



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Zimbabwe - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 14 November 2023

Treatment of LGBT

Reuters in October 2023 states that:

“...gay sex remains illegal and LGBTQ+ people often face discrimination and harassment...” (Reuters (23 October 2023) *Zimbabwe: In Zimbabwe, LGBTQ+ Artists Dodge Discrimination to Stay On Stage*).

In August 2023 *GALZ/The Association of LGBTI People in Zimbabwe* comments on an:

“...existing climate of stigma and discrimination against LGBT people...” (GALZ/The Association of LGBTI People in Zimbabwe (11 August 2023) *GALZ Submission to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Zimbabwe (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people)*, p.1).

New Zimbabwe in April 2023 commenting on the LGBT community in Zimbabwe points out that:

“...state-sponsored attacks on their activities have fallen considerably” (New Zimbabwe (17 April 2023) *Zimbabwe: I Have Been Beaten for My Appearance and Sexuality - Says an LGBTIQ+ Member Spearheading the Setting of Safer Spaces in Harare*, p.2).

In January 2023 the *Standard* notes:

“...the enduring stigma and discrimination that the LGBT community faces in Zimbabwe...” (Standard (29 January 2023) *Punitive laws drive sexual minorities away from HIV services*, p.4).

In March 2023 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on events of 2022 which included stating that:

“LGBTQI+ community leaders reported cases of state sanctioned violence targeted at members of their community were lower than in the previous administration, although the penal code continued to outlaw homosexuality. LGBTQI+ community members, however, continued to report homophobic attacks by the public, which the police did not investigate” (United States Department of State (20 March 2023) *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Zimbabwe*, p.26).

This document also states that:

“LGBTQI+ persons do not have legal protections against discrimination. Leading NGOs noted harassment and discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons seeking employment, housing, and health services” (ibid, p.26).

A publication issued in 2023 by *Freedom House* reviewing events of the preceding year includes noting that:

“While discrimination is prohibited under the 2013 constitution, it is not expressly prohibited on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Sex between men is a criminal offense and can be punished with a fine and up to a year in prison” (Freedom House (2023) *Freedom in the World 2023: Zimbabwe*, p.9).

In December 2022 GALZ/The Association of LGBTI People in Zimbabwe comments on:

“Systematic violence and discrimination against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) people based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics (SOGIE) have been well documented. Disownments, extortion, threats of violence, murders, physical assaults, torture, sexual assault, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and discrimination in a range of domains, including the labour market and health care services, are examples of these abuses” (GALZ/The Association of LGBTI People in Zimbabwe (14 December 2022) *Zimbabwe: LGBTI Violations Report 2021*, p.2).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Report Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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