

# SAMPLE PRISM Annual Report



Periodic Risk Intelligence and Security Monitor for  
Threats to the LGBTQ Community around the World.

April 2021



This is an abbreviated version of the full 2021 PRISM Annual Report.  
This sample report is intended to provide a snapshot of the comprehensive  
analysis included in the PRISM report subscription package.



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## Executive Summary

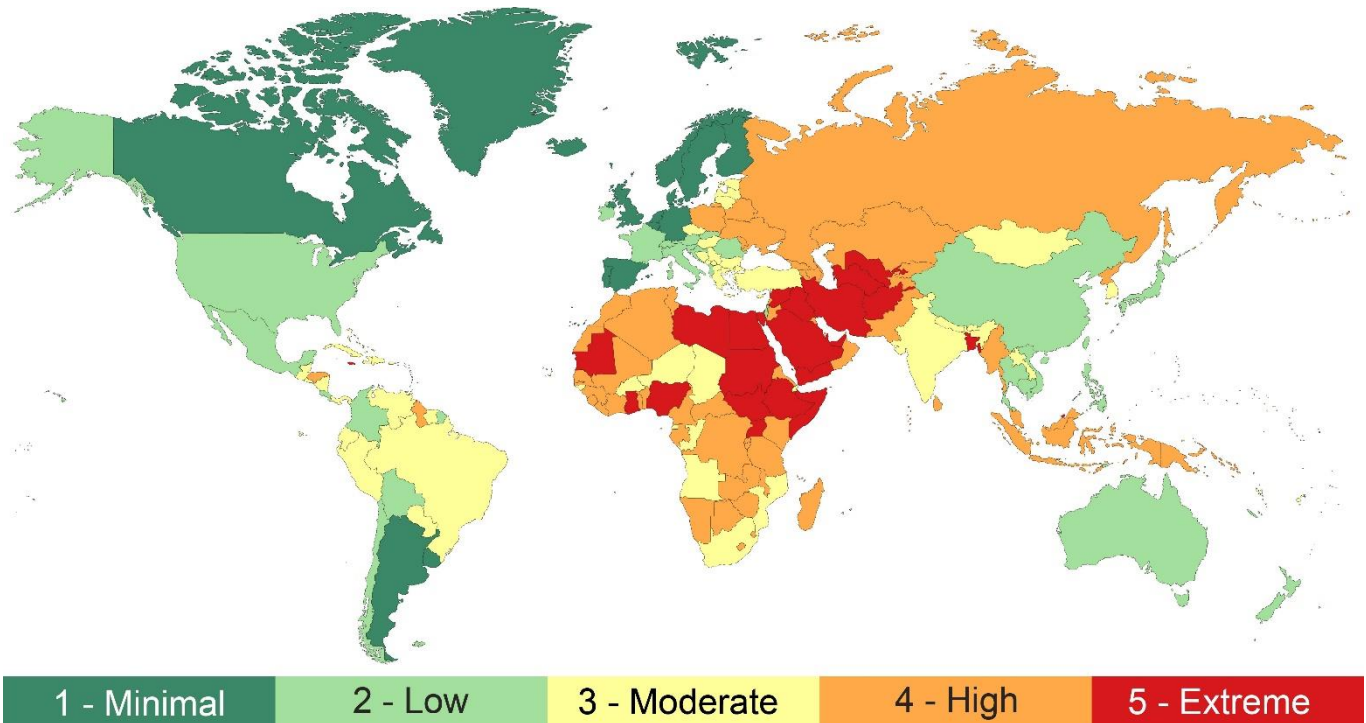
The year 2020 brought unique challenges to LGBTQ individuals worldwide with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, most locations faced a similar or worsening threat environment compared to 2019, with few locations experiencing a significant improvement. In many places, government-mandated lockdowns prompted an increase in intimate partner violence, which disproportionately affects LGBTQ individuals, while simultaneously making it more difficult for survivors to report abuse due to fear of reprisal attacks amid isolation requirements. In the public sphere, governments that shaped lockdown parameters around gender put many LGBTQ individuals at increased risk of harassment and violence. In some Latin American countries authorities stipulated women and men would have separate days to shop for essential goods to decrease occupancy at stores. However, these measures are not only discriminatory toward LGBTQ individuals, but put transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary individuals in a publicly vulnerable position, facing increased rates of harassment and violence.

This year's publication brings several new country ratings and an updated ratings methodology, which is housed in the Appendices at the end of the document. Crisis24 assessed each location based on threats stemming from the legal environment, level of enforcement, and social environment, to give an overall threat rating ranging from Minimal to Extreme. Of the 232 locations rated, 22 pose an extreme threat environment, 68 a high threat environment, and 73 a moderate threat environment. The remaining 69 locations are either Low or Minimal.

Worldwide, the situation has not changed significantly for LGBTQ individuals compared to 2019, with the development of LGBTQ rights in some areas of the world contradicted by increased restriction in others. In some areas, laws are discordant with social attitudes, and threats to the LGBTQ community may stem from the government, law enforcement, society, or all three. In some locations, government-backed support for LGBTQ rights changes with the party in power and the role of prominent religious leaders. Globally, most countries have an LGBTQ support community, even if it remains anonymous and functions primarily via social media.

At the regional level, LGBTQ individuals in Africa and the Middle East generally face the highest threat environment, as religious, cultural, political, and social climates continue to perpetuate anti-LGBTQ sentiment, with minimal to no improvements recorded in the past year. Country-level threats to LGBTQ individuals vary across Asia, ranging from low to extreme threat environments. Several countries are experiencing rapid urbanization and a growing middle class, which is driving an increase in social acceptance. However, there are several countries where conservative religious ideology is widespread, specifically areas where Sharia law is in effect, creating a hostile environment for LGBTQ individuals. Similarly, the threat to LGBTQ individuals varies throughout the Caribbean region, and same-sex sexual acts remain a criminal offense in many Caribbean countries. Central and South American countries pose very similar threats as in 2019, with the notable exception of an increase of intimate partner violence aforementioned above. The LGBTQ community faces varying challenges throughout Europe due to the "East/West divide." Same-sex marriages or civil unions are legal in much of Western Europe, while most Central and Eastern European nations do not afford those legal privileges. Most European nations are working to enact anti-discrimination laws and educate the populace on the LGBTQ community. The threat environment in the Russia/CIS region is high to extreme for LGBTQ individuals. Despite most countries in the region having decriminalized same-sex relations and signed UN human rights petitions against discrimination, few to no legal protections exist for LGBTQ individuals, and intolerance remains prevalent.

## Crisis24 LGBTQ Security Rating Map



The overall country rating assesses the overarching environment for LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities, including LGBTQ organizations and businesses that support or advocate for the LGBTQ community, in any given country.

## Extreme Threat

The operating environment is characterized by pervasive threats to LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities that require strict risk mitigation procedures.

## High Threat

The operating environment is characterized by persistent threats to LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities that require advanced mitigations.

## Moderate Threat

The operating environment is characterized by varied threats to LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities that require some mitigations.

## Low Threat

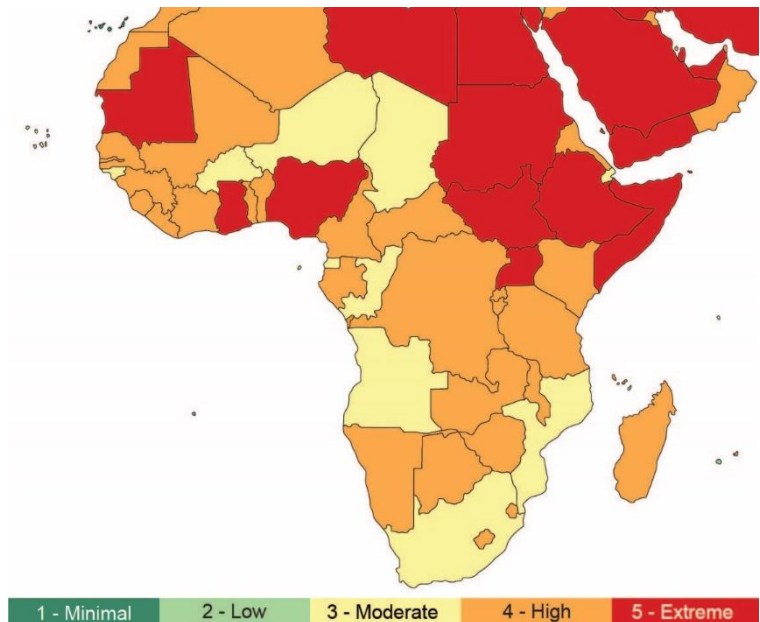
The operating environment is characterized by limited threats to LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities that may require basic mitigations.

### Minimal Threat

The operating environment is characterized by isolated threats to LGBTQ individuals and supporting entities.

## Africa

Despite more countries decriminalizing same-sex acts, sub-Saharan Africa generally hosts a high threat environment for LGBTQ persons amid continued widespread intolerance across most parts of the region. More than half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have legal codes prohibiting same-sex relations, which punish violators with fines, imprisonment, physical punishments, and death. Overall, data on authorities' enforcement of such laws is extremely limited. Anecdotal evidence collected by local and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) suggests police and local security forces in most countries continue to be some of the worst perpetrators of violence and crime against LGBTQ groups. In Ghana, the threat environment has worsened. Authorities have shown increasing intolerance for LGBTQ groups in the past year, and security forces shut down a newly opened LGBTQ center in Accra in early 2021. Additionally, several government officials continue to reject calls for decriminalizing same-sex sexual acts, with some proposing laws that would even ban the advocacy of LGBTQ groups in the country in the future.



Africa LGBTQ Security Ratings Map

Some countries have taken positive steps towards creating a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ persons on the legal front. For example, in the past year, Gabon and Angola have enacted laws that decriminalized consensual same-sex relations. Angola has also criminalized discrimination based on sexual orientation. In a slow and potentially promising start, Sudan has lifted the death penalty and flogging as forms of punishment for same-sex sexual relations. Nigeria, Mauritania, and Somalia remain the only countries in the region that maintain the death penalty as a possible punishment for same-sex relations. South Africa is the only country in the region to recognize same-sex marriages and civil unions and allow joint adoption by same-sex couples. Intolerance of LGBTQ persons continues to be widespread; out of 34 countries, only four measured more than 50 percent of people who tolerate people of a different sexual identity/orientation, according to a 2020 Afrobarometer report. Cabo Verde, South Africa, Mauritius, and Namibia scored the highest in the region, with Gambia, Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia scoring the lowest. The average out of 34 countries was 20 percent, suggesting that intolerance remains extremely widespread, with rural areas posing the biggest threat of intolerance and violence towards LGBTQ persons. As the region hosts a generally conservative social, political, and cultural environment, sub-Saharan Africa will likely continue to be intolerant towards LGBTQ persons in the near-to-medium term.





## Country In Focus: Ethiopia

Overall LGBTQ Rating	Legal Environment	Enforcement	Social Environment	Threat Trend
Extreme	Extreme	High	Extreme	Maintained
	Same-sex Sexual Acts	Punishment		Same-Sex Unions or Marriage
	Illegal	Imprisonment		Illegal

Ethiopia presents an overall extreme environment for the LGBTQ community. Local and international LGBTQ individuals are highly likely to face harsh legal and societal persecution for engaging in perceived indecent behavior and activities. Prohibiting laws are well established. However, there is limited reported enforcement. Anti-LGBTQ sentiment is prevalent throughout all spheres of government and society.

The discriminatory and exclusionary nature of Ethiopia's laws presents an extreme legal environment for the LGBTQ community. Same-sex sexual acts are prohibited and criminalized in Articles 629 and 630 of Ethiopia's Criminal Code 2004. Persons found engaging in a "homosexual act, or any other indecent act" will be subject to imprisonment of no less than one year. Individuals face up to 15 years imprisonment for incidents involving some sort of coercion, fraud, or violence. Legislation does not provide equality or recognize non-discriminatory rights regarding marriage, adoption, age of consent, employment, or housing. The LGBTQ community is not recognized as a protected minority group. Rather, the community is targeted based on sexual orientation or nontraditional gender expression. Ethiopian authorities attempted to further criminalize same-sex sexual acts in a draft crime bill in 2014. The draft bill proposed to designate same-sex sexual acts as offenses considered "non-pardonable," along with terrorism and other serious crimes. Officials later rejected the bill due to international pressure. LGBTQ advocacy is further limited by the country's Charities and Societies Proclamation Law 2009, Article 69, which prohibits the registration of any group that is contrary to "public morality." In 2016, following widespread unrest, authorities enacted legislation limiting internet access. Censored and monitored networks included LGBTQ-related websites.

Due to existing harsh prohibitory laws and punishments and the prevailing dominant anti-gay sentiment, authorities are highly likely to enforce laws that target the LGBTQ community. To date, there have been no reported conviction or charges under the penal code. Nonetheless, advocacy group ILGA noted in its 2019 report on State-Sponsored Homophobia, as well as other anecdotal reports, that the LGBTQ community in the country is subject to persistent discrimination and acts of violence. Victims do not report anti-LGBTQ attacks for fear of further prosecution. Crimes targeting LGBTQ individuals are rarely investigated and generally go unpunished. Authorities do not recognize anti-discrimination laws applying to the LGBTQ community.

The social environment rating for the LGBTQ community in Ethiopia is extreme. Ethiopia is primarily influenced by conservative and religious views, and social attitudes toward the LGBTQ community are intolerant. Government and religious leaders have overwhelmingly continued to speak out against the LGBTQ community and actively advocated for the further criminalization of same-sex sexual acts and nontraditional gender identities and expression. In 2019, a US-based LGBTQ tour company, Toto Tours, canceled its tour to Ethiopia after receiving various online threats from individuals and religious groups. There are limited LGBTQ advocacy groups in Ethiopia, and authorities do not legally recognize them. Advocacy groups, including DANA Social Club, operate informally and are promoted through the internet and social media sites where possible.



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## Risk Mitigation Strategies

Below are risk mitigation strategies for LGBTQ individuals who face threats outlined in this report. This advice is organized by overall threat category after the general advice that applies to all threat levels:

### General

- Understand local expressions and words that may indicate a derogatory view of LGBTQ individuals.
- Do not accept drinks, cigarettes, or chewing gum from strangers, as reports have shown that some assailants taint these products with drugs.
- Most countries that pose above a moderate threat have very conservative societies; dress and act in accordance with social norms.
- Note: Visitors to and expatriates living in a country are bound by the laws of that country. An individual's home country's government is unable to release an individual from incarceration in a foreign country. Home country consulates will be able to give only limited assistance to their citizens who are imprisoned. In some countries, the burden of proof rests on the accused, not the prosecutor.

### Extreme

- If asked, avoid discussing sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Do not engage anyone in conversations about sexuality or LGBTQ issues.
- Do not publicly display affection under any circumstances.
- If police or other authorities harass you, immediately contact your diplomatic mission.
- Avoid using the words "gay," "lesbian," "sex," or other sexually related terms while using the internet and writing emails on both public and private devices, as authorities may monitor or search devices.
- Do not use the internet or online apps to meet members of the LGBTQ community while in extreme-rated countries, as these kinds of apps are banned in some countries with an extreme threat environment and local nationals may use these platforms to target LGBTQ individuals.





## High

- Be mindful of cultural bias when assessing acceptance. Do not assume to understand mannerisms, unless you are familiar with the culture; for example, handholding between men is common in many locations and meant as a gesture of friendship, not sexual attraction. Other behaviors that may appear to be romantically intimate may in fact be platonic.
- Avoid all LGBTQ pride events and festivals.
- If police or other authorities harass you, immediately contact your diplomatic mission.
- If caught in a potentially violent situation, immediately seek shelter in upscale hotels or large public buildings, such as libraries, theaters, hospitals, or museums.
- Take extreme caution if engaging others in conversations about sexuality or LGBTQ issues. Only do so with well-vetted acquaintances in safe locations.
- Do not visit local LGBTQ bars or clubs.

## Moderate, Low, Minimal

- Exercise caution during LGBTQ pride events and festivals, as a precaution.
- If caught in a potentially violent situation, immediately seek shelter in upscale hotels or large public buildings, such as libraries, theaters, hospitals, or museums.



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## About Crisis24

Crisis24, a GardaWorld company, draws on 30 years of field experience to provide actionable risk management solutions to organizations around the world seeking to stay ahead of emerging risks. Our in-country intelligence analysts, highly specialized operational experts and proprietary technology platform enable us to deliver fully integrated end-to-end risk management solutions that help our clients protect their people, organization, assets and cyberspace. Whether at home and abroad, our clients can grow their operations anywhere in the world.

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