

Custom Report Excerpts

Afghanistan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While the constitution prohibits discrimination among citizens and provides for the equal rights of men and women, local customs and practices that discriminated against women prevailed in much of the country. The constitution does not explicitly address equal rights based on race, disability, language, or social status. There were reports of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and gender.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct, and there were reports that harassment, violence, and detentions by police continued. NGOs reported police arrested, detained, robbed, and raped gay men. The law does not prohibit discrimination or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Homosexuality was widely seen as taboo and indecent. Members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community did not have access to health services and could be fired from their jobs because of their sexual orientation. Organizations devoted to protecting the freedom of LGBT persons remained underground because they could not be legally registered. Members of the LGBT community reported they continued to face discrimination, assault, rape, and arrest.

Albania

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, language, religion, gender identity and/or sexual orientation, health, family, economic, or social status. The government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. The government's antidiscrimination commissioner received several complaints from LGBT individuals and organizations. The commissioner issued sanctions against one private business owner. As of August the business owner had ignored the sanctions. The commissioner asked the court to compel two politicians to pay fines imposed upon them in 2013 that they had ignored. Enforcement of the law was generally weak (see section 7.d.).

Sexual orientation and gender identity are among the classes protected by the country's hate-crime law. Despite the law and the government's formal support for LGBT rights,

homophobic attitudes persisted in private and public life. Public officials sometimes made homophobic statements. NGOs reported an increase in families evicting LGBT persons from their homes during the year. In March a lesbian woman and her five-month-old baby were evicted by her family after they discovered her sexual orientation. In August three persons beat a transgender individual in a bar. The police did not arrive at the scene in a timely manner and did not find the perpetrators.

On May 17, activists participated in a Ride against Homophobia, a short bicycle ride on Tirana's main boulevard, as well as a diversity fair, both of which proceeded without incident, unlike in previous years. Police played an important role in ensuring activists' safety during the events. Tirana police also received sensitivity training from LGBT NGOs, and activists gave police an "LGBT Ally of the Year" award.

Algeria

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on birth, race, gender, language, and social status. The government effectively enforced the law, although women continued to face legal and social discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes public and consensual same-sex sexual relations by men or women with penalties that include imprisonment of six months to three years and a fine of DZD 1,000 to DZD 10,000 (\$13 to \$125). If a minor is involved, the adult may face up to three years' imprisonment and a fine of DZD 10,000 (\$125). The law also stipulates penalties that include imprisonment of two months to two years and fines of DZD 500 to DZD 2,000 (\$6 to \$25) for anyone convicted of having committed a "homosexual act."

LGBT activists reported that the vague wording of laws identifying "homosexual acts" and "acts against nature" permitted sweeping accusations that resulted during the year in multiple arrests for same-sex relations but no known prosecutions.

LGBT persons faced societal discrimination. While some LGBT persons lived openly, the vast majority did not, and most feared reprisal from their families or harassment from authorities. Some LGBT individuals received violent threats and believed themselves compelled to flee the country. In April a prominent member of the LGBT community was forced to quit his job and remained in Europe for several months before returning to the country. Another activist departed the country at the same time and as of October was awaiting approval of his asylum request in France.

Members of the LGBT community reported an increase in offensive and derogatory media, specifically denouncing LGBT practices. Activists reported that members of the LGBT community declined to report cases of homophobic abuse and rape due to fear of reprisal by authorities. They also reported that access to health services could be difficult because medical personnel often treated LGBT patients "unprofessionally." Community members added that obtaining legal assistance was also a challenge due to similar discrimination.

Abu Nawas, an Algiers-based LGBT advocacy group, continued cyberactivism on behalf of the LGBT community. Alouen, an Oran-based LGBT association, continued a series of

LGBT-themed podcasts published on the association's Facebook and YouTube pages.

Andorra

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law declare all persons equal before the law and prohibit discrimination on grounds of birth, race, gender, origin, religion, opinions, or any other personal or social condition. For the most part, the government effectively enforced these provisions. In its latest report in May 2012, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance noted that the country's criminal laws relating to racism and intolerance are not exhaustive and do not include, inter alia, a provision prohibiting public incitement to violence, hatred, and discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In June a private company reportedly fired a woman because of her sexual orientation. At the end of the year, no further information was available on this case (see also section 7.d.).

Angola

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, religion, disability, language, or social status; however, the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. The constitution does not specifically address sexual orientation or gender identity. Violence and discrimination against women, child abuse, child prostitution, trafficking in persons, and discrimination against persons with disabilities were problems.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

According to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the law does not criminalize sexual relationships between persons of the same sex. Sections of the 1886 penal code could be viewed as criminalizing homosexual activity, but they are no longer used by the judicial system. The constitution prohibits all forms of discrimination but does not specifically address sexual orientation or gender identity. The constitution defines marriage as between a man and a woman, however. NGOs reported a small underground lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community in Luanda, although an LGBT group calling itself "The Divas" held the first-ever gay pride parade in the country in November 2013. There were isolated reports of same-sex couples being harassed by their communities. There were no registered NGOs advocating for the rights of LGBT persons. There were no known reports of discrimination in employment or occupation, although a prominent transgender musician was reportedly banned from performing on a state-run television channel because of her gender identity (see also section 7.d.).

Antigua and Barbuda

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, creed, language, or social status, and the government generally respected these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity for both sexes is illegal under indecency statutes; however, the law was not strictly enforced. The law also prohibits anal intercourse. Indecency statutes carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison, and consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adult men carries a maximum penalty of 15 years. No antidiscrimination laws exist that specifically protect LGBT persons.

Societal attitudes somewhat impeded operation and free association of LGBT organizations, but there were a few organized groups. There were limited reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in a variety of settings. There were no reports of violence committed against LGBT persons during the year due to their real or perceived sexual orientation.

Argentina

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, nationality, ideology, social status, or physical characteristics, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons generally enjoyed the same legal rights and protections as heterosexual persons. No laws criminalize consensual same-sex conduct between adults. LGBT persons could serve openly in the military. The age of consent is the same for heterosexuals and homosexuals.

The law gives transgender persons the right to legally change their gender and name on identity documents without prior approval from a doctor or judge. It also requires public and private healthcare plans to cover some parts of hormone therapy and gender re-assignment surgery, although the Ministry of Health did not effectively enforce this requirement.

LGBT organizations operated freely. They worked closely with academic institutions, NGOs, and government authorities without interference.

National anti-discrimination laws do not include sexual orientation and/or gender identity as protected grounds, but there was no official discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, statelessness, or access to

education or health care. Overt societal discrimination generally was uncommon, but media and NGOs reported cases of discrimination, violence, and police brutality toward the LGBT community, especially transgender persons. On February 8, police pepper sprayed Damian Marsero outside a night club in La Pampa after other customers complained of his homosexual behavior. On October 7, alleged neo-Nazis in Mar del Plata beat to death a transgender woman. On October 11, approximately 10 men beat Adrian Ramos, a gay man, while he was leaving a night club in Trelew.

Armenia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. In its July 16 report, the CESCR expressed concern about the absence of a comprehensive antidiscrimination legal framework covering all the grounds for discrimination enumerated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws do not apply to sexual orientation or gender identity. There were no hate crime laws or other criminal judicial mechanisms to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community. Societal attitudes toward LGBT persons remained highly negative, with society generally viewing homosexuality as a medical affliction. Societal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity negatively affected employment, family relations, and access to education and health care (see section 7.d.).

In April the NGO Public Information and Need of Knowledge published its annual review for 2013. According to the NGO, many officials regarded defenders of LGBT rights as traitors, and the media presented LGBT persons as enemies of the state. According to the review, LGBT persons experienced physical violence and threats of violence, blackmail, and harassment. Police were unresponsive to reports of such abuses and at times mistreated LGBT persons themselves. The review reported instances of police responding to an LGBT person who filed a complaint about an anti-LGBT crime by moving to prosecute the complainant for allegedly filing a false crime report. As a result some LGBT victims avoided reporting abuses to police.

In a 2013 survey of the attitudes of 500 individuals in service professions (lawyers, doctors, nurses, psychologists, and teachers), toward LGBT persons, 45.4 percent of respondents (including 57 percent of the doctors and 47 percent of the nurses interviewed) considered homosexuality a disease, while 12.6 percent of other respondents (mostly teachers) considered it immoral. The survey, sponsored by the Open Society Foundation Armenia, covered four major cities, including Yerevan. It also indicated high levels of intolerance and ignorance about the issue. According to another NGO survey issued in August 2013, the personnel of human rights organizations demonstrated a low level of awareness and mostly negative attitudes toward LGBT persons, with some respondents expressing the view that homosexuality was a disease and the best way to help LGBT persons was to “cure” them.

The media, including progovernment media, actively engaged in antigay propaganda.

On May 17, the newspaper *Iravunk*, owned by MP Hayk Babukhanyan from the ruling RPA, published links to the Facebook profiles of 60 individuals under an article by its chief editor, Hovhannes Galajyan, entitled, "They are serving the international gay lobby. Black list of enemies of the nation and the state." Twenty of the individuals mentioned in the article (in different groups and individually) sued *Iravunk* for defamation. Although human rights lawyers considered the article to contain and spread hate speech, a trial court ruled against the plaintiffs on October 30 and ordered them to pay 300,000 drams (\$732) for legal expenses to the newspaper and the editor. On October 25, the 25th anniversary of *Iravunk*, President Sargsyan personally awarded MP Babukhanyan with a high state award. He also gave editor Galajyan and the director of the newspaper medals of appreciation for their input into the development of the newspaper. On the same occasion, the speaker of the parliament, Republican MP Galust Sahakyan, awarded Galajyan with an honor medal of the National Assembly. On November 5, 30 prominent civil society organizations issued a statement condemning the ruling and the awards.

Openly gay men were exempt from military service, purportedly because of concern that fellow service members would abuse them. An exemption required a medical finding, based on a psychological examination, that an individual had a mental disorder; this information appeared in the individual's personal documents, and was an obstacle to employment and obtaining a driver's license. Gay men who served in the army faced physical and psychological abuse.

According to human rights activists, LGBT persons were frequent targets for humiliating discrimination in prisons, where authorities forced them to perform degrading labor and separated them from the rest of the prison population.

Australia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Federal laws prohibit discrimination based on disability, race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion, family or caregiver responsibilities, pregnancy, and intersex status. An independent judiciary and a network of federal, state, and territorial equal opportunity offices effectively enforced antidiscrimination laws.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

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, care of elderly persons, and social security.

The HRC received 16 complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation from July 2012 through June 2013. Information on resolution of the complaints was not available.

The law provides protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status.

Austria

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides for protection against discrimination based on race, sex, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status, and the government generally enforced these protections.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. There was some societal prejudice against LGBT persons but no reports of violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Hate-crime legislation includes a prohibition of incitement, including incitement based on sexual orientation. LGBT organizations generally operated freely. Civil society groups criticized the lack of a mechanism to prevent service providers from discriminating against LGBT individuals.

In June a man attacked an LGBT politician at the Vienna Rainbow Parade with butyric acid. There were no injuries, but Vienna police opened an investigation on charges of property damage. They later terminated the investigation since the perpetrator was mentally disabled and could not be held legally responsible for his actions.

According to an EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) study, the situation of LGBT rights in the country was “mediocre.” The study found 20 percent of openly homosexual employed persons reported labor discrimination based on their sexual orientation and 89 percent of openly LGBT persons under the age of 18 claimed to have been bullied in school or in apprenticeships because of their sexual orientation. According to the FRA study, the situation was different in Vienna, which was “at the vanguard” of LGBT rights.

Azerbaijan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but the government did not always respect these prohibitions or effectively enforce them.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws exist but do not specifically enumerate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. Societal intolerance, violence, and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity remained a problem.

A local NGO reported that there were numerous incidents of police brutality against individuals based on sexual orientation and noted that authorities did not investigate or punish those responsible. In addition specific police stations were known to extort

money from LGBT individuals in return for not disclosing their orientation or identity. There were also reports of family-based violence against LGBT individuals and hostile Facebook postings on personal online accounts. In August a local LGBT organization reported receiving online hate messages and stated that its website had been hacked.

LGBT individuals continued to refuse to file formal complaints with law enforcement bodies due to fear of social stigma, reprisal, or retaliatory repression. One NGO working on LGBT issues reported police indifference to investigating crimes committed against the LGBT community.

There was societal prejudice against LGBT persons. According to a local NGO, societal discrimination contributed to the January 22 suicide of LGBT rights activist Isa Shahmarly. LGBT individuals reported that employers found other reasons to dismiss them because employers cannot legally dismiss someone because of their sexual orientation.

Bahamas, The

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, place of origin, political opinion, or creed, and the law prohibits discrimination based on disability. The government did not always effectively enforce these prohibitions, and the constitution and the law contain provisions that discriminate on the basis of gender. Neither the constitution nor the law addresses discrimination based on language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or social status.

The country consists of 700 islands and cays, 12 of which were significantly inhabited. Information in this report reflects the situation in the highly populated areas on New Providence and Grand Bahama. Limited information was available from other less-populated islands.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals occurred, with some persons reporting job and housing discrimination based upon sexual orientation. According to NGOs, LGBT persons also faced discrimination in employment, for which victims had no legal recourse. The government does not keep statistics on such incidents. Although sexual activity between same-sex consenting adults is legal, the law defines the age of consent for same-sex couples as 18, compared with 16 for heterosexual couples. No domestic legislation addresses the human rights concerns of LGBT persons. LGBT NGOs could operate openly in the country, although a Pride weekend in August in Grand Bahama was nearly abandoned after organizers of the events reported receiving threats; only five persons participated. The 2006 Constitutional Review Commission found that sexual orientation did not deserve protection against discrimination.

Bahrain

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The constitution provides for equality, equal opportunity, and the right to medical care, welfare, education, property, capital, and work for all citizens. The government protected these rights unevenly, depending on an individual's social status, sect, or gender. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, sect, or social status. The law deprives foreign workers, who comprised approximately one-half of the population, of many fundamental legal, social, and economic rights.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not criminalize same-sex sexual activity between consenting persons who are at least 21 years of age, but there was at least one reported case of an individual punished for gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activities, such as same-sex relationships and same-sex sexual activity, were not socially accepted, and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity occurred. There were no open manifestations of LGBT activity in the country, such as gay pride parades.

On July 7, authorities sentenced a foreign man to one month in jail followed by deportation for wearing women's make up and accessories. Police arrested him because they thought that he was "walking in a feminine way."

In April 2013 a judge sentenced two Chinese migrant workers who pleaded guilty to prostitution and homosexual conduct to five years' imprisonment followed by deportation. The press quoted the judge as saying the sentence would serve as a deterrent to others and "homosexuality ruins individuals and nations."

Bangladesh

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law specifically prohibits certain forms of discrimination against women, provides special procedures for persons accused of violence against women and children, calls for harsh penalties, provides compensation to victims, and requires action against investigating officers for negligence or willful failure of duty; however, enforcement was weak. Women, children, minority groups, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, and sexual minorities often confronted social and economic disadvantages.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal, but the law was not enforced. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups reported police used the law as a pretext to bully LGBT individuals, particularly those seen as effeminate men. Some groups also reported harassment under a suspicious behavior provision of the police code. The government acknowledged the existence of the LGBT population in its April 2013 Universal Periodic Review, contrary to its stance in the 2009 review, during which the foreign minister stated there were no LGBT individuals in the country. Additionally, the

government allocated funds for the transgender population in the national budget.

In 2013 the government announced it would consider transgender persons, who numbered approximately 10,000 according to a Ministry of Social Welfare survey, as a separate gender, neither male nor female.

There were several informal support networks for gays, but organizations specifically to assist lesbians were rare.

Attacks on LGBT persons occurred occasionally, but those offenses were difficult to document because victims desired confidentiality. The Bandhu Social Welfare Society, a local NGO, reported 33 cases of assault, 82 cases of domestic violence, and 154 cases of discrimination against LGBT persons from September 2013 through September 2014. Strong social stigma based on sexual orientation was common and prevented open discussion of the subject.

Barbados

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal treatment regardless of race, origin, political opinion, color, creed, or sex, and the government effectively enforced these provisions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults, with penalties of up to life imprisonment. There were no reports of the law being enforced during the year. The law does not prohibit discrimination against a person based on real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, education, or health care (see section 7.d.). Activists reported stigma against LGBT persons persisted. LGBT civil society groups reported no impediments to their activities.

Activists reported few violent incidents based on sexual orientation or gender identity but suggested that social stigma and fear of retribution or reprisal rendered the problem underreported by LGBT persons. Anecdotal evidence suggested that LGBT persons faced discrimination in employment, housing, and access to education and health care. Activists suggested that while many individuals lived open LGBT lifestyles, disapprobation by police officers and societal discrimination against LGBT persons occurred.

Belarus

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, language, or social status, but the government did not always enforce these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults is not illegal, but discrimination against LGBT persons was widespread, and harassment occurred.

Due to egregious official harassment of the LGBT community, groups opted for holding private activities and events. LGBT groups did not seek permission from authorities to hold any public events, including a pride parade.

On May 25, several anti-LGBT individuals harassed and severely beat Mikhail Pishcheuski, an LGBT man, as he left a club frequented by LGBT persons. The victim was taken to the hospital in a coma and remained in a coma at year's end. Police arrested several individuals in connection with the beating. On October 16, a court in Minsk sentenced the alleged perpetrator to two years and eight months in jail on charges of hooliganism and inflicting severe body damage. The court did not press charges in connection with intolerance or hatred based on sexual orientation and gender identity despite the testimony of a number of witnesses. Independent journalists and human rights advocates who observed the trial reported that the defendant openly insulted the victim and his friends in the courtroom.

Societal discrimination against LGBT activists persisted, with the tacit support of the regime.

In March 2013 Lukashenka stated that he could not “forgive” homosexuality in men, and in April 2013 he stated, “We should not be forced to introduce same-sex marriages. This will not happen in the near future. That is for sure, as long as I am the president.” In July 2013 Lukashenka condemned same-sex marriages as a “tragic sin of a general spiritual crisis and the Western world’s blindness.”

Belgium

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions. The law specifically identifies 18 categories of discrimination subject to legal penalty: age, sexual orientation, civil status, place of birth, financial situation, religious belief, philosophical orientation, physical condition, disability, physical characteristics, genetic characteristics, social status, nationality, race, color, descent, national origin, and ethnic origin. A separate law governs gender discrimination in the workplace. Under a directive issued by the Board of Prosecutors General, police and prosecutors must cite racial motivation or sexual orientation if present when reporting or recording offenses. In such instances the prosecutor must escalate the case (for example, in a racially motivated crime, the charge would additionally include a hate-crime offense).

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The country has a well-developed legal structure of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, which are included in the country's antidiscrimination laws. This structure enjoyed broad political support in society and the government, which was headed by the country's first openly gay prime minister.

The law provides adequate protections for transsexuals but not for the larger transgender community, as the law requires a lengthy procedure including psychiatric diagnosis and physical adaptation of the new gender (including surgery and hormones) before individuals can legally change their gender, and the vast majority did not wish to undergo medical procedures. Federal police showed high levels of support for Rainbow Cops, an association of LGBT officers, as well as for innovative training of officers on LGBT problems.

During the year the government, in cooperation with the regional entities, implemented an anti-homophobia action plan. The action plan imposes requirements on government entities involved in family matters, housing, and asylum and migration and calls for awareness campaigns to combat homophobic stereotypes in schools, youth movements, places of work, and the sports community.

Despite some progress, underreporting of crimes against the LGBT community remained a problem.

Belize

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The criminal code states that “carnal intercourse” with any person “against the order of nature” shall receive a punishment of 10 years’ imprisonment. The government interpreted this law as including only sex between men. Additionally, the Immigration Act prohibits “homosexual” persons from entering the country, but immigration authorities did not enforce that law.

The legal challenge by a member of the NGO United Belize Advocacy Movement’s (UniBAM) against the “carnal intercourse” law continued during the year. In July 2013 the court heard substantive arguments, but the court’s decision on the constitutionality of the law remained pending as of November.

A Jamaican lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) rights activist based in Canada filed a case challenging the immigration law with the Caribbean Court of Justice, and in May the court issued a preliminary ruling that the case could proceed. A date for substantive hearings to begin remained pending as of October.

The extent of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity was difficult to ascertain due to lack of official reporting of instances of discrimination. Local LGBT rights advocates noted that LGBT persons feared police and had been harassed while reporting unrelated crimes. They also noted that police at times refused to accept reports of crime from LGBT persons.

UniBAM, the country’s first legally registered LGBT advocacy organization, reported that continuing harassment and insults by the public affected its activities, and its members were reluctant to file complaints. In January assailants killed Joseph Sanchez, a transgender teen, in the early morning in Belize City. While members of the LGBT

community condemned the killing as a hate crime, local authorities investigated the incident as general homicide with attempted robbery as the motive.

In March the Catholic Church's bishop in Belize issued a directive to all Catholic schools and organizations to not cooperate with various NGOs engaged in HIV prevention work, including UniBAM, the National AIDS Commission, and Belize Family Life Association. The bishop's directive addressed the organizations' "agenda of sodomy, abortion, and sexual-gender redefinition," which is seeking to "radically change Belize's Christian character."

In May LGBT groups held an event to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. The event was well attended by members of the community, general supporters, *well-known personalities*, and representatives from the diplomatic corps in Belize. For the second year, First Lady Barrow issued a statement in support of the community.

Benin

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and laws prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status, but societal discrimination against women continued. Persons with disabilities were disadvantaged. The government took some measures to address these problems but fell short of providing a comprehensive response.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws explicitly criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity. There were no reports of criminal or civil cases involving consensual same-sex conduct or reports of societal discrimination or violence based on a person's sexual orientation. Although homosexual behavior was socially discouraged, it was not prosecuted. A growing number of citizens were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, but the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community remained largely disorganized and hidden.

Bhutan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, disability, language, politics, or social status. The government generally respected these prohibitions in practice, though societal discrimination existed.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution guarantees equal protection of the laws and application of rights but does not explicitly protect individuals from discrimination on the basis of sexual

orientation or gender identity. Laws against “sodomy or any other sexual conduct that is against the order of nature” exist. Under the penal code, a person can be imprisoned for as long as one year for engaging in prohibited sexual conduct. In response to recommendations to decriminalize same-sex sexual conduct during the country’s Universal Periodic Review, the government stated the law “has never been evoked since its enactment for same sex acts between two consenting adults. These provisions can be reviewed when there is a felt need for it by the general population.”

Homosexuality is a traditionally taboo subject, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population has historically remained out of public view without an organized advocacy community. During the year, however, several LGBT groups established a public presence via social media. There were no NGOs in the country explicitly associated with LGBT issues. There were no reports of violence directed against members of the LGBT community, although social bias was present.

A small transgender community exists in the country, and transgender individuals faced social stigma. The law does not provide any distinct legal status to transgender individuals, nor does it provide explicit protections.

Bolivia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and social status, but the government did not effectively enforce these provisions to protect all populations.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Nevertheless, societal discrimination against LGBT persons was common, and government action to counter it was limited. Citizens are allowed to change their name and gender on their official identification cards, although the process was subject to significant delay, and credible LGBT organizations reported that only seven persons were able to complete the change since 2007. No hate crime laws aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community.

In March the Bolivian Coalition of LGBT Organizations (COALIBOL) announced 55 members of the LGBT community were killed between 2003 and 2013. A study presented by the NGO Hivos and COALIBOL in January found that 93 percent of surveyed LGBT individuals had been discriminated against by a police officer, prosecutor, or judge. The study also noted that of those surveyed, 82 percent knew of at least one person who had been arbitrarily detained by police due to sexual orientation or gender identity. In the educational field, 70 percent of survey participants were discriminated against by teachers and 30 percent by fellow students.

The transgender community remained particularly vulnerable to abuse and violence. COALIBOL reported that 72 percent of transgender individuals abandoned their secondary school studies due to intense discrimination.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status, but the government did not enforce these prohibitions effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While state-level law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, it was not fully enforced, and there was frequent societal discrimination against LGBT persons. Although state-level laws provide protections to LGBT persons, a gap in entity-level laws left room for discrimination by allowing subnational law enforcement authorities to deflect responsibility for crimes based on sexual orientation.

LGBT persons faced frequent harassment and discrimination, including termination of employment (see section 7.d.). In some cases dismissal letters explicitly stated that sexual orientation was the cause of termination, making it extremely difficult for those dismissed to find another job. In its 2014 report on the rights and freedoms of LGBT persons, the Sarajevo Open Center noted that most state-level institutions assumed that the prohibition of discrimination regulated by state-level law was sufficient to protect LGBT persons. At the same time, entity-level laws do not provide explicit protections to LGBT persons.

In February a group of 12-14 masked individuals disrupted the Merlinka LGBT Film Festival in downtown Sarajevo. The attackers shouted homophobic chants and physically assaulted several individuals, including the director and the moderator of the festival. Three persons sustained minor injuries, and two required medical attention. Approximately 30 individuals witnessed the incident. Although the Sarajevo Open Center and Sarajevo Cantons Interior Ministry agreed two weeks prior to the event that police would be present at all times during the festival, they were absent at the time of the attack. Police arrested two alleged perpetrators, but the Sarajevo Canton prosecutor's office failed to press charges.

In October a group of young persons attempted to assault members of LGBT activist organization BUKA at a cafe in Banja Luka. Police quickly intervened in the incident and escorted the activists to a safe location. Nevertheless, they failed to detain or charge any of the alleged perpetrators.

Botswana

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit governmental discrimination based on ethnicity, race, nationality, creed, sex, or social status, and the government generally respected these provisions. The law does not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity, although same-sex sexual activity remains illegal under the penal code. Sexual orientation is protected from discrimination under the employment act. In addition, as long as a

government job applicant is able to perform the duties of the position, he or she may not be discriminated against due to disability or language. The law does not prohibit discrimination by private persons or entities, however, and there was societal discrimination against women; persons with disabilities; minority ethnic groups, particularly the San; LGBT persons; and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not explicitly criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. What the law describes as “unnatural acts” are criminalized with a penalty of up to seven years’ imprisonment, and there was widespread belief this was directed toward LGBT persons. There were no reports police-targeted persons suspected of same-sex sexual activity. LGBT-rights organizations claimed there were incidents of violence, societal harassment, and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The victims of such incidents seldom filed police reports, primarily due to stigma but occasionally as a result of overt intimidation.

Public meetings of LGBT advocacy groups and debates on LGBT issues occurred without disruption or interference. In November the High Court ruled the Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs’ refusal to register the LGBT advocacy organization LeGaBiBo (Lesbian, Gays, and Bisexuals of Botswana) was unconstitutional, since it violated the group’s right to freedom of association. LeGaBiBo attempted to register as an NGO since 2009 to advocate for the rights of LGBT persons, but the government refused registration on the basis that the group promoted an illegal activity. In 2013, after several unsuccessful attempts at litigation, LeGaBiBo filed a lawsuit challenging the government’s refusal to grant the organization legal status. In the judgment the High Court did not address the ban on homosexual activity.

Brazil

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits and penalizes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, or social status, but discrimination continued against women and girls, Afro-Brazilians, indigenous persons, and LGBT persons.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Federal law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, but several states and municipalities have administrative regulations that prohibit such discrimination and provide for equal access to government services. Social discrimination remained a problem, especially against the transgender population. Violence against LGBT individuals remained a serious concern.

In 2013 the SDH released its *Second Annual Report on Homophobic Violence*, which stated that in 2012 there were 315 LGBT-related homicides, compared with 278 in 2011. The NGO Rainbow Group considered the SDH report more accurate than information in other annual reports on homophobic violence because of its use of government data as well as media reports.

According to the SDH, many transgender individuals had difficulty entering the formal labor market or study programs due to an apparent discrepancy between the photograph and name on an individual's labor card and an individual's personal appearance and "social name," which prevented some from obtaining permission to work.

Within Sao Paulo City there are two centers dedicated to supporting "victims of homophobia" that provide social support and inform victims of their rights under the law. A third center was under construction. The city government also has a program that allocates paid internships for transgender students in City Hall to improve their future career prospects and involvement in public service.

The National LGBT Council, created in 2010 to combat discrimination and promote the rights of LGBT persons, continued to meet every two months. Meetings were open to the public and broadcast over the internet.

In April Rio de Janeiro's state-run program "Rio without Homophobia" provided 430 civil police officers with training on the rights of LGBT persons.

On May 17, the Recife NGO Instituto PAPAI launched a nation-wide campaign to support LGBT youth. PAPAI organized a video contest among public high school students to increase participation in the campaign. The videos were to be posted on the website and the winner announced in November.

In June in the city of Sao Paulo, 56 private companies participated in the Forum of Companies and LGBT Rights, an organization created to discuss the best practices to reduce discrimination and promote LGBT rights in working places.

Waldir Pires Bittencourt, an openly LGBT candidate for the Chamber of Deputies in Amapa State, was attacked by assailants who shouted homophobic slurs during the attack. The victim stated that in the weeks prior to the attack he faced a number of death threats through social media and by telephone.

Brunei

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law does not contain specific provisions prohibiting discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The common law makes it a criminal offense to have "carnal intercourse against the order of nature," punishable by a fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment. In cultural practice this included sexual relations between men. The SPC specifically bans anal sex between men or between a man and a woman not his wife and prohibits men from dressing as women or women dressing as men. Implementing regulations governing these provisions were not issued by year's end.

There were no reports of arrests or prosecutions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons under either the common law or the SPC. There were no reports of official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, or access to education or health care, although societal stigma may cause

affected individuals to refrain from reporting such problems. Anecdotal information indicated LGBT individuals avoided disclosing their sexual orientations due to fear of societal or legal retribution. There were no NGOs working on human rights for LGBT persons in the country.

Bulgaria

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, gender, disability, social status, and sexual orientation but not language. Societal discrimination continued, particularly against ethnic minorities, LGBT persons, and persons with disabilities. Trafficking in persons continued to be a problem.

The government investigated complaints of discrimination, issued rulings, and imposed sanctions on violators. The law allows individuals to pursue a discrimination case through the court system or through the CPD. As of October the CPD received 526 complaints, most of them concerning allegations of discrimination based on personal status and disability, particularly with regard to employment. The commission found discriminatory practices in 375 cases and imposed fines totaling 18,950 leva (\$11,800) on violators. In 2013 courts completed 34 discrimination proceedings granting full remedy in six cases and partial remedy in six cases, rejecting six claims, and terminating 16 cases.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, but the government did not effectively enforce this prohibition. While reports of violence against LGBT persons were rare, societal discrimination, particularly in employment, remained a problem. Most LGBT persons did not reveal their sexual preferences to their families due to fear of the relationship being severed. NGOs stated it was not uncommon for persons suspected of being gay to be fired, and such individuals were reluctant to seek redress in the courts due to fear of being openly identified as belonging to the LGBT community. In April, Judge Lilia Ilieva from the commercial division of the Sofia City Court denied registration of a new LGBT foundation on the ground that there was no need for such an organization because there was no discrimination against LGBT persons.

On July 5, the seventh annual LGBT pride parade took place in downtown Sofia. Once again the Bulgarian Orthodox Church issued a statement demanding cancellation of the event. The parade attracted approximately 500 participants and occurred largely without incident. For the first time, an active politician, Viktor Lilov of the Reformist Bloc, spoke at the opening of the parade, and media coverage of the event was largely positive. Police provided sufficient security in the vicinity of the parade and in the wider area, which effectively deterred aggressive behavior by skinheads and others who traditionally caused some problems. Protestors held an anti-LGBT event on June 21, which drew approximately 50-70 demonstrators.

Burkina Faso

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. Discrimination against women and persons with disabilities remained problems.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment and occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care. Nevertheless, societal discrimination, exacerbated by religious and traditional beliefs concerning LGBT persons, was a problem. LGBT persons were occasionally victims of verbal and physical abuse, according to LGBT support groups. There were no reports that the government responded to societal violence and discrimination against LGBT persons.

LGBT organizations had no legal status in the country but existed unofficially. Repeated attempts by LGBT organizations to register with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization, and Security were not approved, and no explanation was provided for the refusals. There were no reports of government or societal violence against such organizations, although incidents were sometimes not reported due to stigma or intimidation.

The country has no hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the investigation, prosecution, or sentencing of bias-motivated crimes against the LGBT community.

Burma

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture, sex, and wealth, but the government did not effectively enforce antidiscrimination laws. Numerous laws, notably the 1982 Citizenship Law, contravene this provision.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Political reforms in the country led to a more visible LGBT movement, including the formation of LGBT rights organizations and their growing activities during the year. These changes made it easier for the LGBT community to hold public events and openly participate in society. Despite this progress consensual same-sex sexual activity remains illegal under section 377 of the penal code, which contains provisions against “sexually abnormal” behavior and entails punishments up to life imprisonment. Laws against “unnatural offenses” apply equally to both men and women. These laws were rarely enforced, but LGBT persons reported that police used the threat of prosecution to extort bribes. LGBT activists reported harassment by police, including arbitrary arrest (for example for loitering), detention, and in some cases rape by security forces. They

also reported broad societal and familial discrimination.

There were reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, including the denial of promotions and firing of LGBT persons (see section 7.d.). Activists reported that job opportunities for many openly gay and lesbian persons were limited, and they noted a general lack of support from society as a whole. The district-, regional-, and union-level courts rejected Myanmar LGBT Rights Network's lawsuit filed in 2013-14 against the Mandalay police for arresting and abusing 12 gay men, transgender persons, and NGO outreach workers involved in HIV and AIDS prevention. Police were investigating the case as of December.

Burundi

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal status and protection for all citizens, without distinction based on race, language, religion, sex, or ethnic origin, but the law does not explicitly address distinctions based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The government did not enforce the law in many cases.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes same-sex sexual acts with penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment of three months to two years. Since its passage in 2009, however, it has not been applied.

The Remuruka Center in Bujumbura offers urgent services to the LGBT community. The government neither supported nor hindered the activities of local LGBT organizations or the center.

In September a Vietnamese employee of the telephone company Viettel was caught in sexual relations with a Burundian man in Karuzi Province. The Burundian man alleged that it was nonconsensual sex, and the Vietnamese man was detained. Authorities dropped the case after three days for lack of evidence.

Cabo Verde

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, religion, disability, language, or social status. The constitution stipulates the government should create conditions for the gradual removal of all obstacles to the full exercise of human rights and equality before the law.

The law also prohibits racism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, but violence and discrimination against women and children remained significant problems. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The government enforced the above prohibitions somewhat effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws exist, but none apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. There was no information available on official or private discrimination against LGBT individuals in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care. There were no reported incidents of violence against LGBT persons during the year. Intimidation was not believed to be a factor in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported.

In June the Cabo Verdean Association of Gays Against Discrimination organized the country's second Cabo Verdean Gay Week, "Mindelo Pride." The event occurred in the city of Mindelo, on Sao Vicente Island, to promote equality and respect for sexual diversity.

Cambodia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status; however, the government did not generally effectively enforce these prohibitions. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There were no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct, nor was there official discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, although some societal discrimination and stereotyping persisted, particularly in rural areas. In May several local businesses and NGOs hosted the sixth annual Gay Pride Week, a week-long series of events highlighting the LGBT community. The event enjoyed support from the local NGO community and also included LGBT representatives from neighboring countries.

There were no reports of government discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, statelessness, or access to education or healthcare. Consensual same-sex relationships, however, were typically treated with fear and suspicion by the general population, and there were few support groups to which cases involving discrimination could be reported. Unofficial discrimination against LGBT persons persisted; however, a local NGO reported that discrimination was on the decrease due to the LGBT community's effectiveness in raising awareness.

There were no reported incidents of violence or abuse against LGBT individuals, but stigma or intimidation may have inhibited reporting of incidents.

Cameroon

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits all forms of discrimination. It states that a human being, without distinction as to race, religion, sex, or belief, possesses inalienable rights. Although the government made some efforts to enforce these principles, violence and discrimination against women and girls and vulnerable communities persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable by a prison sentence of six months to five years and a fine ranging from 20,000 to 200,000 CFA (\$40 to \$400). Government officials defended the law publicly by claiming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights state that countries may limit freedoms in the interests of preserving public order and that individuals have the duty to preserve African values and morals.

Although reports of arrests dropped dramatically, authorities continued to arrest and try alleged LGBT individuals. LGBT individuals continued to face social stigmatization, harassment, and discrimination. There were increasing reports that both police and civilians extorted money from presumed LGBT individuals by threatening to expose them.

On January 10, LGBT activist Jean-Claude Roger Mbede died in his hometown of Ngoumou, after he left the hospital because he lacked the necessary resources for continued medical care. Mbede was found guilty of "homosexuality and attempted homosexuality" and sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 2011. He was released following a successful appeal in July 2012. Human rights activists believed Mbede became ill during his incarceration and that his family may have at one point denied him access to medical care.

On May 24, Cameroon Athletics Federation National Technical Director Michel Nkolo announced before an audience of more than 1,000 athletes and coaches that the federation was suspending Thierry Essamba due to rumors he was homosexual. Essamba, an internationally competitive runner in the 110-meter hurdles who won a gold medal for Cameroon in the 2013 Central African Championships in Brazzaville, was excluded from the national team and banned from any competition organized by the Cameroon Athletics Federation, effectively ending his athletic career. Essamba's parents reportedly expelled him from the family home after the suspension.

On October 1, in Yaounde, elements of the Nkolemesseng gendarmerie brigade detained six persons whom they accused of prostitution and homosexuality. The gendarmes kept the detainees in custody for three days and then referred them to the Ekounou Court of First Instance for prosecution. The State Counsel at the Yaounde Ekounou Court of First Instance ordered the release of the detainees on October 8, stating there was not enough evidence to prosecute them for homosexual acts.

There were no developments in the July 2013 killing of LGBT activist Eric Lembembe Ohena, executive director of the Cameroonian Foundation against AIDS (CAMFAIDS), who was strangled to death at his home in Yaounde. Although authorities claimed an investigation was in progress, CAMFAIDS accused the government of failing to investigate the killing properly. The organization raised the concern that this lack of punishment sent a signal that crimes against LGBT individuals could be committed with impunity. Members of Lembembe's family reported harassment from police officials.

Suspected members of the LGBT community received anonymous threats by telephone, text message, and e-mail. Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that LGBT

individuals who sought services or protection from the authorities were regularly rebuffed, extorted, or arrested. LGBT organizations also were targeted.

Despite the cultural environment, various human rights and health organizations continued to advocate for the LGBT community by defending LGBT individuals being prosecuted, promoting HIV/AIDS initiatives, and working to change laws prohibiting consensual same-sex activity.

Canada

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, social status, and sexual orientation. Provincial or territorial statutes in three provinces and one territory prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity. The government enforced these laws effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

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, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. Birth certificates issued by provinces and territories provide the basis of identification for legal documents, and procedures vary for changing legal gender markers to match an individual's outward appearance or chosen gender expression. Ontario permits individuals to change their gender designation on Ontario birth certificates with written confirmation from a physician that the applicant's gender identity does not conform to his or her sex designation at birth. In April, British Columbia passed legislation to permit the change of legal gender markers with written confirmation from a physician that the birth registration does not correspond with the applicant's gender identity and a declaration from the applicant of his or her intent to maintain the gender identity that corresponds with the desired sex designation. Other provinces and territories require one or more physicians to certify that the applicant has completed gender reassignment surgery before an applicant may change the legal gender marker.

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

There were occasions of violence and abuse against individuals based on sexual orientation, but the government generally implemented the law criminalizing such behavior effectively. NGOs reported that stigma or intimidation was a known or likely factor in the underreporting of incidents of abuse. Some police forces employed LGBT liaison officers, and Toronto police collaborated with community organizations to develop public awareness campaigns to encourage reporting of harassment and abuse. In 2012 the government's statistical agency reported that 13 percent (185) of police-reported hate crime incidents nationally were motivated by sexual orientation.

Central African Republic

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The transitional charter stipulates that all persons are equal before the law without regard to race and gender, but not with regard to disability, language, and sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The government did not enforce these provisions effectively, and significant discrimination existed.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The penal code criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity. The penalty for “public expression of love” between persons of the same sex is imprisonment for six months to two years or a fine of between 150,000 and 600,000 CFA francs (\$285 and \$1,140). When one of the participants is a child, the adult may be sentenced to two to five years’ imprisonment or a fine of 100,000 to 800,000 CFA francs (\$190 and \$1,520); however, there were no reports that police arrested or detained persons under these provisions.

While there is official discrimination based on sexual orientation, there were no reports of the government targeting gays and lesbians. Societal discrimination against LGBT persons was entrenched due to a high degree of cultural stigmatization and social pressure placed upon individuals to conform to a heterosexual lifestyle. Many citizens attributed the existence of homosexuality to undue Western influence. There were no reports of LGBT persons targeted for acts of violence, although the lack of reports may be due to cultural biases and stigma attached to being a member of the LGBT community. There were no known organizations advocating or working on behalf of LGBT persons.

Chad

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on place of origin, race, gender, religion, political opinion, or social status, the government did not effectively enforce these provisions. The law does not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits but does not define “unnatural acts.” On September 4, the Council of Ministers approved a draft revised penal code for debate in the National Assembly’s October session. One of the proposed amendments in the revised penal code would criminalize homosexual acts with 15-20 years’ imprisonment and a fine of between 50,000 and 500,000 CFA francs (\$95-\$950). The government subsequently withdrew the draft penal code from National Assembly consideration for further review, and revisions were pending at year’s end.

There were no reports of violence toward the LGBT community, but authorities arrested LGBT individuals during the year. In September 2013 authorities in Abeche arrested two gay men celebrating their wedding in a bar and charged them with indecent exposure. The following month authorities fined the men and issued a two-year suspended sentence, which prompted religious councils, youth associations, and feminist groups to petition authorities to punish the couple for “ignoble and antireligious acts,” according to Radio France International. Authorities ordered the bar closed for two years.

There were no LGBT organizations in the country.

Chile

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution states that all persons are born free and are equal in terms of the law and dignity; however, it does not specifically identify groups protected from discrimination. The 2012 antidiscrimination law provides civil legal remedies to victims of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic situation, language, ideology or political opinion, religion or belief, association or participation in union organizations or lack thereof, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, marriage status, age, affiliation, personal appearance, and sickness or physical disability. The law also increases criminal penalties for acts of violence based on discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not criminalize consensual same-sex conduct between consenting adults. The law sets the age of consent at 18 for homosexual sexual activity; heterosexual activity is permitted, under some circumstances, at age 14. Antidiscrimination laws exist and prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In February, MOVILH reported that it tracked 143 cases of discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity during 2013.

Violence against LGBT individuals continued; as of September three LGBT persons were killed by assailants who allegedly made direct reference to their victims’ sexuality during the attack. All cases were under investigation, and none had come to trial.

Law enforcement authorities appeared reluctant to use the full recourse of a 2012 antidiscrimination law, including charging assailants of LGBT victims with a hate crime, which would elevate criminal penalties as permitted under the law. For instance, Wladimir Sepulveda died on April 6 from injuries sustained when he was attacked in a public place in October 2013. Witnesses alleged that his assailants uttered homophobic slurs while they beat him. As of September the judiciary failed to charge any of the alleged assailants with a hate crime, and all remained free on bail.

Laws prevent transgender persons from changing gender markers on government-issued identity documents, including national identity cards and university diplomas, to match their outward appearance or chosen expression. In a televised news conference on August 27, Mauricio Ruiz, a member of the country’s navy, announced that he was gay, becoming the first active-duty service member to declare his status. Minister of Defense Jorge Burgos declared Ruiz’s action “a very important step”; Minister of Justice Jose Antonio Gomez stated, “We should respect the diversity of Chilean society.”

China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While there were laws designed to protect women, children, persons with disabilities, and minorities, some discrimination based on ethnicity, sex, disability, and other factors persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws criminalize private consensual same-sex activities between adults. Due to societal discrimination and pressure to conform to family expectations, most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons refrained from publicly discussing their sexual orientation or gender identity. Individual activists and organizations working on LGBT issues continued to report discrimination and harassment from authorities, similar to other organizations that accept funding from overseas.

In May, Beijing authorities detained nine activists to prevent their participation in a conference on LGBT NGOs. Event organizers were ordered to leave Beijing after questioning.

While homosexuality and bisexuality were removed from the Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders in 2001, transsexualism remains pathologized. For transgender individuals, family consent and certificates from mental health clinics are required for sex-change surgeries and to receive hormone therapies. According to international reports, it was extremely difficult for transgender individuals to change their gender on official documents, such as identity cards and school graduation certificates.

Although homosexuality is no longer officially pathologized, some mental health practitioners offered “corrective treatment” to LGBT persons at “conversion therapy” centers or hospital psychiatric wards, sometimes at the behest of family members. Conversion therapy clinics advertise their programs online. Conversion therapy faced scrutiny, however, when the Haidian District Court in Beijing ruled in favor of a gay male plaintiff who sued a psychiatric counseling center that attempted to “cure” him with hypnosis and electric shocks. On December 19, the court called for an investigation of the center’s license and ordered the center, Chongqing Jinyu Piaoxiang, to pay RMB3,500 (\$563) compensation to the plaintiff and post an apology on its website for offering the treatment. Although the search engine Baidu was also named in the lawsuit for advertising the “conversion therapy” program, the court did not order Baidu to pay compensation to the plaintiff but cautioned it to be attentive to advertising such services in the future.

China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - Tibet

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No information in this sub-section. Please see the full country report for more.

China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - Hong Kong

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides that all permanent residents are equal, and the government enforced this. The EOC is responsible for enforcing the relevant laws.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. While the SAR has laws that ban discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, and family status, no law prohibits companies from discriminating on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) professionals are permitted to bring partners to the SAR only on a “prolonged visitor visa.” Successful applicants, however, cannot work, obtain an identification card, or qualify for permanent residency. The government claimed public education and existing civil and criminal laws were sufficient to protect the rights of the LGBT community and that legislation was not necessary. No additional legislative mechanisms existed to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community.

China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau) - Macau

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law stipulates that residents shall be free from discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and many laws carry specific prohibitions against discrimination. The government effectively enforced the law. The law does not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws criminalizing sexual orientation or same-sex sexual contact and no

prohibition against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons forming organizations or associations. There were no reports of violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT groups openly held several public events, and one registered LGBT group openly lobbied for an extension of protections to same-sex couples in a draft law on domestic violence.

Colombia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The 2011 antidiscrimination law specifically prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status, but many of these prohibitions were not universally enforced.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There was no official discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care. Some transgender individuals complained that it was difficult for them to change the gender designation on national identity documents and that transgender individuals whose identity cards listed them as male were still required to show proof that they had provided mandatory military service or obtained the necessary waivers from that service. Despite government measures to increase the rights and protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, there were reports of societal abuse and discrimination.

The Attorney General's Office announced on August 20 that the office was investigating at least 30 alleged homicides of LGBT individuals that had occurred since January 1. Half of the killings occurred in the city of Medellin, and all of them were in the preliminary stages of investigation. Colombia Diversa, an NGO focused on addressing violence and discrimination due to sexual orientation, claimed at least 15 killings through August due to prejudice regarding sexual orientation or gender identity.

Colombia Diversa also reported 14 cases of police abuse of persons due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, with the majority of complaints coming from transgender individuals. According to NGOs working on LGBT issues, these attacks occurred frequently, but victims did not pursue cases due to fear of retaliation. NGOs also reported several cases of threats against human rights defenders working on LGBT issues as well as a high level of impunity for crimes against members of the LGBT community. Such organizations partially attributed impunity levels to the failure of the Attorney General's Office to distinguish and effectively pursue crimes against the LGBT community.

Members of the transgender community cited barriers to public services when health-care providers or police officers refused to accept government-issued identification with transgender individuals' names and photographs.

NGOs claimed that discrimination and violence in prisons against persons due to their sexual orientation or gender identity remained a problem. In addition there were instances where authorities denied medical services to transgender individuals.

The Ministry of Interior, Ombudsman's Office, and Inspector General's Office met with academics and research groups to identify the problems and proposals for a national

public policy framework on LGBT rights and held hearings at a national level on the subject. The sessions responded to a 2011 Constitutional Court ruling that the agencies collaborate to create such a framework. During the year the Ministry of Interior's LGBT unit, in coordination with several other ministries, committed to forming a national framework on LGBT problems by year's end. In addition the Attorney General's Office National Directorate for Public Policy formed a gender working group and tasked it with producing a report on access to justice related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

The manual of administrative procedures for blood banks issued by the Ministry of Health states that to protect the recipient of a transfusion from HIV/AIDS, it excludes those who have had "male homosexual relations in the past 15 years." In 2012 the Constitutional Court ordered the Ministry of Health to remove selection criteria based on the sexual orientation of donors, but the regulation reportedly had not been changed as of September. During the year the Ministry of Health initiated a joint working group to study the matter further.

The Ministry of Interior's Office of Indigenous and Minority Affairs working group for urgent LGBT cases, with participation by the Attorney General's Office and Ministry of Defense, continued to hold interinstitutional meetings to inform civil society about vulnerable groups, articulate action plans on how to address vulnerabilities, follow the progression of cases through various state entities, and employ protocols for attending to victims.

The ministry continued its public information campaigns on LGBT rights through national and regional television and radio networks. In July the ministry hired ATENEA Consultancy Group to formulate an administrative decree establishing a national LGBT public policy and action plan for the LGBT community.

The Bogota Mayor's Office instituted an LGBT advisory council made up of eight representatives from the LGBT community. During the year the advisory council formulated a plan for promoting inclusion of LGBT workers in the workplace.

Comoros

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, there were reports of discrimination against women and persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and can be punished by up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to one million Comoran francs (\$140 to \$2,770). Authorities released two persons jailed in connection with a 2013 investigation of alleged same-sex sexual activity involving a minor. Authorities reported no prosecutions for same-sex sexual activity during the year. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) persons generally did not manifest publicly their sexual orientation due to societal pressure. There were no local LGBT organizations.

Congo, Democratic Republic of the

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, language, culture, or religion but does not address disability or sexual orientation. The government did not enforce prohibitions against discrimination effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While no laws specifically prohibit consensual sexual conduct between same-sex adults, individuals engaging in public displays of same-sex sexual conduct were sometimes subject to prosecution under public indecency provisions. The law prohibits those with homosexual orientation from adopting children. Homosexuality remained a cultural taboo, and harassment by the SSF occurred.

Congo, Republic of the

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, region of origin within the country, place of residence in the country, language, social status, political orientation, or disability; however, the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry for Promotion of Women's Rights are the lead government bodies charged with protecting and promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, the handicapped, and indigenous people (Baka). The Ministry of Social Affairs was particularly active, but its effectiveness was impeded by limited funding and lack of coordination with other ministries.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There is no law that specifically prohibits consensual same-sex sexual conduct. The penal code prescribes imprisonment of three months to two years and a fine for those who commit a "public outrage against decency." The law prescribes a punishment of six months to three years and a fine for anyone who "commits a shameless act or an act against nature with an individual of the same sex under the age of 21." According to the gay rights NGO Association de Soutien aux Groupes Vulnérables (ASGV) and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in Brazzaville, these laws do not prohibit consensual same-sex conduct, and authorities did not employ the law to arrest or prosecute LGBT persons. On occasion, however, police officers harassed gay men and claimed the law prohibited same sex sexual activity in order to elicit a small bribe. There are no laws that limit freedom of speech or assembly for LGBT persons.

The ASGV sits on the National HIV/AIDS Committee, whose meetings are chaired by

President Sassou N'Guesso or the minister of health. A second organization represents the interests of gay men in Pointe-Noire. There was no known advocacy group to represent the interests of lesbians or transgender individuals in the country.

There were no known publicly reported cases of violence against LGBT individuals during the year. The gay men's group in Pointe-Noire, however, privately said police there targeted openly gay young men for verbal, physical, or sexual abuse. Although at the official level LGBT persons were not discriminated against, gay men, particularly the young and the poor, reportedly were vulnerable.

Costa Rica

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution establishes that all persons are equal before the law and no discrimination contrary to human dignity shall be practiced. Discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited by a series of executive orders and workplace policies but not by national laws. Transgender persons were able to change their gender on their identity documents through an administrative law judge's decision and later registration in the Civil Registry Office. There were cases of discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation, ranging from employment, police abuse, and education to access to health care services. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations operated freely and lobbied for legal reforms. A 2013 youth law includes a provision legalizing domestic partnership benefits only for persons between 18 and 35 years of age.

On May 22, the social security system approved a regulation extending insurance benefits to same-sex couples, which includes access to public medical services and hospital visitation rights. On May 16, President Solis raised the flag of the LGBT movement at the presidential office in honor of the International Day Against Homophobia.

Cote d'Ivoire

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, religion, or HIV status, but the government did not effectively enforce the law. The law does not address discrimination based on disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There is no law criminalizing homosexuality. The law's only mention of same-sex sexual activity is as a form of public indecency that carries a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment, the same prescribed for heterosexual acts performed in public. Antidiscrimination laws exist, but they do not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity (see section 7.d.).

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of security forces beating, imprisoning, extorting, or humiliating members of the LGBT community due to their sexual orientation. Law enforcement authorities were at times slow and ineffective in their response to societal violence targeting the LGBT community. On January 20, a mob of neighborhood residents attacked the home of the president of a prominent LGBT rights organization in Abidjan, vandalizing property and physically threatening the inhabitants. On January 25, a mob ransacked and looted the headquarters of the organization. The victims filed a complaint with the local police, who referred the case to the appropriate trial court for further investigation. At year's end the authorities had not made any arrests or filed any charges. The few LGBT organizations in the country, including the victim of this violence, continued to operate freely but with caution.

There was no official discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, or access to education or health care. Nevertheless, societal stigmatization of the LGBT community was widespread, and many members reported discrimination at health clinics, particularly when seeking treatment for sexually transmitted infections. In September an Abidjan tabloid published an inflammatory article about clinics throughout the city that were friendly to the "men who have sex with men" population and included a list of the clinics by name. Persons believed to be gay also faced societal discrimination in finding employment and housing.

Croatia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender orientation, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although the law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, there were reports of some violence against LGBT persons. On June 22, five or six men physically attacked two LGBT activists in Split. One activist received medical assistance after the incident.

In June an unknown person attacked a 19-year-old Brazilian tourist in Split during a music festival after he kissed his partner. The perpetrator punched the victim, leaving him unconscious. The tourist was treated and released from the hospital; the perpetrator was not apprehended.

NGOs reported the police were responsive to reported violations against LGBT individuals but noted ambiguity in the penal code regarding penalties for violent behavior towards such individuals. LGBT NGOs noted there was uneven awareness of

LGBT discrimination within the judiciary. The Zagreb municipal court rejected five joint suits filed for employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, but the supreme court later overruled three of those decisions (see section 7.d.).

On September 6 the first gay pride parade took place in the major eastern city of Osijek, drawing 300 to 400 participants from Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Parade organizers and the police reported no incidents during the event. The annual Split pride parade was held on June 7 without incident. There were approximately 300 parade participants and 600 police officers on duty for the event, which the Split-based NGO Rispet organized. Between 3,000 and 5,000 individuals participated without incident in the 13th Zagreb pride parade on June 14, with a smaller police presence than in previous years.

Cuba

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, or social status. Racial discrimination, however, occurred frequently in all levels of society, mostly directed at the Afro-Cuban population.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care. Nonetheless, societal discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity persisted.

Mariela Castro, President Castro's daughter, headed the national Center for Sexual Education and continued to be outspoken in promoting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Throughout the year the government promoted the rights of LGBT persons, including nonviolence and nondiscrimination in regional and international fora. In May the government sponsored a march and an extensive program of events to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. Nonetheless, nongovernmental rights activists asserted the government had not done enough to stop harassment of LGBT persons. Several unrecognized NGOs promoted LGBT issues and faced government criticism, not for their promotion of LGBT issues, but for their independence from official government institutions.

Cyprus

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws exist and prohibit direct or indirect discrimination based on sexual orientation, but not on gender identity. Antidiscrimination laws cover employment and the following activities in the public and private domain: social protection, social insurance, social benefits, health care, education, participation in unions and professional organizations, and access to goods and services. NGOs dealing with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) matters claimed that housing benefits favored “traditional” families. Hate crime legislation does not include language on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Despite legal protections, LGBT individuals faced significant societal discrimination, and few LGBT persons were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, nor did they report homophobic violence or discrimination. A survey published in the *International Journal of Manpower* in August suggested that LGBT job applicants faced significant bias compared with heterosexual applicants. The survey found that gay male applicants who made their sexual orientation clear on their job application were 39 percent less likely to get a job interview than equivalent male applicants who did not identify themselves as gay. Openly lesbian applicants were 42.7 percent less likely than equivalent female applicants to obtain a job interview (see also section 7.d.).

On November 20, police raided a photographic exhibition organized by Accept LGBT Cyprus in the municipal market of Nicosia and confiscated all 34 photographs exhibited. Using a court warrant, police kept eight of the photographs depicting naked male bodies and returned the rest to the organizers. Police asserted citizens had submitted complaints that children were exposed to pornographic material. The Attorney General’s Office was examining the case to determine whether to bring charges. Accept LGBT and several other groups and organizations criticized the police intervention, arguing that it acted on an antiquated law that police applied selectively.

On May 31, Accept LGBT Cyprus organized the first gay pride parade in Nicosia, attended by more than 3,000 individuals, including several public officials. The press covered the event extensively and positively. Opposition was limited to a press release issued by the Church of Cyprus and a small counterdemonstration led by clerics.

In a press interview on May 19, the president of Accept LGBT Cyprus noted that recent surveys showed society was becoming less homophobic and supported LGBT rights more.

In April the Ministry of Education permitted the Ombudsman’s Office and Accept LGBT Cyprus to deliver lectures on combating homophobia and homophobic bullying to students and educators in secondary education.

A group of Youth Council educators and the family-planning organization conducted a campaign, Shield against Homophobia in Education. In 2012 the campaign sponsored a pilot program attended by 90 teachers and educational psychologists and conducted a survey on homophobia in education based on a random sample of educators participating in the program. The survey revealed the presence of homophobia in education in the form of homophobic language in the educational system and in homophobic bullying. The survey indicated homophobic attitudes prevailed among educators, students, and parents. Educators in the program acknowledged that they were not equipped to deal with sexuality issues in schools.

Cyprus - Cyprus - the Area Administered by Turkish Cypriots

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The “law” prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. Authorities generally enforced these prohibitions. On January 27, the “parliament” passed reforms that decriminalize homosexuality, outlaw gender or sexual identity discrimination, eliminate the death penalty, and increase penalties for child abuse and abuse of the disabled.

The amendments to the “criminal code” outlaw discrimination based on one’s sex, sexual preference, or sexual identity; increase penalties for sexual abuse of children, including child prostitution; increase penalties for abuse of the mentally disabled; increase penalties for violation of sexual inviolability; declare sexual inviolability is a human right; include men in this protection (which previously applied only to women); increase penalties for rape; and increase penalties (to life imprisonment) for sexual activity with minors or persons with mental disabilities--in a new category similar to statutory rape. The amendment decriminalizing homosexuality created controversy, with religious and conservative groups criticizing liberal human rights advocates. Human rights activists reported there remained a lack of awareness-raising campaigns that would reduce discrimination. The “legislation” went into effect on February 12.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On January 27, the Turkish Cypriot “legislature” decriminalized same-sex sexual activity. The “law” also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Homosexuality remained highly proscribed socially and was rarely discussed, despite the decriminalization of homosexual activity and the amendments to the “criminal code.” Few LGBT persons were publicly open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

While there were no cases recorded of official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, or access to education or health care, members of the LGBT community noted that an overwhelming majority of LGBT persons hid their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid such problems.

Czech Republic

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on gender, age, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, or personal belief. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions. Significant societal discrimination against some minorities, including Roma, persisted.

In 2013 the ombudsman received 360 complaints of discrimination, investigated 301, and found discrimination in 20 cases. The most common complaints of discrimination were in the areas of employment (104 cases), public administration (100), education (53), and services (49). The reasons for discrimination were age (49 cases), gender (31), ethnicity (30), and health/disability (25). The ombudsman criticized the high fees for filing a discrimination complaint, which resulted in few cases being filed.

Although the law had been in force since 2009, there were only 13 discrimination cases reported by the Ministry of Justice between 2011 and 2013, of which nine were reported in 2013. Five cases were related to discriminatory employment policies, mainly for ethnic reasons, and one case was related to discrimination in education for religious reasons; the bases for other cases were not specified. The Ministry of Justice reported three additional discrimination cases that were decided under other laws between 2011 and 2013. Those decisions were related to salary discrimination based on gender.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The country has antidiscrimination legislation that covers sexual orientation, but hate-crime laws do not specifically cover LGBT individuals. Single LGBT individuals may adopt children. The 2011 census showed parents in same-sex relationships were raising almost 900 children.

The government did not keep statistics on incidents of violence directed at individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but NGO contacts reported the number of such incidents was very low. Local LGBT activists stated citizens were largely tolerant of LGBT persons. After same-sex registered partnerships were legalized in 2006, authorities had documented 1,812 gay and lesbian couples, including 116 in the first half of the year. Two-thirds of the population approved of domestic partnerships. Nevertheless, an opinion poll in June showed 53 percent of the population believed that “coming out” created problems for LGBT persons. This opinion was held mainly by persons from small villages (less than 800 inhabitants), persons older than 60, and those having left-leaning political beliefs. In 2012 approximately 36 percent of LGBT persons reported suffering discrimination and harassment due to their sexual orientation. Many LGBT persons chose not to reveal their sexual orientation. According to a survey by the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, only 11 percent spoke openly about their orientation at work, while more than 80 percent of young respondents reported witnessing bullying of LGBT youths at school. Discrimination at work or while searching for work was reported by 13 percent of respondents.

There were no impediments to LGBT organizations or to the annual Prague Pride Festival.

Denmark

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Any person who makes a statement or imparts other information that threatens, scorns, or degrades a group of persons because of their sexual orientation is liable to a fine or to imprisonment for not more than two years. If a person is found

guilty of a crime the motive of which was the sexual orientation of the victim, the judge must consider that motive to be an aggravating factor when determining the sentence.

Human rights observers alleged the government denied asylum to some LGBT asylum seekers from Uganda who claimed to be at risk of persecution in their home country due to their sexual orientation. The government declared the denial was based on the merits of the asylum petition without considering sexual orientation as a factor; the individuals whose asylum was denied did not present any evidence of prior persecution in their home countries as a result of their LGBT status but claimed potential future persecution.

According to the latest available data reported by the security and intelligence service, 33 of the 320 hate crimes recorded in the country in 2012 were “sexually oriented,” although a number were unrelated to sexual orientation or gender identity. Authorities actively investigated and punished those complicit in abuses.

On September 1, a law came into force that allows transgender persons to obtain official documents reflecting their gender identity without requiring a diagnosis for a mental disorder or undergoing surgery. Previously, transgender persons could change their legal gender only after undergoing medical treatments, including irreversible sterilization and hormone treatments, or after a psychiatric diagnosis of “transsexualism.”

Djibouti

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or language. Nevertheless, the government did not enforce the law effectively. The constitution does not directly address discrimination based on disability, social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not directly criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct, but authorities prosecuted the public display of same-sex sexual conduct under laws prohibiting attacks on “good morals.” No antidiscrimination law exists to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. There were no reported incidents of societal violence or discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, although this was likely due to victims being unwilling to report such abuse. Societal norms do not allow for the public discussion of homosexuality, and LGBT persons generally did not openly acknowledge their sexual orientation or gender identity. There were no known LGBT organizations.

Dominica

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law specifically prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, place of origin, color, and creed, and the government generally enforced it.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity for both sexes is illegal under indecency statutes. The law also prohibits anal intercourse between male partners. The government reported rare enforcement of both statutes, and there were no instances of the law being enforced through October. Indecency statutes carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adult men carries a maximum penalty of 10 years. No laws prohibit discrimination against a person on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, education, or health care. There were no legal impediments to organizations for LGBT persons, and a few groups operated in the country and were able to speak openly and publicly about their issues.

There were no official reports during the year of violence against LGBT persons, but anecdotal evidence suggested societal discrimination against persons due to their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity was common in the socially conservative society. Furthermore, civil society organizations reported that LGBT victims of violence or harassment avoided notifying police of abuse because of social stigma. There were very few openly gay men or lesbians.

Dominican Republic

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status, such discrimination existed. The government seldom acknowledged that discrimination occurred or made efforts to address the problem.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals ranged from ambivalent tolerance to staunch homophobia. No specific law protects individuals against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. In May a draft law regulating marriage and family was interpreted by the media as supporting the legalization of gay marriages in the country. As a result 18 senators pulled their support for the bill, effectively killing it. The constitution defines marriage to be exclusively between a man and woman and does not extend the same rights to cohabiting same-sex couples as to cohabiting heterosexual couples. The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity for youth development opportunities.

NGOs reported widespread discrimination in such areas as health care, education, justice, and employment (see section 7.d.). LGBT individuals often faced intimidation, harassment, and bullying. Religious groups held rallies against the LGBT community. On July 22, the National Evangelical Community held a rally to support “family values” and protest the promotion of LGBT values. When asked whether legal measures should be taken to protect LGBT persons from discrimination, 54 percent opposed such measures with 46 percent in support. An August Gallup poll found that 73 percent of those polled said that there was societal discrimination against the LGBT community. In June the chief of police, Castro Castillo, publicly stated that he would not accept

homosexual individuals into the police force, which he said was in accordance with the law.

According to LGBT NGOs, transgender individuals and lesbians were particularly at risk of being victims of discrimination. The Human Rights Observatory for Vulnerable Groups received 39 reports of police abuse for arbitrary arrest, police violence, and extortion between December 2013 and October of which 17 were transgender women sex workers. NGOs reported that LGBT persons were reluctant to file official charges or complaints due to fear of reprisals or humiliation. In situations in which LGBT persons filed complaints, many chose to drop the charges. The transgender community reported widespread discrimination and violence. According to NGOs the judicial system did not prosecute 25 crimes committed against transgender sex workers.

In August the organization Trans Always Friends filed a grievance with the National Police's Internal Affairs Unit asserting police abused one of their transgender public-health promoters, Veronica. While Veronica was attending a carnival in Santo Domingo with other transgender friends, a young man allegedly attempted to rob her with a knife. When police arrived, they arrested Veronica. The victim reported that police threw her to the ground, stamped on her head, cut off her hair with scissors, insulted her for being transgender, and locked her in a cell filled with other inmates, yelling at them to do as they wanted. As of November the case remained under investigation.

According to various reports, LGBT individuals were arrested without reason, not hired, denied access to rent or own homes, and denied access to health services. LGBT NGOs reported discrimination and attacks were more prevalent outside of Santo Domingo. NGOs reported several cases of LGBT students expelled from school for no legitimate reason. Members of the LGBT community reported that individuals continued to be denied health services in both private and public hospitals. According to a June survey taken by INTEC University in public hospitals in Puerto Plata, Dajabon y Montecristi, 25 percent of health workers said they would prefer not to provide services to transgender persons. NGOs reported that in September a transgender person, Alexis, was stabbed in the buttocks at the festival El Dean in Monte Plata. Alex sought medical care at the hospital of Monte Plata. After at first allegedly refusing to assist the victim, health care workers at the hospital sewed Alexis's wound up and sent him home. Alexis died the next morning. Police opened an investigation that continued into December.

Although official permits were granted for LGBT individuals to carry out activities in public spaces, these permits often included special conditions that prevented LGBT organizations from holding their events. Members of the LGBT community often gathered informally in public spaces, especially in Duarte Park of the colonial zone in Santo Domingo. Formal activities of LGBT organizations, however, were generally subjected to approval by the Community Board of Neighbors, an institution influenced by the Catholic Church and its conservative views on LGBT issues.

In June, for the fourth year in a row, the LGBT community successfully held a gay pride parade and solidarity concert, during which civil society and LGBT organizations demanded respect for their human rights and requested that authorities discontinue discriminatory practices. Participants encountered some resistance from police during the parade.

From November 27 to December 7, the LGBT community celebrated Santo Domingo Outfest, the country's fourth annual LGBT international film festival. The festival, which sought to promote human rights and social coexistence, was organized by a volunteer network with the support of various other local and international organizations.

Ecuador

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government did not fully enforce these prohibitions. Women, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons, Afro-Ecuadorians, and LGBT persons continued to face discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution includes the principle of nondiscrimination and the right to decide one's sexual orientation as a right. The law also prohibits hate crimes. Although the law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, LGBT persons continued to suffer discrimination from both public and private bodies, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and access to health care. LGBT organizations reported that transgender persons suffered more discrimination because they were more visible. Transgender persons were not able to change their gender on government-issued identification cards. On September 15, a new measure recognizing "de facto civil unions" (same-sex civil unions) on national identification cards went into effect. LGBT activists noted the measure conferred on same-sex couples the same legal rights that heterosexual married couples enjoy, except that same-sex couples are unable to adopt children legally.

Generally, the government, led by the human rights ombudsman, was responsive to concerns raised by the LGBT community. The NGO Silueta X reported that five LGBT individuals were killed during the first 10 months of the year, four of whom were transgender women. On October 28, Silueta X called on authorities to investigate the death of another transgender woman whose body was discovered on a major street in Guayaquil. LGBT groups claimed police and prosecutors did not thoroughly investigate deaths of LGBT individuals, including when there was suspicion that the killing was because of sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT advocates estimated only 33 percent of cases involving violence due to sexual orientation or gender identity were reported to police and only a third of reported cases were processed through the legal system.

LGBT organizations and the government continued to report that private treatment centers confined LGBT persons against their will to "cure" or "dehomosexualize" them, although such treatment is illegal. The clinics reportedly used cruel treatments, including rape, in an attempt to change LGBT persons' sexual orientation. The government undertook a review of rehabilitation clinics nationwide, the number of which media reports estimated could exceed 300. These clinics often were difficult to identify, since some were underground and unregistered. According to a local NGO, law enforcement officers closed approximately 80 clinics in 2013. As of September 17, there had been no reports of closures of "dehomosexualization clinics."

LGBT persons continued to report that the government sometimes denied their right of equal access to formal education. LGBT students, particularly in the transgender community, sometimes were discouraged from attending classes (particularly in higher education) or denied diplomas at the end of their studies. The LGBT population involved in the commercial sex trade reported abusive situations, extortion, and mistreatment by security forces.

Egypt

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution states that all citizens “are equal in rights, freedoms, and general duties without discrimination based on religion, belief, gender, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographic affiliation, or any other reason.” It does not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity. Many aspects of the law discriminate against women and religious minorities, and the government did not effectively enforce prohibitions against such discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not explicitly criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity, but it allows police to arrest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons on charges such as “debauchery,” “prostitution,” and “violating the teachings of religion,” and provides for prison sentences of up to 10 years. Reports of such arrests increased during the year and local rights groups reported at least 16 cases involving up to 100 people. Authorities did not effectively use antidiscrimination laws to protect LGBT individuals. Gay men and lesbians faced significant social stigma and discrimination, impeding their ability to organize or publicly advocate on behalf of LGBT persons. Information was not available on official or private discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care based on sexual orientation and gender identity. There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination.

There were few reported incidents of violence against LGBT individuals, although intimidation and the risk of arrest greatly restricted open reporting and contributed to self-censorship.

On November 1, a court sentenced eight men to three years in prison on charges including “spreading indecent images,” “inciting debauchery,” and “acts endangering public morals” after a video depicting a marriage-like ceremony between two men on a riverboat appeared on YouTube. The sentence also included three years of police monitoring following completion of the prison terms. Lawyers for the defendants claimed authorities subjected the defendants to forced anal examinations during the investigation process, according to HRW.

On December 17, prosecutors referred 26 men to trial on charges of “practicing debauchery” and “indecent public acts” after police raided a traditional bathhouse known as a hammam in Cairo on December 7 and arrested the men. Authorities reportedly subjected 21 of the individuals to forced anal examinations. A private television channel reportedly informed police of the alleged “debauchery” in the hammam and filmed the men as police placed them under arrest. The trial was ongoing at year’s end.

El Salvador

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

Although the constitution and other laws provide that all persons are equal before the law and prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status, the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. There was discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, LGBT persons, and indigenous people.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Societal Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although the law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, discrimination against LGBT persons was widespread, including in employment and access to health care. NGOs reported public officials, including police, engaged in violence and discrimination against LGBT persons. The LGBT community stated personnel from the PNC and FGR ridiculed them when they applied for identification cards or reported cases of violence against LGBT persons. The government responded to these abuses primarily through PDDH reports that publicized specific cases of violence and discrimination.

On February 2, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal facilitated the right of transgender persons to vote by instructing electoral employees and volunteers to allow voters to cast their ballot if their facial features, name, and signature matched their national identification cards. The electoral tribunal also accredited a group of observers from the LGBT community to oversee compliance with the guidelines by voting stations.

As of July the PDDH had investigated 16 cases of possible human rights violations committed against LGBT persons, of which eight involved alleged abuses committed by public officials, including two by municipal police officers.

A 2013 report by the UN Development Program (UNDP) and the PDDH stated that transgender women experienced violations of basic rights, including access to education, employment, health care, and justice. Only 36 of 100 transgender women cited in the UNDP study received their high school degrees, and they reported facing harassment, violence, and exclusion in schools. Only 23.9 percent of the transgender women who suffered violence reported it to the authorities, and only one of the accused perpetrators was punished.

The human rights NGO Comcavis Trans reported that unknown perpetrators killed seven transgender women and one gay man shortly after a June 25 LGBT march. They also reported four complaints of human rights abuses of LGBT prisoners, including sexual abuse and torture.

As of May the hotline for the LGBT community had received 700 calls, with 171 reporting incidents of discrimination and the remainder requesting information. According to SIS, of the 171 callers who reported incidents, 42 percent reported verbal aggression, 39 percent physical aggression, and the remaining 19 percent reported psychological and familial aggression. The security forces were the most often reported source of aggression, at 55 percent, followed by family members at 16 percent. Transwomen reported 64 percent of all discrimination incidents recorded by the hotline.

Equatorial Guinea

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, religion, language, or social status. Neither the law nor the constitution addresses discrimination based on disability or sexual orientation. The government did not enforce the law effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws criminalizing same-sex sexual conduct, but societal stigmatization and discrimination against the LGBT community were problems, and the government made no effort to combat it. There are no specific legal impediments to LGBT organizations, but none existed at year's end, due mainly to societal stigma. Such stigma likely also prevented incidents of abuse from being reported.

Official discrimination against LGBT persons occurred. For example, government-owned and private television stations contributed to stigmatization. RTVGE and Television Asonga broadcast news segments in which LGBT persons were publicly "shamed" and forced to stand in front of the camera and explain their "wrong actions."

Eritrea

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law and unimplemented constitution prohibit discrimination based on race, language, and social status and against women and persons with disabilities, but the government did not enforce these prohibitions. The constitution does not specifically address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, which is punishable by 10 days to three years' incarceration. The government did not actively enforce this law. Antidiscrimination laws relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons do not exist. There are no hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms to investigate bias-motivated crimes against LGBT persons.

Foreign male tourists reported that hotel staff in different cities told them men could not share a room. There were no reports of Eritrean men encountering this restriction. There was no official action to investigate and punish those complicit in abuses, including state or nonstate actors. There were no known LGBT organizations in the country. In general society stigmatized discussion of LGBT issues.

Estonia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on nationality, race, color, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other opinion, property, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, social status, or on other grounds, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics, and the government generally respected these prohibitions. While the law is not specific regarding the forms of sexual orientation and gender identity covered, the general understanding is that all are included. On October 9, the parliament adopted the Civil Partnership Act, which recognizes same-sex couples alongside heterosexual couples and providing for enhanced protection of the rights of same-sex couples and their family members. Advocacy groups reported that harassment and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons remained routine within society.

According to LGBT activists, many LGBT persons did not reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity publicly and avoided reporting incidents to police. Anti-LGBT messages did not generally appear in mainstream media reports, but anonymous online commentary on LGBT themes often included strong, hostile language, in some cases advocating violence against individuals and the LGBT community. Some rights organizations reported that LGBT persons, especially males, were reluctant to display affection in public due to fear of physical and verbal assaults should they do so. These organizations also complained that there was a lack of data on the challenges faced by LGBT persons and that the government made little effort to fund studies on these issues.

In 2013 the commissioner for gender equality and equal treatment received four claims of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Two of the claimants were men, one was a woman, and one was a legal entity.

Ethiopia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides all persons equal protection without discrimination based on race, nation, nationality or other social origin, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, birth, or status, but the government did not fully promote and protect these rights. The constitution does not address discrimination based on disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable with three to 15 years' imprisonment under the law. No law prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. There were some reports of violence against LGBT individuals; reporting was limited due to fear of retribution, discrimination, or stigmatization. There are no hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the investigation of abuses against LGBT persons. Persons did not

identify themselves as LGBT persons due to severe societal stigma and the illegality of consensual same-sex sexual activity. Activists in the LGBT community stated they were followed and at times feared for their safety.

The AIDS Resource Center in Addis Ababa reported the majority of self-identified gay and lesbian callers, most of whom were male, requested assistance in changing their behavior to avoid discrimination. Many gay men reported anxiety, confusion, identity crises, depression, self-ostracism, religious conflict, and suicide attempts.

Fiji

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, culture, ethnic or social origin, color, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, birth, primary language, economic or social or health status, disability, age, religion, conscience, marital status, or pregnancy. The government generally enforced these provisions effectively, although there were problems in some areas.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution provides that sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity and expression are prohibited grounds for discrimination; however, the right to equality and nondiscrimination may be limited for the purposes of adoption, marriage, devolution of property on death and for pension decisions by the Fiji National Provident Fund, and excluding individuals from holding public office. The crimes decree does not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct and recognizes male-on-male rape as a crime. The ERP prohibits discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. There were no laws specifically prohibiting discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in other areas, nor were there criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community. While same-sex sexual conduct was objectionable to some with deeply held religious beliefs, in general attitudes toward LGBT individuals were becoming more accepting, especially among the young, and articles promoting tolerance appeared regularly in the media.

There was some societal discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation and gender identity, although there was no systemic discrimination. There were reports of bullying of LGBT students in schools. There were no official reports of discrimination against LGBT persons in such areas as employment, housing, or access to health care.

Finland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, and social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. The government generally respected these rights, and law enforcement authorities investigated and punished violations.

On November 28, parliament approved a bill allowing same-sex marriage. The reform requires changes in other statutes, and the new same-sex marriage law was therefore not likely to take effect until 2016. The law has allowed registered partnerships since 2002.

According to Amnesty International, transgender persons cannot change the gender code in their government-issued identity documents unless they receive a psychiatric diagnosis, undergo a “real life test,” and submit to mandated and invasive surgical procedures that can leave them sterile. The process can last for years and excludes all transgender persons who do not receive, or choose not to receive, a specific diagnosis as well as those who do not want to, or cannot for health reasons, undergo all the required medical treatments. Transgender persons can rarely change their name to a differently gendered name unless they get a psychiatric diagnosis.

The Finnish Medicine Agency’s new regulation, effective on May 12, no longer considers sex between two men a permanent hindrance to donating blood, but it continues to prohibit blood donation within 12 months of a man having sex with another man.

A recent study by Amnesty International on the well-being of young LGBT persons in the country found that 80 per cent of the transgender individuals interviewed had faced harassment and that transgender pupils were generally more likely to experience violence than other pupils. Of the transgender pupils interviewed, 48 percent stated that in school they experienced physical violence (compared with 40 per cent of the other LGBT interviewed), 79 per cent experienced psychological violence (compared with 67 per cent), and 21 per cent sexual violence (compared with 14 per cent). Of the transgender pupils who experienced violence, 67 percent perceived it was motivated by their gender identity or expression.

In June 2013 the state prosecutor filed charges against a man who attacked politician Dan Koivulaakso with pepper spray while he delivered a speech at a gay pride festival in 2012. The defendant faced charges of assault and violation of political freedom and the right to assemble. On January 28, the media reported that the Central Finland District Court issued a fugitive arrest warrant because of the possibility that the suspect had fled abroad (see also Anti-Semitism).

France

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, social status, or sexual orientation, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Authorities pursued and punished perpetrators of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. The NGO SOS Homophobia reported 3,517 homophobic acts in 2013, a 78 percent increase from 2012. It reported 188 instances of physical assault, a 54 percent decrease from the previous year.

On January 16, the parliament extended the statute of limitations from three to 12 months for offenses related to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.

On June 3, a Paris criminal court sentenced two of the four young men who beat a gay couple in April 2013 to 15 and 18 months in prison. Another perpetrator in the homophobic attack received a six-month suspended prison sentence, while the youngest had not yet appeared before a juvenile court.

Gabon

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on national origin, race, gender, disability, language, or social status, the government did not enforce these provisions consistently. The constitution and law do not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although the law does not criminalize sexual orientation or limit freedom of speech or peaceful assembly for lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons, no LGBT persons sought to organize public LGBT events during the year. There were no reports LGBT persons were targeted for abuse. There are no specific antidiscrimination or hate crime laws, or other criminal justice mechanisms specifically designed to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community. Discrimination was a problem, and most LGBT individuals chose to keep their status secret, except in trusted circles. Discrimination in employment and housing was a problem, particularly for LGBT persons open about their sexual identity (see section 7.d.). Landlords often turned away such persons. Stigma was a likely factor in preventing the reporting of incidents.

Gambia, The

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions. Nevertheless, discrimination against women remained a problem. The constitution and law do not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On October 9, the president signed into law an amendment to the criminal code making “aggravated homosexuality” a crime punishable by life imprisonment. The bill defines “aggravated homosexuality” to include serial offenders or persons with a previous conviction for homosexuality, persons having same-sex relations with someone under the age of 18 and with members of other vulnerable groups, or a person with HIV having same-sex relations.

Prior to this amendment, the law established prison terms ranging from five to 14 years for any man who commits in public or private “any act of gross indecency,” engages a male sex worker, or has actual sexual contact with another man. There was no similar law applicable to women. There are antidiscrimination laws, but they do not apply to LGBT individuals.

In October the NIA arrested three suspected persons on suspicion of homosexual activities, following a security operation targeting persons practicing illegal acts. At year’s end the High Court had yet to set a trial date.

In November, NIA officers reportedly conducted door-to-door inquiries to identify, arrest, and detain individuals believed to be homosexual. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights reported many of those detained were “subjected to violent attacks and mistreatment.”

Amnesty International reported on November 18 that eight individuals, including a 17-year-old boy, were arrested for crimes of homosexuality. They were detained at the NIA in Banjul. There they were subjected to torture and mistreatment, including beatings, sensory deprivation, and threat of rape, in order to force confessions for their “crimes” and to reveal information concerning other persons perceived to be gay or lesbian. There were reports of citizens fleeing to neighboring countries due to fear of being arrested.

On February 17, President Jammeh, in a televised address, said, “Homosexuality will never be tolerated and in fact will attract the ultimate penalty, since it is intended to bring humanity to an inglorious extinction. We will fight these vermin called homosexuals or gays the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively.” President Jammeh said that “L.G.B.T can only stand for Leprosy, Gonorrhoea, Bacteria, and Tuberculosis, all of which are detrimental to human existence.” He added that no diplomatic immunity would be respected for any diplomat found guilty or accused of being gay and the country would not accept diplomats who are gay.

The mayor of Kanifing Municipality, Yankuba Colley, who also doubles as the national mobiliser of the ruling APRC party, said in an interview published in *The Standard* on September 26 that “homosexuality is such a grave crime against nature that homosexuals should be killed.”

There was strong societal discrimination against LGBT individuals. There were no LGBT organizations in the country.

Georgia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government did not always enforce these prohibitions effectively. On May 2, parliament adopted antidiscrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination against individuals based in part on ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political beliefs.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution provides for fundamental equality before the law, and a variety of laws or regulations contain antidiscrimination provisions. The criminal code makes racial, religious, sexual orientation, and other bias motives of an offender an aggravating factor for all crimes. According to NGOs the government did not enforce the legislation. There were reports that LGBT persons were unable to find employment or lost their jobs based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Societal prejudices against LGBT persons remained strong. The Georgian Orthodox Church condemned same-sex sexual activity. LGBT organizations reported that most LGBT persons concealed their sexual orientation for fear of harassment, and few organizations worked openly because of the extensive societal stigma against LGBT persons. The Media Development Foundation noted numerous homophobic statements issued by high-level officials, politicians from various political parties, and media outlets, most frequently in the context of the antidiscrimination law. In a May 9 interview with the newspaper *Versia*, the former minister for refugees and accommodation, David Darakhvelidze, called LGBT persons “diseased people with sexual deviations.” The ministry later issued an apology.

On October 29, a group of NGOs released a statement calling comments made by Deputy State Minister on Diaspora Issues Sandro Bregadze in an October 25 *Kviris Palitra* interview inappropriate for a public official on grounds of hate speech. The NGOs alleged Bregadze called for reprisals against the head of an NGO focusing on LGBT issues, Identoba, and for restrictions of their activities.

LGBT organizations viewed threats of violence as one of the most serious problems facing the community. For example, the LGBT community did not mark the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) on May 17 for fear of violence. Organizers also postponed a May 17 screening of a film about a gay couple due to threats and fears it might be seen as an attempt to destabilize the country.

Victims of discrimination and violence were reluctant to report incidents to police due to fear of disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity to family members and homophobic reactions by police. The Women’s Initiatives Support Group reported the LGBT community had low trust in police. An NGO, Article 42 of the Constitution, reported several cases of mistreatment and verbal and violent physical abuse against the LGBT community.

Although IDAHO passed without violence, the patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church announced that May 17 would henceforth be Family Day, a “day of strength for family and respect for parents.” As a result, on May 17, Georgian Orthodox Church priests led an antigay march and protest of approximately 500 persons on Tbilisi’s Rustaveli Avenue that ended at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, where the patriarch delivered a sermon to approximately 1,000 additional parishioners. A separate group held a demonstration of approximately 300 persons in front of parliament in Tbilisi, denouncing the antidiscrimination law, condemning LGBT persons, and gathering signatures in support of parliament removing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity from

the law. A group of individuals marked the day with an art installation, “Shoes of the Invisible,” which featured dozens of pairs of empty shoes representing LGBT individuals who felt unsafe to exercise their freedoms of assembly and expression.

The trials of Iotam Basilaia, the father superior at the Iione-Tornike Eristavi Monastery, and three other defendants who were charged with violating the right to assembly during a violent 2013 counterdemonstration against IDAHO, remained pending. Civil society groups criticized authorities for being slow to prosecute the defendants despite the existence of video evidence against some of the violent protesters.

In February the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the use of “homosexuality” as an indicator against blood donation. The government’s *2014-20 National Human Rights Strategy* and *2014-16 Human Rights Action Plan* marked the first time that the government included sexual orientation and gender identity in its strategic documents. On May 7, President Margvelashvili signed into law a bill that prohibits discrimination against protected categories, based in part on ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political beliefs.

Germany

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and laws prohibit discrimination, including in employment, based on sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, religious or political opinion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status. Authorities compiled a strong enforcement record in most of these areas but acknowledged that they needed to do more in some areas, such as enforce laws prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The antidiscrimination law prohibits discrimination based on sexual identity. There were no official statistics on mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons; the availability of NGO reports on the incidence of such mistreatment varied widely in different parts of the country, although some quantitative data was available for cities with large populations of LGBT persons. In 2013 in Berlin, according to the NGO Maneo, there were 259 assaults, including physical violence motivated by bias against LGBT persons. They included one killing, one attempted homicide, 69 incidents involving physical assault or attempted assault, and 118 cases of theft. An additional 23 assaults were directed against transgender persons.

Under the law same-sex couples registered under the Civil Partnership Act enjoy the same tax advantages as married (heterosexual) couples, such as splitting the difference between spouses’ incomes tax purposes. Gays and lesbians may adopt a child previously adopted by their respective registered partner. The law prohibits gay and lesbian couples from adopting children jointly.

In July, in response to a parliamentary inquiry, the federal government stated that enforcement authorities as well as medical licensing agencies and associations would have to respond to any person who offered therapies intended to harm a person, such as attempting to change his or her sexual orientation.

The city of Berlin assigned two public prosecutors specifically to address offenses against LGBT persons and to serve as direct advocates for LGBT victims.

Ghana

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, or social status; however, enforcement was generally inadequate. Limited financial resources and a generally permissive societal attitude toward such discrimination contributed to its perpetuation. Courts were empowered to order specific enforcement of these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

According to the criminal code, “unnatural carnal knowledge” is defined as “sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal.” It states that individuals who have unnatural carnal knowledge “of any person of 16 years or over with his consent” is guilty of a misdemeanor. There was considerable public debate over whether this legislation could be used to prosecute consenting adults for same-sex sexual activity, but there were no reports it had been used.

LGBT persons faced widespread discrimination in employment and education, as well as police harassment and extortion attempts (see section 7.d.). There were reports police were reluctant to investigate claims of assault or violence against LGBT persons. According to the HRAC, gay men in prison were often subjected to sexual and other physical abuse. The government took no known action to investigate or punish those complicit in the abuses. An LGBT refugee was ostracized by other members of a refugee camp during the year.

In August police in Walewale, a small farming town and capital of the West Mamprusi District, Northern Region, arrested a 21-year-old man on suspicion of being homosexual and “recruiting” other youth to be homosexual. Police stated the arrest was for the suspect’s own safety, since residents of the town had vowed to kill the man and his entire family if he was not removed from the community.

While there were no reported cases of police or government violence against LGBT persons during the year, stigma, intimidation, and the attitude of the police toward LGBT persons were likely factors in preventing victims from reporting incidents of abuse.

Greece

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, or social status. Some laws also include antidiscrimination provisions on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. While the government generally enforced these provisions, some societal discrimination continued against women, persons with disabilities, migrants, Roma, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)

individuals.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Some antidiscrimination laws do not specify sexual orientation or gender identity. Violence against LGBT individuals remained a problem, and societal discrimination and harassment were widespread. The legal age of consent for heterosexual sex is 15 and for sexual intercourse between men, 17. The law does not specify an age of consent for sex between women. The NGO Lesbian and Gay Community of Greece (OLKE) stated that the higher age of consent for gay men and the lack of any legal framework for lesbians constituted discrimination, and it criticized the laws against hate speech for not including sexual orientation or gender identity.

The only way to obtain a formal change of gender identity in identification documents was to undergo a gender reassignment operation, followed by an additional administrative legal process with a court.

In its 2013 report the Racist Violence Recording Network documented six victims of attacks based on sexual orientation. The network also recorded 16 victims of violence due to gender identity, the majority involving allegations of arbitrary detention of transgender women in Thessaloniki. While the law includes sexual orientation and gender identity as aggravating circumstances in hate crimes, crimes targeting sexual orientation or gender identity are not expressly included in the official mandate of offices combating racist violence. LGBT activists alleged that authorities were not motivated to investigate incidents of violence against LGBT individuals and criticized the absence of hate crimes training for police.

On January 13, a member of parliament reported in parliament on the harassment of a transgender student that continued despite the intervention of the Office of the Ombudsman and an educational program to combat homophobia organized by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The parliamentarian's complaint was referred to the ministry for a response.

In March the Greek Transgender Support Association (GTSA) criticized the exclusion of gender identity as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the workplace. The antiracism law passed September 9 (see section 2.a.) prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation. The GTSA also criticized discrimination against transgender individuals in employment, which led to limited access to housing and medical care (see section 7.d.). According to an April 11 media report, police arrested a Thessaloniki teacher for making homophobic and threatening comments against one of his students. According to the media, his school took no disciplinary action against the teacher, and the outcome of his trial was pending at year's end.

The Athens metro declined to sell advertising space for the 10th annual Athens Pride parade in June, claiming that space was unavailable. For the third time a gay pride parade under the auspices of the local mayor took place in Thessaloniki in June. The Orthodox Citizens of Thessaloniki, a conservative organization backed by the local orthodox metropolitan, gathered 19,500 signatures opposing the parade and held a demonstration that drew 200 persons. The metropolitan publicly described homosexuality as a "perversion" and the annual pride festival as a "disgrace."

In July the National Television and Radio Council fined a journalist 3,000 euros (\$3,750) for making homophobic comments during a March radio program, although the fine was imposed for "the use of low-quality language" rather than its homophobic substance.

Members of parliament, LGBT activists, and journalists reported that five separate attacks against LGBT individuals took place in Athens and Thessaloniki between June 29 and August 22. In four incidents perpetrators harassed and physically attacked victims. In one case police arrested and detained a suspect, and the case was pending trial. In another instance three political parties issued statements denouncing the attack. The fifth incident reportedly involved police, who allegedly intimidated, harassed, and used violence against two victims.

Grenada

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, place of origin, political opinion, color, creed, or gender, and the government generally upheld these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activities between men and provides penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment. The law makes no provision for same-sex sexual activities between women. No laws prohibit discrimination against a person on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, education, or health care.

Society generally was intolerant of same-sex sexual conduct, and many churches condemned it. Most LGBT persons were not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Grenada Caribbean HIV/AIDS program (GrenCHAP) participated on the national AIDS council, served as an advocate for LGBT persons and at-risk populations, and experienced no impediments to its operations.

There were no gay pride events. There were no reports of violence linked to real or perceived sexual orientation. Persons who were subjected to rumors regarding their sexual orientation complained their livelihoods were affected.

Guatemala

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government frequently did not enforce these provisions, and there was no protection related to sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws exist, but they do not apply to LGBT individuals. LGBT rights groups alleged members of police regularly engaged in extortion and harassed male and transgender individuals they believed to be sex workers. There was general

societal discrimination against LGBT persons in access to education, health care, employment, and housing. The government undertook minimal efforts to address this discrimination.

According to LGBT rights groups, gay and transgender individuals often experienced police abuse. A lack of trust in the judicial system and a fear of further harassment or social recrimination discouraged victims from filing complaints.

Guinea

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law states that all persons are equal before the law regardless of race or gender; however, it does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on sex, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status. The government did not enforce these provisions uniformly. A new labor code adopted in February prohibits discrimination in employment based on gender, disability, or ethnic identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, which is punishable by three years in prison; there were no known prosecutions. In 2012 the government restructured OPROGEM to include a unit for investigating morals violations, including same-sex sexual conduct. Unlike in the previous year, there were no reports authorities arrested cross-dressing men in nightclubs on public nuisance charges. Antidiscrimination laws do not apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

Deep religious and cultural taboos against consensual same-sex sexual conduct existed. There were no official or NGO reports of discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, although societal stigma likely prevented victims from reporting abuse or harassment. There were no active LGBT organizations.

Guinea-Bissau

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination but does not designate the kinds of discrimination the prohibition covers. The government did not enforce the law.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws that criminalize sexual orientation. Antidiscrimination laws do not apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. There were no reported violent incidents or other human rights abuses targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation or identity. There was no official discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment or access to education and health care. According to government guidelines for civil servants' housing allowances, only

heterosexual married couples were entitled to family-size housing, while same-sex couples received the single person allotment. Social taboos against homosexuality sometimes restricted freedom to express sexual orientation, yet society was relatively tolerant of consensual same-sex conduct, according to a 2010 study by the Pew Research Center.

Guyana

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, social status, religion, or national origin.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex activity between adult men is illegal under the law and is punishable by up to two years in prison. Anal intercourse is punishable with a maximum sentence of life in prison, regardless of whether the intercourse is between persons of the same sex. Activists reported that it was more common for police to use the law to intimidate men who were gay or perceived to be gay than to make arrests. There are no laws concerning same-sex sexual activity between women. The law also criminalizes cross-dressing. A High Court ruling in 2013 interpreted the law as making cross-dressing illegal only for men when done for an “improper” purpose, without defining which purposes qualify as improper.

No antidiscrimination legislation exists to protect persons from discrimination based on real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

NGOs reported widespread discrimination of persons based on their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Reports note discrimination in employment, access to education and medical care, and in other public settings (see section 7.d.). A 2012 report noted that LGBT persons were fearful of reporting crimes committed against them because they believed or were told charges would also be brought against them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In May the media reported that LGBT persons were shunned and ridiculed on account of their sexual orientation when attempting to access medical care at some public hospitals around the country. According to the same media report, police allegedly ordered a member of the LGBT community to undress himself and made him stand on a counter in a police station for hours when he tried to lodge a formal complaint against another citizen.

In April a person in a passing vehicle indiscriminately shot at a small group of transgender persons standing on the road. The police initially refused to document their report of the incident. After public protests, the assailant was charged in July, and as of October the prosecution continued.

Haiti

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status, but the preamble to the constitution specifically reiterates the importance of adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which prohibits all forms of discrimination. Nonetheless, no effective governmental mechanism administered or enforced such provisions, including provisions called for in various regional and international agreements.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There were no laws criminalizing sexual orientation or consensual same-sex conduct between adults, nor were there any reports of police officers actively perpetrating or condoning violence against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

There were no laws criminalizing the changing of one's gender or sex; however, local attitudes remained hostile to outward LGBT identification and expression, particularly in Port-au-Prince. In response to increased advocacy and activism by LGBT and other human rights groups during the year, LGBT persons experienced a higher degree of hostility from more conservative or traditional segments of society, including government officials, than in previous years. Religious and other conservative organizations actively opposed the social integration of LGBT persons and discussion of their human and civil rights. Parliamentarians publicly noted that they would not and should not consider any type of LGBT rights legislation, particularly one calling for marriage equality.

There were no antidiscrimination laws that protected LGBT persons and minority groups. Additionally, traditional mistrust of law enforcement and judiciary officials, along with a historically low rate of successful prosecution of SGBV and related crimes, hindered LGBT advocates and community members from successfully cooperating to reduce violence and discrimination experienced by the group. Some civil society advocates claimed that in the greater Port-au-Prince area, HNP authorities were inconsistent in their willingness to document or investigate LGBT persons' claims of abuse.

LGBT advocacy groups in the capital reported a greater sense of insecurity and less trust of government authorities than did groups in rural areas. Several local NGOs and international organizations provided direct support to LGBT persons who alleged discrimination due to their sexual orientation or gender identity or being victims of SGBV.

LGBT advocacy and human rights groups, as well as international organizations, continued to assert that LGBT persons consistently experienced great difficulty in formally registering complaints of abuse and discrimination with government authorities. Reporting of rape and sexual assault remained low across all demographics of the LGBT community. Although advocates and international partner institutions insisted that the incidence of such abuse remained high, there was a lack of consensus among advocates on the extent of abuses. The women's victims organization KOFIVIV claimed that, since the 2010 earthquake, cases of rape and other forms of SGBV perpetrated against women, children, and LGBT persons rarely yielded both arrests and convictions of the perpetrators. LGBT advocacy groups also expressed fear of reprisal from perpetrators if they report crimes to police.

During the year the HNP expanded the institution's dialogue with human and LGBT rights

groups, engaging with LGBT advocates to discuss the challenges they face in interacting with police. During these exchanges HNP participants affirmed their commitment to protecting the rights of LGBT persons and promised to increase the institution's responsiveness to activists' concerns through training. HNP academy instructors worked with civil society groups and international organizations to incorporate a community policing framework and philosophy, teaching police officers to respect the rights of all civilians without exception, into their adapted human rights training curriculum.

In contrast with 2013, there were no large-scale antigay marches or rallies.

Honduras

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. In 2013 the National Congress reformed the penal code to include sexual orientation and gender identity as classes protected from discrimination. Authorities did not effectively enforce these laws.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In 2013 the National Congress passed a law adding sexual orientation and gender identity to classes protected from discrimination and included these same classes in the hate crimes amendment to the penal code. Social discrimination against LGBT persons was widespread. The special prosecutor for human rights reported receiving six legal complaints of discrimination against the LGBT community as of September.

Representatives of NGOs focusing on sexual diversity rights asserted police and others harassed and abused their members. As of September NGOs reported 13 violent deaths of LGBT individuals, compared with 24 in 2013. NGOs reported that three of the 13 cases were in some phase of the judicial process as of September. The national human rights commissioner reported 92 percent of crimes committed against LGBT persons remained unsolved due to lack of investigation. NGOs also documented multiple cases of assault and discrimination against members of the LGBT community. In July prosecutors charged six soldiers with dereliction of duty for failing to intervene in an altercation between a transsexual sex worker and another person.

LGBT rights groups asserted that government agencies and private employers engaged in discriminatory hiring practices. LGBT groups continued working with the Violent Crimes Task Force, the Secretariat of State of Security, and the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights to address problems of intimidation, fear of reprisal, and police corruption.

During the year the Violent Crimes Task Force made five arrests, brought two cases to trial, and obtained one conviction and one acquittal in cases of homicides of LGBT individuals. Between January 2011 and August 2014, the Violent Crimes Task Force investigated 110 LGBT victim homicides. Two of the cases appeared to be hate crimes and remained open.

Hungary

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prescribes that fundamental rights shall be provided to everyone without discrimination based on race, color, sex, disability, language, religion, political or any other opinion, ethnic or social origin, wealth, birth, or any other circumstance whatsoever. The government failed to enforce these rights fully.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Act on Equal Opportunity explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. In addition the laws on “inciting against a community” and “violence against a member of a community” prohibit certain forms of hate speech and prescribe increased punishment for violence against members of the LGBT community, specifically referencing these groups as being targeted for their “gender identity” or “sexual orientation.” Despite legal protections, anti-LGBT extremists continued to abuse LGBT persons. NGOs reported law enforcement and other authorities often disregarded the hate element of these crimes, and no protocol or regular training on the subject existed.

On June 27, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen stated with regard to same-sex sexual conduct in an interview broadcast on television, “small, yet loud interest groups that want to force this I think deviant attitude to the world receive serious assistance from Brussels.”

On July 5, an estimated 10,000 persons joined the annual Budapest Gay Pride Parade. Police secured the parade and sealed off the entire route of the march. Anti-LGBT demonstrators shouted homophobic slogans from behind the police cordon.

Iceland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and social status. Various laws implement these prohibitions, and the government effectively enforced them.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The general penal code criminalizes discrimination including in employment against LGBT individuals. It prohibits incitement to hatred against such persons. Intimidation was not a known or likely factor in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported.

India

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, place of birth, caste, or social status. The government worked with varying degrees of success to enforce these provisions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On January 28, a high court dismissed petitions challenging the December 2013 Supreme Court judgment that overturned a 2009 ruling by the Delhi High Court, which had ruled unconstitutional a colonial-era portion of the penal code that criminalized homosexual sex. The Supreme Court ruled that only parliament may make changes to the law that bans consensual same-sex sexual activity. The media, activists, prominent individuals, and some government officials reacted strongly against the ruling. On April 22, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a curative petition challenging the December ruling. At year's end the curative petition hearing was pending.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons faced physical attacks, rape, and blackmail. Some police committed crimes against LGBT persons and used the threat of arrest to coerce victims not to report the incidents. Several states, with the aid of NGOs, offered education and sensitivity training to police.

LGBT groups reported that they faced widespread discrimination and violence throughout society, particularly in rural areas. Activists reported that transgender persons who were HIV positive continued to have difficulty obtaining medical treatment. Advocacy organizations, such as the Mission for Indian Gay and Lesbian Empowerment (MINGLE), documented workplace discrimination against LGBT persons, including slurs and unjustified dismissals.

Transgender persons in Rajkot, Gujarat, and surrounding neighborhoods complained of discrimination in finding accommodation. An NGO advocating for LGBT rights reported that at least 32 transgender persons could not find accommodation in Rajkot and that three had attempted suicide following the discrimination.

LGBT activists in Hyderabad expressed satisfaction with public awareness efforts, including protests against the Supreme Court judgment to uphold the criminalization of same-sex conduct. The activists stated, however, that they were aware of homophobia among students at certain university campuses. According to LGBT students, there was also a systematic disregard for LGBT rights on university campuses.

On April 15, the Supreme Court codified the right to self-identify as male, female, or third gender. The ruling gives a person the right to identify as "third gender" when registering to vote, own property, marry, or apply for a passport, ration card, and driver's license. The judgment also instructed state and central governments to extend affirmative action or reservations to transgender individuals for admission to higher-education facilities, public appointments, and health-care services. The Supreme Court assigned a committee to study problems faced by the transgender community and provide suggestions on how to address discrimination. On September 11, the central government filed a formal request asking the Supreme Court for clarifications on the policy implications of the ruling as well as an implementation extension.

Following the April Supreme Court verdict, Bharathy Kannamma, a transgender individual from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, ran for a parliamentary seat in the Lok Sabha (the upper house of parliament) as an independent candidate during the April national elections.

In July, following the April Supreme Court ruling recognizing “transgenders” or “third genders,” the Maharashtra election commission authorities rejected a petition to include “third gender” on electoral rolls.

On August 19, the government of Telangana commissioned the Intensive Household Survey to collect social and economic data to ensure those who qualified for welfare programs were registered and receiving benefits. According to a transgender rights activist, the survey collected data for at least 800 transgender individuals, consequently entitling them to multiple welfare programs due to the April Supreme Court judgment.

On September 24, the Delhi Development Authority’s, under its vice chairman’s direction, provided a third gender option on its 2014 housing eligibility forms, which for the first time included “male, female, or third gender.”

Indonesia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender, race, disability, language, or social status. It provides for equal rights for all citizens, both native and naturalized. The government sometimes failed to defend these rights, particularly for minority communities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Pornography Law criminalizes the production of media depicting consensual same-sex sexual activity and classifies such activity as deviant; fines range from IDR 250 million to seven billion (\$21,800-\$612,500) and sentences from six months to 15 years with increased penalties of one-third for crimes involving minors. 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, local authorities sometimes abused transgender individuals and forced them to pay bribes following detention by local authorities. In some cases the government failed to protect LGBT individuals from societal abuse. Police corruption, bias, and violence caused LGBT individuals to avoid interaction with police. Police generally did not investigate cases that involved police intervention during assaults by hardline groups against LGBT gatherings. Officials usually ignored formal complaints by victims and affected persons. In criminal cases with LGBT victims, police investigated the cases reasonably well, as long as the suspect was not affiliated with the police. When investigating allegations of abuse by police, however, investigators were unresponsive--even in the face of pressure from Komnas HAM.

Sharia Police in Aceh reportedly harassed transgender individuals. In September the Aceh parliament passed a bill imposing a penalty of 100 strokes of the cane for homosexual acts. As of October the governor of Aceh had not signed the law into effect, and some NGOs were urging the central government to reject the law. NGOs reported that religious groups, family members, and the public sometimes ostracized LGBT individuals. A 2013 NGO survey found that 89 percent of LGBT respondents from Jakarta,

Yogyakarta, and Makassar reported experiencing some form of discrimination or violence. During 2013 the National Commission on Violence against Women recorded 49 cases of violence against lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals, involving 53 victims.

The antidiscrimination law does not apply to LGBT individuals, and the government took almost no action to prevent discrimination against LGBT persons.

LGBT organizations and NGOs operated openly and frequently held low-key events in public places, although often without proper licenses.

In cases of domestic violence affecting LGBT persons, especially young lesbians with disapproving parents, advocates reported that police usually sided with the parents in blaming the minor for deviant behavior or blaming her girlfriend for “corrupting” her. Families often put LGBT minors into therapy, confined them to their homes, or pressured them to marry. Bullying of children perceived to be LGBT was common.

In August, DPD Member Fahira Idris publicly called for publishers to pull a sex-education comic book called *Why Puberty* because it allegedly contained pro-LGBT propaganda and was against the tenets of religion and the state ideology of Pancasila.

NGOs documented instances of government officials not issuing identity cards to transgender individuals. A 2013 revision to the Civil Administration Law allows transgender individuals officially to change their gender only after the completion of sexual reassignment surgery. Some observers say the process was cumbersome and degrading because it requires a court order declaring that the surgery is complete and was permitted only under certain undefined special circumstances. Transgender individuals faced discrimination in employment and in obtaining public services and health care.

Iran

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status “in conformity with Islamic criteria,” but the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. The constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, which is punishable by death, flogging, or a lesser punishment. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Security forces harassed, arrested, and detained individuals they suspected of being gay. In some cases security forces raided houses and monitored internet sites for information on LGBT persons. Those accused of sodomy often faced summary trials, and evidentiary standards were not always met. Punishment for same-sex sexual activity between men was more severe than for such conduct between women.

The government censored all materials related to LGBT issues. There were active, unregistered LGBT NGOs in the country, but most activities to support the LGBT

community took place outside the country. Antidiscrimination laws do not exist. Hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms do not exist to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community. International LGBT NGOs reported that many young gay men faced harassment and abuse from family members, religious figures, school leaders, and community elders. Some persons were reportedly expelled from university for alleged same-sex sexual activity.

Fifteen of 24 LGBT individuals interviewed by the UN special rapporteur for his February 2013 report stated they had been arrested at least once for their sexual orientation or association with other LGBT individuals. Thirteen interviewees claimed that security officers subjected them to torture or physical abuse in detention, including punches, kicks, baton strikes, sexual assault, or rape. Many reported that family members beat them at home but feared reporting those assaults to authorities because they might themselves be charged with a criminal act.

The law defines transgender persons as mentally ill, and the government provided transgender persons financial assistance in the form of grants of up to 4.5 million tomans (\$1,660) and loans up to 5.5 million tomans (\$2,030) to undergo gender-confirmation surgery. In addition, the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare requires health insurers to cover the cost of gender-confirmation surgery. Individuals who underwent gender-confirmation surgery may petition a court for new identity documents with corrected gender data, which the government reportedly provided efficiently and transparently. Human rights activists and NGOs reported that some LGBT persons were advised to undergo gender-confirmation surgery to avoid legal and social consequences due to their gender-identity ambiguity.

Iraq

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, or origin. The law prohibits discrimination based on race, disability, or social status. The government was ineffective in enforcing these provisions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Neither hate crime nor antidiscrimination laws exist, nor do other criminal justice mechanisms exist to aid in the prosecution of crimes motivated by bias against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

No law specifically prohibits consensual same-sex sexual activity, although the law prohibits sodomy, irrespective of gender. There was no data on prosecutions for sodomy. Due to social conventions and intimidation, including violence, against consensual or nonconsensual participants, same-sex sexual conduct was generally unreported.

In light of the law, authorities relied on public indecency charges or confessions of monetary exchange (i.e., for prostitution, which is illegal) to prosecute same-sex sexual activity. Authorities used the same charges to arrest heterosexual persons involved in sexual relations with persons other than their spouses.

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, disability, or social status, but it does not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Societal discrimination in employment, occupation, and housing based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and unconventional appearance was common (see section 7.d.). Information was not available regarding discrimination in access to education or health care, although the media reported that students were harassed at school for not adopting conventional clothing or hairstyles.

Due to stigma, intimidation, and potential harm, including violent attacks, LGBT organizations did not operate openly, nor were there gay pride marches or gay rights advocacy events. LGBT persons often faced abuse and violence from family and nongovernmental actors. In addition to targeted violence, members of the LGBT community remained at risk for honor crimes, since their conduct did not conform to traditional mores and gender norms. LGBT rights groups attributed the lack of publicized cases of attacks to the low profile of members of the LGBT community, who altered their public dress and lifestyle to conform to societal norms. NGOs established shelters for individuals who feared attacks and continued to take in victims. They periodically received threats and relocated shelters for security reasons. Community activists reported that violence and intimidation continued.

Following a series of attacks on LGBT persons in 2012, the Council of Ministers established an interministerial committee to investigate the attacks and provide recommendations on LGBT rights. The committee established a charter to provide for the baseline protection owed to members of the LGBT community and issued a statement declaring that LGBT individuals were “no different” from other citizens. The committee did not complete its report and recommendations by year’s end. Despite repeated threats and violence targeting LGBT individuals, the government failed to identify, arrest, or prosecute attackers or to protect targeted individuals.

Ireland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination. The nine grounds under which the law prohibits discrimination include sex, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership in the Traveller community. The government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation with respect to employment, goods, services, and education. The law does not include gender identity as a category.

Israel and The Occupied Territories

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, disability, language,

sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status, and the government was generally effective in enforcing these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, and the government generally enforced these laws, although discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity persisted in some parts of society. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) activists commented that 2013-14 marked a significant shift from achievements via court cases against the government in the field of civil and human rights for LGBT persons to active legislation by the government to extend rights to the community. On August 12, the minister of interior announced that non-Jewish spouses of gay and lesbian married couples could immigrate under the Law of Return, even if one of the couple was not Jewish. Members of the cabinet, including the prime minister, publicly voiced approval for giving same-sex couples the same surrogacy rights as heterosexual couples. Representatives from the LGBT task force commented that the prime minister's support for such a measure in and of itself constituted a landmark in the struggle for equality for LGBT persons. The minister of education and other elected officials, however, made disparaging comments about LGBT families.

An LGBT violence-prevention center and hotline established in 2012 reported it received 250 reports of violence and discrimination between August 2013 and August.

In February police arrested the chief state witness in the case against Hagai Felician, who had been indicted on homicide and attempted homicide charges in relation to a 2009 double killing at an LGBT youth club in Tel Aviv, on suspicion of fabricating evidence and obstruction of justice. Because the witness was critical to proving Felician's involvement and motive, the case collapsed.

In 2013 the government established an interministerial team to examine the issue of West Bank residents who claimed to be in a life-threatening situation due to their sexual orientation and requested legal residency status in the country. There is no mechanism for granting such persons legal status, leaving those who cannot return to the West Bank due to fear of persecution in limbo and vulnerability to human traffickers, violence, and exploitation.

In contravention of laws prohibiting such discrimination (see section 7.d.), there were reports of discrimination in the workplace against LGBT persons. A study by the LGBT task force found that employers discriminated against approximately 80 percent of transgender persons, 50 percent of lesbians, and 20 percent of gay males in the hiring process or terminated them once their sexual orientation or gender identity was known.

Same-sex couples could face difficulties in renting a home, and the law allows private landlords to use discretion in determining to whom to rent, which in some cases allegedly could amount to discrimination. The *Haaretz* newspaper reported that a law firm specializing in LGBT-related issues received reports of such incidents approximately once a week.

Israel and The Occupied Territories - Israel and The Occupied Territories - The Occupied Territories

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

PA law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. PA authorities worked to enforce these laws but often failed to do so. Some laws are discriminatory. For example, it is illegal for a Palestinian to sell land to Israelis, an offense punishable by death.

Hamas, despite remaining under the authority of Palestinian laws prohibiting discrimination, continued to implement discriminatory policies based on race, political affiliation, gender, and sexual orientation.

Many NGOs alleged Israeli actions in the West Bank and Gaza amounted to racial and cultural discrimination, citing legal differences between the treatment of Palestinians and Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Palestinian law, based on the 1960 Jordanian penal code, prohibits consensual same-sex sexual activity, although the PA did not prosecute individuals suspected of such activity. Societal discrimination based on cultural and religious traditions was commonplace, making the West Bank and Gaza challenging environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Some Palestinians claimed PA security officers and neighbors harassed, abused, and sometimes arrested LGBT individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. NGOs reported Hamas also harassed and detained persons due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Italy

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, ethnic background, and political opinion. It provides some protection against discrimination based on disability, language, or social status. While the government generally enforced these prohibitions, some societal discrimination continued against women, persons with disabilities, immigrants, ethnic minorities such as Roma, and LGBT persons.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Antidiscrimination laws exist and apply specifically to LGBT victims of homophobic and transphobic offenses, but there was no provision for a victim's sexual orientation to be considered an aggravating circumstance in hate crimes, nor is incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation prohibited. In 2013 Gay Help Line, an NGO that runs a hotline dedicated to LGBT persons, received 14,000 calls. Approximately 40 percent of callers under the age of 25 reported problems at school and with their families, while most adults (38 percent) reported discrimination at work (see section 7.d.). The press reported cases of violence against gay and lesbian couples during the year. On June 25, a group of adults and minors attacked the office of the association Di Gay Project in Rome with excrement, wooden boxes, and vegetables while members were rehearsing for a theater performance. The group made death threats, but no arrests were reported.

Jamaica

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The 2011 Charter of Rights amendment to the constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, place of origin, political opinion, color, or creed. The government generally enforced these prohibitions, although there continued to be widespread discrimination based on party affiliation in the distribution of scarce governmental benefits, including employment, particularly in the poor inner city communities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits “acts of gross indecency” (generally interpreted as any kind of physical intimacy) between persons of the same sex, in public or in private, punishable by two years in prison. There is also an “antibuggery” law that prohibits consensual same-sex sexual conduct between men, which is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, but it was not enforced during the year. Homophobia was widespread in the country, perpetuated by the country’s dancehall culture through the songs and the behavior of some musicians. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons faced violence, harassment, and discrimination.

In July an official at J-FLAG, a prominent LGBT NGO, withdrew the petition he had filed with the Supreme Court in 2013 challenging the antibuggery law. In dropping the suit, the petitioner cited threats against himself and his family.

In May the University of the West Indies fired the director of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Network--a leading authority on HIV/AIDS and a pioneer in infectious diseases--for testifying on behalf of a group of churches seeking to retain a law in Belize that criminalizes consensual sex between adult men. The dismissal came after a coordinated, year-long campaign by LGBT rights advocates and civil society groups, and it sparked a series of backlash demonstrations to protest what the organizers termed “the university’s cowardice for failing to uphold his right to free speech.” Local newspapers extensively covered both sides of the debate.

NGOs continued to report serious human rights abuses, including assault with deadly weapons, “corrective rape” of women accused of being lesbians, arbitrary detention, mob attacks, stabbings, harassment of gay and lesbian patients by hospital and prison staff, and targeted shootings of such persons. Stigma and intimidation were likely factors in preventing victims from reporting incidents of discrimination in employment, occupation, and housing. Although individual police officers expressed sympathy for the plight of the LGBT community and worked to prevent and resolve instances of abuse, NGOs reported the police force in general did not recognize the extent and seriousness of bullying and violence directed against members of the LGBT community and failed to investigate such incidents.

Prison wardens held male inmates considered gay in a separate facility for their protection. The method used for determining their sexual orientation was subjective and not regulated by the prison system, but inmates reportedly confirmed their sexual orientation for their own safety. There were reports of violence against gay inmates, perpetrated by the wardens and by other inmates, but few inmates sought recourse through the prison system.

J-FLAG, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, trained approximately 60 health-care workers to sensitize them to LGBT patients. Most health-care workers were not familiar with the specific health concerns and issues of their LGBT patients, resulting in a lack of adequate care and treatment. Although the country has universal health care, members of the LGBT community relied mainly on the Jamaica AIDS Support for Life clinic, claiming that the staff in the government's health system did not understand their needs and was unwelcoming. Training programs such as those conducted by J-FLAG, public advocacy by various NGOs and international donors, and increased focus by the government on the public health issue of HIV/AIDS increased the number of LGBT persons accessing the regular public sector health-care facilities.

Japan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, and social status but does not prohibit discrimination based on language, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Although the government enforced these prohibitions to some degree, discrimination against women, minority group members, persons with disabilities, LGBT persons, and foreigners remained problems. Moreover, enforcement was not uniform, with some provisions for persons with disabilities interpreted as applying to the public sector but not the private sector.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There are no penalties associated with such discrimination, and no related statistics were available. Laws governing rape, sexual commerce, and other activity involving sexual intercourse do not apply to same-sex sexual activity, since sex is defined in the law as exclusively male-to-female vaginal intercourse. This definition leads to lower penalties for perpetrators of male rape and greater legal ambiguity surrounding same-sex prostitution.

In December 2013 the Supreme Court recognized a paternity claim by a transgender man whose eldest son was born through artificial insemination, after the Osaka Family Court had rejected the man's claim in September. The Osaka court ruled that the child could not have a blood relationship with the father because the father was not biologically capable of reproduction as a male. The Supreme Court decision applied only to the man's oldest son, born in 2010. The Supreme Court has yet to announce a ruling on the man's second son, born in 2012 and the subject of a separate case pending in the Osaka Family Court.

NGOs that advocate on behalf of LGBT persons reported no impediments to organization but some instances of bullying, harassment, and violence. Stigma surrounding LGBT persons remained an impediment to self-reporting of discrimination or abuse, and studies on bullying and violence in schools generally did not take into account the sexual orientation or gender identity of the persons involved. Pervasive societal stigma surrounding LGBT persons also prevented many from being open about their sexual orientation, and attorneys who frequently represent LGBT persons related several cases during the year in which clients were threatened with disclosure of sexual orientation.

Self-censorship in the press remained an impediment to bringing LGBT issues into mainstream discourse.

The law allows transgender individuals to change their legal gender, but only after undergoing sex reassignment surgery.

Jordan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution states that all citizens are equal under the law and prohibits discrimination based on race, language, and religion; however, discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, and social status is not specifically prohibited and remained a problem in practice. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions, and the penal code does not address discrimination, thereby severely limiting judicial remedies. Women faced significant and widespread discrimination across society.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is not illegal; however, societal discrimination against LGBT persons was prevalent and LGBT persons were targets of abuse. Activists reported discrimination in housing, employment, education, and access to public services. Some LGBT individuals reported reluctance to engage the legal system due to fear their sexual orientation or gender identity would either provoke hostile reactions from police or disadvantage them in court. Activists report that most LGBT individuals were closeted and fearful of their sexual identity being disclosed.

On February 26, news sources reported that police arrested 14 persons at a wedding hall in Marka after complaints of “suspicious activity.” News accounts varied on whether the persons arrested were gay men, men dressed in women’s clothing, or lesbians. Police said that they arrested the 14 persons for probation violations, but many saw the arrests as repression of the gay community. During the year there were reports of individuals who left the country due to fear that their families would punish them because of their sexual orientation.

Kazakhstan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While the law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, the government did not effectively enforce the law. Violence against women, trafficking in persons, and discrimination against persons with disabilities and LGBT persons were reported.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The country does not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. Although there

were no government statistics on discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity, there were reports of such actions. According to representatives of international and local organizations, negative social attitudes towards members of marginalized groups, including LGBT persons, impeded the willingness of the latter to come forward, organize, or seek access to HIV/AIDS programs. LGBT individuals, particularly gay men, were among the most oppressed groups.

According to a 2009 Soros Foundation study, 64 percent of LGBT respondents said they did not face open discrimination in the workplace, although LGBT individuals often concealed their sexual orientation to avoid such discrimination. LGBT individuals whose sexual orientation became publicly known risked physical and verbal abuse, possible loss of work, and unwanted attention from police and other authorities. A local NGO working on LGBT issues noted new regulations made gender reassignment more cumbersome but cited a slight improvement in public awareness of LGBT rights. Several LGBT organizations operating in the country reported government-run HIV clinics occasionally breached confidentiality and reported patients' sexual orientation to their families and employers. In 2011 and 2012, the NGO Amulet reported 16 attempts on the lives of LGBT persons and 298 cases of physical violence of varying degrees toward them. The organization reported 13 instances of LGBT persons dismissed from work on the basis of their sexuality and two cases of landlords' refusing to rent property to LGBT persons. In 2011 and 2012, the organization reported 115 cases of LGBT persons denied health care. In 2014 several public officials made inflammatory statements about the LGBT community, and there were reports of several anti-LGBT rallies outside nightclubs thought to welcome patrons from the LGBT community.

NGOs reported members of the LGBT community seldom turned to law enforcement agencies to report violence against them because they feared hostility, ridicule, and occasionally violence. Additionally, they did not want law enforcement officers to notify their employers of their sexual orientation.

Kenya

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. Government authorities did not effectively enforce many of these provisions, and discrimination against women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons; individuals with HIV/AIDS; persons with disabilities; persons suspected of witchcraft; and certain ethnic groups was a problem. There was also evidence that some national and local government officials tolerated, and in some instances instigated, ethnic violence. The law criminalizes homosexual activity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution does not explicitly protect LGBT persons from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The penal code criminalizes "carnal knowledge against the order of nature," which is interpreted to prohibit consensual same-sex sexual activity and specifies a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment. A separate statute specifically criminalizes sex between men and specifies a maximum penalty of 21 years' imprisonment. Police detained persons under these laws, particularly suspected sex workers, but released them shortly afterward. Statistics

presented in the National Assembly in March indicated police had opened files on 595 “unnatural offenses” cases since 2010, including 49 in 2014. According to a 2014 report issued by the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya and the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, between 2012 and 2014 there were eight prosecutions of gay men on indecency charges.

LGBT organizations reported police more frequently used public order laws (e.g., disturbing the peace) than same-sex legislation to arrest LGBT individuals. Police frequently harassed, intimidated, or physically abused LGBT individuals in custody.

Authorities permitted LGBT advocacy organizations to register and conduct activities. There were reports, however, that some organizations registered under modified platforms to avoid being denied registration by the government.

Legal efforts by Mbugua, born Andrew Mbugua, to change her legal name and gender identity continued.

Violence and discrimination against LGBT individuals was widespread. According to a report by journalist Denis Nzioka during the year, LGBT individuals were especially vulnerable to blackmail and rape by police officers and individuals who used LGBT websites to locate victims. LGBT individuals were especially vulnerable to harassment, intimidation, and discrimination in employment, occupation, education, and housing. Human rights and LGBT rights organizations noted that victims were extremely reluctant to report abuse or seek redress. According to a 2011 study, *The Outlawed Amongst Us*, by the Kenya Human Rights Commission, 89 percent of LGBT individuals who revealed their sexual orientation were disowned by family and friends. There were reports of forced “medical examination” of LGBT individuals by the police and of forced medical treatment or exorcism to “treat” LGBT individuals.

During the year an “antigay” caucus was formed in parliament, although its only action was to inquire why the government had not taken stronger action against LGBT individuals and organizations. The National Assembly majority leader stated that homosexuality was as serious an issue as terrorism but resisted calls for new anti-LGBT legislation. Several NGOs conducted anti-LGBT political campaigns, including one that announced a drive to collect one million signatures on a petition against homosexuality. While these campaigns resulted in scattered demonstrations, they did not attract widespread support.

Kiribati

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, or color, and the government observed these prohibitions; however, only native I-Kiribati may own land. The law prohibits gender discrimination only regarding employment, but due mainly to limited resources the government did not effectively enforce this provision during the year. There is no law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual sexual conduct between men is illegal, with a maximum penalty of five to 14

years' imprisonment depending on the nature of the offense. There were no reports of prosecutions directed at gay, bisexual, or transgender persons under these provisions.

There is no law specifically prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. There were no reports of societal discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Korea, Democratic People's Republic of

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While the constitution grants equal rights to all citizens, the government reportedly did not actually grant its citizens most fundamental human rights, and it continued pervasive discrimination based on social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws against consensual same-sex activity, but no information was available on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Korea, Republic of

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law forbids discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and social status, but not discrimination based on language or gender identity. There is no enforcement mechanism in the law, and it does not protect migrant workers against racial discrimination, pregnant women against employment discrimination, or pregnant school-age girls against being denied an education.

In February 2013, following the recommendation of the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, legislators prepared comprehensive antidiscrimination legislation. The legislation was withdrawn, however, due to aggressive lobbying, primarily from conservative religious groups opposed to efforts to provide protection to gays and pregnant women.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The Ministry of Justice reported the constitution's equality principles apply to LGBT persons. The law that established the NHRC prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and authorizes the NHRC to review cases of such discrimination, but the law does not specify discrimination based on gender identity. From 2010 to 2013, four provincial education offices adopted Student Rights' Decrees that prohibit discrimination in schools, including that based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

No laws either specify punishment for persons found to discriminate against LGBT persons or provide for remedies to victims of discrimination or violence. During the first

half of the year, the NHRC reported eight cases of such alleged discrimination.

While there were no known cases of violence against LGBT persons during the year, LGBT individuals and organizations continued to face societal discrimination. In June conservative Christian groups obstructed gay cultural festivals in Seoul and Daegu. In May the Seodaemun District Office in Seoul cancelled the approval of the Queer Cultural Festival. Although the NHRC ruled in June the cancellation violated freedom of assembly and equal rights, the district mayor did not reverse the decision.

The Military Criminal Act criminalizes consensual sodomy between men in the military with up to two years' imprisonment.

LGBT groups kept a very low profile because same-sex relationships were not widely accepted. For example, few entertainers were openly gay, and one who was "outed" claimed various entertainment organizations fired him as a result. The legality of the 2013 same-sex wedding of movie director Kim Jho Kwang-soo was under review by a local district court in Seoul.

KOSOVO

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law specifically prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender, age, marital status, language, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or conviction, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, race, social origin, property, birth, or any other characteristic. The government did not always effectively enforce these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation; but neither specifically includes gender identity. When the motivation for a crime is hostility based on gender, sexual orientation, or perceived affinity of the victim with persons who are targets of such hostility, the law considers that motivation to be an aggravating circumstance.

The Center for Equality and Liberty reported several online death threats to its members in October and November based on their sexual orientation. The KP had not located the perpetrators as of December.

In December 2013 the government established an Advisory and Coordinating Group to increase cooperation between domestic and international institutions and NGOs working to protect and promote the rights of the LGBT community. The working group met four times during the year. The government took steps to signal its support for LGBT rights by sponsoring numerous public events such as a program on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and illuminating the main government building with rainbow colors. The Center for Equality and Liberty described these initiatives as clear indicators that the government opposed hate speech. On the other hand, these events prompted several Kosovo Albanian intellectuals to sign a letter denouncing homosexuality. On May 17, LGBT NGOs publicly endorsed a program entitled Doctors Against Homophobia by holding an LGBT support walk and publicly supporting LGBT rights for the first time in Pristina. Several government officials attended the event.

Police provided security, and no incidents occurred.

There was no official discrimination in employment, housing, determination of statelessness, or access to education or health care, but societal pressure persuaded the majority of LGBT persons to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity. NGOs reported that discrimination against LGBT individuals often went unreported. LGBT persons who reported crimes said KP officers were not sensitive to the needs of their community.

According to a May study, *Mapping and Needs Assessment of the LGBT Community in Kosovo and Bosnia* by Mindy Michaels, society strongly condemned homosexuality.

Kuwait

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, origin, disability, or language. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on social status, gender, or sexual orientation. The government did not consistently enforce laws against discrimination, and a number of laws and regulations discriminated against women, bidoon, noncitizens, and domestic and foreign workers.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct between men, as well as cross-dressing, are illegal. The law punishes consensual same-sex sexual activity between men older than 21 with imprisonment of up to seven years; those engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity with males younger than 21 may be imprisoned for as long as 10 years. The law imposes a fine of 1,059 dinars (\$3,760) and imprisonment for one to three years for those imitating the appearance of the opposite sex in public. No laws criminalize sexual behavior between women. Transgender persons reported harassment, detainment, and abuse by security forces.

Police arrested 23 cross-dressers and gay men in October after allegedly breaking up a party at a private residence. Police reportedly obtained a warrant and raided the residence, charging those arrested with engaging in immoral activities.

Societal discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity was common; to a lesser extent, officials also practiced such discrimination, usually upon discovering that a person stopped for a traffic violation did not appear to be the gender indicated on his/her identification card. Transgender men and women often faced rejection by their families and, in some cases, disputes over inheritances.

In April the director of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, announced plans to establish a center to offer psychological counseling to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons or those with gender identity problems. The center was not established at year's end.

No registered NGOs focused on LGBT matters, although unregistered ones existed. Due to social convention and potential repression, LGBT organizations neither operated openly nor held gay pride marches or gay rights advocacy events.

Kyrgyz Republic

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, ethnic origin, creed, age, political or other beliefs, education, background, property, or other status. The government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. Although women were active in government, education, civil society, the media, and small business, they encountered gender-based discrimination. Rights activists claimed authorities failed to investigate or punish perpetrators of crimes of discrimination during the year. Members of the LGBT community have reported systematic-police led harassment and beatings. NGOs reported ethnic Uzbeks were attacked by ethnic Kyrgyz because of their ethnicity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

LGBT persons whose sexual orientation or gender identity was publicly known risked physical and verbal abuse, possible loss of jobs, and unwanted attention from police and other authorities. Inmates and officials often openly victimized incarcerated gay men. Doctors sometimes refused to treat LGBT individuals. Members of the LGBT community said their families ostracized them when they learned of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Forced marriages of lesbians and bisexual women to men also occurred. The Labrys Public Foundation noted the practice of rape of lesbians or their partners by their family members to punish or “cure” their homosexuality. The practice was underreported, and its extent was difficult to estimate.

Local NGOs reported numerous acts of violence and threats against LGBT individuals. NGOs described attacks at homes and beatings by individuals shouting anti-gay slurs. For example, in April, four men were chased, tackled, and kicked after leaving a gay club in Bishkek. The men reported their attackers shouted antigay slurs. The men submitted a complaint to police, but the complaint was never investigated.

On January 29, HRW released *They Told Us We Deserved This: Police Violence against Gay and Bisexual Men in Kyrgyzstan*, a 65-page report based on interviews with 40 individuals chronicling instances of extortion and beatings of and sexual assault on members of the LGBT community. The report described in detail how police patrolling parks and bars frequented by gay men would threaten them with violence and arrest or threaten to reveal their homosexuality to their families if they did not pay bribes. In response to the report, Maksat Hajji Toktomushev, the country’s mufti, issued a fatwa January 30 against same-sex relations and announced Islam absolutely forbids same-sex relations. Toktomushev called on authorities and the parliament “to pay special attention to the activities of some public organizations that disseminate social discord while using humanistic ideas.”

High-level members of the government made public statements that dehumanized and degraded the LGBT community. Parliamentary speaker Asylbek Jeenbekov said he supports legislation making it a crime to propagate a positive attitude towards nontraditional sexual relations. He explained he supported such legislation because it “liquidates the problem” and prevents society from “going into the sewer.” Parliamentarian Narynbek Moldobayev, during hearings of the Committee for the Rule of Law, Public Order, and the War on Crime on a draft anti-LGBT propaganda law, said that he would “shoot” people who have “nontraditional sexual relations.” Kurmanbek Dykanbayev, one of the bill’s initiators, said he did not want homosexuals “stepping out

of their boundaries” to interfere with the “natural family.”

Laos

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal treatment under the law for all citizens without regard to ethnicity, gender, social status, education, or faith, but there were no prohibitions of discrimination based on language, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The government at times took action when well-documented, obvious cases of discrimination came to the attention of high-level officials, although the legal mechanism whereby citizens may bring charges of discrimination against individuals or organizations was neither well developed nor widely understood.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and there was no such official discrimination reported during the year. Nonetheless, it was likely societal stigma and concern about repercussions led individuals to withhold reporting incidents of abuse.

There were no legal impediments to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizational activities, but the government discouraged those activities.

Within lowland Lao society, despite wide and growing tolerance of LGBT persons, societal discrimination in employment and housing persisted, and there were no governmental efforts to address it. Local activists explained that most LGBT individuals did not attempt to apply for government or high-level private-sector jobs because there was a tacit understanding that employers were unwilling to hire them. Reports indicated lesbians faced greater societal stigma and discrimination than gay men.

Latvia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and social status. The government enforced most of these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There were reports of violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The ombudsman reported receiving one report of alleged discrimination based on sexual orientation. LGBT representatives reported that cooperation between the ombudsman and the LGBT community was limited. NGOs complained that intolerance of LGBT persons was widespread and that attacks and discrimination they encountered were underreported.

The NGO Mozaika received 17 reports of LGBT rights abuses, which ranged from physical and verbal attacks to discrimination at work and bullying in schools. As of year's end, two criminal investigations opened in 2013 against alleged perpetrators continued. One involved an extremist who allegedly collected munitions for an attack on the EuroPride 2015 events planned in Riga, and the other involved persons accused of issuing death threats to a board member of Mozaika.

According to a September survey, *Attitudes Toward Sexual Minorities*, by Mozaika, intolerance of LGBT individuals increased. The survey showed that 65 percent of respondents opposed hosting EuroPride events in Riga in 2015, compared with only 4 percent in favor. More than one-fourth of respondents condemned homosexual relations.

In December a regional political party chair made homophobic statements via Twitter. Officials, including her party leadership, harshly criticized her statement and forced her to step down from the party's board. Police initiated an investigation to determine whether the incident was classifiable as a hate crime.

On May 17, on the International Day against Homophobia, unknown persons tore down a rainbow flag and flagpole from the residence of the Dutch ambassador. Police opened an investigation into the incident, which remained pending at year's end.

In November the foreign minister publicly announced via social media that he was gay. He was the first high-ranking politician in the country's history to make public his sexual orientation.

Lebanon

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides for equality among all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. Although the government generally respected these provisions, they were not enforced, especially with regard to economic matters, and aspects of the law and traditional beliefs discriminated against women. The law does not protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Official and societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons persisted. There is no all-encompassing antidiscrimination law to protect LGBT persons. The law prohibits "unnatural sexual intercourse," an offense punishable by up to one year in prison but rarely applied; however, it often resulted in a fine. The Ministry of Justice did not keep records on these infractions. There were no reports authorities imprisoned anyone for violation of this law during the year.

Meem, the first NGO in the country exclusively for nonheterosexual women, and the NGO Helem hosted regular meetings in a safe house, provided counseling services, and carried out advocacy projects for the LGBT community.

Information was not available on official or private discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or lack of access to education or health care based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The government did not collect such

information, and individuals who faced problems were reluctant to report incidents due to fear of additional discrimination. There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination. During the year *Oui Pour La Vie*, an NGO working on the issue of stigma and discrimination against LGBT persons, reported employers expelled two transgender women and one gay person from their work because of their gender identity and sexual orientation (see section 7.d.).

NGOs claimed LGBT persons underreported incidents of violence and abuse due to negative social stereotypes. Observers received reports from LGBT refugees of physical abuse by local gangs, which the victims did not report to the ISF; observers referred victims to UNHCR-sponsored protective services.

Lesotho

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, or social status. The law does not reference sexual orientation or gender identity, but other laws prohibit same-sex sexual activity between men. Authorities did not regularly enforce antidiscrimination laws, in part because public awareness of these protections was low, so victims rarely brought claims. Under customary law, constitutionally recognized as a parallel legal system, women are disadvantaged with regard to property rights, inheritance, and succession rights.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits consensual sexual relations between men, but authorities did not enforce it. The law is silent on consensual sex between women. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons faced societal discrimination and official insensitivity to this discrimination. LGBT rights groups complained of discrimination in access to health care and participation in religious activities. Same-sex sexual relationships were taboo in society and not openly discussed. LGBT persons often did not report incidents of violence due to fear of stigma.

Matrix, an LGBT support group, operated freely and had members in all 10 districts. Matrix reported having a good working relationship with the LMPS; in a June incident, during which a member of Matrix was assaulted, police responded quickly and arrested the perpetrators.

Matrix engaged in public outreach through film screenings, radio programs, and other social media. On May 17, Matrix organized the second annual gay parade, led by Ms. Gay Princess Lesotho. Approximately 200 persons, mainly family and friends of LGBT persons, marched peacefully and without incident from the national stadium through downtown Maseru. Matrix representatives noted that police officers escorting the march were generally supportive, which they attributed to Matrix's previous outreach efforts to the LMPS.

Liberia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on ethnic background, sex, creed, place of origin, disability, or political opinion; however, the government did not enforce these provisions effectively. The constitution allows only persons who are “Negroes” or of “Negro descent” to become citizens and own land. Lebanese born in the country over several generations, for example, remained noncitizens in accordance with this provision.

Tribal tensions exploited during the country’s civil war which formally ended in 2003 continued on a diminished level to contribute to social and political friction among ethnic groups.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits consensual same-sex sexual activity, and the culture is strongly opposed to homosexuality. “Voluntary sodomy” is a misdemeanor with a penalty of up to one year’s imprisonment. As of November 4, five detainees were in custody for sodomy in the MCP, two of whom were detained for more than two years. The law prohibits same-sex couples, regardless of citizenship, from adopting children. LGBT persons were cautious about revealing their sexual orientation or gender identities. A few civil society groups promoted the rights of LGBT individuals, but most maintained a very low profile due to fear of mistreatment.

There were press and civil society reports of harassment of persons perceived to be LGBT. Societal stigma and fear of official reprisal may have prevented victims from reporting violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

According to a local news report, on September 8, unknown assailants recognized and attacked a local LGBT-rights activist. The attackers smashed the front windshield of the car the activist was driving. The activist managed to escape from the mob and filed a police report. The case was under investigation at year’s end.

In November 2013 Human Rights Watch, in conjunction with Stop AIDS in Liberia (SAIL), an HIV/AIDS advocacy group, released a report, *‘It’s Nature, Not a Crime’: Discriminatory Laws and LGBT people in Liberia*. The report described the legal and cultural contexts of LGBT discrimination and made broad recommendations to government and civil society regarding policy, legislation, law enforcement techniques, investigation of reports of violence, and education. Human Rights Watch and SAIL continued their joint awareness campaign during the year highlighting the discrimination the LGBT community faced.

Libya

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The Constitutional Declaration contains clear references to equal rights and states that all citizens are equal before the law in enjoying civil and political rights, equal opportunities, and the duties of citizenship without discrimination based on religion, sect, language, wealth, sex, descent, political views, social status, or regional, family, or tribal affiliations. In 2013 the GNC adopted a law mandating punishment of not less than one year’s imprisonment for anyone guilty of discrimination on the basis of class, group, region, gender, or color. The interim governments enforced neither the prohibitions nor the punishments effectively, particularly with regard to women and minorities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In 2013 the government deemed lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) orientations illegal, and official and societal discrimination against LGBT persons persisted. The penal code punishes consensual same-sex sexual activity by three to five years in prison. The law provides for punishment of both parties.

There was scant information on and no reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, access to education, or health care. Observers noted that possible violence or abuse could intimidate persons who reported such discrimination. There was no information on whether there were hate crime laws or other judicial mechanisms to aid in prosecuting bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community.

Citizens tended to hold negative views of LGBT persons and stigmatize homosexuality. There were reports of physical violence, harassment, and blackmail based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Militias often policed communities to enforce compliance with militia commanders' understanding of "Islamic" behavior, and harassed and threatened with impunity individuals believed to be LGBT and their families.

Liechtenstein

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

An antidiscrimination law that exists as part of a broader equality law only applies to equality between men and women. The law does not explicitly mention lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) individuals. The country's LGBT community issued no formal complaints of abuse or discrimination during the year. However, homosexual men publicly complained that current regulations do not allow them to donate blood. According to the country's only LGBT organization, Flay, societal stigma or intimidation generally were not deemed factors in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported, but many LGBT individuals known to the organization were nonetheless often reluctant to publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation and gender identity for fear of experiencing social backlash and isolation.

Lithuania

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Among the forms of discrimination prohibited by the law are race, sex, gender, social

status, ethnic background, sexual orientation, and disability. Discrimination against women and ethnic minorities as well as LGBT persons persisted despite government efforts at enforcement.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The antidiscrimination laws apply to LGBT persons. Society's attitude toward LGBT persons remained largely negative, and LGBT groups claimed that official bodies governing publishing and broadcast media took prejudicial action against certain works with LGBT themes. The few NGOs focusing on LGBT problems kept a low profile because of public hostility to their aims but did not face legal impediments. The Lithuanian Gay League and Tolerant Youth Association continued to promote an inclusive social environment for LGBT persons.

The media reported acts of violence against LGBT persons. For example, on June 21, openly gay singer Ruslanas Kirikinas suffered injuries to his lip, chin, and ears from eggs thrown at him during a performance in Aukstadvaris. According to media reports, he had to be taken to a hospital by ambulance. The offender paid a fine of 225 litas (\$89).

The Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information, an antipropaganda measure enacted in 2009, served as a rationale for limiting LGBT awareness-raising efforts. On May 9, the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics concluded that the book *Gintarine Sirdis (Amber Heart)* should be unavailable to children younger than 14. The book consists of fairytales about minorities, and the office objected to two stories about same-sex characters falling in love, stating the book contained the "harmful, primitive, and purposeful propaganda of homosexuality." Because of this finding, the publisher withdrew the book from shelves. In September the same inspectorate, citing the same law, ruled that an LGBT-awareness video produced by the Lithuanian Gay League could not air on television during regular broadcast hours.

Luxembourg

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government effectively enforced it.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation. This law applies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. There were no reported incidents of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Macedonia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, race, disability, language, gender identity, and ethnic, social, or political affiliation. The law provides for fines ranging from 400 to 1,000 euros (\$500 to \$1,250) on individuals or legal entities found guilty of discrimination. The government generally enforced these prohibitions. The ombudsman's report stated that discrimination existed in all spheres in society, especially with regard to employment rights and on the basis of ethnicity and political affiliation.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Activists supporting LGBT rights reported multiple incidents of societal prejudice such as physical violence, harassment, and use of derogatory language, including in the media and from the government. The Helsinki Committee in Macedonia announced criminal lawsuits against television hosts Milenko Nedelkovski and Janko Ilkovski for hate speech against the LGBT community in Macedonia

In October a group of masked individuals entered an event marking the second anniversary of the LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) support center (operated by the Helsinki Committee) in Skopje and threw glass bottles at the guests, injuring at least one person. As of November 4, police had not identified or arrested any suspects. In an October statement, Amnesty International called on authorities to carry out a prompt and fair investigation into the attack and said that this was the sixth attack on the center since it opened in 2012. Amnesty International noted that five of the attacks remain unresolved. It criticized the Ministry of the Interior for failing to recognize the organized and alleged discriminatory motivation for the attack and only recording the attack as violence by unknown perpetrators.

Intimidation did not prevent LGBT organizations from reporting incidents of abuse. This was not the case for individuals. In June the LGBTI Center organized a public pride week event and experienced neither problems nor provocations. Police were visibly present during the event.

Madagascar

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status; the law does not specifically address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. No government institutions were designated to enforce these provisions, and the laws were not effectively enforced.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law provides for a prison sentence of two to five years and a fine of two to 10 million ariary (\$800 to \$4,000) for acts that are "indecent or against nature with an individual of the same sex under the age of 21." Members of the LGBT community reportedly were unaware of the risk of arrest for "corruption of a minor," and arrests occurred, although there were no official statistics. In past years LGBT persons

sometimes were lured into sexual encounters by underage individuals who were aware of the law but were seeking to extort money.

There are no specific antidiscrimination provisions that apply to LGBT persons. No laws prevent transgender persons from identifying with their chosen gender.

There were reports of official discrimination and that local officials, particularly law enforcement personnel, either abused LGBT persons or failed to protect them from societal violence. Health officials also reportedly denied services to LGBT persons or failed to respect confidentiality agreements.

Sexual orientation and gender identity were not widely discussed, with public attitudes ranging from tacit acceptance to violent rejection, particularly of transgender sex workers. Members of this community faced considerable social stigma and discrimination, often within their own families and particularly in rural areas. Many were ostracized by their relatives and were refused burial in the family tomb. Within the workforce, male homosexuals and transgender individuals faced discrimination in hiring.

On May 17, the LGBT community organized a press conference to mark International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia. During the year journalists reported on violence against sex workers, noting members of the LGBT community--particularly transgender individuals--were often reluctant to report such incidents to authorities. LGBT populations in Toamasina, Fort Dauphin, Toliara, Morondava, and to a lesser extent in the capital, were reportedly most vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

Malawi

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law forbids discrimination based on race; color; sex; language; religion; political or other opinion; national, ethnic, or social origin; disability; property; birth; or other status. The law does not specifically mention sexual orientation. The capacity of government institutions to enforce the law was limited.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable by up to 14 years in prison, including hard labor. The penal code outlaws “unnatural offenses” and “indecent practices between males.” In September 2013 the High Court invited friend-of-the-court submissions on the constitutionality of laws against these acts. It received arguments both for and against the laws’ constitutionality, with most of the arguments being in opposition. The attorney general filed a motion with the Supreme Court objecting to the process on the basis that the chief justice must certify constitutional questions and obtained an order in February suspending the proceedings. As of November the motion had yet to be decided.

Same-sex activity may also be prosecuted as “conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace.” A 2011 amendment to the penal code established penalties for consensual same-sex sexual activity between women, setting a maximum prison term of five years. In July, Solicitor General Janet Banda told the UN Human Rights Commission that the government would not enforce these laws. In May, however, two men were charged

pursuant to the antisodomy laws after one disclosed their relationship to police. As of November the men were free on bail, but charges remained pending. Two other cases of men charged with sodomy were reported in the press. Each case involved activity between an adult and a minor that could be charged under other criminal statutes.

Public discussion of LGBT rights increased during the year. In October the Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation and the Center for Development of People released a report documenting 76 instances in 2013 of discrimination and human rights violations in the country based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Documented abuses included mob violence and police harassment directed toward gay or allegedly gay men. For example, the center reported that in July 2013 a gay man named Vincent was beaten by a mob and subsequently arrested and assaulted by police.

The Weekend Nation newspaper continued to publish a weekly column entitled “Sexual Minority Forum” written by the leaders of two human rights NGOs to shed light on conditions affecting LGBT persons and their rights.

Malaysia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal protection under the law and prohibits discrimination against citizens based on race, gender, religion, descent, or place of birth. The law is silent on discrimination based on disabilities and sexual orientation. The constitution also provides for the “special position” of ethnic Malays and the indigenous groups of the eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak (collectively, “bumiputra”), and discrimination based on this provision persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The penal code states that sodomy and oral sex acts are “carnal intercourse against the order of nature,” but it was rarely enforced. It was, however, the basis for the politically motivated case against parliamentary opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim (see section 1.e.). Religious and cultural taboos against same-sex sexual conduct were widespread.

Transgender individuals were often charged under the Minor Offences Act for “indecent behavior” and “importuning for immoral purposes” in public. Those convicted of a first offense may be fined up to RM25 (\$7.65) and sentenced to as many as 14 days in jail. The sentences for subsequent convictions may be fines up to RM100 (\$30.60) and up to three months in jail. Local advocates contended that those imprisoned served their time in the male prison population and were often mistreated verbally and sexually by police and other inmates.

In November the Court of Appeal declared unconstitutional a provision in a state’s Islamic law criminalizing cross-dressing for Muslims. The case began in 2011, when three Muslim transgender women challenged the provision in the state of Negeri Sembilan, claiming it violated their constitutional rights. The judgment noted that while states are empowered to enact laws involving matters of Islam, such laws cannot contravene the federal constitution. The state government was appealing the decision.

Maldives

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for the equality of all citizens, but the law requires citizens to be Sunni Muslims. Women have been historically disadvantaged, particularly in the application of Islamic law in matters such as divorce, education, inheritance, and testimony in legal proceedings. In 2012 the administration re-established the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Human Rights, which in November was renamed the Ministry of Law and Gender.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits same-sex sexual conduct. The punishment for men includes banishment for nine months to one year or 10 to 30 lashes. For women the punishment is house arrest for nine months to one year. No organizations focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) issues in the country. There were no reports of officials complicit in abuses against LGBT persons, although societal stigma likely discouraged individuals from reporting such problems. Due to societal intolerance of same-sex sexual relationships, there were few openly LGBT individuals in the country and no information on official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, access to education, or health care. The “Colorless” case cited under internet freedom illustrates discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Mali

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on social origin and status, color, language, gender, or race but not disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Citizens were generally reluctant to file complaints or press charges of discrimination, based largely on cultural factors. Absent complaints or lawsuits, the government did not aggressively pursue violations of these laws.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits association “for an immoral purpose,” and there were no laws specifically prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There were no known LGBT organizations in the country, although some NGOs had medical and support programs focusing specifically on gay men. The law prohibits lesbians and gay men from adopting children.

Credible NGOs reported LGBT individuals experienced physical, psychological, and sexual violence, which society viewed as corrective punishment. Family members, neighbors, and groups of strangers in public places committed the majority of violent acts, and police frequently refused to intervene. Most LGBT individuals isolated themselves and kept their sexual identity hidden. A credible NGO reported that LGBT

individuals frequently dropped out of school, left their places of employment, and did not seek medical treatment in order to protect their sexual identity and avoid social stigmatization.

Malta

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On April 17, parliament amended the constitution to “introduce immediate protection” from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

On August 1, authorities amended the criminal code to widen the scope of offenses related to homophobia and racial hatred.

Marshall Islands

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, language, national or social origin, place of birth, and family status or descent, and the government generally observed these provisions. Land ownership and the right to run for office are reserved to indigenous citizens.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There is no law criminalizing consensual same-sex activity, and there were no reports of societal violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There were no reports of official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care. Existing antidiscrimination laws do not specifically protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. There are no formal impediments to organizations for LGBT persons, but no such organizations were reported.

Mauritania

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibits discrimination against citizens on the basis of race,

national origin, sex, disability, or social status and prohibits racial or ethnic propaganda, but the government often favored individuals based on racial and tribal affiliation, social status, and political ties. Societal discrimination against women, trafficking in persons, and racial and ethnic discrimination were also problems.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws that protect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons from discrimination. Under sharia law as applied in the country, consensual same-sex sexual activity between men is punishable by death if witnessed by four individuals; authorities have never applied this penalty. Same-sex sexual activity between women is punishable by three months to two years in prison and a fine of 5,000 to 60,000 ouguiya (\$16.40 to \$197). There were no criminal prosecutions during the year, although local press sources alleged that police officials had dismantled a “network” of gay Senegalese men who had “infiltrated” the country. There was no evidence of societal violence, societal discrimination, or systematic acts of government discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Members of the LGBT community were rarely identified or discussed, likely because of the severity of the stigma and legal penalties attached to such labels. There were no organizations advocating for LGBT rights, but there were no legal impediments to the registration of such groups.

Mauritius

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, caste, place of origin, social status, political opinion, color, gender, disability, language, or sexual orientation. While the government generally enforced these provisions, some societal discrimination occurred. The law prohibits all forms of trafficking of adults and children and prescribes penalties of up to 15 years’ imprisonment for offenders.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not specifically criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. It criminalizes the act of sodomy, however, among both same-sex and heterosexual couples. Sodomy cases that reach the courts almost exclusively involve heterosexual persons, especially as an aggravating factor in divorce cases. The sodomy statute was rarely used against same-sex couples, unless one of the partners cited sodomy in the context of sexual assault.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) victims of verbal abuse or violence within the family reported such incidents to local NGO Collectif Arc-en-Ciel. Victims generally refused to file complaints with police, however, for fear of ostracism or, in some cases, fear of reprisal from family members. A 16-year-old committed suicide on January 27 after constant bullying and taunting from classmates due to his sexual orientation.

Following a complaint about the questionnaire used by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to prohibit blood donation from LGBT persons, the ministry amended its

policy and website in 2013 to indicate individuals who have had same-sex sexual activity could donate blood. The Young Queer Alliance group, however, reported Ministry of Health officials canceled a blood donation event in Rose Hill in November due to the officials' reluctance to collaborate with an LGBT organization.

Mexico

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. While the government made some progress enforcing these provisions, significant problems, particularly violence against women, persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination against LGBT individuals, but LGBT persons reported the government did not always investigate and punish those complicit in abuses. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was prevalent, despite a growing public acceptance of LGBT individuals.

On September 1, Coahuila became the first state after the Federal District to legalize same-sex marriage following the approval of a slate of reforms to state's civil code by the local congress. The reforms give same-sex married couples the same rights and obligations as heterosexual couples, including access to social security, bank credits, and adoption. Additionally, the reform allows couples (heterosexual or same-sex) who have been cohabitating for at least three years to receive the same benefits as married couples, provided the couple have legal standing and no legal impediments to getting married.

In June the Tecnológico de Monterrey (TEC), one of the country's most prestigious universities, inaugurated its first LGBT student association. TEC previously prohibited formation of such student groups.

Micronesia, Federated States of

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law provide explicit protection against discrimination based on race, gender, or language, but societal discrimination against women remained a problem. Kosrae state passed a Family Protection Act, but the other three states have no laws against family violence. All four state governments have laws to implement the national anti-trafficking law enacted in 2012. There are no specific legal protections regarding social status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. There are limited protections for persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults. There are no laws prohibiting discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons in such areas as employment, housing, or access to education and health care. There were no known reports of violence, official or societal discrimination, or workplace discrimination against LGBT persons. The culture stigmatized public acknowledgement or discussion of certain sexual matters, including sexual orientation and gender identity. It was rare for individuals to identify themselves publicly as LGBT persons.

Moldova

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, ethnicity, or social status, but the government did not always enforce these prohibitions effectively.

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of 11 characteristics, including gender, race, and disability, as well as employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As of September a council established in October 2013 to prevent discrimination and ensure equality in implementing the law had examined 101 complaints and sent 15 cases to court, all of which were challenged by state institutions accused of discrimination. Based on the council's recommendation, the sides came to an amicable solution in 33 cases. The council has no sanctioning power and its recommendations may only be used in court at the judge's discretion. A plurality of cases involved discrimination against persons with disabilities while other cases involved age and gender discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. Societal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity continued during the year.

In 2013 the NGO Genderdoc M reported 17 crimes committed against individuals due to their sexual orientation. Most crimes were perpetrated against gay men, with the perpetrators targeting victims through social media sites. Prosecutors responded by opening two criminal cases against suspected perpetrators and, in seven other instances, fining or administratively sanctioning perpetrators. One person was dismissed from his position in law enforcement. In six cases, authorities did not take the victim's sexual orientation into consideration or categorize the offense as a hate crime. Investigators determined discrimination based on sexual orientation in only one case.

In June a representative of the extremist Occupy Pedophilia movement threatened a member of the Genderdoc M organization. Following the threats, Genderdoc M alerted the police and took protective measures to enhance security at the organization's headquarters. A second violent incident took place on September 20, when approximately 40 members of the local LGBT community gathered at the Genderdoc M premises prior to departing for a one-day retreat outside Chisinau. A group of eight masked men belonging to Occupy Pedophilia approached the Genderdoc M office and threw eggs, hitting several people. One of the assailants shouted homophobic insults. The group's leader, Stanislav Ghibadulin, was reportedly among the perpetrators. Shortly before the assault, Genderdoc M employees received a telephone call warning of the attack. Police were called to the scene. Authorities administratively sanctioned

the group's leader and fined him 1,000 lei (\$64.30). Despite evidence against the same group leader in the earlier harassment case, police failed to punish the perpetrator and closed the case after three months when the statute of limitations expired. While prosecutors initiated a number of court cases against Occupy Pedophilia in years past, no court has issued a judgment against it. Genderdoc M noted that Occupy Pedophilia became more violent and moved from verbal insults and threats to physical assaults during the year.

Civil society organizations reported transgender individuals were unable to change identity documents during or following gender reassignment and that they experienced employment discrimination (see section 7.d.).

On May 17, more than 100 individuals attended an "equality march" in Chisinau organized by the LGBT Community in Moldova to celebrate the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia; the march proceeded without significant incidents (see section 2.b.).

While authorities allowed individuals to change their names (for example, from a male to a female name), the government did not allow persons to change the gender listed on their identity cards or passports. A 2012 court of appeals decision allowed transgender persons to change the gender on their official documents without compulsory gender-reassignment surgery, but the court later reversed itself, and the case remained pending. In 2012 the Supreme Court of Justice issued a nonbinding recommendation to lower courts that transgender individuals be permitted to change the gender on their civil documents. In 2012 the Ministry of Health established a commission to determine gender identity and issue certificates that can be used to apply for new documents. Five transgender persons changed their identity papers since 2011, four following a court decision. Two transgender persons changed their identity papers during the year. Genderdoc M was aware of approximately 30 transgender persons living in the country.

In Transnistria, consensual same-sex activity is illegal, and LGBT persons were subject to governmental and societal discrimination.

Monaco

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The country has no law against discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The law provides for punishment of up to five years in prison and/or a fine for persons who provoke hatred or violence against a person or group due to their sexual orientation, real or supposed. Stigma or intimidation was not a factor in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported. There were no reports of acts against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Mongolia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law states that no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, social origin, or status and that men and women shall be equal politically, economically, socially, culturally, and within the family. The government generally enforced these provisions. The law also protects persons with disabilities from discrimination in all social relations, and the labor law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment. These rights were not always enforced. The law does not address sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is not specifically proscribed by law; however, AI and the International Lesbian and Gay Association criticized a section of the penal code that refers to “immoral gratification of sexual desires,” arguing that it could be used against persons engaging in same-sex sexual conduct. There is no law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Civil Registration Law permits individuals who have had gender reassignment surgery to have their birth certificate and national identity card reissued to reflect the change, and the LGBT Center reported that transgender persons successfully applied for new identity cards under this provision.

NGOs continued to report that LGBT individuals faced violence and discrimination both in public and at home based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. The LGBT Center received a number of reports of domestic violence against LGBT individuals, most involving young LGBT persons who either came out to their families or were discovered by their families to be LGBT. The LGBT Center also continued to track a rape case in which a young gay man was allegedly raped by other males in December 2013. According to the LGBT Center, although the young man filed a first instance report, he later withdrew the case. He was found dead in late January. The police treated the incident as suicide and closed the case in April. Before his death the deceased reported to his friends and his lawyer that he was treated insensitively by the police and prosecutor in charge of his case.

Some media outlets described gay men, lesbians, and transgender persons in derogatory terms and associated them with HIV/AIDS, pedophilia, and corruption of youth. Additionally, NGOs stated that online media frequently ridiculed LGBT persons, sometimes revealing their names and addresses in internet comments.

Although the provision in the criminal code criminalizing rape (Article 126) contains no language specifying who may be considered a victim, courts commonly interpreted the law as applying only to females; rape of males is usually prosecuted under Article 125, which simply refers to unnatural sexual gratification. This prevailing interpretation made it difficult to prosecute rape of males and treated such rapes as less severe crimes: Whereas Article 126 calls for a sentence of up to 25 years depending on the circumstances of the crime, Article 125 calls for a sentence of two to five years.

LGBT persons reported harassment and surveillance by police, and a 2013 report from the NHRC indicated that police sometimes verbally abused LGBT individuals who reported bias-motivated crimes. Despite training in recent years for police and

investigators on how to handle cases involving LGBT rights, victims reported harassment by officers responding to initial complaints of alleged crimes. NGOs reported difficulties estimating the extent of crimes committed against LGBT persons due to a combination of limited law enforcement data and a lack of reporting due to social stigma and fear of reprisal. No hate crime law or other criminal justice mechanisms exist to aid in the investigation, prosecution, or sentencing of bias-motivated crimes against the LGBT community. There were also reports of abuse of persons held in police detention centers based on their sexual orientation. In one case police reportedly detained two transgender women on the suspicion that they were engaged in sex work. When the women's statements were being recorded, police authorities allegedly allowed a television news crew to film the women's faces, and this video was later broadcast on television and online. According to NGOs the women were detained without any evidence, based solely on police suspicions based on their appearance and whereabouts. Police released the women shortly after they were detained.

Authorities frequently dismissed charges against those accused of having committed crimes against LGBT persons. LGBT persons reported fear of perpetrators acting with impunity against them in cases where they filed charges against their attackers, and observers cited lack of confidence in law-enforcement officials as a reason for underreporting.

Discrimination in employment was also reported to be a problem. NGOs, the NHRC, and members of the LGBT community reported companies rarely hired LGBT individuals who were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity, and LGBT persons who revealed their status in the workplace frequently faced discrimination, including the possibility of dismissal. As a result most LGBT individuals hid their sexual orientation from their employers. Moreover, in cases where LGBT persons were illegally dismissed, employees rarely sought court injunctions to avoid disclosing their status to more people and thereby increasing the risk of discrimination (see section 7.d). The government did not take any steps to address discrimination against LGBT persons in the workplace.

NGOs working for the rights of LGBT individuals organized the country's second year of Pride activities. According to the LGBT Center, district police provided protection during the march, and there were no incidents of violence during the two weeks of pride events.

Montenegro

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and laws prohibit discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, gender, disability, language, and social status. Despite progress the government did not fully enforce these prohibitions. Discrimination continued, especially against persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and Roma, LGBT persons, women, and the elderly. Persons could bring complaints of discrimination to the ombudsman, but the institution lacked the human, technical, and financial resources to address them adequately. Government continued to conduct antidiscrimination campaigns and provide training for public servants, but efforts to combat discrimination and enforce the antidiscrimination law remained modest.

On March 24, the parliament adopted amendments to the Antidiscrimination Law to outlaw sexual harassment, segregation, hate speech, racial discrimination, and discrimination based on religion or belief. During the first nine months of the year, police received 128 reports of discrimination against 135 individuals.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and applies to LGBT individuals.

Despite government efforts to improve the position of the LGBT community, LGBT persons and their supporters experienced continued societal discrimination, ostracism, public hostility, and multiple incidents of violence. Negative public perception of LGBT persons led many of them to conceal their sexual orientation, although there was a trend toward greater visibility as LGBT persons came out to their families and colleagues. LGBT activists stated that members of the community did not report some violent attacks against them to police because the victims were afraid of further victimization generated by their complaints. Hostile individuals used social media and LGBT dating sites to attack and bully known and suspected LGBT persons anonymously. In May the victory of a gay Austrian man in the Europe-wide Eurovision song contest led to an increase in hate speech against LGBT persons on web portals in the country.

Two domestic NGOs, LGBT Forum Progress and Queer Montenegro, focused solely on the rights of the LGBT community, but other human rights NGOs also dealt with LGBT rights. A newly formed LGBT NGO, Social Center, ran an LGBT club and organized social events for the LGBT community. During the first nine months of the year, LGBT Forum Progress ran a shelter for LGBT persons. The NGO Juventas operated an LGBT emergency hotline and ran a drop-in center that provided support, workshops, and medical and psychological assistance to LGBT individuals.

A pride parade with approximately 200 participants, including Minister for Human and Minority Rights Suad Numanovic, took place on November 2, in Podgorica. There were no violent incidents. An estimated 1,800 police officers guarded the event. Police brought in approximately 80 individuals for questioning and confiscated dangerous items such as Molotov cocktails from 16 persons.

LGBT Forum Progress stated that violence against LGBT persons was on the rise, in part because previous attacks remained unsolved or perpetrators received mild penalties. On March 1, a youth from Podgorica attacked a representative of Forum Progress and one other LGBT person, injuring them slightly. Authorities arrested the perpetrator and subsequently released him. The NGO Human Rights Action asserted that an atmosphere of impunity regarding hate crimes against members of the LGBT community encouraged such behavior. On May 21, unknown persons physically attacked a prominent LGBT activist outside his apartment building. While the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights condemned the attack, the perpetrators remained at large.

On April 26, LGBT Forum Progress cancelled a planned performance and demonstration against homophobia in Bar after police informed the NGO that event security would require 600 police officers and cost more than 30,000 euros (\$37,500), beyond the capacity of Bar's police budget.

On June 2, the Podgorica Basic Court announced its verdict in the trial of two individuals accused of a 2012 attack against producers of a 2011 LGBT rights commercial. The judge found Nikola Raznatovic guilty and sentenced him to three months in prison but acquitted Drasko Mirkovic. The 2011 commercial featured the country's first publicly displayed kiss between two men.

LGBT Forum Progress criticized prosecutors for "selective justice" and an inadequate response to acts of violence against LGBT persons, which they alleged encouraged

perpetrators to continue verbal attacks, assaults, and death threats against them.

Police charged tens of secondary school students with misdemeanors for aggressive behavior towards LGBT persons during two parades in 2013, but the prosecutor failed to bring charges against the individuals.

During the year three persons were waiting for the operation to change their gender. The state health fund pays 80 percent of the operation costs.

The government and several senior leaders affirmed support for LGBT rights. Approximately 60 police officers completed training on appropriate conduct towards LGBT persons. Every police station had an officer whose duties included monitoring observance of the rights of LGBT persons.

Morocco

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, social status, faith, culture, regional origin, or any other personal circumstance. Discrimination occurred based on each of these factors. The 2011 constitution mandates the creation of a body to promote gender equality and resolve parity issues--the Authority for Equality and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination -- but implementing legislation for the body had not been not adopted by year's end.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No information in this sub-section. Please see the full country report for more.

Mozambique

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but discrimination persisted against women and persons with HIV/AIDS. Discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is not cited except in labor law, which specifically prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation. The government failed to enforce prohibitions against discriminatory acts.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity. There were reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The Workers Law includes an article that prohibits discrimination in the workplace based on a number of factors, including sexual orientation. Since 2008 the government has declined to act on the application for registration as an NGO of Lambda, the Mozambican Association for the Defense of Sexual Minorities, although it met with

Lambda representatives during the year.

The government does not track and report discrimination or crimes against individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The media did not report such abuses, although there were cases reported in social media. Intimidation was not a factor in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported.

Namibia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, creed, gender, language, disability, or social status, or religion and specifically prohibit “the practice and ideology of apartheid.” The government did not effectively enforce all prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although the country’s Roman-Dutch common law inherited at independence criminalizes sodomy and remains on the books, the ban was not enforced. Sodomy is defined as intentional anal sexual relations between men. This definition excludes anal sexual relations between heterosexual couples and sexual relations between lesbians. Many citizens considered all same-sex sexual activity taboo, however. The prohibition against sexual discrimination in the constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Some politicians publicly stated their opposition to considering legislation, even though not proposed during the year, that could specifically protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. The newly formed Namibian Economic Freedom Fighters political party criticized homosexuality as a threat to the country, compared it to the Ebola virus, and claimed it must be contained.

OutRight Namibia, an organization that advocates for LGBT rights, continued to report that police generally did not take complaints of violence against LGBT persons seriously. It claimed police often ridiculed LGBT persons when they reported cases of abuse, and this secondary victimization often dissuaded victims from reporting. The organization reported that beginning in 2011, however, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Ministry of Health and Social Services strengthened their relations with the LGBT community and included that community in the National Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS 2010-16 as a group requiring outreach.

Societal discrimination and violence against LGBT persons remained a problem. The Ombudsman’s Office reported that LGBT persons were often subject to ridicule and even physical and verbal abuse when they walked in a different neighborhood from their own. In September a man sexually assaulted a lesbian in Windhoek because he wanted to “cure” her of her lesbianism. When she sought medical help at a state hospital, the receptionist told her to return later and publicly announced the lesbian had been raped.

The Ombudsman’s Office reported that many cases of human rights violations against LGBT persons went unrecorded, including the use of “corrective rape” against lesbians, families disowning LGBT children, and the beating of LGBT persons. A large number of LGBT youth were unemployed, did not go to school, abused drugs and alcohol, and remained vulnerable to discrimination.

Nauru

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status, and the government generally observed these provisions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual male same-sex sexual conduct is illegal, but there were no reports of prosecutions directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There are no hate crime laws nor are there criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. There were no reports of violence or discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Nepal

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, caste, gender, disability, language, and social status, but the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. Despite passage of the Caste Discrimination and Untouchability Act in 2011, a rigid caste system continued to operate throughout the country in many areas of religious, professional, and daily life. Societal discrimination against lower castes, women, and persons with disabilities remained common, especially in rural areas. Human trafficking persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws specifically criminalize same-sex sexual activity, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons actively and openly advocated for their rights. LGBT activists continued to press for protections for sexual minorities in the new constitution.

In 2007 the Supreme Court directed the government to enact laws to protect LGBT persons' fundamental rights, enable third-gender citizenship, and amend laws that were sexually discriminatory. Implementation of the 2007 decision was initially slow. In 2013 the Home Ministry started issuing citizenship certificates with an "others" gender category for those applying for citizenship. In April the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare assigned an official to be the focal person for sexual and general minorities. According to Blue Diamond Society (BDS), a local LGBT advocacy NGO, the government did not provide equal opportunity to LGBT persons in employment, education, and health care.

Government authorities and private citizens reportedly harassed and abused LGBT

persons, and the Nepal Police HRC documented two such incidents during the year, a decline from 2013. According to BDS, harassment of LGBT persons was common. BDS also stated the police targeted transgender sex workers, subjecting them to 25 days' detention without charge. The Nepal Police HRC confirmed that some low-level harassment occurred because many citizens held negative views of LGBT persons, and the Nepal Police were not immune to such social perceptions. The Nepal Police HRC conducted LGBT rights training and worked closely with the LGBT community to minimize and prevent such harassment.

Netherlands

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and laws prohibit discrimination based on age, race, gender, disability, language, political preference, sexual orientation, and social status, and the governments generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. Laws have been revised to eliminate any discrimination on problems such as taxes and allowances, pensions, inheritance, or access to health care.

The government gave high priority to combating anti-LGBT violence. The police had "pink in blue" units dedicated to protecting the rights of LGBT persons. When courts find acts of violence against LGBT persons to be motivated by bias, they can provide higher penalties to perpetrators.

In January the Sexual Diversity Awareness Act came into effect obliging all elementary and secondary schools to pay attention to diversity and LGBT problems. The Expreszo youth website set up a hotline for complaints on schools that did not comply. The government supported Christian LGBT groups and Muslim community changers as well as "gay-straight" alliances to counter bullying. Government programs to counter prejudice in immigrant and orthodox religious communities where social acceptance of homosexuality was low also continued.

Laws in the Caribbean semi-autonomous states prohibit discrimination against LGBT persons. No cases of abuse or violence against LGBT individuals were recorded by authorities or described in press accounts. The Caribbean parts of the kingdom extended equal rights to, and foster tolerance and acceptance of, LGBT persons.

New Zealand

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, social status, language, disability, age, and national or ethnic origin, and the government actively enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No information in this sub-section. Please see the full country report for more.

Nicaragua

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, or social status; however, the government did not regularly enforce these legal prohibitions. Persons thus discriminated against filed few discrimination suits or formal complaints due to a belief their complaints would not be addressed and could lead to negative outcomes for those filing.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although sexual orientation is not mentioned specifically, the law states all persons are equal before the law and provides for the right to equal protection. LGBT persons, however, continued to face widespread societal discrimination and abuse, particularly in housing, education, and employment (see section 7.d.). While the special prosecutor for sexual diversity was active throughout the year in education, information collection, and collaboration with NGO efforts, the LGBT community generally believed the office had insufficient resources. No specific laws existed to punish hate crimes against LGBT groups.

Niger

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government generally did not enforce these provisions, however, because victims in large part did not report discrimination or were pressured into handling complaints through traditional dispute mechanisms. There are no laws on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The constitution provides for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and introduces basic standards of respect for economic and social rights, such as the right to safe and adequate food and drinking water.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There was strong societal stigma against same-sex sexual activity but no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity in general. The law states an “unnatural act” with a person of the same sex who is under 21 is punishable by six months to three years in prison and a fine of 10,000 to 100,000 CFA francs (\$19-\$190).

Gay men and lesbians experienced societal discrimination and social resentment. Reportedly, two gay rights associations conducted their activities secretly, in part because they were not officially registered. The social pressure to conform is great, and many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals marry and have families, often while pursuing LGBT relationships in secret. There were no reports of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. International organizations and NGOs continued their awareness-raising efforts in this regard, focusing on social stigma in general.

There were no documented cases of discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care based on sexual orientation. Stigma or intimidation was a likely cause in preventing incidents of abuse from being reported.

Nigeria

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on community, place of origin, ethnic group, sex, religion, or political opinion, but the government did not enforce the law effectively. The constitution prohibits discrimination based on the circumstances of a person's birth, but it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on disability.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

On January 7, President Jonathan enacted the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act (SSMPA), which effectively renders illegal all forms of activity supporting or promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights. Under the SSMPA anyone found to have entered into a same-sex marriage or civil union may be punished by up to 14 years' imprisonment. In addition anyone found guilty of being an individual who "aids the solemnization of a same-sex marriage or civil union, or supports the registration, operation, and sustenance of gay clubs, societies, organizations, processions, or meetings" or "registers, operates, or participates in gay clubs, societies, organizations, or directly or indirectly makes public show of same-sex amorous relationship" commits an offense punishable by 10 years' imprisonment.

Following the passage of the SSMPA, LGBT persons reported increased harassment and threats against them based on their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. News reports and LGBT advocates reported numerous arrests, but detainees were in all cases released without formal charges after paying a bond. As of December there were no reports of the government enforcing the SSMPA.

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is also illegal under federal law and is punishable by prison sentences of up to 14 years. In the 12 northern states that adopted sharia, adults convicted of engaging in same-sex sexual activity may be subject to execution by stoning. Although no such sentences were imposed during the year, individuals convicted of same-sex activity were sentenced to lashing.

On February 12, a mob in the Gishiri community of Abuja attacked 13 gay men and drove them out of their homes with sticks and knives. The mob took four of the men to a local police station where police also beat them. The four men were released the following day. Despite requests from advocacy groups, police neither investigated the incident

nor apprehended any of the attackers. The men were unable to return to their homes

Because of widespread societal taboos against same-sex activity, very few LGBT persons were open about their sexual orientation. Several NGOs provided LGBT groups with legal advice and training in advocacy, media responsibility, and HIV/AIDS awareness, as well as providing safe havens for LGBT individuals. The government and its agents did not impede the work of these groups during the year.

Norway

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status. The government generally enforced this prohibition, although there were reports of violence against women and children, anti-Semitism, and stigmatizing statements against immigrants and Muslims.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law covers crimes and prohibits discrimination against LGBT individuals.

Transgender persons may change their name fairly easily, but long-standing governmental practice requires that, to change one's gender officially, a multidisciplinary specialized unit on transsexualism of the Oslo University Hospital must first diagnose the person as having "transsexual gender identity disorder." Approximately 120 persons were referred to the unit annually, of whom approximately half were diagnosed as transsexual. For a "real sex conversion" to take place, the person must undergo a sex-change operation. The entire process could last as long as 10 years.

The National Criminal Investigation Service maintained an online tip service for hate crimes, including those motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity. In 2013 it received 34 reports of hate crimes motivated by the victims' sexual orientation or gender identity. The NGO Norwegian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Organization estimated as many as 90 percent of crimes against LGBT individuals were not reported to police. The NGO ran an online reporting mechanism funded by the government and received approximately 25 reports during the year.

On July 22, three persons of Somali descent attacked a foreign citizen vacationing in Oslo due to his sexual orientation. Media widely reported the incident, which authorities classified as a hate crime. The trial took place in mid-October. The three defendants received sentences of six, seven, and 10 months in jail, respectively. They were ordered to pay the victim 1,000 kroner (\$133) as restitution and 25,000 kroner (\$3,330) as a fine.

The government funded a training program for police on engaging with the LGBT community.

Oman

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination against citizens on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, race, language, religion, place of residence, and social class. The government selectively enforced prohibitions on most bases of discrimination but did not do so for discrimination against women.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

LGBT persons faced discrimination under the law and in practice. The penal code criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct with a jail term of six months to three years. There were no reports of prosecutions during the year, although 18 prosecutions for sodomy occurred in 2012, the most recent year for which statistics were available. Social norms reinforced discrimination against LGBT persons.

The discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in any context remained a social taboo, and authorities took steps to block LGBT-related internet content. Observers believed that social stigma and intimidation prevented LGBT persons from reporting incidents of violence or abuse. In 2013 *The Week* published an article on the LGBT population that praised the country for its passive tolerance. Authorities prosecuted the newspaper's executive chairman for the LGBT content (see section 2.a.).

Transgender persons are not recognized as a gender class by the government.

Due to social conventions and potential persecution, there were no known LGBT organizations. There were no pride marches or LGBT rights advocacy events. Information was not available on official or private discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care based on sexual orientation and gender identity. There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination.

Pakistan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equality for all citizens and broadly prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, caste, residence, or place of birth. There was, however, significant societal and governmental discrimination based on each of these factors.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is a criminal offense; however, the government rarely prosecuted cases. The penalty for same-sex relations is a fine, two years' to life imprisonment, or both. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons rarely revealed their sexual orientation or gender identity. No laws protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Discrimination against LGBT persons was widely acknowledged privately, but insufficient data existed for accurate reporting, due in part to severe societal stigma and fear of recrimination for

those who came forward. In September 2013 the PTA blocked the country's first online platform for the LGBT community to share views and network.

Society generally shunned transgender persons, eunuchs, and intersex persons, collectively referred to as "hijras," who often lived together in slum communities and survived by begging and dancing at carnivals and weddings. Some also were involved in prostitution. Local authorities often denied hijras places in schools or admission to hospitals, and landlords often refused to rent or sell property to them. Hijras were often denied their fair share of inherited property. A 2012 Supreme Court ruling recognizes hijras as a "third gender" and allows them to obtain accurate national identification cards. Because of the ruling, hijras fully participated in the May 2013 elections for the first time as candidates and voters.

Violence continued against LGBT persons. In April police arrested a Lahore paramedic who confessed to killing three gay men whom he met on gay websites. Authorities suspended one senior officer allegedly involved in the attack, and the police department launched an investigation. On May 10, a group of men attacked and gang-raped a transgender woman in Karachi. Activists claimed police refused to conduct a thorough investigation despite having photographic evidence and contact information for one of the accused assailants. According to media reports, a transgender woman died in police custody after her arrest on October 23 in Bhawalpur. Police officials claimed the victim's death was an accident related to her attempt to escape, but members of the transgender community claimed the arresting officers beat her.

Palau

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There were no laws addressing sexual orientation and gender identity. One law criminalizing sodomy, regardless of the gender of the partners, remains in effect, although the only prosecution under this statute involved an adult male sexually abusing a young girl. There were no reports of violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Panama

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, or social status, but the government did not always enforce these prohibitions effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and there was societal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which often led to denial of employment opportunities (see section 7.d.). The PNP's regulations describe homosexual conduct as a "grave fault." Harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons by security forces was a major complaint of the New Men and Women of Panama (AHMNP), the main LGBT organization, but formal complaints were rare due to the perception that the reports were not taken seriously or that complaints could be used against claimants in the absence of nondiscrimination legislation. On June 28, gay rights advocates led the 10th annual gay pride parade without impediment.

The Panamanian Association of Transgender Persons reported regular incidents in which security forces refused to accept complaints of harassment of transgender individuals.

The country does not recognize any relationship between LGBT partners in terms of health care, parental rights, property rights, or any publicly provided services.

Papua New Guinea

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal protection under the law irrespective of race, tribe, place of origin, color, or sex; however, enforcement of the provisions was not effective.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual relations and acts of "gross indecency" between males are illegal. The maximum penalty for same-sex sexual relations is 14 years' imprisonment; for acts of gross indecency between male persons (a misdemeanor), three years. There were no reports of prosecutions directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons under these provisions during the year. There were no specific reports of societal violence or discrimination against such persons, but they were vulnerable to societal stigmatization, which may have led to underreporting.

Paraguay

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but it was not effectively enforced. Women, LGBT persons, indigenous persons, and persons of African ancestry also faced discrimination. The country has no comprehensive law against discrimination, which undermined enforcement of the constitutional clause against discrimination and the protection and restitution for victims of discrimination and societal abuses.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBT persons in employment, housing, access to education, or health care, and all types of such discrimination, including societal discrimination, occurred frequently. Penalties for sex with a minor between ages 14 and 16 are more severe if the victim and perpetrator are of the same sex. Same-gender perpetrators are subject to up to two years in prison; the maximum penalty for opposite-gender perpetrators is a fine. CODEHUPY reported widespread police harassment and discrimination against LGBT persons (see section 7.d.).

The Attorney General's Office is responsible for investigating discrimination cases; however, government agents often condoned such discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Panambi and other LGBT rights NGOs denounced the torture and killings of more than 50 transgender prostitutes between 1989 and 2013. Panambi reported 12 killings from 1989 to 1999 and 38 killings from 1999 to the present, with the most recent occurring in July 2013. There were no cases reported during the year. LGBT NGOs accused the Attorney General's Office of conducting cursory investigations that produced no tangible results.

On June 28, 200 advocates of LGBT rights in Asuncion marched in an International Day of LGBT Pride parade. There were no reports of harassment during the event. On September 27, 350 LGBT supporters marched in Asuncion in another parade in support of LGBT family rights.

On August 6, SOMOSGAY and the Committee for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS in the armed forces and National Police, an official committee of the military, signed a preliminary cooperation agreement stipulating that the NGO would carry out sexual health workshops, widespread HIV testing, and human rights training for armed forces and national police personnel.

Peru

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but enforcement lagged, and discrimination persisted. The law does not specifically protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and the government did not keep any national-level statistics on such discrimination. The Ministry of Interior's *Handbook of Human Rights Applied to the Civil Police* stipulates that police must respect human rights, especially of the most vulnerable groups, and refers explicitly to the rights of lesbian, gay, and transgender individuals. During the year, however, there were instances of official and societal discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, housing, and access to education and health care. According to NGO and Ombudsman Office reports, government authorities, including police, harassed and abused LGBT persons.

The law does not specifically guarantee transgender persons the right to identify with their chosen gender, including by changing their name and gender on government-issued identification. Transgender persons reported encountering obstacles when attempting to do so. A local NGO's 2012 survey reported that 94 percent of transgender persons in Lima stated their national identity document did not contain their desired name, and 13 percent of transgender persons chose not to register for a national identity document because they could not secure the name and gender that corresponds to their identity.

Local NGOs stated that discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was widespread, culturally sanctioned, and largely underreported for fear of violence or additional discrimination. NGOs reported that LGBT youth were frequently targets of severe bullying that contributed to higher rates of suicide than for straight youth. A local NGO reported four killings of LGBT persons through August. The government did not keep statistics on these crimes.

Philippines

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, disability, language, or minority status, but not discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Moreover, vague regulations and budgetary constraints continued to hinder implementation of specified protections.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No national laws criminalize consensual same-sex sexual conduct or prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Officials prohibit transgender individuals from self-reporting their gender on passport applications. Authorities print the sex assigned at birth, as reported on the certificate of birth, in the individual's passport.

NGOs seeking to protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals from discrimination and abuse continued to criticize the government for the absence of applicable law and policy. NGOs reported incidents of discrimination and abuse, including in employment, education, health care, housing, and social services (see section 7.d). The Rainbow Rights Project, Inc., a group of lawyers, continued to claim that LGBT human rights defenders, particularly in Muslim areas, experienced pressure from community authorities to conduct their activities less openly because of increasing religious radicalization.

Poland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination in "political, social, and economic life for any

reason whatsoever.” The law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender, disability, race, nationality, ethnic origin, and sexual orientation.

The law requires the ombudsman for citizen rights to monitor implementation of the principle of equal treatment and to support victims of discrimination. The ombudsman and NGOs asserted that some provisions of the antidiscrimination law may be unconstitutional, since they do not treat all groups equally, providing greater protection against discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, and gender than on disability, sexual orientation, or age.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While the constitution does not specifically prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, it prohibits discrimination “for any reason whatsoever,” and the laws on discrimination in employment cover sexual orientation and gender identity. Hate crime and incitement laws do not include gender identity or sexual orientation. The prime minister’s plenipotentiary for equal treatment monitors LGBT problems. The ombudsman for citizen rights monitors and promotes equal treatment and support for victims of discrimination on all grounds.

NGOs and politicians reported increasing acceptance of LGBT persons by society and the government but also stated that discrimination was still common in schools, workplaces, hospitals, and clinics (also see section 7.d.). There were some reports of skinhead violence and societal discrimination against LGBT persons, but NGOs maintained that most cases went unreported.

On August 22, the Szczecin District Court opened a trial into the fatal beating of a 21-year-old LGBT student by two 18-year-old men. The incident took place on January 4. Authorities charged one man with murder, the other with assault. At the beginning of the trial, the judge stated that it was hard to determine whether the men were motivated by homophobia. The Campaign against Homophobia attended the trial as a subsidiary prosecutor, in which role it could present evidence, question witnesses, and appeal the verdict.

A rainbow arch which was installed in central Warsaw in 2011 and served as a symbol of tolerance particularly for the LGBT community was burned several times, most recently early on the morning of August 7, when two inebriated men set it alight, causing partial damage. The city repaired it immediately.

On September 16, a Warsaw local court fined a person who assaulted the first openly gay member of parliament, Robert Biedron, following Warsaw’s equality parade in June 2013.

The government took several steps during the year to respond to societal discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The law requires the ombudsman to monitor and promote equal treatment and to support victims of discrimination on all grounds. The ombudsman received funding to implement these obligations.

The police advisor for equal treatment and the ombudsman for citizens’ rights cooperated with the police to publish a special handbook for police that promoted officers’ tolerance and understanding of diversity and counseled police officers on how to work with victims of various minorities, including LGBT individuals.

Portugal

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, and social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions. The law does not expressly make racist motivation an aggravating circumstance for all offenses. The procedure to file a complaint of racial discrimination continued to be lengthy and complicated. The current complaints system against police officers concerning racist or racially discriminatory acts was not functional, and there was serious underreporting.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The law bars lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender couples and single women from receiving medically assisted reproductive health care from government-funded health-care providers.

Qatar

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, language, and religion, but not disability, sexual orientation, or social status. Local custom, however, outweighed government enforcement of nondiscrimination laws. Legal, cultural, and institutional discrimination existed against women, noncitizens, and foreign workers. The UN special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants reported salaries were sometimes calculated on the basis of nationality rather than experience or qualification levels.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons faced discrimination under the law and in practice. The law prohibits same-sex sexual conduct between men but does not explicitly prohibit same-sex relations between women. Under the law a man convicted of having sexual relations with a boy younger than 16 years is subjected to a sentence of life in prison. A man convicted of having same-sex sexual relations with a man 16 years of age or older may receive a sentence of seven years in prison. The number of such cases before the courts during the year was unknown.

There were no public reports of violence against LGBT persons. LGBT individuals largely hid their sexual preferences in public due to an underlying pattern of discrimination toward LGBT persons based on cultural and religious values prevalent in the society. There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination nor are there antidiscrimination laws.

Due to social and religious conventions, there were no LGBT organizations, nor were there gay pride marches or gay rights advocacy events. Information was not available on official or private discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or

access to education or health care based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Victims of such discrimination, however, were unlikely to come forth and complain because of the potential for further harassment or discrimination.

Romania

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law forbids discrimination based on race, gender, disability, ethnicity, nationality, language, social status, beliefs, sexual orientation, age, noncontagious chronic disease, HIV infection, or belonging to an underprivileged category, or on any criteria that aim at restricting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The government did not enforce these prohibitions effectively, and women, as well as Roma and other minorities, often experienced discrimination and violence.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. NGOs reported that police abuse and societal discrimination against LGBT persons were common and that open hostility prevented the reporting of some harassment and discrimination. Members of the LGBT community continued to voice concerns about discrimination in public education and the health care system.

On March 13, Member of Parliament Sonia Draghici made derogatory statements about homosexuality in an interview with the daily newspaper *Gandul*, implying that it was a mental illness or at least a behavioral flaw and linking it to pedophilia.

In September, following a complaint by a client, a gay couple was forbidden by the director of the fitness club in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bucharest to change the clothes of their three-year-old daughter in the men's locker. The couple and ACCEPT Association, an NGO promoting LGBT rights, filed a complaint with the CNCD.

In September the Orthodox Church asked local authorities in Botosani to remove an array of umbrellas meant to provide shade at tables in a sitting area in the traditional city center. The array consisted of approximately 40 umbrellas of different colors, and Orthodox priests believed that their rainbow colors represented the LGBT community. Authorities acceded to the request and removed the umbrellas.

The law governing the ability of transgender persons to change their identity was vague and incomplete, resulting in inconsistency in judicial practice concerning legal recognition of gender identity, and in some cases recognition of a change in identity was denied unless a sex-reassignment intervention had occurred. Because of the difficult legal procedure for gender recognition, it was often impossible for transgender persons to get documents reflecting their gender identity, which led to difficulties in the area of all services requiring identity documents (health care, transportation pass, banking services). There were reports that transgender persons faced particular difficulties in accessing health care because doctors had very limited knowledge about transgender issues and, consequently, did not know how to treat transgender patients. There were almost no doctors who had the knowledge or willingness to undertake sex-reassignment surgery. Access to adequate psychological services was also limited because there were few specialists with the knowledge and expertise to deal with transgender issues, while others refused to accept transgender patients.

In June the High Court of Cassation and Justice ruled in favor of ACCEPT regarding the case of a young man whom police had harassed and threatened in 2011 based on his presumed sexual orientation. Police did not investigate the case, and the CNCD stated that it did not have the competence to investigate internal measures by the police.

On June 7, more than 500 persons participated in the gay pride parade in Bucharest, which transpired without incident. Prior to the pride parade, several dozen persons took part in a “normalcy march” sponsored by an extreme-right NGO, the New Right, to protest against homosexuality. The EU Commission and the embassies of 18 countries signed a message of support for the rights of LGBT persons.

Russia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, language, social status, or other circumstances, but the government did not universally enforce these prohibitions.

During the year hostile rhetoric and propaganda against some groups disseminated through state-run media outlets contributed to discrimination and xenophobia. The escalation in anti-immigrant and anti-LGBT rhetoric created an atmosphere in which nationalist groups could attack these persons with impunity, sometimes with police collusion.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

A 2013 law criminalizes the “propaganda” of nontraditional sexual relations to minors. The law effectively limits the rights of free expression and assembly for citizens who wish to publicly advocate for LGBT rights or express the opinion that homosexuality is normal. Examples of what the government considered LGBT propaganda included materials that “directly or indirectly approve of people who are in nontraditional sexual relationships.” LGBT persons reported heightened societal stigma and discrimination, which some attributed to increasing official promotion of intolerance and homophobia. Gay rights activists asserted that the majority of LGBT persons hid their orientation due to fear of losing their jobs or their homes as well as the threat of violence. Medical practitioners reportedly continued to limit or deny LGBT persons health services due to intolerance and prejudice.

LGBT persons faced discrimination in hiring and in the workplace. In a June report, HRW documented seven cases in six regions of the country in which employers fired LGBT persons for their sexual orientation or gender identity. In other cases employers fired LGBT persons for their public activism in support of LGBT rights.

In Moscow authorities refused to allow a gay pride parade for the ninth consecutive year, despite an ECHR ruling that the denial violated the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom from discrimination and otherwise violated free expression, association, and assembly rights of LGBT persons.

Human rights groups reported continuing violence against LGBT individuals. Openly gay men were particular targets of skinhead aggression, and police often failed to respond. Vigilante groups also used social media to pursue and bully LGBT teenagers and in

some cases lure them to encounters where they would torture them and subject them to degrading treatment, which the groups would sometimes record and post on the internet.

During the year there were reports of killings motivated by the sexual orientation of the victim. On February 25, local media in Moscow reported the Moscow City Court sentenced a man to nine years in prison for killing a doctor who allegedly suggested that they have “homosexual relations.” The man reportedly visited the apartment of the doctor and substance abuse counselor to seek medical help while under the influence of an unspecified drug. During that meeting the unnamed man told the court the doctor proposed that they have sex, infuriating the patient, who stabbed him in the back with a knife. The court found the man guilty of manslaughter.

In some cases courts gave reduced sentences to perpetrators of violence against LGBT individuals due to the sexual orientation of the victim. On September 17, a Vilyuchinsk court sentenced a man to one year of correctional labor for the 2012 murder of a gay Kamchatka resident on the basis that the crime was committed in a fit of passion.

On March 17, Andrei Lishchinskiy, the owner of Central Station, Moscow’s largest gay club, announced that he would close the nightclub permanently on March 21. The closure came as a result of a number of attacks in the previous year, including shootings, the release of a poisonous gas, and a coordinated attack by approximately 100 men. Lishchinskiy previously said that Moscow Police had refused to investigate any of the incidents and that none of his 30 complaints had received a police response.

LGBT activists often experienced threats and attacks in public, with police unwilling to assist. For example, on May 31, near the Oktyabr’skaya metro station in Moscow, a group of unidentified young men attacked a group of LGBT activists planning to participate in a “rainbow rally” dedicated to protecting the rights of gay and lesbian adolescents. The group attacked the activists with pepper spray and threw stones and eggs at the activists. Police did not arrest any of the attackers, and authorities did not open an official investigation.

On the weekend of February 27, the LGBT Sports Federation, a nationwide network of LGBT organizations focused on athletic engagement between LGBT individuals and supporters, attempted to hold a series of athletic competitions in Moscow, called the Open Games. A combination of private efforts and coordinated police engagements interrupted the planned events, including a bomb threat at the opening ceremony and venue cancellations for every event except table tennis. Similar disruptions occurred during St. Petersburg’s Queer Fest in September.

Although the law allows transgender individuals to change their names and gender classifications on government documents, they faced difficulties because the government had not established a standard procedure for doing so, and many civil registry offices denied these requests. When their documents failed to reflect their gender accurately, transgender persons often faced discrimination in accessing health care, education, housing, and employment.

A homophobic campaign continued in the state-controlled media, in which officials, journalists, and others called LGBT persons “perverts,” “sodomites,” and “abnormal,” and conflated homosexuality with pedophilia.

Rwanda

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law, without discrimination based on ethnic origin, tribe, clan, color, sex, region, social origin, religion or faith, opinion, economic status, culture, language, social status, or physical or mental disability. The constitution and law are silent on sexual orientation and gender identity. The government generally enforced these provisions, although problems remained.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There are no laws that criminalize sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct, and cabinet-level government officials expressed support for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. LGBT persons reported societal discrimination and abuse, and LGBT rights groups' staff reported occasional harassment by neighbors and police.

There were several reports that students at the secondary and university levels were suspended or expelled for same-sex relationships, but authorities did not arrest or prosecute students. The status of the cases was unknown at year's end.

There were no known reports of physical attacks against LGBT persons, nor were there any reports of LGBT persons fleeing the country due to harassment or attack.

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or sex, and the government generally respected these prohibitions. No specific legislation addresses discrimination based on disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity between men, which carries a penalty up to 10 years in prison, but there were no reports of the law being enforced during the year. The law does not prohibit sexual activity between women. No laws prohibit discrimination against a person on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Negative societal attitudes towards the LGBT community impeded the operation of LGBT organizations and the free association of LGBT persons. The government asserted it received no reports of violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation; however, unofficial reports indicated that violence and discrimination remained a problem. Anecdotal evidence suggested that LGBT persons were reluctant to report incidents of violence or abuse out of fear of retribution or reprisal due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Saint Lucia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, race, place of origin, or color, but no specific legislation addresses discrimination based on disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal under indecency statutes, and some same-sex sexual activity between men is also illegal under anal intercourse laws. Indecency statutes carry a maximum penalty of five years, and anal intercourse carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. No legislation protects persons from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

While the indecency statutes and anal intercourse laws were rarely enforced, there was widespread social discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons in the deeply conservative society. There were few openly LGBT persons in the country.

There were few reported incidents of violence or abuse during the year. Civil society representatives noted that LGBT persons were reluctant to report incidents of violence or abuse out of fear of retribution or reprisal due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

During the year the police force and the country's sole LGBT organization, United and Strong, conducted human rights training to educate selected officers on both general and LGBT-specific content.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides for equal treatment regardless of race or gender, and the government generally enforced this provision. The constitution does not address equal treatment regarding disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex conduct is illegal under indecency statutes and some sexual activity between men is also illegal under anal intercourse laws. Indecency statutes carry a maximum penalty of five years, and anal intercourse acts carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, although these laws were rarely enforced. No laws prohibit discrimination against a person on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Anecdotal evidence suggested there was social discrimination against LGBT persons in the deeply conservative society, although local observers believed such attitudes of intolerance were slowly improving. Members of professional and business classes were

more inclined to conceal their sexual orientation.

Samoa

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally respected these provisions. The constitution does not address sexual orientation or gender identity. The society publicly recognizes the transgender Fa'afafine community, although members of the community reported instances of social discrimination. Male same-sex sexual activity is illegal. Politics and culture generally reflected a heritage of matai privilege and power, and members of certain families of high traditional status possessed some advantages.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

“Sodomy” and “indecent between males” are illegal, with maximum penalties of seven and five years’ imprisonment, respectively, but these provisions were not actively enforced with regard to consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

Although the pre-existing law was not enforced for decades, the 2013 Crimes Act decriminalizes the act of “impersonating a woman.”

Although there were no reports of societal violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity, there were isolated cases of discrimination.

San Marino

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status. The government effectively enforced antidiscrimination laws.

Acts Of Violence, Discrimination, And Other Abuses Based On Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity.

The law forbids discrimination based on sex or personal, economic, social, political, or religious status. Such laws apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

The law punishes discriminatory acts based on sexual orientation. In the first 10 months of the year, there were no official or media reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and there were no indications that stigma or intimidation were factors in preventing persons from reporting incidents of abuse.

There were no reports of discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS or other groups. The country’s laws prohibit persons from disseminating through any means ideas based

on racial or ethnic hatred, or to commit or encourage others to commit discriminatory acts on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation, and offenders are subject to prosecution. By law the perpetration of an offense for purposes related to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation is an aggravating circumstance.

Sao Tome and Principe

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government did not effectively enforce the law.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity, but there were occasional reports of societal discrimination, primarily rejection by family and friends, based on sexual orientation. While there were no official impediments, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations did not exist. There were no reports social stigma or intimidation was a factor in preventing the reporting of incidents of abuse.

Saudi Arabia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race but not gender, sex, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status. The law and tradition discriminate based on gender. The law and the guardianship system restrict women to the status of legal dependents vis-a-vis their male guardians. This status is unchanged even after women reach adulthood. Women and some men faced widespread and state-enforced segregation based on societal, cultural, and religious traditions.

The government generally reinforced sharia-based traditional prohibitions on discrimination based on disability, language, social status, or race. Nevertheless, discrimination based on race, lineage, or social status were common.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Under sharia as interpreted in the country, consensual same-sex sexual conduct is punishable by death or flogging, depending on the perceived seriousness of the case. It is illegal for men “to behave like women” or to wear women’s clothes, and vice versa. Due to social conventions and potential persecution, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations did not operate openly, nor were there gay rights advocacy events of any kind. There were reports of official societal discrimination, physical violence, and harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, statelessness, access to education, or health care. Stigma or intimidation was likely to limit reports of incidents of abuse. Sexual orientation and

gender identity could constitute the basis for harassment, blackmail, or other actions.

There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination. In March Abdullatif Al al-Sheikh, president of the CPVPV, stated the CPVPV regularly used undercover agents to identify and arrest the owners of social media accounts that distributed pornographic content or served as social networking tools for LGBT persons in the kingdom.

In April local authorities and the CPVPV raided a concert in a rest house in Jeddah and arrested 35 gay men, some of whom were dressed in women's clothing. In July the Medina Criminal Court sentenced a 24-year old man to three years in prison and 450 lashes for soliciting sex with other men using Twitter.

Senegal

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides that men and women are equal under the law, and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. Nevertheless, discrimination was widespread, and antidiscrimination laws, in particular laws against violence against women and children, generally were not enforced. There are no laws to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual activity, referred to in the law as an "unnatural act," is a criminal offense, and penalties ranged from one to five years' imprisonment and fines of between 100,000 and 1.5 million CFA francs (\$190 and \$2,840). Enforcement was haphazard, but authorities prosecuted approximately 10 cases each year.

LGBT persons often faced widespread discrimination, social intolerance, and acts of violence. Local NGOs worked actively on LGBT rights issues, but because of social stigma and laws against homosexuality, they maintained an exceedingly low profile. There are no laws to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The media rarely reported acts of hatred or violence against LGBT persons. Local human rights groups, however, reported LGBT persons faced frequent harassment by police, including arbitrary arrest and poor treatment in detention due to their sexual orientation.

Serbia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government made efforts to enforce these prohibitions effectively. Discrimination continued, however, against women, LGBT persons, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities, particularly Roma. Violence against women and children were problems.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Violence and discrimination against members of the LGBT community were serious problems. While attacks happened often, few were reported to the authorities because victims were afraid of further harassment.

The NGO Gay Straight Alliance received death threats via e-mail. LGBT activists maintained that members of the LGBT community did not report many violent attacks against them to police because the victims did not believe their cases would be addressed properly and wanted to avoid further victimization from police or publicity generated by their complaints. LGBT activists also noted the lack of proper government response to violent acts against the LGBT community encouraged perpetrators to target members of the community with death threats, assaults, and verbal abuse.

On July 11, the Belgrade Appellate Court reached a final verdict confirming that Dragan Markovic "Palma," a member of parliament and president of the political party United Serbia, committed serious forms of discrimination against the LGBT population. The court found Palma's address to media before the 2013 Pride Parade, in which he said that "we are against any gathering where homosexuals would demonstrate in streets of Belgrade and want to show their disease as normal," to be a serious form of discrimination. The NGO that brought the suit, the Gay Straight Alliance, welcomed the final decision.

On June 27, LGBT and other human rights groups held a small pride day parade in downtown Belgrade, without any security incidents. They organized the parade quietly, without announcing it online or in the media. Organizers coordinated with police, who provided sufficient protection for the marchers and did not leak news of the event. On September 28, the Belgrade pride parade took place for the first time in four years. An estimated 1,000 to 1,500 participants marched in the event, including several high-level Serbian government officials. Police, who greatly outnumbered the participants in the parade, shut down a large portion of central Belgrade to ensure there was no contact between parade participants and hooligans.

Seychelles

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law affirm the right to be free from all types of discrimination but do not prohibit discrimination based on specific factors. There was no overt discrimination in housing, employment, education, or other social services based on race, gender, ethnicity, or nationality. There were anecdotal reports of discrimination based on political affiliation.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex activity between men is punishable by 14 years' imprisonment, but the law was not enforced. There were no reports of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, although stigma was likely a factor preventing incidents of abuse from being reported. No local NGOs worked openly or

exclusively for the rights of the LGBT population.

During the year the Judicial College organized a national public debate on the rights of LGBT persons and whether same sex activities should be decriminalized. Local media covered the event, and social media carried the debate for several weeks.

Sierra Leone

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, tribe, sex, place of origin, political opinion, color, creed, or disability. The law does not acknowledge sexual orientation or gender identity as protected categories.

The government did not effectively enforce the prohibition of discrimination based on gender as it affected women and girls, and a number of legal acts and customary laws contravened the constitutional provision. The other prohibitions on discrimination were generally enforced.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

A law from 1861 prohibits male-to-male sexual acts (“buggery” and “crimes against nature”); however, there is no legal prohibition against female-to-female sex. The 1861 law, which carries a penalty of life imprisonment for “indecent assault” upon a man or 10 years for attempting such an assault, was not enforced. The constitution does not offer protection from discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. During the country’s Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, the attorney general told the Working Group that all persons in the country would be protected regardless of their sexual orientation. The government subsequently rejected three of 129 Working Group recommendations, two calling for decriminalizing all sexual activity between consenting adults and one calling for legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

A few organizations, including Dignity Association and the local chapter of Pride Equality, supported LGBT persons, but they maintained low profiles. Gay pride parades and other public displays of solidarity could not safely take place.

Social discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity occurred in nearly every facet of life for known LGBT persons, and many chose to have heterosexual relationships and family units to shield them. In the areas of employment and education, sexual orientation or gender identity was the basis for abusive treatment, which led individuals to leave their jobs or courses of study. It was difficult for gay men and lesbians to receive health services due to fear that their confidentiality rights would be ignored if they were honest about their ailments; many chose not to be tested or treated for sexually transmitted infections. Secure housing was also a problem for LGBT persons. Families frequently shunned their gay children, leading some to turn to prostitution to survive. Adults could lose their leases if their sexual orientation became public. Lesbian girls and women were also victims of “planned rapes” initiated by family members in an effort to change their sexual orientation. Religious groups reportedly promoted discrimination against the LGBT community.

In 2013 international NGO Global Rights, in cooperation with local LGBT organizations,

released a report on discrimination against LGBT individuals. The report, *Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Access to Health Care and Violence/Bias: A Sierra Leone Case Study*, documented specific examples of abuse, while also providing survey results illustrating high levels of discrimination experienced by LGBT persons. More than half of medical practitioners surveyed were unwilling to provide medical services to LGBT patients, and virtually all LGBT respondents had experienced some form of harassment or discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Singapore

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution states that all persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law, and the government generally respected these provisions; there is no explicit provision granting equal rights to women and minorities. Mindful of the country's history of intercommunal tension, the government took numerous measures to provide for racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural nondiscrimination. Social, economic, and cultural benefits and facilities were available to all citizens regardless of race, religion, or gender.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Section 377a of the penal code criminalizes and punishes male-to-male sexual relations as follows: "Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or abets the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years." The law does not criminalize female-to-female sexual relations.

After the failure of a 2007 attempt to repeal this provision, Prime Minister Lee stated that authorities would not actively enforce the statute.

In 2013 a justice of the High Court dismissed two constitutional challenges to Section 377a. A gay couple brought one case in 2012, and the other stemmed from the arrest of two men in 2010 for committing, "an act of gross indecency in a public space." The court upheld Section 377a as constitutional, reasoning that because the law is not enforced, there is no need to overturn it, and also that because it was not proven that people are born homosexuals, Section 377a cannot infringe upon an individual's "born" or constitutional rights. During the year the Court of Appeals heard the cases and also rejected the challenge, finding 377a to be consistent with article 9 that guarantees the right to life and liberty, and article 12, which guarantees the right to equal protection under the law. The court noted that "the remedy lies, if at all, in the legislative sphere."

No laws explicitly provide for the protection of the LGBT community from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Moreover, as single persons are prevented from purchasing government housing reserved for married couples until age 35, LGBT persons are subject to these restrictions.

Recruitment procedures do not bar members of the LGBT community from military service but classify LGBT military personnel by sexual orientation and evaluates them on a scale of "effeminacy." LGBT citizens may become government workers but must

declare their sexual orientation on job applications. Changing of gender on official documents is allowed only through sex reassignments. Media censorship perpetuated negative stereotypes of LGBT individuals by restricting portrayals of LGBT life. The MDA continued to censor films and television shows with LGBT themes. According to the MDA website, authorities allow the broadcast of LGBT themes on television, “as long as the presentation does not justify, promote, or glamorize such a lifestyle” (see section 2.a.).

Slovakia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and the law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status; the government made efforts to enforce these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Persons intending to change their legal gender status need to obtain medical approval, which usually requires undergoing gender-reassignment surgery. According to LGBT rights advocates, prejudice and official and societal discrimination persisted, although no official cases were reported.

The fifth Bratislava gay pride parade, held in June, demonstrated good cooperation between police and organizers, and no major incidents were reported. The second Kosice gay pride parade was held in September, and no major incidents were reported.

Slovenia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and social status. The government usually enforced these prohibitions effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While the law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, societal discrimination was widespread, and there were cases of violence against LGBT persons. The law bans incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation.

The Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities, NGOs, and law enforcement authorities monitor but do not track the exact number of cases of violence against LGBT persons. According to LGBT sources, most victims did not report these cases. ECRI found hate speech on the internet increased, with LGBT persons being one of the main targets.

Solomon Islands

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides that no person--regardless of race, place of origin, color, or disability--shall be treated in a discriminatory manner with respect to access to public places. The constitution further prohibits any laws that would have discriminatory effects and provides that no person should be treated in a discriminatory manner by anyone acting in an official capacity. Despite constitutional and legal protections, women remained the victims of discrimination in the male-dominated society. Unemployment remained high, and there were limited job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

“Sodomy” is illegal, as are “indecent practices between persons of the same sex.” The maximum penalty for the former is 14 years’ imprisonment and for the latter five years. There were no reports of arrests or prosecutions directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons under these provisions during the year, and it appeared that these laws generally were not enforced. There were no reports of violence or discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity, although stigma may hinder some from reporting.

Somalia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The provisional federal constitution states that all citizens, regardless of sex, religion, social or economic status, political opinion, clan, disability, occupation, birth, dialect, age, race, color, tribe, ethnicity, culture, or wealth, shall have equal rights and duties before the law. The provisional constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Authorities did not enforce antidiscrimination provisions effectively in any of the regions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Same-sex sexual contact is punishable by imprisonment for two months to three years. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Society considered sexual orientation and gender identity taboo topics, and there was no known public discussion of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in any region of the country. There were no known LGBT organizations, and no LGBT events occurred. There were few reports of societal violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity due to severe societal stigma that prevented LGBT individuals from making their sexual orientation or gender identity publicly known. There were no known actions to investigate or punish those complicit in abuses. Hate crime laws or other criminal justice mechanisms did not exist to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the LGBT community.

South Africa

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, disability, ethnic or social origin, color, age, culture, language, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or marital status. Nevertheless, entrenched attitudes and practices often resulted in gender-based violence and employment inequities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The post-apartheid constitution outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation, but, according to a 2013 Pew Research Center study, 61 percent of respondents said society should not accept homosexuality. This prevailing cultural attitude influenced service delivery by individual government employees at the local level. NGOs reported the prevailing culture also negatively influenced hiring practices by local firms, particularly for transgender and intersex individuals.

There were reports of official mistreatment or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity despite clear government policies prohibiting discrimination. A 2011 Human Rights Watch report highlighted violence and discrimination, particularly faced by lesbians and transgender persons. The report documented cases of “secondary victimization” of lesbians, including cases in which police harassed, ridiculed, and assaulted victims of sexual- and gender-based violence when they reported crimes. According to the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry Report released on August 25, LGBT individuals were particularly vulnerable to violent crime due to anti-LGBT attitudes within the community and among police. Anti-LGBT attitudes among junior members of SAPS affected how SAPS handled complaints by LGBT individuals, and management did not always address the problem.

During the year the government launched a National Intervention Strategy to provide rapid-response teams from civil society and various government departments to ensure law enforcement officials dealt with crimes against the LGBT community promptly and professionally. At the launch of the strategy for the LGBT sector in April, then justice minister Jeff Radebe said more than 30 LGBT individuals were raped since 2012 and that many more cases had probably been classified incorrectly.

On March 22, in Ceres, Western Cape, a man raped openly gay David Olyn and allegedly invited a group of young men to watch as he beat him to death and burned the body. Police arrested the suspect and charged him with murder. The trial continued at year’s end.

On August 15, Stoffel Pule Botlhokwe raped and killed open lesbian Disebo “Gift” Owen in Ventersdorp, Northwest Province. Police acted quickly to collect evidence in the high-profile case, arrested Botlhokwe, and charged him with murder. The trial continued at year’s end.

The trial of Lekgoa Lesley Motleleng for the June 2013 killing of Duduzile Zozo, an open lesbian, ended with a conviction and a 30-year jail sentence. Motleleng sexually assaulted Zozo because of her sexual orientation; Zozo subsequently died from internal injuries. In his ruling the judge said he wanted to send a strong message that attacks

motivated by bias against someone’s sexual orientation would not be tolerated.

South Sudan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The transitional constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status but is silent on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The government did not effectively enforce the prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not prohibit sodomy, but it prohibits “unnatural offenses,” defined as “carnal intercourse against the order of nature.” Unnatural offenses are punishable by up to 10 years’ imprisonment if committed with consent and up to 14 years if without consent. There were no reports authorities enforced the law during the year.

Societal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons was widespread. There were no known LGBT organizations. While there were no reports of specific incidents of discrimination or abuse during the year, stigma was a likely factor in preventing incidents from being reported.

Spain

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, or social status, and the government generally enforced the law effectively.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The LGBT community was widely accepted throughout the country. Discrimination in employment is banned. The law can consider an anti-LGBT hate element an aggravating circumstance in crimes.

On October 2, the Catalan parliament approved the Law on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transsexual People’s Rights and on the Eradication of Homophobia, Lesbophobia, and Transphobia. The first of its kind in the country, the law provides members of the LGBT community greater protections than those provided by national law and prohibits discrimination based on sexuality. It reverses the burden of proof involved in cases of discrimination in the realms of civil and social law. The law is limited to competencies of the regional government, such as the provision of education and health care.

The Ministry of Justice ordered all Spanish consulates to allow enrollment in the civil registry of children born through surrogacy. The order entered into force on July 14.

A report from the security forces indicated that of the 550 hate crimes recorded during the first three months of the year, 235 were focused on LGBT members.

In January a Barcelona court sentenced the manager of an Austrian transportation company based in Barcelona to three and one-half years in prison for accessing his employees' e-mail accounts without permission. He found information indicating two employees were gay and then conveyed that information to management in their Austrian office. His actions led to the dismissal of the two individuals (see also section 7.d.).

Sri Lanka

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. There were instances, however, in which gender, religious, and ethnic-based discrimination occurred.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Same-sex sexual activity is punishable by a prison sentence of up to 10 years, and there were no legal safeguards to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Authorities very rarely enforced the criminal provisions. In recent years human rights organizations reported that, while not actively arresting and prosecuting members of the LGBT community, police harassed and extorted money or sexual favors from LGBT individuals with impunity and assaulted gay men and lesbians in Colombo and other areas. Crimes and harassment against LGBT individuals were a problem, although such incidents often went unreported. Social stigma against LGBT persons remained a problem. There were reports that persons undergoing gender-reassignment procedures had difficulty amending government documents to reflect those changes. A civil society group that worked to advance LGBT rights reported close monitoring by security and intelligence forces.

In a March report by the Women's Support Group, *"Sri Lanka: Not Gonna Take it Lying Down,"* 13 of 33 LGBT persons interviewed in the country between 2010 and 2012 admitted to having been the victim of some kind of violence at the hands of state agents. Interviewees noted police often utilized existing laws, such as the 1842 Vagrants Ordinance, to detain any individual deemed to be "loitering," which generally led to detention and at times physical and sexual abuse. Interviewees also noted that police and antigay groups also used penal code sections on "gross indecency" and "cheating by personation" to brand LGBT persons as "perverts and criminals." There was also a general perception in the LGBT community that police officers used blackmail and violence against persons they perceived to be homosexual, bisexual, or transgender. The report concluded that incidents of physical violence, both in the public and private spheres, remained underreported and undocumented and that LGBT persons who experienced physical violence "rarely seek compensation, redress or even counselling." Members of the LGBT community, the study stressed, felt they had "no access to redress."

In September the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission released a "shadow report" on the conditions confronting the country's LGBT community as part of the review of the application and implementation of the ICCPR in Sri Lanka conducted by

the OHCHR's Human Rights Committee. The report was based upon the previously cited Women's Support Group interviews. On September 3, the government issued a written response to the Human Rights Committee that addressed the protection of the rights of the LGBT community in the country, noting the constitution "protects persons from stigmatization and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identities." The Human Rights Committee pursued the issue and asked the government to clarify what it had done to amend the constitution to include explicit protections based on sexual orientation and gender identities. In response Bimba Jayasinghe Thilakeratne, additional solicitor general with the Attorney General's Department, observed that the constitution "ensures equality for sexual orientation and gender identity" and stated "laws discriminating on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity are unconstitutional."

Sudan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The interim constitution states, "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religious creed, political opinion, or ethnic origin to the equal protection under the law." Other articles of the constitution encourage tolerance between different tribes and provides protections for women and persons with disabilities. The law provides safeguards for children. The government worked to promote the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities. It did not always provide protections to persons of different religious groups. There were no protections for persons based on their sexual orientation or identification.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons are not considered a protected class under antidiscrimination laws. The law does not specifically prohibit homosexuality but criminalizes sodomy, which is punishable by death. Antigay sentiment was pervasive in society. LGBT individuals expressed concern for their safety and did not identify themselves publicly. A few LGBT organizations existed but operated underground due to fear of official and societal discrimination. Several LGBT persons felt compelled to leave the country due to fear of persecution, intimidation, or harassment.

There were no reports of official action to investigate or punish those complicit in LGBT-related discrimination or abuses.

Suriname

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, ethnicity, but it does not address discrimination based on disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or social status. Various sectors of the population--such as women, Maroons, Amerindians, persons with HIV/AIDS, and LGBT persons--suffered forms of discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No specific laws protect LGBT persons from discrimination or grant them any specific rights. The National Assembly and government openly discriminated against same-sex couples; they were not recognized and were specifically excluded from new social security legislation in August.

LGBT groups could associate freely, were very active, and advocated within society under the same laws that pertain to the assembly and association of other groups.

There were very few official reports of societal violence against LGBT persons, primarily due to fear of retribution, although there was a reported case of abuse by police. During the year popular local artists released a song perceived to incite hate and direct violence against LGBT persons, and local evangelical organizations spoke out against LGBT persons and their advocacy for rights. There were reports of societal discrimination of the LGBT community in areas of employment and housing (see section 7.d.).

Swaziland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, age, ethnicity, religion, political opinion, or social status, but the government did not consistently enforce the law.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While colonial-era legislation against sodomy remains on the books, no penalties are specified and there were no arrests. On several occasions throughout the year, the government issued statements that same-sex relationships and acts were illegal but did not prosecute any cases. Societal discrimination against LGBT persons was prevalent, and LGBT persons generally concealed their sexual orientation and gender identity. There were no known acts of violence. Gay men and lesbians who were open about their sexual orientation and relationships faced censure and exclusion from the chieftdom-based patronage system, which could result in eviction from one's home. Chiefs, pastors, and government officials criticized same-sex sexual conduct as neither Swazi nor Christian. LGBT advocacy organizations had trouble registering with the government. One such organization, House of Pride, was under the umbrella of another organization dealing with HIV/AIDS. It was difficult to determine the extent of employment discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity because victims were not likely to come forward, and most LGBT persons were not open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Sweden

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

While the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, social status, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, the government did not always effectively enforce these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

During the year there were isolated incidents of societal violence and discrimination against persons perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). The NCCP reported 630 hate crimes in 2013 based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Antidiscrimination laws exist, are enforced, and apply to LGBT individuals.

In January the government presented its first comprehensive strategy for LGBT rights. Its purpose was to strengthen the LGBT situation in Sweden. In addition the year's budget included an increase in the government's annual grants to organizations for LGBT persons from 6.3 million kronor (\$930,000) to 7.3 million kronor (\$1.07 million) annually.

Switzerland

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government generally enforced these prohibitions.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The country's antidiscrimination law does not apply to sexual orientation or specifically address lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) problems, which was a source of major concern to the country's LGBT community.

There were occasional reports of societal violence or discrimination based on opposition to LGBT orientation. According to the organization Pink Cop (gay and lesbian police officers), however, the extent of physical violence was difficult to gauge, in view of the absence of official statistics on LGBT-oriented violence or discrimination. Pink Cop noted that authorities did not specifically prosecute hate crime. While the LGBT umbrella organization Pink Cross did not record any physical assaults in 2013, it documented 10 to 15 harassment cases, particularly in connection with workplace discrimination (see section 7.d.).

During the year NGOs criticized the government's restrictive asylum policy, which requires LGBT refugees to provide substantiated evidence of oppression in their countries of origin in order to receive asylum.

In March 2013 the city of Zurich's Office for Equality extended its mandate to include LGBT problems. During the year the office held several public discussion forums on the struggles of transgender individuals, the legal and social rights of rainbow families, and the evolution of homophobia. The office initiated a poster campaign in seven languages to encourage family members to accept their children's sexual and gender

identity.

A 2012 study on homophobic and transphobic violence, with a cohort of more than 260 LGBT persons between the ages of 16 and 60, indicated that 73 percent of respondents had experienced insults, 81 percent received threats, and 7 percent were spat on because of their sexual orientation. Although only 1.5 percent of respondents experienced violence resulting in serious injuries, 5 percent suffered minor injuries and 12 percent experienced minor physical violence, involving no injuries. According to the study, young men carried out the attacks, mostly at night. When asked if they feared attacks, approximately 35 percent of gay and lesbian respondents and 70 percent of transgender respondents answered “to a high degree” or “very high degree.” The study, the first of its kind in the country, asserted the reason for this difference was that the gay and lesbian movement was older and more accepted than the transgender movement.

A study released by the Transgender Network in 2012 found that 20 percent of transgender persons were unemployed, a rate six times higher than among the general population (see section 7.d.). With the support of the Federal Office for Gender Equality, the Transgender Network continued a project to document transgender persons in the labor market.

During the year, LGBT activists sought to establish a central office tasked with collecting data and publishing statistics on verbal or physical attacks on LGBT individuals.

Syria

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equal rights and equal opportunity for all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The constitution does not address sexual orientation or gender identity. The government did not enforce the law effectively or make any serious attempt to do so. Women faced widespread violence, discrimination, and significant restrictions on their rights. ISIL imposed severe restrictions on women’s personal conduct, attire, and freedom of movement in the territory it controlled (see section 1.g.).

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The penal code prohibits homosexual relations, defined as “carnal relations against the order of nature,” and provides for at least three years’ imprisonment. Specifically, the law criminalizes any sexual act that is “contrary to nature.” In previous years police used this charge to prosecute lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. There were no reports of prosecutions under the law during the year; however, reports indicated the government arrested dozens of gay men and lesbians over the past several years on charges such as abusing social values; selling, buying, or consuming illegal drugs; and organizing and promoting “obscene” parties.

Although there were no known domestic NGOs focused on LGBT matters, there were several online networking communities, including an online LGBT-oriented magazine. Human rights activists reported there was overt societal discrimination based on sexual

orientation and gender identity in all aspects of society. There were also reports of extremist groups threatening LGBT activists.

Local media reported numerous instances in which security forces used accusations of homosexuality as a pretext to detain, arrest, and torture civilians. The frequency of such instances was difficult to determine since police rarely reported their rationale for arrests. Furthermore, social stigma prevented many victims of such abuse from coming forward, even when accusations were false.

Taiwan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation or gender identity, or social status.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law stipulates that employers cannot discriminate against job seekers on the basis of sexual orientation. Violators face a fine of NT\$300,000 (\$9,700) to NT\$1.5 million (\$48,000). According to activists for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights, violence against LGBT persons with HIV/AIDS was a problem, but instances of police pressure on LGBT-friendly bars and bookstores were rare and continued to decrease. The police response to violence against LGBT persons with HIV/AIDS was adequate. LGBT rights activists alleged that restrictions on doctors providing fertility treatments to unmarried persons unfairly resulted in discrimination against LGBT persons.

Tajikistan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides for the rights and freedoms of every person regardless of race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but there was discrimination against women and persons with disabilities. Trafficking in persons for sexual and labor exploitation remained a problem.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While same-sex sexual conduct is legal in the country, and the age of consent is the same as for heterosexual relationships, the law does not provide legal protection against discrimination. Homophobic attitudes and little societal tolerance toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons made it rare for individuals to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity. Throughout the country there were reports that LGBT individuals faced physical and psychological abuse, including from police.

There is no law against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and LGBT persons were victims of police harassment and faced threats of public beatings by community members. Public activism on behalf of LGBT persons was limited. LGBT representatives claimed law enforcement officials extorted money from LGBT persons by threatening to tell their employers or families of their activities. Hate crimes against members of the LGBT community reportedly went unaddressed. LGBT representatives claimed health-care providers discriminated against and harassed LGBT persons.

On June 5, Minister of Internal Affairs Ramazon Rahimzoda announced that individuals detained for immoral crimes or who have venereal diseases would have their names, photos, and fingerprints entered into a special electronic database. There is no legal definition of “immoral crimes,” but subsequent detentions focused on suspected violators of a legal provision regarding the organization or maintenance of brothels, procuring, or pimping. In the first two weeks of June, law enforcement officers detained more than 500 individuals for “immoral behavior,” including suspected sex workers and those suspected of being LGBT persons. Police subjected these individuals to forced HIV and sexually transmitted disease testing, an illegal activity. On June 12, a Ministry of Internal Affairs representative told reporters that, as part of these arrests, police had detained three individuals for “homosexual conduct,” although the law does not outlaw homosexuality. On June 18, 30 local and international NGOs jointly wrote Rahimzoda to express concern that authorities denied the detainees access to a lawyer and taunted, assaulted, and blackmailed them.

On February 7, the head of the Council of Ulema and head Hanafi Sunni cleric Saidmukarram Abduqodirzoda told Muslims during Friday prayers at the Dushanbe Grand Mosque to shun LGBT persons and exhorted them to teach their children to avoid such “sinful behavior.” Mullahs in other mosques also delivered sermons against homosexuality on February 7 in response to a request by the Committee on Religious Affairs that clerics discuss “nontraditional sexual relations” in their sermons.

It was difficult for transgender persons to obtain new official documents from the government. The law allows for changing gender in identity papers if a medical organization provides an authorized document. Because a document of this form does not exist, it was very difficult for transgender persons to change their legal identity to match their gender. This created internal problems involving anything requiring government identification and could prevent persons from traveling abroad, since they could not obtain a new passport.

Tanzania

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on nationality, tribe, place of origin, political ideology, color, sex, or social status. The government did not effectively enforce the prohibitions. No provisions prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, language, or gender. The law prohibits certain forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is illegal on the mainland and on Zanzibar. The law on both the mainland and Zanzibar punishes “gross indecency” by up to five years in prison or a fine. The law punishes any person who has carnal knowledge of another against the order of nature or permits a man to have carnal knowledge of him against the order of nature with a prison sentence of 30 years to life on the mainland and imprisonment up to 14 years in Zanzibar. In Zanzibar the law provides for imprisonment up to five years or a fine for “acts of lesbianism.” The burden of proof in such cases is significant. According to a 2013 Human Rights Watch report, arrests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons rarely led to prosecutions; usually they were a pretext for police to collect bribes or coerce sex from vulnerable individuals. Nonetheless, the CHRAGG’s 2011 prison visits revealed that “unnatural offenses” were among the most common reasons for pretrial detention of minors. In the past courts charged individuals suspected of same-sex sexual conduct with loitering or prostitution. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBT persons faced societal discrimination that restricted their access to health care including access to information about HIV, housing, and employment. There were no known government efforts to combat such discrimination.

Thailand

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The interim constitution promulgated by the NCPO on July 22 purports to protect “all human dignity, rights, liberties and equality of the people,” but it does not specifically mention protection against discrimination for minority populations.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws criminalize sexual orientation or consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups were able to register with the government, although there were some restrictions on the wording used in registering their group names. They reported that police treated LGBT victims of crime the same as other persons except in the case of sexual crimes, where there continued to be a tendency to downplay sexual abuse or not to take harassment seriously.

The law does not permit transgender individuals to change their gender on identification documents, which, coupled with societal discrimination, limited employment opportunities for transgender individuals.

A 2013 study commissioned by Plan International Thailand in partnership with UNESCO and Mahidol University found that in both private and public secondary schools, students teased or bullied other students whose gender expression did not match local gender norms; secondary schools either did not cover sexual diversity topics or covered them inconsistently and used stigmatizing terminology; and schools generally lacked explicit antibullying policies, including policies specifically aimed at reducing bullying based on gender identity or sexual orientation. In May the Corporal Punishment Curriculum Development Committee of the Office of Promotion and Protection of Children, Youth, the Elderly, and Vulnerable Groups, under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, invited Plan International Thailand to present its

report to the committee.

A local NGO reported that police targeted transgender individuals for harassment and discrimination in the tourist city of Pattaya.

University officials allowed transgender students to participate in commencement ceremonies and sit for examinations while wearing gender-specific uniforms of their choice on a case-by-case basis. At the same time, university authorities usually required students to obtain official permission before they could wear their chosen uniform. Such permissions remained voluntary for each school. On June 27, the NHRC issued a resolution advising universities to revise regulations to permit transgender students to attend class, sit for examinations, and participate in commencement ceremonies while wearing gender-specific uniforms of their choice. Failure to do so, the commission stated, would violate the human dignity and rights of transgender students.

There was some continued commercial discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, some life insurance companies refused to issue policies to gay men, although some companies expressed willingness to sell policies to LGBT citizens with provisions for full transfer of benefits to same-sex partners. NGOs reported that more insurance companies had begun to accept same-sex partner beneficiaries, but it remained at the company's discretion. NGOs alleged that some nightclubs, bars, hotels, and factories denied entry or employment to LGBT individuals, particularly transgender persons.

Timor-Leste

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Government regulations prohibit all forms of discrimination. Nonetheless, violence against women was a major problem, and discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community occurred.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law makes no reference to consensual same-sex sexual relations. LGBT persons were not highly visible in the country, although there were some openly gay public personalities. There were no formal reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, due in part to limited awareness of the issue and a lack of formal legal protections. The Islands of South East Asia Network on male and transgendered sexual health reported that in August a transgender person was beaten in Aileu district based on her clothing choices, and in October another transgender person was stabbed and beaten by her brother.

Togo

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, although the government did not enforce these provisions

effectively. The constitution and law do not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law provides that a person who engages in consensual same-sex sexual activity may be sentenced to one to three years' imprisonment and fined 100,000 to 500,000 CFA (\$189 to \$947), but the law was not enforced directly. On those occasions when police do arrest someone for engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity, authorities file a charge for some other violation as a pretext for the arrest, such as disturbing the peace or public urination. The media code forbids promotion of immorality, and includes same-sex sexual activity. LGBT persons faced societal discrimination in employment, housing, and access to education and health care. Existing antidiscrimination laws do not apply to LGBT persons (see section 7.d.). No laws allow transgendered persons to change gender markers on government-issued identity documents.

No organizations openly focused on LGBT matters; LGBT organizations organized as public health or general human rights organizations. Activists reported violence against LGBT persons was common, but police ignored complaints. Most human rights organizations, including the CNDH, refused to address LGBT problems.

Tonga

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the constitution prohibits general discrimination, the government did not effectively enforce this provision, and the law confirms the special status of members of the royal family and the nobility. While social, cultural, and economic facilities were available to all citizens regardless of race and religion, members of the hereditary nobility had substantial advantages, including control over most land and a generally privileged status.

The law provides for the unequal treatment of women.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

By law "sodomy with another person" is a crime with a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, but there were no reports of prosecutions under this provision for consensual sexual conduct between adults, regardless of the gender of the parties. No laws specifically prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or address hate crimes. No criminal justice mechanisms exist to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Society accepted a subculture of transgender dress and behavior, and a prominent NGO's annual festival highlighted transgender identities. There were no reports of violence against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but social stigma or intimidation may have prevented incidents of discrimination or violence from being reported.

Trinidad and Tobago

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The government generally respected the constitutional provisions for fundamental human rights and freedoms for all without discrimination based on race, gender, social status, or disability. Laws do not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although the law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity, providing penalties of up to 25 years' imprisonment, the government generally did not enforce such legislation, except in conjunction with more serious offenses such as rape. Immigration laws also bar the entry of "homosexuals" into the country, but the legislation was not enforced during the year.

The Equal Opportunity Act identifies classes of persons protected from discrimination but does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. The 2012 Children Act decriminalizes sexual exploration between minors close in age but specifically retains language criminalizing the same activity among same-sex minors. Other laws exclude same-sex partners from their protections. LGBT rights groups reported that a stigma related to sexual orientation or gender identity in the country remained and likely inhibited reporting incidents. LGBT rights groups also reported individual cases of violence against LGBT persons, as well as a reluctance to report crimes to police due to fear of harassment by police and court officials.

In general victims of gay-related hate crimes avoided media attention. In one notable exception, a 26-year-old gay man who was attacked by a small group of men after being set up and lured to an isolated area by imposters on social media, permitted the press to publish his name and photograph. Media coverage identified the attack as a hate crime. Supporters of the victim also praised the police for their professionalism in handling the investigation.

In September PM Persad-Bissessar stated the country was not ready to tackle the social issue of decriminalizing homosexuality, saying, "[decriminalization] is a very touchy, a very sensitive issue... there's no consensus."

Tunisia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law and the newly promulgated constitution explicitly prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions, although discrimination against women occurred due to reliance on customary law and social norms. The law is silent regarding sexual preference and gender identity. Traditional social norms resulted in discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Although consensual same-sex sexual activity is not illegal, the law criminalizes sodomy. Convictions carry up to a three-year prison sentence; there were no reports that authorities enforced the law during the year.

Anecdotal evidence suggested lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals faced discrimination, although societal stigma likely discouraged individuals from reporting problems. Due to societal intolerance of same-sex sexual relationships, LGBT individuals were discreet, and there was no information on official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, access to education, or health care. Despite the hostile environment, numerous LGBT-oriented websites and Facebook pages were not censored. Chouf Minorities, an association of activists, focused on fighting discrimination against LGBT persons.

Turkey

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but the government did not enforce these prohibitions effectively. Government officials used discriminatory language toward opposition groups such as protesters, women, Alevis, Kurds, and other minorities. The constitution allows measures to advance gender equality as well as measures to benefit children, seniors, persons with disabilities, widows, and veterans, without violating the constitutional prohibition against discrimination.

On March 3, the parliament approved a law known as the Democratization Package that introduced an article on hate speech or injurious acts related to language, race, nationality, color, gender, disability, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, or sectarian differences. Perpetrators of these acts may be punished by up to three years in prison. While observers considered the legislation a positive step, they noted its categories did not match OSCE's recommendations because ethnic identity, sexual orientation, sexual identity, age, and profession were not included. Consequently civil society organizations asserted the grounds for punishing discrimination and hate in the law remained too limited and excluded major offences that may be motivated by discrimination and/or hate, especially failing to protect the most vulnerable groups, including women, persons with disabilities, LGBT individuals, Roma, and religious minorities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While the law does not explicitly discriminate against LGBT individuals, references in the law relating to "offenses against public morality," "protection of the family," and "unnatural sexual behavior" sometimes served as a basis for discrimination by employers and abuse by police. LGBT prostitutes reported that police detained them to extract payoffs. The law provides that "no association may be founded for purposes against law and morality." Authorities applied this law in attempts to shut down or limit the activities of NGOs working on LGBT matters, and the TIB blocked LGBT social websites. For example, the website Grindr, blocked in August 2013, remained blocked during the year.

LGBT individuals continued to suffer discrimination, intimidation, and violent crimes. The NGO KAOS-GL reported that between 2010 and June 2014, there were at least 41 reported hate murders of individuals known to self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

KAOS-GL also reported that social protection was withheld from LGBT individuals due to the failure of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Ministry of Labor to acknowledge the existence of LGBT individuals. KAOS-GL reported that neither ministry would engage with LGBT groups or consider the rights of LGBT persons or their need for services and protection.

LGBT advocates accused the courts and prosecutors of creating an environment of impunity for attacks on transgender persons in prostitution. Human rights attorneys reported that police and prosecutors frequently failed to pursue violence against transgender persons aggressively. They often did not arrest suspects or hold them in pretrial detention, as was common with other defendants. When arrests were made, defendants could claim “unjustifiable provocation” under the penal code and request a reduced sentence. That code states that punishment “will be reduced if the perpetrator commits a crime under the influence of rage or strong, sudden passion caused by a wrongful act.” Judges routinely applied the law to reduce the sentences of those who killed LGBT individuals. For example, on February 26, a court reduced the sentence of a man who killed a transgender woman from life imprisonment to 18 years under the “unjust provocation” provision. According to the verdict, the “unjust act” was the victim’s “being a transvestite.” Courts of appeal upheld these verdicts based, in part, on the “immoral nature” of the victim.

On April 21, two transgender women were assaulted in the district of Tarlabasi in Istanbul. One woman, Nalan, was injured and her companion, 21-year-old Cagla, died. Another transgender woman recounted the attack and reported that police and ambulance staff refused to touch the dead body, so the victim’s friends were forced to carry her.

There were active LGBT organizations in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Eskisehir, and Diyarbakir, and unofficial groups in smaller cities and on university campuses. Groups reported harassment by police and government authorities. Many university groups in small cities complained that rectors had denied them permission to organize. On June 18, the administration of Mardin Artuklu University canceled a “queer and architecture” workshop for a graduate class due to threats that included hate speech.

LGBT organizations reported the government used regular and detailed auditing to create administrative burdens and threaten the possibility of large fines. They also reported challenges finding office space to rent due to discrimination from landlords.

LGBT individuals faced discrimination in employment. The law includes a clause that allows for dismissal if a government employee is found “to act in a shameful and embarrassing way unfit for the position of a civil servant,” and other statutes criminalize the vague practice of unchastity. In March an LGBT police officer in Gaziantep was fired and charged with the crime of “unchastity.” The administrative court rejected the officer’s appeal to annul the decision.

Turkmenistan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Although the law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, ethnic minority status, or social status, discrimination continued to be a problem, as did violence against women.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Same-sex sexual contact between men is illegal under a section of the criminal code on pederasty, with punishment of up to two years in prison and the possible imposition of an additional two- to five-year term in a labor camp. The law also stipulates sentences of up to 20 years for repeated acts of pederasty, homosexual acts with juveniles, or the spread of HIV or other sexually transmitted infections through homosexual contact. The law does not mention same-sex sexual contact between women. Enforcement of the law was selective. Antidiscrimination laws do not apply to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. Society does not accept transgender individuals, and the government provides no legal protection or recognition of their gender identity.

There were reports of detention, threats, and other abuses based on sexual orientation and gender identity. No official information was available regarding discrimination against LGBT individuals in employment, housing, statelessness, access to education, or health care. Since same-sex sexual activity and nonconforming gender identity were taboo subjects in the country's traditional society, social stigma likely prevented reporting of incidents.

Tuvalu

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and place of origin, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions. In 2005 the High Court stated it was a deliberate decision in the constitution originally to omit gender as a prohibited basis of discrimination; thus, there is no constitutional protection against sex discrimination.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sexual conduct between men is illegal, with maximum penalties of seven to 15 years' imprisonment depending on the nature of the offense, but there were no reports of prosecutions of consenting adults under these provisions. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There are no hate crime laws, nor are there criminal justice mechanisms to aid in the prosecution of bias-motivated crimes against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. There were no reports of violence against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but social stigma or intimidation may have prevented reporting of incidents of discrimination or violence.

Uganda

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in

Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status but is silent on sexual orientation and gender identity. The penal code, however, prohibits “unnatural offenses.” The government did not enforce the law in matters of locally or culturally prevalent discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities, or certain ethnic groups.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Consensual same-sex sexual conduct is illegal, according to a colonial-era law that criminalizes “carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature” and provides for a penalty up to life imprisonment. While authorities did not convict any persons under the law, the government arrested persons for this and related offenses.

On February 24, President Museveni--who called LGBT persons “disgusting”--signed into law the AHA, which the National Assembly passed in 2013. The AHA criminalizes, outlaws, and provides harsh prison terms for same-sex relationships, “promoting” homosexuality, or “aiding and abetting” homosexual acts. On July 29, activists filed a petition in the Constitutional Court seeking to overturn the AHA, claiming the National Assembly passed the law without the necessary quorum and that the law violated the rights of individuals under the constitution. On August 1, the Constitutional Court nullified the law, noting the National Assembly’s speaker had “acted illegally” by not establishing a quorum before its passage.

LGBT persons faced discrimination, legal restrictions, and societal harassment and violence, intimidation, and threats. They were denied access to health services. Several LGBT persons were charged with engaging in “acts against the order of nature” and indecency, and their cases were pending at year’s end. For example, on February 12, police in Masaka District arrested John Sseruwu on charges of performing unnatural acts prohibited under the penal code. Police released Sseruwu on bail, and hearing of the case was pending.

Police arrested several persons following the passage of the AHA, and human rights organizations reported the LGBT community faced increased discrimination.

Authorities targeted several projects suspected of “promoting” homosexuality. For example, on March 14, the minister of relief, disaster preparedness, and refugees, Hilary Onek, suspended the activities of the RLP pending investigation into allegations the project was “promoting” homosexuality. On May 20, the project received a letter from the permanent secretary, signed by the OPM’s commissioner for refugees, extending the suspension of the Kampala office. Despite the nullification of the AHA and the elimination of the basis for any charge, Minister Onek refused to lift the suspension of the RLP.

On April 3, police in Kampala raided a foreign-funded project that offered HIV/AIDS services to patients, including members of the LGBT community, on suspicion the project “promoted” homosexuality. On April 4, the project suspended its activities in the country after authorities arrested a member of its local staff. Police did not produce any information regarding their investigation of the project and in October sent a letter stating they had dropped the case.

In 2013 the Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum (HRAPF) reported that, of the 15 LGBT organizations that submitted applications, eight were registered with the URSB.

The HRAPF confirmed in November that the remaining seven organizations were subsequently registered with the URSB.

In November the HRAPF reported that police dropped the case against Patrick Musoke, a member of Kampus Liberty Uganda, who was arrested on suspicion of engaging in illegal “unnatural acts” in February 2013.

Some religious and political leaders delivered church sermons and wrote articles to lobby the public against LGBT persons. On March 31, the Inter-religious Council of Uganda, with substantial support from the government, held a major rally thanking parliamentarians for passing the AHA. At the rally, President Museveni and other major religious leaders pledged to continue efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals and those who called for LGBT rights.

Unlike in the previous year, the government did not block meetings organized by LGBT groups.

On June 23, the High Court in Kampala dismissed a 2012 petition filed by four LGBT activists accusing the minister of ethics and integrity and the attorney general of illegally closing a workshop organized by Freedom and Roam Uganda in Entebbe in 2012. The court ruled the minister acted in the public interest to protect the moral values of society. The minister reportedly told the court the participants were distributing literature intended to “train and recruit others into homosexuality.” The court ordered the petitioners to compensate the minister. The petitioners have not appealed.

Ukraine

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While the constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, social status, and ethnic and social origin, the government lacked effective legal instruments to enforce the prohibitions, and both governmental and societal discrimination persisted. The law covers discrimination, although experts raised concerns the definition of discrimination was too narrow and the law lacked meaningful enforcement mechanisms.

In May the parliament amended the law to define discrimination and related actions and prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on behalf of national and local government authorities, legal entities, and natural persons.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Human rights experts and the LGBT community criticized amendments to antidiscrimination legislation passed by parliament in May because it did not explicitly prohibit discrimination due to sexual orientation and gender identity.

The country’s two largest Orthodox churches opposed adoption of any law extending discrimination protections to LGBT persons, asserting such laws would “encourage citizens to engage in same-sex relationships.”

On May 7, the High Specialized Court issued a letter to appellate courts stating discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment is illegal in the country. The

LGBT community asserted the letter had virtually no effect on the overall situation with regard to the protection of LGBT rights in the country.

According to the LGBT rights group Our World (Nash Mir), the situation of LGBT persons did not improve during the year and deteriorated in Russia-occupied Crimea and the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts controlled by Russia-backed separatists (see section 1.g. and the Crimea section).

LGBT individuals complained of societal intolerance and stigmatization. Participants canceled an LGBT “equality march” scheduled for July 5 because Kyiv police claimed they could not provide for the safety of participants. Other events during the June 30-July 6 Kyiv pride festival took place, however, including cultural, human rights, and educational programs.

Between January and September, Our World documented 42 cases of abuses and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The largest number of abuses was reported in the cities of Zhytomir, Chernivtsi, and Kyiv. There were 25 hate-motivated cases, 20 of which involved threats of physical violence, and eight cases that involved alleged violations by law enforcement agencies. Our World registered eight cases of robbery and extortion, three incidents of workplace discrimination, and eight cases involving the disclosure of or threats to disclose confidential information. Our World documented three cases of alleged torture and degrading treatment, two incidents of rape and sexual harassment, and one case of kidnapping. In two incidents the victims’ families were driven out of their homes.

On October 29, fire seriously damaged the Zhovten movie theater in Kyiv during the screening of films as part of an LGBT film festival. In November police arrested two youths who claimed they attacked the theater to disrupt the film showing and intimidate the LGBT community. Damage to the theater, the oldest in the city, was estimated at more than 7.9 million hryvnias (\$500,000).

Ukraine - Ukraine (Crimea)

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Occupying Russian forces created an atmosphere of impunity, leading to attacks on ethnic Tatars and Ukrainians, creating a hostile environment for members of ethnic and religious minorities, and fostering discrimination and hostility against LGBT persons.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Human rights groups and local gay rights activists reported most of the LGBT community fled Crimea after the Russian occupation began. LGBT individuals faced increasing restrictions on their right to peaceful assembly as occupation authorities enforced a Russian law that criminalizes the so-called propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations to minors (see section 6 of the *Country Reports on Human Rights* for Russia).

In July police in Yevpatoriya, a resort town in western Crimea, opened an investigation into the death of a foreign tourist who may have been a victim of a homophobic killing. Media reports quoted the local police *KrymInform* news service as stating the deceased was a foreigner of “nontraditional sexual orientation,” who had been visiting Crimea regularly for vacations. Police did not specify the victim’s nationality but noted there

were “signs of a violent death.”

In September Russian occupation authorities announced LGBT groups would not be allowed to hold public events in Crimea. Sergey Aksenov, “head of the republic,” stated, “we in Crimea do not need such people...our police and self-defense forces will react immediately and in three minutes will explain to them what kind of sexual orientation they should stick to.”

United Arab Emirates

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution provides for equality of citizens without regard to race or social status, and the law prohibits discrimination based on disability; however, legal and cultural discrimination existed and went unpunished. The constitution does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity; however, the constitution states that all persons are equal before the law. The government took some steps to advance the rights of women and promote the role of Emirati women in all sectors of society. Recognizing Arabic as the country’s official language, the constitution does not prohibit discriminating concerning language, nor does it provide for equality for noncitizens.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Both civil law and sharia criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. Under sharia individuals who engage in consensual same-sex sexual conduct are subject to the death penalty. Dubai’s penal code allows for up to a 10-year prison sentence for such activity. There were prosecutions for consensual same-sex activity during the year. At times the government subjected persons against their will to psychological treatment and counseling for consensual same-sex activity.

Due to social conventions and potential persecution, LGBT organizations did not operate openly, nor were gay pride marches or gay rights advocacy events held. Information was not available on official or private discrimination in employment, occupation, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care based on sexual orientation and gender identity. There were no government efforts to address potential discrimination.

Wearing clothing deemed inappropriate for one’s gender is a punishable offense under the law. The government deported foreign residents and referred to the public prosecutor any individuals who wore clothing deemed inappropriate. For example, in June authorities sentenced two Filipino men to one-month jail sentences, followed by deportation, for wearing women’s clothing in public.

United Kingdom

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status, and the government routinely enforced the law effectively.

Bermudian law protects against discrimination because of race, place of origin, color, or ethnic or national origins, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, disability, family status, religion or beliefs, political opinions, and, except where the nature of the an offense justifies different treatment, criminal record. Elderly persons are also a protected class in the areas of goods, facilities, services, and accommodations but not in employment. The law does not protect against discrimination of persons with mental, learning, and cognitive disabilities.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In Bermuda the legal minimum age for consensual sex is 16 for heterosexuals and lesbians and 18 for gay men.

The law in England and Wales prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, although individuals reported sporadic incidents of homophobic violence. It encourages judges to impose a greater sentence in assault cases where the victim's sexual orientation was a motive for the hostility, and many local police forces demonstrated an increasing awareness of the problem and trained officers to identify and moderate these attacks. From 2013 to 2014, police in England and Wales recorded 4,622 hate crimes related to sexual orientation and 555 transgender hate crimes.

In Scotland racial, sexual, or other discriminatory motivation may be an "aggravating factor" in crimes. Scottish law also criminalizes behavior that is threatening, hateful, or otherwise offensive at a regulated soccer match and penalizes any threat of serious violence and threats to incite religious hatred through the mail or the internet. Crime aggravated by sexual orientation was the second most common type of hate crime, with 890 charges reported in 2013-14.

The PSNI recorded 179 hate crimes related to sexual orientation and eight transgender hate crimes in Northern Ireland from April 2013 until March (see section 7.d.).

In a move welcomed by human rights groups, the opening ceremony of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, hosted by Glasgow, included a gay kiss, viewed as a rebuke to the 42 Commonwealth nations where homosexuality remains illegal. The rainbow flag flew at the Scottish government's headquarters in Edinburgh for the duration of the games in support of LGBT rights.

Uruguay

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, disability, language, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or social status, and the government effectively enforced these prohibitions, although societal discrimination against some groups persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No laws criminalize sexual orientation, and authorities generally protected the rights of

lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) persons. There were isolated reports of street violence against LGBT individuals; the police did not intervene in these incidents. Colectivo Ovejas Negras (CON - Black Sheep Collective), an LGBT rights NGO, claimed police occasionally refused to file reports on discrimination and street violence. The NGO also asserted that in the provinces police committed acts of violence and degradation against transgender persons who were legally registered prostitutes. There were occasional reports of nonviolent societal discrimination, including in employment and occupation based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The INR inaugurated a separate facility for transgender women at Compen (former Comcar) Prison.

The Public Health Service Administration in tandem with LGBT NGOs offered workshops and public awareness training for health workers to create health centers free of prejudice and discrimination. The 21st LGBT parade again occurred without incident. In June the Association of Relatives of LGBT Persons petitioned the Ministry of Public Health to revoke a decree that establishes a 12-month prohibition on blood donation after an individual has had sexual intercourse with a same sex partner. In April authorities of the National Marriage Register reported 70 same-sex marriages during the first year of national legalization.

Uzbekistan

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law and constitution prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, and social status. Nonetheless, societal discrimination against women and persons with disabilities existed, and child abuse persisted.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Sexual relations between men are punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. Although there have not been any known arrests or convictions under this provision since 2003, according to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community, police and other law enforcement personnel used the threat of arrest or prosecution to extract heavy bribes from gay men. The law does not criminalize same-sex sexual activity between women.

Same-sex sexual activity was generally a taboo subject in society, and there were no known LGBT organizations. There were no reports of official or societal discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in employment, housing, statelessness, or access to education or health care, but observers attributed the absence of such reports principally to the social taboo against discussing same-sex relationships. In September a group of unidentified men reportedly beat a transvestite identified as "Dilshod."

Vanuatu

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

While the law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, place of origin, language, or

sex, women remained victims of discrimination in the tradition-based society.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

There were no reports of societal violence or discrimination against persons based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and the law is silent on the issue.

Venezuela

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, language, or social status; however, discrimination occurred against women; persons with disabilities; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community; and indigenous persons.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution provides for equality before the law of all persons and prohibits discrimination based on “sex or social condition,” but it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or sexual identity. According to a TSJ ruling, no individual may be discriminated against because of sexual orientation, but the ruling was rarely enforced. The media and leading advocates for the rights of LGBT persons noted victims of hate crimes based on sexual orientation or sexual identity frequently did not report the incidents and were often subjected to threats or extortion if they filed official complaints.

Since the law has no legal definition of a hate crime, LGBT-related violence was not reflected in any official law-enforcement statistics. Rather, most crimes against LGBT persons were classified as “crimes of passion,” not crimes of hate. According to a 2013 study by NGO Citizen Action against AIDS, the national press recorded 99 cases of crimes against the LGBT community (46 killings and 53 assaults) between January 2009 and August 2013. The incidents of violence were most prevalent in the transgender community. Leading advocates noted, however, that the media underreported most cases of LGBT-related crime and that law enforcement did not properly investigate to determine the motives for such crimes. LGBT experts also noted an estimated 6,000 same-gender families, with and without children, lacked legal protection.

Local police and private security forces allegedly prevented LGBT persons from entering malls, public parks, and recreational areas. The report also stated the government systematically denied legal recognition to transgender and transsexual persons by preventing them from obtaining identity documents required for accessing education, employment, housing, and health care. This vulnerability often led transgender and transsexual persons to become victims of human trafficking or prostitution.

Psychological, verbal, and physical abuses towards the LGBT community were common practice in schools and universities, according to leading advocates. No laws or policies protect LGBT persons against bullying. As a result, according to NGOs, LGBT

students had a higher dropout rate than heterosexual students.

Vietnam

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, but enforcement of these prohibitions was uneven, and the law did not specifically address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. During the year the government demonstrated an increased tolerance and respect for rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, compared with previous years.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuse Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law does not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. There was no reported official discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, but societal discrimination and stigma remained pervasive, and local media reported general harassment of transgender individuals, including those in custody.

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

In May 2013 the Institute for Studies of Society, Economics, and Environment, a nonprofit organization working for the rights of minority groups, reported approximately 1.65 million individuals in the country identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender persons. In August approximately 300 activists took part in “Viet Pride 2014,” a gay pride parade in Hanoi. In late 2013 the government decriminalized same-sex marriages. On June 19, the National Assembly passed legislation to amend the Law on Marriage and Family to lift the prohibition on same-sex marriage but did not recognize it.

Western Sahara

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The living conditions and social mores paralleled the situation in internationally recognized Morocco, and the laws are the same. Please see the Department of State’s 2014 Morocco Human Rights Report.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

No information in this sub-section. Please see the full country report for more.

Yemen

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law provides for equal rights and equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, language, beliefs, or disability, but the government did not consistently enforce the law. Discrimination based on race, gender, social status, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability remained a serious problem. Some groups, such as the marginalized Muhamasheen community (an ethnic group largely descended from East Africans) and the Muwaladeen (Yemenis born to foreign parents), faced social and institutional discrimination based on social status. Despite significant female participation in the revolution and in the NDC, societal discrimination severely limited women's ability to exercise equal rights.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons faced discrimination and could face the death penalty, although there have been no executions of LGBT persons in more than a decade. The penal code criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual conduct, with the death penalty as a sanction, under the country's interpretation of Islamic law. In January in Lahj Governorate, a motorcyclist shot and killed a man suspected of being gay; officials reported that at least 34 such killings occurred in the past two years.

Due to the illegality of and possible severe punishment for consensual same-sex sexual conduct, there were no LGBT organizations. Because the law does not prohibit discrimination, the government did not consider LGBT problems "relevant" for official reporting, and few LGBT persons were open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. The government blocked access to LGBT internet sites.

Zambia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnic group (tribe), gender, place of origin, marital status, political opinion, color, disability, language, social status, and creed, but they do not address discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The government did not effectively enforce the law. Violence and discrimination against women and children, discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and discrimination against persons with disabilities remained problematic.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity and provides penalties of 15 years' to life imprisonment for individuals who engage in "acts against the order of nature." A lesser charge of gross indecency carries penalties of up to 14 years' imprisonment. The government also used laws against "soliciting for immoral purposes" to arrest and charge some LGBT activists. The government enforced laws against same-sex sexual activity and did not adequately address societal discrimination against LGBT individuals. The courts, however, acquitted several individuals accused of engaging in

same-sex activities, citing lack of evidence.

Societal violence against persons based on gender, sex, and sexual orientation persisted throughout the year. LGBT persons in particular were at risk of societal violence due to prevailing prejudices, misperceptions of the law, lack of legal protections, and inability to access health services.

According to LGBT advocacy groups, societal violence occurred, as did societal discrimination in employment, housing, and access to education or health care. According to the VSU report for the first half of the year, there were 23 reported cases of “unnatural offenses,” the same as in 2013, although these often included cases of statutory rape. Several groups quietly promoted LGBT rights and provided services to LGBT individuals, principally in the health sector. The groups held private social gatherings but did not participate in open demonstrations or marches in view of societal stigma against LGBT persons.

Total incidents of societal violence against LGBT individuals remained high. LGBT groups reported frequent attacks and discrimination in the neighborhoods in which they operated. Activists reported regular harassment, including threats via text message and e-mail, vandalism, stalking, and outright violence. On May 19, some residents of the Marapodi area of Lusaka apprehended two women suspected of being lesbians, took them to a nearby police station, and demanded police arrest them. After the mob dispersed, police released the two without charge. Between January and February, the state-owned newspaper *Times of Zambia* published a series of seven editorials based on pseudoscience that decried homosexuality. Some media watchdogs called this series “hate speech” and worried it would exacerbate societal tensions and misinform citizens about LGBT issues and rights.

Two courts, however, made landmark rulings that acquitted those suspected of engaging in same-sex activities. On July 3, the Kapiri Mposhi Magistrate Court acquitted two Kapiri Mposhi men suspected of engaging in same-sex relations, noting the prosecution had failed to prove its case against them. The men spent 14 months in remand prison before their acquittal. In the same month, the Kitwe Magistrate Court acquitted a Kitwe-based police officer of similar charges. Although other arrests occurred throughout the year, they did not result in prosecutions.

Still, police threatened LGBT rights advocates, claiming they would arrest them for speaking out against discrimination and rights abuses. Police also questioned relatives of LGBT advocates who traveled outside the country. On October 22, police arrested two transgender individuals in Lusaka’s Kabwata area, claiming they “looked gay.” Police told those who attempted to obtain their release that police would use the 24-hour detention period to “teach them a lesson” and released them with no charges only after extracting a bribe. The next day police in Lusaka’s Kaunda Square arrested a separate transgender individual for “trespassing,” releasing him only after advocates pointed out police had no grounds for arrests. In both instances police verbally assaulted arrestees before releasing them.

Zimbabwe

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The bill of rights in the constitution provides that no person can be deprived of fundamental rights, such as the right to life, personal liberty, security of person, freedom of assembly and association, equality, and political and socioeconomic rights. It prohibits

discrimination based on one's race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, color, creed, gender, or disability. The bill of rights cannot be arbitrarily amended and, in the section on the rights of women, states that all "laws, customs, traditions, and practices that infringe the rights of women conferred by this constitution are void to the extent of the infringement." Nevertheless, discrimination against women and persons with disabilities persisted. The government and ZANU-PF continued to infringe on the right to due process, citizenship, and property ownership in ways that affected the white minority disproportionately.

Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. According to the country's criminal code, "any act involving physical contact between men that would be regarded by a reasonable person to be an indecent act" carries a penalty of up to one year in prison or a fine up to \$5,000. Despite that, there were no known cases of prosecutions of consensual same-sex sexual activity. Common law prevents gay men and, to a lesser extent, lesbians from fully expressing their sexual orientation. In some cases it criminalizes the display of affection between men.

President Mugabe and ZANU-PF leaders publicly criticized the LGBT community. In March, President Mugabe declared, "gays have no human rights." Prosecutor General Johannes Tomana also stated that the country's laws were weak and not thorough enough for "dealing with" gays and lesbians. In April at Zimbabwe's Independence Day commemoration President Mugabe threatened to expel foreign diplomats who "promoted" homosexuality.

Members of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), the primary organization dedicated to advancing the rights of LGBT persons, experienced harassment and discrimination. A decrease in scrutiny of the GALZ by the government was attributed to less anti-LGBT rhetoric in the postelection environment.

Religious leaders in a society traditionally conservative and Christian encouraged discrimination against LGBT individuals. In March, Emmanuel Makandiwa, leader of the United Family International Church, described LGBT individuals as "mentally sick."

On March 12, police officers arrested Natasha Dowell, a volunteer coordinator for the GALZ, and Tawanda Maguze. The two were facilitating a GALZ workshop on social media use at a Harare hotel. Their lawyers said police disrupted the workshop, alleging organizers had not sought police clearance as required under the law. Police charged Dowell with violating the law but released her. Police released Maguze without charge. Authorities indicated they would proceed by way of summons with the case, although Maguze had not been summoned as of the end of November.

In contrast with GALZ, the Bulawayo-based Sexual Rights Center (SRC), an organization similarly dedicated to advancing the rights of "sexual minorities," faced minimal harassment. In January, however, police arrested one of the SRC's board members, a transgender woman. While detained at the Bulawayo Central Police Station, police subjected her to degrading treatment, including a nonconsensual medical examination.

LGBT individuals reported widespread societal discrimination based on sexual orientation. In response to social pressure, some families reportedly subjected their LGBT members to "corrective" rape and forced marriages to encourage heterosexual conduct. Such crimes rarely were reported to police. Women in particular were

subjected to rape by male family members. LGBT persons often left school at an early age due to discrimination and had higher rates of unemployment and homelessness. Many persons who identified themselves as LGBT did not seek medical care for sexually transmitted diseases or other health problems due to fear that health providers would shun them.

The LGBT community made some legal advances during the year. GALZ registered a legal victory related to a series of raids conducted by police against their organization in 2012. In 2012 police raided GALZ offices several times, arrested GALZ members, and charged Martha Tholanah, GALZ cochairperson, with running an unregistered organization under a law used by the government to disrupt and harass civil society organizations. During one of the raids, police also confiscated property belonging to GALZ, including computers and documents. Following a lengthy legal process, on January 14, the High Court ruled the 2012 raid was illegal and ordered the Ministry of Home Affairs to return the property to GALZ. On February 26, a local magistrate ruled in favor of Tholanah, citing the High Court's order that the law did not oblige GALZ to register.