards LGBTQ+ individuals are shifting in Gauteng, South Africa.

Author

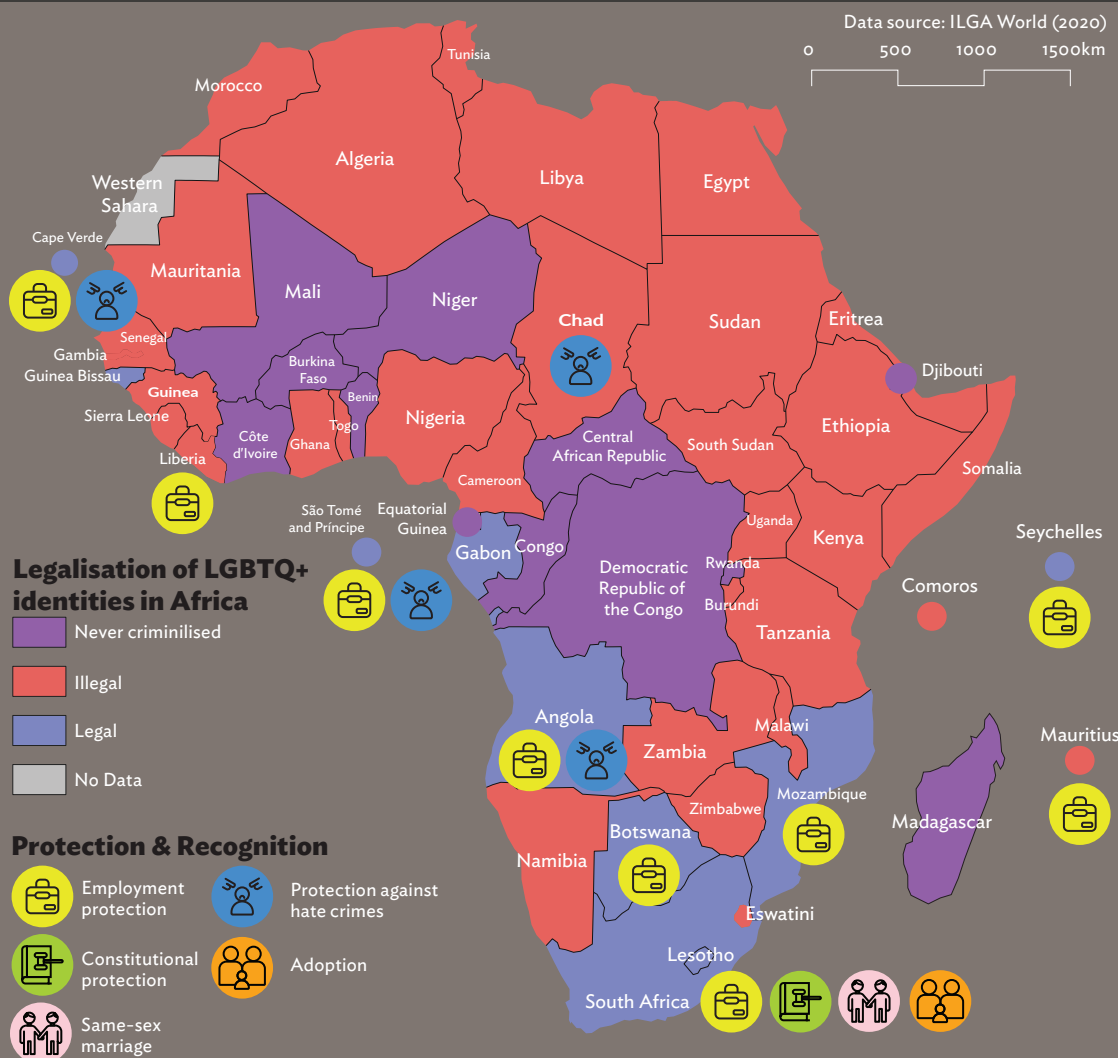
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Source

GCRO's Quality of Life Survey
(2015/16, 2017/18 & 2020/21)
and ILGA World (2020)



Legalisation of LGBTQ+ identities pre-1990

	No. Of Countries
Legal	0
Illegal	42
Never criminalised	12

Legalisation of LGBTQ+ identities since 1990

Legal	10
Illegal	32
Never criminalised	12

Current Protection

Constitutional	1
Employment	9
Hate Crime	4

Current Recognition

Same-sex marriage	1
Adoption by LGBTQ+ parents	1

South Africa was the first country to ever host LGBTQ+ pride on the African continent, and is the only country in Africa with constitutional protection of LGBTQ+ identities and activities, and recognition for same-sex marriage and adoption by LGBTQ+ parents. However, South Africa's legislative commitments exist amidst a legacy of pervasively conservative societal attitudes. GCRO's Quality of Life (QoL) survey, conducted every 2 years in Gauteng, South Africa, asks respondents whether they agree with the statement: It is acceptable to be violent to 'gays and lesbians'. The results have

improved markedly since the 2015/16 iteration of the survey, and in 2020/21, only 4% agree or strongly agree that it's acceptable to be violent towards LGBTQ+ people. This growing tolerance is encouraging, but according to ILGA World (2020) data, South Africa does not legally protect LGBTQ+ individuals against hate crime in the same way as other countries do, raising the question whether additional legislation is needed to further strengthen Section 9(3) of the Constitution.

Do you agree or disagree with the statement: "It is acceptable to be violent to 'gays and lesbians'"?

