

### INTRODUCTION

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LGBT refugees face unique challenges and dangers, often fleeing persecution, violence, and legal discrimination in their home countries. As of 2024, homosexuality is still criminalized in over 70 countries worldwide, with penalties ranging from imprisonment to death. According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), 11 countries, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia, impose the death penalty for same-sex relations, making it perilous for LGBT individuals to live openly.

For LGBT refugees, seeking asylum in a country that respects and protects their rights is a matter of survival. The resources available to them are crucial for navigating the complex asylum process and integrating into new societies. Organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provide specialized support and guidance, helping LGBT refugees find safe havens and rebuild their lives. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Rainbow Railroad and ORAM (Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration) offer assistance ranging from legal aid to mental health services, ensuring that refugees receive comprehensive support.

Additionally, many countries have implemented specific asylum policies to protect LGBT individuals. For instance, Canada and several European nations recognize the persecution of LGBT people as legitimate grounds for asylum. However, despite these advancements, many refugees face significant obstacles, including discrimination and violence in host countries.

Access to accurate information and supportive networks is essential for LGBT refugees. By connecting with these resources, they can find the safety and acceptance needed to thrive in their new environments, free from the fear and oppression they fled.

### DATA AND STATISTICS

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#### Countries with a Death Penalty for LGBT

- |               |                |                              |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Afghanistan | • Nigeria      | • Somalia                    |
| • Brunei      | • Pakistan     | • (UAE) United Arab Emirates |
| • Iran        | • Qatar        |                              |
| • Mauritania  | • Saudi Arabia | • Yemen                      |

#### Statistics

- Around 67 Countries have criminalized being LGBT, with 11 Countries having implemented the death penalty.
- It is not illegal to be LGBT in an estimated 128 countries around the world.
- More than 37 Countries have legalized same-sex marriage and 11 others have other legal civil unions.

**Sources**

ILGA

<https://ilga.org/ilga-world-maps/>

UNAIDS

[https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2023/may/20230517\\_idahobit](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2023/may/20230517_idahobit)

**RESOURCES**

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**Rainbow Railroad**

Rainbow Railroad is a global not-for-profit organization that helps at-risk LGBTQI+ people get to safety worldwide. Based in the United States and Canada, we're an organization that helps LGBTQI+ people facing persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

<https://www.rainbowrailroad.org>

Rainbow Railroad Canada

401 Richmond Street West, Suite 360, Toronto, ON, M5V 3A8, Canada

Rainbow Railroad USA

575 5th Avenue, Unit 18-139, New York, NY, 10017, USA

**ORAM (Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration)**

ORAM protects and empowers LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees globally, creating sustainable and systemic change.

<https://www.oramrefugee.org/>

USA Office:

1325 Quincy St NE Ste A1, Minneapolis, MN, 55413

Europe Office:

ORAM gGmbH, Sony Center, WeWork, D  
Kemperplatz. 1, 10785 Berlin

[help@oramrefugee.org](mailto:help@oramrefugee.org) for services or  
[oraminfo@oramrefugee.org](mailto:oraminfo@oramrefugee.org) for general inquiries

**Find specific resources for applying for Refugee and Asylum by country at  
[sanctuarynet.org](https://sanctuarynet.org)**

**United States Immigration Refugee Program**

Information for those wanting to apply for Refugee Status in the United States.

<https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

**Canada immigration and Citizenship Refugee Program**

Application process and information for obtaining Refugee Status in Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/claim-protection-inside-canada.html>

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