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Question(s)

1. [Legislation on LGBT issues and its implementation](#)
2. [Treatment of LGBT people by the state](#)
3. [Treatment of LGBT people by society](#)

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COI QUERY RESPONSE - Cameroon

LGBT people in Cameroon

1. Legislation on LGBT issues and its implementation

Cameroon criminalises and punishes same sex relations.¹ In 2016, Cameroon amended its Penal Code, introducing an article which made same sex relations explicitly illegal.² Section 347-1 of the 2016/007 Law states:

‘Whoever has sexual relations with a person of the same sex shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6 (six) months to 5 (five) years and a fine of from CFAF 20 000 (twenty thousand) to CFAF 200 000 (two hundred thousand)’.³

In addition, Section 83 (1) of the Cameroonian Cybercrimes Law No. 2010/012 of 21 December 2010 states:

‘Whoever uses electronic communication devices to make sexual proposal to a person of the same sex shall be punished with imprisonment for from 01 (one) to 02 (two) years or a fine of from 500,000 (five hundred thousand) to 1,000,000 (one million) CFA francs or both of such fine and imprisonment.’⁴

The 2020 USDOS report on Human Rights Practises stated that ‘constitution provides for equal rights for all citizens, but the law does not explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBTI persons in housing, employment, nationality, and access to government services such as health care’.⁵

A joint report by the NGOs Humanity First Cameroon and Alternatives Cameroon reported that 60 people were arrested during 2018 in Cameroon, on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity, while over 200 were subjected to physical violence.⁶ There were reports of arrests and harassment against LBGT people by Cameroonian police also in 2019,⁷ 2020,⁸ and 2021.⁹

¹ HRW, Cameroon Events of 2019, 14 January 2020, [url](#); UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Cameroon*, 30 November 2017, [url](#), p.3; USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.40; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2021, Cameroon, 3 March 2021, [url](#); Jurist, Cameroon security forces cracking down on LGBT, Human Rights Watch Says, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

² ILGA World, State-sponsored homophobia, December 2020, [url](#) p. 114; BBC, Cameroon jails transgender women for 'attempted homosexuality', 12 May 2021, [url](#)

³ Cameroon, Law No. 2016/007 Relating to the Penal Code, 12 July 2016, Section 347-1 [url](#)

⁴ Cameroon, Law No. 2010/012 relating to Cybersecurity and cybercriminality in Cameroon, 21 December 2010, Section 83(1), [url](#)

⁵ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.40

⁶ Humanity First Cameroon and Alternatives Cameroon, Des Violences et Violations, Faites aux minorites sexuelles et de genre au Cameroon, 2018, [url](#)

⁷ HRW, Cameroon Events of 2019, 14 January 2020, [url](#);

⁸ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.40; VOA, In Face of Threats, Lawyer Defends Gays in Cameroon, 10 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹ HRW, Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People, 14 April 2021, [url](#); Reuters, LGBT persecution on the rise in Cameroon, Human Rights Watch says, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

2. Treatment of LGBT people by the state

According to a joint report by Cameroonian organisations and cited by ILGA World, ‘between 2016 and 2018 there were nearly 1,800 reports of arrests, extortion, and violence against individuals based on their sexual orientations by authorities in Cameroon’.¹⁰

Human Rights Watch reported that during 2019 the police and the gendarmes continued to arrest and harass people that ‘they believe to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT)’.¹¹ USDOS mentioned various incidents against LGBT people during 2019. Citing various non-governmental organisations as sources, USDOS noted that arbitrary arrests, non-investigations on allegations made by LGBT people, extortion of money by the police under the threat to expose them, arrests by army units and security forces were some of the incidents against LGBT in 2019. Furthermore, LGBT organisations could not register as such, therefore they were registered as general human rights or healthcare organisations.¹²

Harassments and arrests by police and gendarmes continue throughout 2020.¹³ USDOS recorded an increase in the number¹⁴ of arbitrary arrests against LGBT people in comparison with 2019.¹⁵ On 17 May 2020, 53 people were arrested in Bafoussam, while celebrating the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.¹⁶ A 2020 BTI report stated that there is evidence of ‘significant discrimination and unequal access to justice’ for the LGBT community.¹⁷ Freedom House 2021 report covering the year of 2020, mentioned that LGBT people were excluded from ‘positions of political influence’ and that the organisations that focus on LGBT rights ‘were targeted by law enforcement’ and that ‘people are frequently prosecuted with no evidence of sexual activity, but rather on suspicions that they are gay’.¹⁸

According to Human Rights Watch, since February 2021, 24 people were arrested, beaten or threaten by the Cameroonian security forces for ‘alleged consensual same-sex conduct or gender nonconformity’.¹⁹ On 11 May 2021, two transgender women were arrested and sentenced to five years in prison and a fine around 300 euro for ‘attempting homosexuality’.²⁰

3. Treatment of LGBT people by society

The New Humanitarian described Cameroon as ‘one of the world’s most homophobic countries’.²¹ According to Freedom House, discrimination against LGBT people is ‘rife’ and violence against them

¹⁰ Acodevo et al., Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals in Cameroon, October 2017, [url](#), p.17

¹¹ HRW, Cameroon Events of 2019, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

¹² USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p.36-37

¹³ HRW, Cameroon Events of 2020, 13 January 2021, [url](#); VOA, Abuses of LGBT People Increasing in Cameroon: Rights Activist, 15 April 2021, [url](#)

¹⁴ According to USDOS ‘Data collected through the UNITY platform, a group of 34 local organizations dedicated to the LGBTI population’.

¹⁵ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.40; USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p.36

¹⁶ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.40

¹⁷ BTI, 2020 Country Report, Cameroon, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p.14

¹⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2021, Cameroon, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹ HRW, Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

²⁰ Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p.2; BBC, Cameroon jails transgender women for ‘attempted homosexuality’, 12 May 2021, [url](#)

²¹ New Humanitarian (The), No action on homophobic violence in Cameroon, 13 September 2013, [url](#)

is 'common'.²² BBC noted that there is 'animosity towards gays and transgender people in Cameroon and they can often be beaten up in public'.²³

A 2017 joint report by various organisations noted that 'generalized discrimination and marginalization of LGBT people is deeply ingrained in Cameroonian society'. For example, religious leaders, media and public officials 'reject' LGBT people and 'associate same-sex behaviour with Satanism'.²⁴ A media source described how lesbian women are often been perceived as 'witches or as been cursed' and their family members are torturing, raping and murdering them. The same source reported a case of a murder of a gay man by his brother.²⁵

ILGA 2019 report observed that lesbians and bisexual women in Cameroon remained 'ignored and invisible in health programs'.²⁶

USDOS Human Rights Practises Report for Cameroon, covering 2019, mentioned that individuals who belong to LGBT community 'received anonymous threats by telephone, text message, and email'. Furthermore, the access to housing, employment, nationality laws, government services and health care, was difficult for LGBT+ due to discrimination.²⁷ People who belong to the LGBT community are reported to struggle financially and they 'may be forced or coerced to provide sex in exchange for assistance'.²⁸

OCHA reported that due to the fear of being exposed, access to HIV/AIDS services was affected 'and a number of HIV-positive men who had sex with men took female partners to conceal their activities'.²⁹ Additionally, 'unwelcoming attitudes and a lack of understanding from providers' are another barrier for accessing humanitarian and health care services.³⁰

Related EASO COI Query Responses:

[Cameroon: People with disabilities, 23 July 2021](#)

[Cameroon: Treatment of people with HIV/AIDS, 11 May 2021](#)

²² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2021, Cameroon, 3 March 2021, [url](#)

²³ BBC, Cameroon jails transgender women for 'attempted homosexuality', 12 May 2021, [url](#)

²⁴ Acodexo et al., Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals in Cameroon, October 2017, [url](#), p.1- 2

²⁵ Reuters, Lesbian 'witches' chained and raped by families in Cameroon, 2 October 2018, [url](#); GCN, Horrific Report Finds LGBT+ Women Face Violence And 'Corrective Rape' in Cameroon, 2 October 2018, [url](#)

²⁶ ILGA, State-sponsored Homophobia, 1 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁷ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p.36-37

²⁸ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Cameroon, revised June 2020, [url](#), p.43

²⁹ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p.36-37

³⁰ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview, Cameroon, revised June 2020, [url](#), p.43

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