

COVERING SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES & RELIGION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A REPORTING GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS

2nd Edition

Written and Edited by Brian Pellot and Debra L. Mason



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Regional trainers Brian Pelot, Debra Mason, Selly Thiam, Isabella Matambanadzo, Nanjala Nyabola, and Carl Collison have brought to fruition the reporting workshops on which this guide is based, and guest speakers have added valuable insight. Some content included herein was previously published in other formats, as noted and attributed throughout. We thank the original authors and organizations for their work.

Finally, we thank the hundreds of journalists who have traveled across Sub-Saharan Africa to participate in our regional and country-specific workshops. Their willingness to learn and share has been inspiring. We hope their final stories, many of which are [available on our website](#)¹, encourage fellow journalists to cover sexual and gender minorities & religion with honesty, fairness, accuracy, transparency, sensitivity, and thoroughness.

01

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa, as in much of the world, reporting on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SSOGIE) can be tricky. Cultural taboos, entrenched stereotypes, social hostilities, legal prohibitions, and editorial censorship often distort coverage of these sensitive topics. Add religion to the mix and producing responsible journalism on sexual and gender minorities can seem impossible.

In November 2016, Taboom Media set out to show that ethical and sensitive coverage of SSOGIE issues and communities is not only possible, it's necessary. To this end, we assembled 24 professional journalists and editors representing 15 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa for a four-day reporting workshop in Cape Town, South Africa.

During that first workshop, we discussed our motivations and professional obligations as journalists; reviewed key concepts and terms around SSOGIE issues and religion; shared regional media freedom challenges and opportunities from our own communities; analyzed structural roots of inequality; brainstormed story ideas, angles, and sources; strategized how best to protect source safety and sensitivity; and debated issues around news value and public interest. We started the week as strangers and ended it as friends, com-

mitted to helping one another and our broader network of colleagues improve coverage of sexual and gender minorities & religion in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Taboom Media has since led dozens of regional and country-specific SSOGIE and religion reporting workshops for hundreds of journalists across the continent. This guide summarizes some of the key principles and topics our workshops address while also offering journalists a trove of resources and sources to enhance their own coverage of these issues.

Since we published the first edition of this guide in 2017, much has changed. Angola and Botswana decriminalized same-sex sexual activity while Chad and Gabon enacted new laws making it a crime. As rights and lived realities continue to shift, it's critical that journalists bear witness to and document this real-time history. We hope the updated information, terminology, links, and resources in this second edition help keep you safe and informed as you cover the difficult and sometimes dangerous issues surrounding sexual and gender minorities & religion in Sub-Saharan Africa and around the world.

— Brian Pellot
Lead Author and Editor
Taboom Media
June 2020

REPORTING RESOLUTION

Reporting Resolution

In Sub-Saharan Africa, sexual and gender minorities remain disadvantaged, stigmatized, and excluded from many aspects of economic, political, and social life. Alarming levels of discrimination, prejudice, and violence make these often marginalized and misunderstood individuals and communities particularly vulnerable to human rights violations.

As journalists, we have the power to replace dehumanizing stereotypes with nuanced and accurate portrayals of persecuted minorities. Doing so requires us

to put biases aside and to embrace the core teachings of our profession.

The following reporting resolution was first drafted during our 2016 regional workshop and has continued to evolve with each subsequent training. It reflects some of the best practices journalists have identified to improve coverage of sexual and gender minorities & religion. It serves as a useful starting point and summary of what's to come in this guide.



Trainees visit Auwal Masjid in Bo-Kaap, Cape Town. Photo by Brian Pellot.

Taboos Media Reporting Resolution

Covering Sexual and Gender Minorities & Religion in Sub-Saharan Africa

As journalists from across Sub-Saharan Africa, we adhere to our profession's principles of honesty, fairness, accuracy, transparency, sensitivity, and thoroughness. When reporting and editing on sexual and gender minorities & religion, we resolve to:

01. Develop our knowledge of different SSGIE (Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) issues and belief systems.
02. Avoid mentioning SSGIE status or faith affiliation when such information is not directly relevant to a story.
03. Carefully consider word choice and framing around sexual and gender minorities and followers of different faiths. Use sources' preferred terminology when appropriate.
04. Allow marginalized and under-represented people to speak for themselves and in their own voices.
05. Strive to include moderate voices in our reporting, not just the extremes.

06. Seek out knowledgeable sources who can provide accurate information and analysis.
07. Always consider the motivations and potential biases of our sources.
08. Diligently verify all details when covering sensitive news. Ask for clarification when needed.
09. Avoid including dangerous hate speech in our stories.
10. Avoid sensationalizing or capitalizing on marginalized identities.
11. Avoid using imagery that depicts religious or sexual and gender minorities in stereotypical or dehumanizing ways.
12. Take all measures possible to protect the safety and security of sources, subjects, communities, and ourselves.
13. Practice the qualities of responsible, ethical journalism by minimizing harm and interrogating hearsay and rumor.
14. Encourage diversity in our newsrooms and educate our colleagues.
15. Ensure that our personal beliefs and biases do not influence the accuracy of our reporting or limit the topics we cover. If our beliefs somehow jeopardize our ability to fairly cover a story, we should pass it onto a colleague who can do it justice.

**ETHICAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
REPORTING
PRINCIPLES**

Ethical Human Rights Reporting Principles

Covering SSOIGIE and religious minorities is part and parcel of human rights reporting. This section discusses important ethical principles that professional journalists should remember when covering human rights topics.

The London-based [Ethical Journalism Network](#)² (EJN) lists truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity, and accountability as five of the most important principles that distinguish ethical journalism from propaganda or public relations.

To ensure truth and accuracy, we as journalists must learn about the topics we cover. To achieve independence, we must limit the influence of interested parties that try to shape our work. To foster fairness and impartiality, we should interview and seek input from a diverse range of relevant stakeholders, most importantly the individuals and communities we're covering. To safeguard humanity, we should recognize and strive to minimize any potential harm our reporting may bring upon vulnerable individuals and communities. To ensure accountability to our readers, we need

to humbly acknowledge and correct past mistakes in our reporting.

Committing to these basic principles of our profession means giving individuals and communities the opportunity to speak in their own words and tell their own stories. Doing so contributes to the accurate portrayal of underrepresented minorities in our communities.

WHY REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS?

We often start our workshops by asking trainees why they became journalists. Common responses include: "to give voice to the voiceless; to make sense of the world for my audience; to challenge stereotypes, entrenched norms, and structural inequalities; to expose corruption; to enact positive change in my community." We also ask why they are keen to report on human rights issues: "to right wrongs and injustices; to inform people of their rights; to promote good governance; to create a freer society; to advocate for vulnerable and exploited communities; to address violence and

impunity against groups; to expose the daily struggle of my people.” We ask them to list traits that make a good journalist great: “passion; curiosity; sensitivity; empathy; patience; integrity; tolerance; conscientiousness; courage; thoroughness; objectivity; impartiality; willingness to learn; commitment to accuracy.”

These motivations, qualities, and principles form the backbone of ethical and professional human rights reporting. By identifying important stories that are not being told accurately (or at all), we can shine light on human rights abuses and do our part to help make the world a better place, all while maintaining our journalistic credibility.

COVERING AND AVOIDING DANGEROUS HATE SPEECH

Ethical journalists have a responsibility to cover the facts, but we also have a responsibility to avoid unnecessarily stoking hatred and violence, especially when tensions are running high.

Some politicians and religious leaders across Sub-Saharan Africa and around the world use homophobic and transphobic hate speech to rally public support around a common perceived enemy (sexual and gender minorities), distracting the masses from other economic, political, or social concerns. By labeling same-sex attraction and gender nonconformity as unAfrican, ungodly, sinful, immoral, illegal, or unacceptable, these leaders create scapegoats out of already vulnerable minorities. Journalists

are sometimes complicit in legitimizing and spreading this vitriol, as we’ll explore in later chapters.

When hate speech crops up in professional journalism, it does a disservice to our profession, our audience, and society at large. Sometimes it reinforces unpleasant stereotypes; other times it contributes to evils far worse. But what constitutes hate speech, and how do we balance the right to freedom of expression with a need to prevent the spread of dangerous rhetoric?

WHAT CONSTITUTES HATE SPEECH?

Broadly speaking, we can think of hate speech as that which denigrates people based on some aspect(s) of their individual or group identities. Legal discrepancies and local sensitivities mean that the same quote from a source or line in a story might be considered discriminatory, hateful, offensive, dangerous, libelous, blasphemous, treasonous, seditious, or perfectly acceptable from one country to the next. Given this reality, it’s important to familiarize yourself with local red lines when reporting on controversial issues at home or abroad.

[Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#)³ broadly defines hate speech as any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence. The U.S. outlaws speech intended to and likely to provoke imminent lawless action — a very high threshold. The legal bar is much

lower in most countries, resulting in prohibitions against homophobia, transphobia, racism, blasphemy, religious defamation, and a range of other speech and thought crimes.

RELIGION AS SOURCE AND TARGET OF HATE

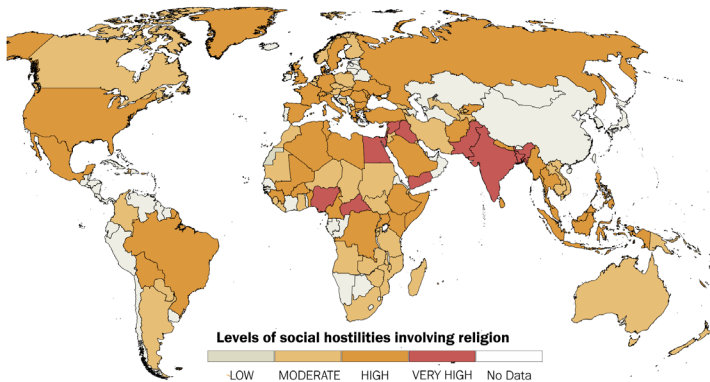
Conflict is bound to arise when different groups express mutually exclusive claims to truth and believe that salvation is on the line. For this reason, religion and hateful or offensive speech often overlap in complicated ways. We see: Evangelical Christians accuse Mormons of following a “false prophet” in the U.S.; Christians and Muslims battle for converts in Africa; Buddhists and Hindus persecute Muslims in Asia. There’s also animosity within religions: Sunni vs. Shi-ite Muslims, ultra-Orthodox vs. Reform

Jews, Protestant vs. Catholic Christians. Then there’s hatred exchanged on other belief grounds: religious groups teaming up to resist equal rights for sexual and gender minorities; atheists ridiculing believers of any stripe. These inter- and intra-religious tensions often result in faith-based hate speech, even if religion is just one factor in a broader conflict over resources, culture, politics, or along other fault lines.

A [2019 Pew Research Center report](#)⁴ citing 2017 data found harassment of religious groups in most countries surveyed. Christians, Muslims, and Jews face harassment in the highest number of countries, but Sikhs, Zoroastrians, Bahá’ís, Hindus, Buddhists, and people of other faiths and none are also subject to social hostilities and government restrictions based upon their beliefs.

Social hostilities involving religion around the world

Level of social hostilities involving religion in each country as of 2017



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.
“A Closer Look at How Religious Restrictions Have Risen Around the World”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

IDENTIFYING HATE SPEECH: A FIVE-POINT TEST

The [Ethical Journalism Network's five-point test](#)⁵ highlights what journalists and editors should consider when deciding how to report potentially inflammatory news:

01. The content and form of speech

Journalists should ask themselves whether the speech they are quoting is dangerous. Will it incite violence, intensify hatred, or lead to prosecution under local laws?

02. The economic, social, and political climate

Hateful speech can become more dangerous amid economic, social, and political strife. Where insecurity and instability reign supreme, journalists should evaluate what impact quoting hateful speech might have on its intended targets.

03. The position or status of the speaker

Journalists should not act as indiscriminate megaphones for hate speech. If a prominent source makes hateful, false, or malicious claims, those claims should be scrutinized and reported accordingly. If a non-public figure makes unsubstantiated claims, they should be ignored if not newsworthy.

04. The reach of the speech

Limited off-color remarks in private conversations are unlikely to produce much harm. That changes if hateful remarks are repeatedly broadcast for all to see, a good indicator that the speaker may be trying to deliberately promote hostility.

05. The objectives of the speech

Journalists should strive to determine whether speech is deliberately designed to denigrate the rights of others and should know what forms of expression are subject to legal sanctions. When confronted with hate speech, EJN advises journalists not to sensationalize it and to think through potential consequences before rushing to publish.



"Journalists on Duty" by Yan Arief Purwanto is licensed under CC by-SA 2.0 license.

HATE SPEECH

TURNING THE PAGE OF HATE:
A MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR
TOLERANCE IN JOURNALISM

When it comes to hate speech, journalists and editors must pause and take the time to judge the **potential impact** of offensive, inflammatory content.

The following test, developed by the EJN and based on international standards, highlights questions in the **gathering, preparation** and **dissemination** of news and helps place what is said and who is saying it in an **ethical context**.

2 REACH OF THE SPEECH

How far is the speech traveling?
Is there a **pattern of behaviour**?

3 GOALS OF THE SPEECH

How does it benefit the **speaker** and their **interests**?
Is it **deliberately intended** to cause harm to others?

A 5 POINT TEST FOR JOURNALISTS

4 THE CONTENT ITSELF

Is the speech **dangerous**?
Could it incite **violence** towards others?

5 SURROUNDING CLIMATE SOCIAL / ECONOMIC / POLITICAL

Who might be **negatively affected**?
Is there a history of **conflict or discrimination**?

1 STATUS OF THE SPEAKER

How might their **position** influence their **motives**?
Should they even be **listened to** or just **ignored**?

DON'T **SENSATIONALISE**!

AVOID THE **RUSH** TO PUBLISH

TAKE A **MOMENT OF REFLECTION**

EthicalJournalismNetwork.org



IDENTIFYING DANGEROUS SPEECH: A FIVE-POINT TEST

“Dangerous speech” is inflammatory speech that has the capacity to catalyze violence among different groups. Susan Benesch, who heads the Dangerous Speech Project, says the most dangerous speech acts occur when the following [five factors](#)⁶ are maximized:

01. **The speaker is powerful and has a high degree of influence over the audience**
02. **The audience has grievances and fear that the speaker can cultivate**
03. **The speech act is understood as a call to violence**
04. **There exists a social or historical context propitious for violence, for any of a variety of reasons, including long-standing competition between groups for resources, lack of efforts to solve grievances, or previous episodes of violence**
05. **There exists a means of dissemination that is influential in itself, for example because it is the sole or primary source of news for the relevant audience**

Use these two five-point tests to help determine whether your sources’ statements, your colleagues’ broadcasts, or

even your own writing could be considered dangerous hate speech.

HOW TO HANDLE OFFENSIVE SPEECH

Someone might be upset by facts or ideas you publish, but that alone is no reason to censor yourself. A professional journalist’s duty is to inform the public, not to shield people from uncomfortable or upsetting realities. That being said, a story’s perceived newsworthiness should always be balanced with concern for the safety of sources and vulnerable communities that might be affected by your reporting.

Followers of different faiths consider certain forms of expression hateful or offensive, even if they are legal in most countries. The 2015 [Charlie Hebdo attacks](#)⁷ in France and earlier controversies such as the [2005 Danish cartoons](#)⁸ demonstrate the dangers that can arise when taboos — depicting the Prophet Muhammad, in these cases — are broken. Christian outrage over “[blasphemous” art](#)⁹ and [music videos](#)¹⁰ show that Muslims aren’t the only ones who take offense to irreverent portrayals of their sacred beliefs.

When reporting on these tensions, try to understand why individuals or groups are offended, but don’t confuse freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression — both fundamental human rights — with a community’s desire to be shielded from offense.

Before journalists can decide whether to publish potentially offensive material, they first need to understand what different groups consider offensive and why. Consult local faith leaders and SSOGE activists and check out ReligionLink's [various reporting guides](#)¹¹ to ensure that your language is accurate and nuanced.

The five-point Hate Speech and Dangerous Speech tests above can help you assess whether source quotes that some readers consider offensive are likely to prompt violence or actual harm. Sources who resort to sensational rhetoric, hateful slurs, or dehumanizing stereotypes should be ignored or challenged by including alternative voices in your reporting. Biased, misleading, or otherwise inaccurate portrayals of individuals and groups have no place in a responsible journalist's toolkit.

It's important to remember that journalists do not enjoy absolute freedom of expression. We all face legal and ethical limits on our reporting, and our profession's harm limitation principle should be carefully considered when determining how to handle potentially offensive speech. Different media outlets will arrive at different conclusions in this balancing act. Whatever rationale shapes such decisions, basic news values should trump fear of causing offense.

For more resources and sources on ethical human rights reporting principles and hate speech, see our [Reporting Guide on Covering and Avoiding Religious Hate Speech](#)¹².



Taboom trainers Isabella Matambanadzo and Carl Collison lead a session during our regional workshop in October 2019. Photo by Brian Pellot.

**KEY SSOGIE
TERMINOLOGY**

Key SSOGIE Terminology

Before reaching out to sources, it's important to familiarize yourself with the relevant terminology that tends to come up in conversations about sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SSOGIE). Knowing that LGBTQI+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and more (+) is just the tip of the iceberg. Not every SSOGIE minority chooses to use these terms and labels.

Rather than trying to fit sources into particular identity categories, allow them to use their own vocabulary, and describe them as such in your reporting when appropriate.

Though not exhaustive, the following definitions provide a useful starting point for journalists and a glossary for this guide.

Ally:	A term for human rights defenders who are supportive of LGBTQI+ people, communities, and/or social movements but do not themselves identify as LGBTQI+. Most allies identify as cisgender and/or heterosexual.
Asexual:	A sexual orientation characterized by a lack of sexual attraction, which is different from romantic or emotional attraction. Asexuality is a range, not a fixed endpoint, on the spectrum of sexual attraction.
Bi/Homo/ Intersex/Trans/ Queer-phobia:	Emotional disgust, fear, anger, and/or discomfort felt or expressed towards people who don't conform to certain societal expectations around sex or gender. Biphobia, Homophobia, Intersexphobia, Transphobia, and Queerphobia are human-made constructs often fed by political, religious, legal, and pseudo-medical justifications.

Bisexual:	A binary term for someone who is sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to both males and females or men and women. The term “pansexual” is more inclusive and expansive than “bisexual” (see definition below).
Cisgender:	A person whose gender identity and/or expressions mostly align with societal expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.
Coming out:	The process of identifying to oneself and to others in accordance with one’s sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
Female:	A biological sex assignment based on characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals. Females typically have XX chromosomes, a vagina and ovaries, and higher levels of estrogen than males, among other sex characteristics.
Feminine:	Gender attributes, behaviors, and roles typically associated with girls and women. Such attributes can vary greatly across time and culture.
Gay:	Describes a person who is sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex or gender. This means males or men who are attracted to other males or men, or females or women who are attracted to other females or women. The word “gay” can refer to any homosexual person, but mostly it refers to homosexual men.
Gender:	Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society associates with men and women.
Gender expressions:	How individuals present their relationships with masculinity and/or femininity through external characteristics and behavior. This can include dress, mannerisms, grooming, speech patterns, and social interactions, among many other traits.
Gender identity:	Refers to a person’s innate, deeply felt psychological identification as man, woman, or another category. This may or may not correspond with the sex a person was assigned at birth.

Genderqueer:	Gender identities/expressions that do not match typically masculine or feminine gender norms. Terms similar to “genderqueer,” all with different meanings, include gender diverse, gender nonconforming, gender non-binary, pangender, third gender, genderfree, gender-fluid, and gender variant. These terms (spellings vary) emphasize that gender can be non-binary or non-fixed.
Gender dysphoria:	Distress or discomfort people may experience if their gender identities or expressions do not align with societal expectations.
Gender-fluid:	Someone who identifies with multiple genders, or who has fluctuating gender identities.
Gender minorities:	People who do not conform to societally expected binary gender norms in terms of expressions or identities around masculinity and femininity.
Gender pronouns:	Gender pronouns such as She/Her/Hers, He/Him/His, They/Them/Their(s) allow us to refer to a person without constantly repeating that person’s name. They/Them/Their(s) can be used as gender-neutral singular pronouns and are often the preferred pronouns of genderqueer people. Always use your source’s preferred pronouns.
Heterosexism:	Promoting heterosexuality as superior, “natural,” or “normal,” or assuming that all people are heterosexual.
Heterosexual/Straight:	Someone whose predominant attraction is to the “opposite” sex or gender (in a binary system).
Homosexual:	Someone whose predominant attraction is to the same sex or gender.
In the closet:	Withholding information about one’s sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Also referred to as “closeted.”
Intersex:	A biological sex assignment based on characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals. Intersex falls between typical definitions of male and female.

Key populations:	Key populations (KPs), as identified by UNAIDS, have the highest risk of contracting and transmitting HIV and the least access to prevention, care, and treatment services due to stigma or criminalization. Key populations vary somewhat by context but often include men who have sex with men, transgender persons, sex workers, intravenous drug users, prisoners, and truck drivers.
LGBTQI+:	Acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and more (+). This umbrella term is acceptable when describing communities or issues that affect most sexual and gender minorities. Do not describe individuals as LGBTQI+, and do not use the acronym when discussing issues that only pertain to a particular group (intersex people, for instance).
Lesbian:	A female or woman who is sexually, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to other females or women.
Male:	A biological sex assignment based on characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals. Males typically have XY chromosomes, a penis and testes, and higher levels of testosterone than females, among other sex characteristics.
Man:	A person who identifies as a man, regardless of sex or gender expressions.
Masculine:	Gender attributes, behaviors, and roles typically associated with boys and men. Such attributes can vary greatly across time and culture.
MSM:	Men (or males) who have sex with men (or males). They may or may not identify as gay or bisexual.
Out:	The opposite of being “in the closet.” People who are “out” are open about their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity to at least some people in their lives. Do not assume that people who are out to friends are necessarily out to family or colleagues. People should come out on their own terms, not be forcibly “outed” by others.

Pansexual:	Sexual, romantic, or emotional attraction towards people regardless of their sex or gender identity. The term “pansexual” is more inclusive and expansive than “bisexual,” which by definition perpetuates gender and sex binaries.
Queer:	An umbrella term that is used by many sexual and gender minorities to describe themselves. Many value its inclusiveness in terms of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expressions. “Queer” was once considered derogatory but has been “reclaimed” in many LGBTQI+ communities. Only use this term when the sexual and gender minorities you’re engaging with use it, and when doing so is clearly not offensive.
Questioning:	The process of seeking information and support when exploring one’s sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.
Sex:	Assignment at birth as male, female, or intersex based upon biological and physiological characteristics.
Sex reassignment surgeries:	The surgical procedures by which some transgender people’s sexual characteristics (physical appearances and/or functions) are altered to more closely align with sexual characteristics commonly associated with their gender identities.
Sexual minorities:	An umbrella term for people who are oriented towards or who engage in “non-heterosexual” activities, and for individuals who do not fall into the binary sex categories of male or female.
Sexual orientation:	The preferred term used when referring to an individual’s innate romantic, sexual, and/or emotional attraction to other people, with regards to sex and/or gender. “Heterosexual,” “bisexual,” “pansexual,” “asexual,” and “homosexual” are all examples of sexual orientations. A person’s sexual orientation is distinct from a person’s gender identity and expressions.
Sexual preference:	Indicates sexual desires that are more individual and fluid than sexual orientation. Someone may have a sexual preference for people with certain physical characteristics, or they may prefer certain sexual practices. Do not refer to someone’s innate sexual orientation as a “preference.”

“Sodomy” laws:	The term often used to describe laws that prohibit consensual sexual acts among consenting adults. Such acts are seldom fully defined but can include anal and oral sex, even among heterosexual people. Sodomy laws are most often used to target men who have sex with men, but also apply to women in many jurisdictions.
SSOGIE/SOGIE/SOGI:	Acronyms used to refer to Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expressions.
Transgender:	An umbrella to describe someone whose gender identity or expressions differ from societal expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth.
Transition:	The process of altering or affirming one’s sex and/or gender. This may or may not include changing legal documents, physical alterations, surgeries, etc.
Woman:	A person who identifies as a woman, regardless of sex or gender expressions.
WSW:	Women (or females) who have sex with women (or females). They may not identify as lesbian or bisexual.

TERMS TO AVOID

The [GLAAD Media Reference Guide - 10th Edition](#)¹³, published in October 2016 and updated every few years, elaborates on some of these definitions in its [Terms to Avoid](#)¹⁴ section, which has been modified and republished below. The guide also includes glossaries of LGBTQ terms, [transgender terms](#)¹⁵, and a summary of relevant [Associated Press and New York Times style terms](#)¹⁶, which continue to evolve.

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p><u>"homosexual" (as noun or adjective)</u></p> <p>Because of the clinical history of the word "homosexual," it is sometimes used by anti-LGBTQI+ sources to suggest that people attracted to the same sex are somehow diseased or psychologically disordered – notions that have long been discredited by psychological and psychiatric associations around the world. Avoid using "homosexual" except in direct quotes or proper names of organizations and research.</p>	<p><u>"gay people," "gay man," "lesbian," etc.</u></p> <p>Use your source's preferred terminology (gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, etc.). Do not use "a gay" or "gays" as stand-alone nouns. The same logic applies for genderqueer people – Do not use "a transgender" or "transgenders" as isolated nouns. The LGBTQI+ letters are adjectives.</p>
<p><u>"homosexual relations/relationship," "homosexual sex," "gay sex," "homosexual couple," etc.</u></p> <p>Identifying a same-sex couple as "a homosexual couple," characterizing their relationship as "a homosexual relationship," or identifying their intimacy as "homosexual sex" is sometimes used by anti-LGBTQI+ sources to denigrate queer people, couples, and relationships. Avoid extraneous modifiers.</p>	<p><u>"relationship," "sex," "couple," etc.</u></p> <p>Avoid describing an activity, emotion, or relationship as "gay, lesbian, bisexual, or queer". In most cases, your audience can infer people's sexes, genders, and/or orientations from your depictions of relationships and use of pronouns. Relevant modifiers may sometimes be necessary for clarity. Use discretion.</p>
<p><u>"sexual preference"</u></p> <p>The term "sexual preference" is typically used to suggest that sexual orientation is a choice and can therefore be changed or "cured."</p>	<p><u>"sexual orientation"</u></p> <p>Sexual orientation is the accurate description of an individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to other people, with regards to sex and/or gender. The term applies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and straight people alike.</p>

OFFENSIVE	PREFERRED
<p><u>“gay lifestyle,” “homosexual lifestyle,” “transgender lifestyle,” or “gayism”</u></p> <p>The phrases “gay lifestyle,” “homosexual lifestyle,” and “transgender lifestyle” are typically used to denigrate LGBTQI+ people and to suggest they live immorally.</p>	<p><u>“LGBTQI+ people’s lives/lived realities”</u></p> <p>There is no uniform LGBTQI+ lifestyle. Queer people’s hopes, desires, values, and lifestyles are as diverse as anyone’s.</p>
<p><u>“admitted homosexual,” “avowed homosexual,” “confessed homosexual,” or “confirmed homosexual”</u></p> <p>Outdated terms used to describe people who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, etc. in their personal, public, and/or professional lives. Such words suggest that being attracted to the same sex is somehow shameful or inherently secretive.</p>	<p><u>“out gay man,” “openly bisexual,” “identifies as queer”</u></p> <p>“Out” implies that a person openly and publicly identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etc., at least in some circumstances.</p>
<p><u>“gay agenda” or “homosexual agenda”</u></p> <p>Notions of a so-called “homosexual agenda” are rhetorical inventions of anti-LGBTQI+ extremists who seek to create a climate of fear by portraying the pursuit of equal rights and opportunity for queer people as sinister.</p>	<p><u>Accurate descriptions of the issues (e.g., “inclusion in existing nondiscrimination laws,” “securing equal employment protections”)</u></p> <p>LGBTQI+ people are motivated by the same hopes, concerns, and desires as anyone else. They seek to be able to earn a living, be safe in their communities, and take care of loved ones. Their commitment to equality and acceptance is shared by many allies and advocates who are not queer.</p>
<p><u>“special rights”</u></p> <p>Anti-LGBTQI+ extremists frequently characterize equal protection for queer people as “special rights” to incite opposition to such things as relationship recognition and inclusive nondiscrimination laws.</p>	<p><u>“equal rights” or “equal protection”</u></p>

DEFAMATORY LANGUAGE

“fag,” “faggot,” “dyke,” “homo,” “sodomite,” “tranny,” “she-male,” “moffie,” “isitabane/stabane,” “onggingili,” “usis-bhuti,” etc.

These and similar derogatory terms should not be used except in direct quotes that reveal the bias of the person quoted. To avoid giving such words credibility, reporters can also say, “The source used a derogatory word for a [lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer/intersex/etc.] person.”

“deviant,” “disordered,” “dysfunctional,” “diseased,” “perverted,” etc.

The notion that being LGBTQI+ is a psychological disorder has been discredited by prominent psychological and psychiatric associations since the 1970s. Today, words such as “deviant,” “diseased,” and “disordered” are often used to portray LGBTQI+ people as less than human, mentally ill, or as dangers to society. Words such as these should be avoided in stories about queer communities. If they must be used, they should be quoted directly in a way that clearly reveals the bias of the person being quoted.

Associating LGBTQI+ people with pedophilia, child abuse, sexual abuse, bestiality, bigamy, polygamy, adultery, or incest

Such claims, innuendoes, and associations are often used to insinuate that LGBTQI+ people pose a threat to society, to families, and to children in particular. Such assertions and insinuations are defamatory and should be avoided. They may be included in direct quotes that clearly reveal a source’s bias, but only if accompanied by accurate context and information that challenges and refutes any dangerous myths.

For additional guidance on SSOGIE terminology, consult the following sources:

- [Irantí’s 2019 Reference Guide for Media Practitioners and News Outlets](#)¹⁷ provides a glossary of terms for journalists covering LGBTQI+ issues in Africa and specific tips for writing about transgender, bisexual, and intersex people.
- The Association of LGBTQ Journalists (NLGJA) has a [Stylebook Supplement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Terminology](#)¹⁸ that is intended to complement the Associated Press stylebook and those of individual newsrooms.
- The [Gender Spectrum Guide to Gender Terminology](#)¹⁹ explains non-binary gender notions and includes relevant terminology.
- The Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism’s [Diversity Style Guide](#)²⁰ has an [LGBTQ glossary](#)²¹ of relevant terms.

For guidance on religion-related terminology, check out the Religion Stylebook, an easy-to-use guide created for journalists who report on religion in the mainstream media. It’s an independent supplement to The Associated Press Stylebook and is a service of the Religion News Association. It can be found at [religionstylebook.com](#)²².

**SORTING
SSOGIE MYTHS
FROM FACTS**

Sorting SSOGIE Myths from Facts

Audiences rely on journalists to help them sort fact from fiction. With “fake news” flying around social media, real, accurate, and factual news has never been more important.

Because SSOGIE issues are sometimes considered taboo, myths around sexual and gender minorities often go unchecked and unchallenged, even in professional news reports. The “How NOT to Report on SSOGIE Issues” chapter of this guide highlights some of the sensational and false stereotypes that consistently crop up in regional and global reporting.

The perpetuation of these myths can contribute to inequality, human rights violations, privacy violations, gender-based violence, physical and sexual violence, stigma, arrest, unlawful detention, prosecution, denial of autonomy

over sexual health choices, removal of children from parental custody, housing discrimination, employment discrimination, educational discrimination, healthcare discrimination, mental health issues, suicide attempts, homelessness...the list goes on.

Below you’ll find a mix of common tropes and truths about sexual and gender minorities. Cover the right column with your hand or a piece of paper and read each statement on the left from top to bottom, revealing and distinguishing myths from realities as you go.

The following table was inspired by and partially adapted from earlier guides produced by Gay and Lesbian Memory in Africa (GALA) and Taboom Media.

STATEMENT	MYTH OR REALITY
<p>People can change their sexual orientation through prayer</p>	<p>Myth: Sexual orientation is an individual’s innate and enduring romantic, sexual, and/or emotional attraction to other people, with regards to sex and/or gender. Prayer will not change it. Although “conversion therapy” remains legal in many places, the American Psychological Association condemns it²³ for representing “a significant risk of harm by subjecting individuals to forms of treatment which have not been scientifically validated and by undermining self-esteem when sexual orientation fails to change.” The same risks extend to deliverance and exorcism attempts.</p>
<p>LGBTQI+ people are capable of having healthy, long-term relationships</p>	<p>Reality: Many sexual and gender minorities have been happily partnered for decades. Seek out such sources in your community.</p>
<p>Sexual and gender minorities often face higher rates of violence and discrimination than the general population</p>	<p>Reality: See other sections of this guide for some of the disturbing persecution LGBTQI+ people face merely for who they love or how they look or identify. Consult local human rights groups and reliable authorities for statistics.</p>
<p>Every society has sexual and gender minorities</p>	<p>Reality: Similar to how every society has left-handed people, every society has sexual and gender diversity. Research has shown that intersex conditions, homosexuality, and gender nonconformity are universal realities. They are not confined to certain races, ethnicities, or geographic borders.</p>
<p>Same-sex attraction is caused by witchcraft and evil spirits</p>	<p>Myth: Most credible medical and health professionals consider exorcism and deliverance attempts to be ineffective, psychologically harmful, and often physically dangerous.</p>

STATEMENT	MYTH OR REALITY
Gay men are more likely to abuse children	Myth: This disparaging myth has been widely disproved ²⁴ . Consult credible local and international statistics and sources, including the American Psychological Association ²⁵ .
Not all congregations are against homosexuality	Reality: See Human Rights Campaign’s Faith Positions guide ²⁶ and the books Behold, I make all things new: What do the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam really say in regard to human sexuality? ²⁷ and I Am Divine, So Are You: How Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Hinduism affirm the dignity of queer identities and sexualities ²⁸ for examples of inclusive and affirming denominations and congregations.
Homosexuality is a mental disorder	Myth: Major international mental health organizations have long agreed that homosexuality is not a mental disorder.
People are LGBTQI+ because they were abused as children	Myth: Speak with a diverse range of LGBTQI+ people in your community. Some may have been abused as children, as is true of the general population, but most will say their identities and expressions are not a result of childhood abuse.
If a lesbian has sex with a man she will be “cured” and become straight	Myth: Same-sex attraction is not a mental disorder that needs to be “cured,” and sexual orientation is enduring. So-called “corrective rape” is a serious criminal violation of human rights.
Scientists still don’t know what determines a person’s sexual orientation	Reality: Theories abound, but none have been decisively proven.

STATEMENT	MYTH OR REALITY
Children of same-sex parents will grow up to be same-sex attracted	Myth: In countries where child adoption by same-sex parents is legal, research has shown that those children are not more likely to be gay than the general population. Sexual orientation is innate and enduring, not a result of one's upbringing.
You can't tell a person's sexual orientation just by looking at them	Reality: Gender expression may be displayed, but sexual orientation is innate and cannot be determined merely by looking at someone.
A transgender woman is a woman	Reality: The words "woman" and "man" typically refer to a person's gender identity, "masculine" and "feminine" to gender expression, and "male" and "female" to biological sex. If a transgender person identifies as a woman, she is a woman regardless of biological sex, sexual orientation, or gender expression.
Same-sex relationships always have "male" and "female" roles	Myth: This is not true, and many LGBTQI+ people consider the premise offensive.
People become queer from hanging out with other queer people	Myth: Sexual and gender diversity is not contagious.

**HOW TO
REPORT ON
SSOGIE ISSUES**

How to Report on SSOGIE Issues

The following reporting tips expand on key principles in our Reporting Resolution (Chapter 2). We cite real-world media clips, some produced by our past trainee journalists, to demonstrate best practices you can replicate and highlight cautionary tales you should avoid repeating.

Additional trainee stories, including video and audio clips, can be found under the [“Stories” tab at Taboom-Media.com](#)²⁹. These stories evolved under Taboom’s editorial guidance and were published by the trainees’ home media outlets before appearing on our website.

1. EDUCATE AND INFORM THROUGH NUANCED AND SENSITIVE COVERAGE

While some media outlets sensationalize sexual and gender minorities to entertain, you should strive to educate and inform audiences. Avoid melodramatic depictions in favor of nuanced and sensitive coverage of SSOGIE issues and lived realities. Use accurate, accessible language and clearly explain terms and

concepts that might be unfamiliar to your audience while avoiding the urge to oversimplify. When covering sensitive news, be especially diligent in verifying all details with your sources, and don’t be afraid to ask for clarification when needed.

[Headline: “New door for at-risk men” - The Nation, Malawi, 6 October 2017](#)³⁰

This story gives men who have sex with men (MSMs) a platform to voice their concerns and highlight challenges they face when seeking health care. It provides a public service, informing MSMs where they can find non-discriminatory clinics. Although the story contains some problematic phrasing and terminology issues, it successfully educates readers and provides critical information to key populations.

2. CHALLENGE MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

If a source repeats a myth we know is false, we can either exclude it from our reporting altogether or include it along-

side accurate information that reveals the source's ignorance or bias. Source statements that are beliefs or opinions rather than facts should be contextualized alongside others' beliefs or opinions. These statements should be balanced and weighted appropriately based on broader community sentiment.

Headline: ["LGBT community still faces high levels of violence – report" - News24, South Africa, 4 December 2017](#)³¹

This article documents a report from the Centre for Risk Analysis at the South African Institute of Race Relations (IRR). The story and report highlight some of the real discrimination, violence, and oppression sexual and gender minorities continue to face in South Africa. Citing survey results, it challenges the common assumption that South Africa's human rights-affirming constitution and equality courts adequately protect LGBTQI+ people.

Headline: ["Understanding the gay rights case and Penal Code penalties" - The Star, Kenya, 24 February 2018](#)³²



Members of Kenya's LGBTQI+ community hold a sign during a demonstration. Religion News Service photo by Fredrick Nzwili.

This op-ed, not a traditional news article, was published shortly before Kenya's High Court considered the constitutionality of penalizing same-sex sexual activity. The op-ed effectively challenges common myths and stereotypes concerning LGBTQI+ people and champions dignity, equality, and human rights for all.

3. INCLUDE MODERATE AND DIVERSE SOURCES

There are seldom just "two sides" to any story, and every person's story is unique. Rather than trying to paint SSGIE issues as black and white, explore the grey. That's where you'll find the most interesting and important stories. If you only quote sources who hold polar opposite views on an issue, you're missing the vast majority of people whose opinions and beliefs fall somewhere in between. "Exploring the grey" means speaking to moderate and diverse sources rather than just the extremes. The more diverse sources you include in your reporting, the more accurately you'll be able to portray highly complex and emotionally charged issues.

Headline: ["Namibian Christians vest hopes in 'pray the gay away' tactic" - The Namibian, Namibia, 16 December 2016](#)³³

Sources in this article about "deliverance ceremonies" at Pentecostal churches in Namibia include two gay men subjected to the abuse, a government official, a pastor, the head of a LGBTQI+ faith-based nonprofit organization, a psychologist,

and the author's independent research. The sources' beliefs and opinions are layered and complex. Rather than relying on lazy caricatures to express "opposing" views, the author manages to include sources who reflect a wide range of nuanced and at times contradictory opinions, resulting in a far richer story.



The nonprofit Tulinam held a dialogue workshop with female church leaders in Otjiwarongo, Namibia, on 6 August 2016. Photo courtesy of Madelene Isaacks.

4. ALLOW SSGIE MINORITIES TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AND IN THEIR OWN VOICES

"Nothing about us without us" is a popular rallying cry among SSGIE rights activists and other marginalized groups. The phrase usually applies to policymaking but is also relevant to your reporting. When covering SSGIE issues, you should (safely) include the voices and perspectives of SSGIE minorities. They know more about the issues that affect their lives than any outside expert, government statement, or high-level report could possibly capture. While a diverse range of sources is crucial, your most important sources and those most likely to engage your audience are those at the heart of your story.

[Headline: "The Muslims who will not choose between their god and being gay" - Mail & Guardian, South Africa, 18 April 2019³⁴](#)

This feature story about queer Muslims in Cape Town profiles three men. Rather than writing it as a traditional news story and including a range of "expert" sources and statistics, the author zooms in on three characters, captures vignettes of their lives, and chronicles their intimate thoughts. It is clear that the author reported this story over several days and worked hard to develop trust and rapport with his sources. Their quotes are prioritized and take up as much space as the author's narration. By allowing sources to speak for themselves and in their own voices, the story shines light on the complexities of being queer and Muslim and succeeds in engaging the reader.

[Headline: "Transgender Zimbabweans lack gender-affirming healthcare amid economic turmoil" - Queerston Media, Zimbabwe, 2 February 2020³⁵](#)

This story features the voices of four transgender people in Zimbabwe who struggle to access counseling and hormone therapy. A health expert from the United States is referenced as a secondary source but contributes little compared to these primary sources' firsthand accounts. The author's decision to prioritize these sources over those of detached officials or authorities keeps the spotlight on the affected community and gives their voices the

authority they deserve as experts on their own lived realities.

5. USE SOURCES' PREFERRED TERMINOLOGY WHEN APPROPRIATE

If a source tells you, "I'm a Christian," are you going to second-guess it? Probably not. You could ask how often she attends church or quiz her on chapters of the Bible, but to what end? If a person identifies as Christian, and if that fact is relevant to your story, take her word for it and report accordingly. You can't peer into a source's heart or mind to determine their "true" beliefs. Some truths and identities are unverifiable and should be taken at face value.

The same logic applies to a source's sexual orientation or gender identity. If a source tells you they are gay or transgender, and if that information is somehow relevant to your story, you can ask them to elaborate, but there's no way (and no need) to verify the statement's veracity. That information is true to the source, which makes it true for your reporting. The same goes for gender pronouns. If a transgender woman uses "she" pronouns or a genderqueer source wants to be referred to as "they," who are you to deny them that basic dignity? Sexual and gender minority sources should be afforded the same respect and benefit of the doubt you would give any source.

If you're not sure which gender pronouns a source uses, an easy way to broach the subject is by stating your own

pronouns when you start the conversation. If your source doesn't immediately reciprocate and tell you theirs, you can ask what pronouns they use when you ask how to spell or pronounce their name, signaling that this is just a normal part of the reporting process to help ensure accuracy.

[Headline: "Transgender Case Postponed To December" - The Monitor, Botswana, 7 August 2017](#)³⁶

This story about Tsepho Ricki Kgositau, a transgender woman and prominent human rights activist who successfully sued the Botswana government for refusing to recognize her gender, correctly uses she/her pronouns throughout, in accordance with Kgositau's preferred gender pronouns and identity. It is a well-reported piece that is neutral in tone and lays out some of the many obstacles Kgositau endured.

[Headline: "I'm trapped in a woman's body" - Daily Monitor, Uganda, 10 July 2017](#)³⁷

This story about a transgender man does the opposite. The author repeatedly misgenders the source. "I'm a man," she says softly," (the author quoting the source but referring to him as "she" rather than "he) is perhaps the most egregious example of this misgendering.

6. PROTECT THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF SOURCES, SUBJECTS, COMMUNITIES, AND YOURSELF

The above story from Uganda ([“I’m trapped in a woman’s body”](#)³⁸) and its aftereffects demonstrate the danger of not respecting source safety. The author writes that the source prefers not to use his full name but publishes it multiple times along with the neighborhood where he lives and a clear photo of his face. After this story was published, the source was kidnapped.

Even if a source consents to having his photo taken and gives you his full name during an interview, a responsible journalist should still obtain “informed consent” before publishing any identifiable information if circumstances suggest that the source may face elevated risk of potential harm. “Informed consent” means explaining to your source where and when your story will be published, outlining realistic dangers that might arise, and then giving them adequate time to privately reflect before agreeing to let you publish their personal details. Sources should be reminded that any news can reach anyone online. Your goal isn’t to scare sources away but rather to protect them and safeguard your own conscience, knowing you did everything an ethical journalist should do to inform them of potential risks.

Even if you obtain a source’s informed consent, you should still independently evaluate safety concerns and consult

your newsroom before publishing the source’s identity. Your editors and publishers may ask you to reveal the source’s identity to confirm that your story is true, but there’s no need to share potentially compromising information with friends or other newsroom colleagues. Remember that what’s in the “public interest” isn’t whatever interests the public.

Doctors vow to “do no harm.” Our goal as journalists is to minimize it, which sometimes means anonymizing at-risk sources. Ask your editors how your newsroom has handled anonymity in the past. If they don’t have a standard procedure, consider the following formulations when introducing a new source who requires anonymity in your story:

- “John, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, is a farmer...”
- “John (not his real name) is a farmer...”
- “John* is a farmer...” *At the top or bottom of your story, explain that asterisks indicate those sources’ names have been changed.*
- “Richard, whose surname has been withheld to protect his safety, is a farmer...”
- “The source, who requested anonymity for his safety, is a farmer...”

If your source has a particularly common first name, you may deem it safe to use if the surname is excluded. If you decide it necessary to use a pseudonym/alias, try to keep it culturally relevant so as not to distract or confuse your reader

“Christine” is not a good substitute for “Mohammed”). There is no need to invent a fake surname. Using first names for pseudonymous sources and surnames for identifiable sources can help remind your audience which are which.

Generalize other details about anonymous sources so as not to accidentally identify them. If your source is 33 and his age is relevant to the story, write he is in his 30s. If he lives in “a small village in northeastern Nigeria,” write exactly that rather than the village’s specific name. If he is a receptionist at a well-known hotel, write he works in hospitality.

For more tips on protecting sources, vulnerable communities, and yourself, see Chapters 10 and 11.

Headline: [“Torturous life of a minority” - Malawi News Agency, Malawi, 31 August 2017](#)³⁹

This story about “Thandie,” the pseudonym given to a lesbian source in Malawi, offers a cautionary tale for journalists. After a local newspaper published her real name and her story in 2013, Thandie was “shamed in public, denied shelter, and disowned by her parents.” Her business lost clients and she faced daily waves of hate messages on Facebook and other platforms. Her father, who was excommunicated from his church, and her mother, who faced constant ridicule after the story was published, pressured Thandie to have a baby with a man, which she did. Thandie agreed to reveal her identity in the original 2013 story “because she wanted to make peace with herself. Instead of finding the

peace she was seeking, she found ridicule and hatred.” Remember Thandie’s story when a vulnerable or marginalized source agrees to be interviewed on the record and — before you rush to publish — think through what might happen if you reveal their identity.

7. ILLUSTRATE YOUR STORY WITH RESPONSIBLE AND RELEVANT IMAGES

Even radio stories need compelling photos or graphics to boost their reach on social media. Whatever medium you work in, images probably accompany most if not all of your stories. Chapter 10 on Source Safety and Digital Security outlines how to responsibly film or photograph vulnerable sources without revealing their identities, but sometimes we don’t have the time or budget to source original visuals.

When choosing stock photos or images from your archive, make sure they are relevant. If your story is about Ghana’s transgender community, don’t illustrate it with a photo of two white women holding hands or getting married. Not only would that photo be irrelevant, it might also reinforce the false notion that sexual and gender diversity is a “Western phenomenon”. It’s also important not to oversexualize SSOGIE communities. If your story is about healthcare discrimination, don’t illustrate it with racy photos of shirtless men in bed. Generic rainbow flags and gender symbols might signal to your audience that the story is about SSOGIE issues, but you can do better.

If using images from your archive, be careful not to include faces of people who are not in the story. If you write a story about how gay men were arrested at a popular restaurant and accompany it with an old photo of people dining at that restaurant, readers might mistakenly assume the people in the photo were the ones arrested. Always remember the right to privacy and strive to include relevant, accurate, and humanizing photography.

Example: [*This Is How the Heart Beats: LGBTQ East Africa*](#)⁴⁰

This book, published in 2020, is part of the Diverse Humanity LGBTQ-Themed Photo Book Series showcasing the rich diversity and complexity of LGBTQ communities around the world. It demonstrates the power and versatility of photography as a storytelling medium.

For good examples of shorter photo essays, see:

Headline: [*"For Indonesia's Buginese community, trans women play key role in Muslim weddings" - Religion News Service, Indonesia, 14 August 2015*](#)⁴¹

Headline: [*"For trans Muslims in Malaysia, daily life brings struggles, triumphs" - Religion News Service, Malaysia, 28 July 2015*](#)⁴²

8. TELL STORIES OF TRIUMPH

Marginalized sexual and gender minorities often face disproportionate pain, suffering, and abuse, but they also experience joy, love, and triumph just like anyone else. Most stories about LGBTQI+ communities dwell too heavily on the negative. When journalists frame SSOIGIE minorities exclusively as victims, they strip away their agency and power. Yes, sexual and gender minorities often face more hurdles and discrimination than the general population, but their lives are more than gloom and doom. When speaking with sources and looking for stories, no matter how grim the subject, keep an eye out for silver linings. Surviving persecution requires resilience, which often translates into hope. Seek out and tell stories of people making a positive difference in their communities and triumphing over adversity.

Headline: [*"Uganda's LGBT faith leaders say God's love is unconditional" - Religion News Service, Uganda, 29 November 2016*](#)⁴³

This story profiles five religious leaders and community activists at the forefront of Uganda's LGBTQI+ equality movement who kept their faith after being ostracized by their religious communities. Many authors would have focused solely on the struggles these leaders endured. By emphasizing their love and resilience, the author chooses to inspire rather than depress readers.

**HOW NOT TO
REPORT ON
SSOGIE ISSUES**

How NOT to Report on SSOGIE Issues

Most of this guide focuses on best practices, but it's worth flagging some problematic reporting examples we've come across so that you can avoid making the same mistakes.

Sloppy or sensational reporting on sensitive issues can cause real harm to vulnerable communities, harm that can lead to discrimination or violence. In October 2010, the Ugandan tabloid *Rolling Stone* published an article with the headline "100 PICTURES OF UGANDA'S TOP HOMOS LEAK" alongside the caption "Hang Them". Three months later, Ugandan LGBTQI+ rights activist David Kato was murdered.

While normal standards of good journalism obviously apply to covering SSOGIE issues, be extra careful about your framing and presentation. If sources you interview demonize or dehumanize individuals or entire communities, consult the hate speech and dangerous speech tests outlined in Chapter 3 of this guide. Your job as a journalist is to present fair and accurate portraits of people in your community. Don't let your own biases

or those of the loudest or most extreme voices dictate your coverage.

Here are some common tropes and pitfalls to avoid when reporting on SSOGIE issues.

1. DON'T LET ISOLATED OUTLIERS SPEAK FOR ENTIRE COMMUNITIES

[Headline: "Men made me a lesbian after raping me three times" - The Standard, Kenya, 17 January 2013⁴⁴](#)

In this story from Nairobi, a lesbian woman attributes her sexual orientation to sexual violence. Few sexual minorities would agree with this parallel, but absent any other voices in the article, the subject's controversial claim stands as authoritative testimony. While the subject is certainly entitled to her belief, it should be balanced by a range of opinions and testimonies so that readers are not left to falsely believe that sexual violence determines sexual orientation.

2. DON'T LEND FALSE CREDIBILITY TO UNINFORMED "EXPERTS"

Headline: ["Is there anything like a gay gene?" - Daily Nation, Kenya, 23 April 2013](#)⁴⁵

In a column called "Medical Clinic," written by a medical doctor, the author quotes his former professor's false and misguided views about homosexuality:

In his opinion, the majority of men attracted to other men were not necessarily born gay. They do not have the characteristic 'gay' look, and it would be difficult to tell such from a 'straight' chap. "So how do they become gay?" he questioned.

"Men are indoctrinated into a gay lifestyle at an early age when they are impressionable," he explained. "This is usually by a friend or older boys. However, the stimulation of the prostrate [sic] is what makes them seek out men time and time again. This eventually develops into a lifestyle."

The above statements, presented as medical fact, are nonsensical. So is the article's excerpt, which reads, "Is homosexuality genetic or is it a learned behavior bordering on addiction? All medical indicators point to personal choice and conditioning rather than genes."

When quoting doctors, lawyers, psychologists, academics, and other "expert" sources who hold contro-

versial, unconventional, or patently false views, beware of lending them undue authority and credibility. Speak to a variety of sources to deduce and present mainstream professional views on the matter. If you determine that your original expert source is completely off the mark, you may decide not to include their views at all or to include them with proper context to expose them as incorrect or extreme. Beware of implying false balance on issues that have already achieved general consensus.

3. AVOID PUBLISHING IMAGES OR DETAILS OF SSGIE MINORITIES WITHOUT FIRST NOTIFYING THEM OR OBTAINING CONSENT

Headline: ["Lesbian pastor vs church" - The Cape Times, South Africa, 22 May 2013](#)⁴⁶

Although the text of this story was ethically sound, the massive photo that accompanied it on the front page of Cape Town's most widely circulated newspaper was problematic. The minister profiled was out to friends, family, and colleagues, but her wife was not. The front-page photo of the married couple smiling side-by-side was published without the subjects' consent, a legally defensible decision given that it was taken in a public place, but one that raises ethical concerns and created real problems for the minister's wife, who was outed against her will. When photographing or covering sensitive SSGIE

issues, confirm that sources know what will be done with the material produced and that they consent to being quoted or featured.

4. DON'T EXPLOIT SSGIE MINORITIES FOR SALACIOUS CLICKBAIT

[Headline: "I Got Three Grindr Dates in an Hour in the Olympic Village" - The Daily Beast, Brazil, August 11, 2016](#)⁴²

In this article from the 2016 Summer Olympics, a straight reporter used the gay social network app Grindr to chat with athletes -- some of them closeted and from countries where coming out can be dangerous -- and published potentially identifiable details about them. This practice, sometimes called Grindr-baiting, is intrusive and unethical. SSGIE minorities should not be exploited for sensational or salacious entertainment coverage.

[Headline: "MANERELA faults Malawi police over arrest of man posing as woman" - Nyasa Times, Malawi, 20 July 2017](#)⁴⁸

The shirtless "perp walk" photo of a transgender woman that accompanies this story is dehumanizing and dan-

gerous considering attitudes toward LGBTQI+ people in Malawi. Listing the specific village where the subject is from (and perhaps still lived at the time) is also dangerous. The author deliberately misgenders the subject ("man posing as woman," "man alleged to have been pretending to be a female prostitute") and makes reference to police officers laughing at the subject's genitals, which is particularly demeaning. The details and tone of this story are unnecessarily salacious and violate serious journalism ethics.

5. DON'T PUBLISH IF YOU'VE NOT DONE YOUR RESEARCH

[Headline: "House to address matter of intersex people" - Daily Nation, Kenya, 10 October 2016](#)⁴⁹

While the author's seemingly objective approach to covering intersex issues is admirable, his ignorance of the actual issues and misuse of terminology do more to confuse than inform the reader.

The author characterizes intersex people as "victims" who "suffer" from a "rare gender disorder," a "gender identity disorder that makes it difficult to determine whether they are male or female at birth,



'MUSCULAR ATHLETE FOR MEETS' 08.11.16 6:00 AM ET

I Got Three Grindr Dates in an Hour in the Olympic Village

though their gender becomes apparent as they grow.”

The author quotes “expert opinion” as saying, “the victims have both female and male sexual organs at birth, both poorly formed.” He quotes an MP as saying, “an intersex person requires at least four chromosome tests to determine their gender” and implies that “corrective surgery” is required.

The author’s victimizing language, muddling of gender and biological sex, and reliance on false information from “expert” sources show that he hasn’t done his homework. The absence of any intersex voices in the piece may shed some light on these oversights. Avoid the rush to publish, reach out to relevant sources, and research the issue in-depth before confusing your audience with misrepresentations and falsehoods.

6. DON’T LET VILIFYING STEREOTYPES GO UNCHALLENGED

[Headline: “Homosexuality finds room in the office” - The Standard, Kenya, 23 October 2009](#)⁵⁰

Your sources might say some pretty outlandish things about sexual and gender minorities. Take a look at the quotes in this story about workplace SSOGIE issues in Kenya:

“I think we should not shun gays unduly so long as they do not embark on a recruitment drive in the workplace. Their

lifestyle should remain private, and they have a right to it just like anybody else,” said a lecturer at Egerton University.

Mr Nelson Njema, an accountant with an oil firm, says being gay is just like being impotent or a hermaphrodite.

He says gays and lesbians have the right to workplace benefits and respect like anybody else.

Do you turn away people from the workplace on account of physical disability that does not in any way affect their productivity? He poses.

But Mr Anthony Wainaina, a secondary school teacher, differs. He has no patience with gay mannerisms. “They dye and plait their hair and manicure their hands at the expense of doing any real work,” he says.

He quotes the bible, terming homosexuality as the most serious transgression next to murder.

These notions that SSOGIE minorities go on sexual recruitment drives, that being gay is a disability, and that gay people are too distracted grooming themselves at the office to get any work done are frankly ridiculous. They would seem almost humorous if such stereotypical beliefs were not so widely and genuinely held. Journalists have a duty to challenge sources who parrot vilifying stereotypes. If such quotes are somehow deemed newsworthy, they should be contextualized and balanced with alternative opinions that more closely reflect reality.

7. BEWARE OF BOGUS SURVEYS AND STATISTICS

Headline: [“Nkurunziza furious as Senate rejects anti-gay law” - The East African, Burundi, 28 March 2009](#)⁵¹

This article makes numerous references to “the roughly 400 gay people living in Burundi,” a country of more than 10 million people, without ever citing a source. Statistics concerning sexual orientation and gender identity are extremely unreliable given that such data must be self-reported, often in societies where homosexuality is stigmatized or unlawful. That being said, the proportion of sexual minorities among Burundi’s general population is certainly above 0.004% if surveys from other parts of the world provide any guidance. Be skeptical of any SSGIE statistics you come across, and always check and report the source if you do use numbers in your stories.

8. DON’T PANDER TO YOUR AUDIENCE’S FEARS

Headline: [“I’m your dad, he’s your papa” - Daily Nation, Kenya, 22 May 2012](#)⁵²

Our audiences’ biases, prejudices, and fears around SSGIE issues often stem from ignorance or misinformation. Our job as journalists is to inform the public, not to prey on their fears for our own financial gain. Consider the following introduction to a story about a Kenyan

National Human Rights Commission report that recommended the decriminalization of homosexuality and same-sex marriage:

Picture 21st Century Kenya as a country where same-sex marriages are legal. A man falls head over heels and marries a “bearded sister.” As time goes by, the couple takes to the children’s department over that small matter of adopting a future voter.

The child duly goes to school where the couple dutifully attend visiting and Parent’s Days. One is daddy, the other the “male mother.” Now imagine the child filling forms with spaces for “Father’s and Mother’s” names. Picture too, trying to introduce them in a social gathering.

This is not far-fetched.

The unnamed author’s fearmongering and reliance on invented terminology to introduce a news report is irresponsible, unprofessional, and unethical. Such framing does a disservice to our readers and should be avoided at all costs.

For more advice on what NOT to do, see “Terms to Avoid” in Chapter 4 of this guide and “Offensive Terms vs Preferred Terms” in Iranti’s [2019 Reference Guide for Media Practitioners and News Outlets](#)⁵³.



08



RELIGIOUS
PERSPECTIVES
ON SSOGIE
ISSUES

Religious Perspectives on SSOIE Issues

Most perpetrators of anti-LGBTQI+ hate — especially parachurch organizations, religious entities, and ideology/values-based groups — portray their viewpoints as the will of a supreme being, be it God, Brahman, Allah, YHWH, or something else. Many of these groups justify their hate by plucking isolated verses from religious texts that support their beliefs.

Differing interpretations of the same lines of scripture can affect how people dress, what they eat, how rituals are performed, whether women can become clergy, what children are taught about the Earth's creation, and countless other aspects of human belief and expression.

Hate groups that cite scripture to condemn, demonize, or manipulate sexual and gender minorities come from diverse faiths and denominations, yet often use similar tactics. Rather than employing contextual interpretation to decipher scripture's underlying intent, many use outdated, incomplete, or isolated texts to justify their beliefs. Pentecostal believers, especially, reject modern scholarship and new translations

that include scroll fragments discovered in the past 100 years. They sometimes rely on versions of the Bible that are known to include translational errors, such as the King James Version. Another common problem is inconsistent application of literal and contextual interpretative methods. Choosing to follow only some scripture word-for-word while ignoring verses that don't align with one's worldview reflects a somewhat arbitrary, reactive, and limited understanding of and approach to scripture.

The greatest challenge to understanding religion and its relationship to LGBTQI+ people is the diversity of viewpoints. Views differ among religions but also among individuals, generations, denominations, and groups within each religion.

It's therefore important to distinguish between a religion's formal or official stance on a topic—any topic—and how practitioners and leaders may interpret or ignore that stance.

Despite public opinion in many countries

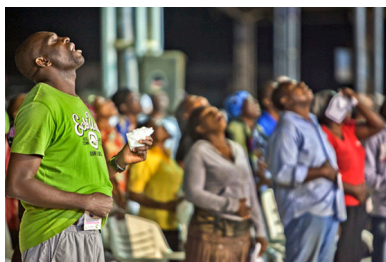
becoming more accepting of LGBTQI+ people, representatives of the world's two largest religious groups—the Roman Catholic Church and Sunni Islam—continue to issue “official” interpretations of scriptures that are hurtful and harmful to sexual and gender minorities. At the same time, queer Catholics and Sunni Muslims work in ministries or parachurch groups fighting for greater rights for sexual and gender minorities within those religions. Other faith groups under the broad umbrella of Islam and Christianity, particularly some mainline Protestants and Sufi Muslims, already welcome LGBTQI+ individuals and consider sexual and gender minorities to be wholly accepted members of their congregations and clergy. Understanding this nuance will help journalists determine which religious groups and individuals promote equality, which oppose it, and which actively fund or coordinate anti-LGBTQI+ campaigns.

This section provides a small window into the diverse viewpoints major world religions and belief systems hold toward LGBTQI+ people.

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

The Abrahamic religions of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism all share a common history, narratives, central figures, and even some religious obligations. Slightly varied retellings of these faiths’ ancient scriptures and rules are often used to justify anti-LGBTQI+ bias.

CHRISTIANITY



A worshipper falls to the floor during a deliverance ceremony at the Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries prayer service called “Power Must Change Hand” in Lagos, Nigeria. Photo by Andrew Esiebo, used with his permission.

The world’s largest religion is Christianity, but there is little unity among individual Christian groups in terms of who can be ordained clergy or whether sexual and gender minorities are fully welcome to join a congregation.

The Metropolitan Community Church, which has congregations in Kenya and South Africa, supports full partnership and ordination of LGBTQI+ members. Other African churches that support LGBTQI+ rights to varying degrees include the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the Anglican Church of South Africa. Cape Town’s Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba supports same-sex marriage, making him an unusual proponent within Anglicanism. Some of the aforementioned groups do not allow non-celibate

gay clergy and do not bless formal same-sex marriages. Other churches in Africa that are outreach ministries of religious groups based largely in the United States reject any LGBTQI+ rights or affirmations. Such churches include the Assemblies of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Orthodox Christian groups, Southern Baptists, and many independent Pentecostal churches. Beyond those mentioned above, non-celibate sexual minorities are prohibited from participating as clergy or active lay leaders in most Christian religious groups around the world, including the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox groups.

Sexual and gender minorities who grow up amid religious groups that preach and teach anti-LGBTQI+ viewpoints such as "love the sinner, hate the sin" often suffer from great emotional, spiritual, and psychological harm. Some denominations or groups will even attempt "conversion therapy" to make queer people straight or gender-conforming—a practice that psychological and psychiatric associations around the world condemn as damaging, fraudulent, and ineffective.

Core disagreements among Christian groups over LGBTQI+ rights most often relate to interpretations of scripture, as is true among other faiths. Some Christians believe that several well-known passages contain language that in English and other translations condemns same-sex relationships. These Old Testament passages are Genesis 19: 1-26; Judges 19; Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13. The New Testament passages

are in biblical books thought to be written by the Apostle Paul, including Romans 1:26-27; Corinthians 6:9-10; and Timothy 1:10. These passages, depending on language and version of translation, present male and female as complementary binaries and the only divinely intended partnership. They also discuss prohibitions or punishments for same-sex relationships. Other passages, cited as upholding heterosexual unions and marriage as the ideal relationship, include Genesis 1-26-31 and 2:18-24 in the Old Testament and Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-40; and Ephesians 5:22-33 in the New Testament.

Modern scholarship since the 19th century, however, interprets biblical verses in more complex ways, especially in light of ongoing discoveries of ancient scrolls, and a growing understanding of the ways humans edited sacred scrolls for their own political, social, and cultural purposes. Scholars also understand more about the literary devices used in biblical storytelling, including poetry, song, and allegory. The literal interpretation of individually plucked passages—devoid of cultural context and disregarding surrounding and sometimes contradictory passages, is viewed as problematic by many biblical scholars.

Scholars point to the dangers of singling out individual verses as "proof" of God's word when applied to today's world. Such "proof-texting" takes Bible verses out of context or to support one's own biases and interpretations. It is not a new problem. For example, in U.S. and British fights to end slavery, proof-text-

ting was used to both support slavery and to argue for its end. Biblical verses have been used to defend the physical and sexual abuse of women, too, and to promote complementarianism — the theological perspective that says women have a different and “subservient” role to men and only men can hold leadership within marriage and church life. Although women have been told to be subservient to men since Christianity’s founding, this use of misogynistic theological arguments emerged in the 1980s as a response to second-wave feminism and has been used to bolster opposition to gay marriage. In complementarianism, marriage is narrowly defined as a monogamous union between one cisgender man and one cisgender woman, what some Christians have dubbed the “traditional” family model—a propagandistic term that became a key phrase in culture wars, despite its subjectivity.

In the 21st century, proof-texting of the Christian Bible has been increasingly used to support caustic and venomous anti-LGBTQI+ attitudes and actions. Many evangelical Christians and Pentecostal/Apostolic Christians who view the Bible as the literal word of God selectively pluck out individual passages to condemn sexual and gender minorities while ignoring other literal rules about how many days a woman must wait after her period before having sex, what fabrics can be used in clothing, or which crimes deserve punishment by stoning. No one follows all of these admonitions.

The Rev. Ecclesia de Lange, an ordained

minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) who is based in Cape Town, cautions against literal biblical interpretations. De Lange is the director of Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM), a group that advocates for acceptance of LGBTQI+ individuals within faith traditions. IAM’s booklet, [“The Bible and Homosexuality,”](#)⁵⁴ notes:

“One cannot randomly choose isolated verses as if they represent God’s command to us today. We must interpret and understand the Bible, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, within the Biblical context as well as our own context. The big challenge therefore is: How do we read the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit?”



The Rev. Ecclesia de Lange is the director of Inclusive and Affirming Ministries. Photo provided by Ecclesia de Lange.

Instead of reading the Bible literally, IAM says readers should strive to understand:

01. the cultural contexts in which the Bible’s authors lived.
02. how specific verses fit into larger passages and the Bible’s overall message.
03. how verses can be read with contemporary context.

Regarding SSOIE issues specifically, IAM says Bible readers should avoid:

01. isolating specific verses from their broader meanings or context.
02. inconsistently applying the literal method by regarding certain verses as eternal truths while ignoring other verses that bear similar style.
03. using isolated texts to prove your own point of view. No text 'speaks' on its own.
04. relying on translations of the Bible that introduce ahistorical prejudices or misconceptions.
05. falling back on moralism and prescriptiveness or categorizing certain sexual sins as worse than the sin of judgment.

IAM reminds readers, "It is irresponsible and unscientific to interpret isolated verses in the Bible literally or in a fundamentalist way. The Bible says absolutely nothing about, nor does it condemn, a committed, loving, and faithful homosexual relationship as we know it today."

Sexual and gender minorities belong to every religious group on earth, even faith groups that routinely condemn them or deny their existence. In the most hostile Christian groups, LGBTQI+ members often remain closeted. But in others, such as the Roman Catholic Church or within Methodism,

LGBTQI+ members and their advocates sometimes belong to ministries devoted to fighting homophobia and bigotry from within the faith tradition, similar to IAM's work. Groups like the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics provide counternarratives and fight anti-LGBTQI+ policies and actions within their respective church bodies. Not all members of such groups are always comfortable speaking out on the record, but they can often help you find sources who will.

The Catholic Church encapsulates the complex and contradictory ways sexual and gender minorities are viewed among church officials, clergy, and laity. The Church's Catechism, which details official church beliefs, says "[men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies ... must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity.](#)"⁵⁵ But LGBTQI+ Catholics are told to remain chaste because sexuality should be practiced only in marriage, which the Church defines as permanent, procreative, heterosexual, and monogamous. The Church [condemns all forms of violence against homosexual persons](#)⁵⁶ but maintains that [only two genders exist and that it's not possible to change genders](#)⁵⁷. Professional sourcing and storytelling need to reflect these complex narratives. Without them, journalists covering SSOIE issues and religion will miss an important piece of the puzzle.

Although anti-LGBTQI+ hate has existed globally for centuries, Christian-based hate speech has ramped up in recent years. See Taboom Media's 2019 handbook [Investigating Anti-](#)

[LGBTQI+ Hate: A Reporting Guide for Journalists](#)⁵⁸ for relevant background, tips, and sources that should help you investigate and report on how

faith groups and NGOs use “religious freedom” arguments to foment anti-LGBTQI+ hatred around the world.

PROSPERITY GOSPEL’S PROBLEMATIC THEOLOGY

Christian churches headed by charismatic preachers who promise vast wealth and answered prayers to congregants who make generous donations to the church are among the [fastest growing in the Global South](#)⁵⁹. Members typically belong to lower socio-economic groups for which jobs, food, housing, health, and education are typically scarce or unstable. Some congregants pay these churches to perform exorcisms, conversion therapy, forced marriages, or even rape in hopes of “curing” a LGBTQI+ family member.

Prosperity theology emerged out of U.S.-born Pentecostal beliefs and worship styles following World War II. Revivals and a wave of religious growth in the 1950s included emotional services with faith healings and plentiful claims of miraculous events. Kate Bowler writes in her 2013 book [Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel](#)⁶⁰:

Prosperity teachers, though varying widely in interpretation and focus, agreed on three fundamental ideas. First, healing is God’s divine intention for humanity. Second, Jesus’ work on the cross earned not only redemption from sin but also deliverance from its penalties: namely, poverty, demonic interference, and sickness. Third, God set up the laws of faith so that believers could access the power of the cross. (p. 141)

One 2018 study of nearly 100 Prosperity Gospel pastors in South Africa clustered their theology around “abilities prosperity,” “progress prosperity,” and “miracle prosperity.” Regardless of the theological argument, the overwhelming message among Prosperity Gospel ministries is that sexual minorities require “healing” because their core identity is “sinful” or wrong. Bowler writes about one American pastor who claimed to have healed a man in the late stages of AIDS. “God restored the man, said Walton (the pastor), when he was delivered of the spirit of homosexuality,” Bowler writes. (p. 145) Such claims, regardless of their impossibility and even cruelty, can be heard at Prosperity Gospel church services across the globe.

Prominent news investigations of fraudulent claims and mismanaged donations by Prosperity Gospel ministries have won prestigious journalistic awards, including [a Pulitzer Prize](#)⁶¹. These investigations require time and deep sourcing that often includes disaffected employees, former board members, disgruntled congregants, and other individuals who might have access to private caches of documents that can prove a religious group’s nefarious actions.

ISLAM

Overlapping narratives among the Abrahamic faiths mean that anti-LGBTQI+ Christians, Orthodox Jews, and Muslims end up citing similar Bible, Torah, and Quran verses to oppose equality.

For example, Muslims who condemn homosexuality often reference the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as evidence that Allah (God) views same-sex sexual relationships as punishable by death. The story is described in the Quran with much the same detail as is found in various versions and translations of the Christian Bible. Muslims, however, still read the Quran in Arabic, the language in which it was first written from oral retellings. This fact has helped give Muslims who support literal interpretations of Quranic verses a protective theological shield, of sorts, when they spread hateful rhetoric against LGBTQI+ Muslims and others.

In addition to the Quran, the Muslim world has extensive legal and theological writings that were heavily influenced by religious, legal, political, and cultural events during the religion's founding in the seventh century and beyond. These turbulent times were marked by persecution, regional expansion, and changing balances of power. Despite artwork, poetry, interpretations, and other evidence of accepted same-sex romantic and sexual relationships in pre-modern Islamic cultures, European-based condemnations of sexual minorities influenced and helped create similar condemnations in Islamic

jurisprudence beginning in the 1800s onward. Despite this history, scholars (like Kacia Ali in her 2016 book [Sexual Ethics and Islam](#)⁶²) are documenting greater recognition of sexual and gender diversity within Islam today.

Just as there is nuance within Christianity, some contemporary Muslim organizations affirm queer Muslims and support equal rights for sexual and gender minorities. That said, it's generally harder for journalists to find pro-LGBTQI+ Muslim groups than it is to find such groups among Christians.

Ishmael Bahati is a Muslim LGBTQI+ advocate and the director of [Persons Marginalized and Aggrieved \(PEMA\)](#)⁶³ in Mombasa, Kenya. He cites the following Quranic passage, which addresses hate speech and diversity. The English version of the original Arabic in Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11) comes from Sahih International, as republished at [Quran.com](#)⁶⁴.

O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

Muhsin Hendricks is a Cape Town-based Islamic scholar with a background in classical Arabic and Islamic sciences from the University of Islamic Studies in Karachi,

Pakistan. He is an Islamic religious leader (imam) by profession and also a human rights activist who focuses on sexual orientation and gender identity within Islam. Muhsin founded the Inner Circle and [Compassion-Centred Islam](#)⁶⁵ to support Muslims who have been marginalized because of their sexual orientations or gender identities and expressions.



Cape Town-based Imam Muhsin Hendricks creates safe spaces for queer Muslims. Photo by Brian Pellot.

Muhsin says homosexuality and gender non-conforming identities have existed within predominantly Muslim societies since Islam's inception more than 1,400 years ago.

He cites the example of the mukhanathun, a social group mentioned in ancient ahadith and sunan among which sexual and gender non-conforming activities and expressions were prevalent.

Muhsin says that contemporary Sunni and Shiite scholars generally agree that homosexuality falls under adultery and should be punished under Islamic law. In 2007, the Muslim Judicial Council of South Africa declared that any Muslim

who accepts homosexuality should be considered an apostate. Policies in places such as Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates—where Islamic law and government law are intertwined—prescribe harsh prison sentences or even the death penalty for some SSOGIE minorities. Dozens of countries ruled by or influenced by Islamic law also oppose LGBTQI+ rights at the United Nations.

Islamic radio stations and online broadcasts often include preaching and hate speech by Muslim clergy who condemn sexual minorities. Such rhetoric is frequently broadcast in Arabic, which poses an additional challenge for reporters who do not speak the language. With [global Islam predicted to grow by 70 percent](#)⁶⁶ in the next 30 years, this damaging rhetoric within the world's second-largest religion is also likely to grow.

Muhsin says the contemporary conflict between LGBTQI+ narratives and orthodox Islam leaves many queer Muslims with cognitive dissonance and low levels of self-esteem when trying to reconcile their sexual orientations or gender identities with their faiths:

"This cognitive dissonance, coupled with blatant rejection from orthodox Muslim communities, has led many queer Muslims to negotiate this dilemma between sexuality and spirituality through dual identities, drugs and alcohol abuse, irresponsible sexual behavior, apostasy, and even suicide."

Transgender individuals, however, are more accepted or at least tolerated in some majority Muslim countries. For example, Iran’s government subsidizes sex reassignment surgery and Pakistan passed a “Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act” in 2018. That law requires the government to provide protection centers and safe houses to at-risk people, among other safety measures.

JUDAISM

Among the Abrahamic faiths, Judaism is by far the smallest, with about 14 million people worldwide. It is still notable in the context of this guide because Hebrew scriptures include the same Creation stories and Leviticus passages that are notoriously interpreted as anti-LGBTQI+ in Christianity’s Old Testament.

Jewish scholars interpret the Torah—the first five books of the Hebrew Bible -- using some of the same scriptural analysis methods that Christian scholars use to interpret cultural and societal influences in their Bible.

Progressive Jewish groups have been at the forefront of LGBTQI+ equality globally. But just like most evangelical Christians who interpret scripture literally, many Orthodox Jews read the Torah and rabbinical teachings as forbidding certain specific sexual activities and have policies prohibiting specific types of sex, such as anal sex. Although there are transgender Orthodox rabbis, Orthodox rabbis generally do not support sex reassignment surgery. Yet even with prohibitive religious interpre-

tations, signs of change have begun. In 2019, Rabbi Daniel Atwood became the [first openly gay Orthodox rabbi](#)⁶⁷ to be ordained in Israel.

Interestingly, some Talmudic scholars say rabbinic literature names several different gender categories. These names include “saris,” translated as eunuch; “tumtum,” meaning someone whose sex is unknown because their genitals are covered; and “androgynos,” which translates as intersex.

As is true for most religions, the most strictly literalist practitioners of Judaism—a group collectively known as ultra-Orthodox Jews—strongly reject LGBTQI+ rights. When trans activist and former Hasidic rabbi [Abby Stein came out](#)⁶⁸ to her family in 2015, she was shunned.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS

Traditional African religions are as diverse as the continent is wide. These intricate belief systems cannot be easily summarized, but their perspectives regarding sexual and gender minorities are often negative, as seen in [reports of intersex babies being killed at birth because “they’re bad omens.”](#)⁶⁹



Pharie Sefali represents the Ubambo Lwam Luvuyo LGBTI Traditional Healers Forum in Cape Town. Photo provided by Pharie Sefali.

Some traditional healers do support LGBTQI+ people. One example is Pharie Sefali, community engagement and empowerment manager at the Triangle Project and an executive committee member of Ubambo Lwam Luvuyo LGBTI Traditional Healers Forum in Cape Town. Pharie describes traditional healing as more cosmology than religion and says that traditional healers (also called sangomas) serve as the medium through which physical, psychological, spiritual, and ancestral worlds are connected.

Pharie says LGBTQI+ sangomas are often considered “strange” and out of line with African ancestral beliefs. In rural communities across South Africa, some families of LGBTQI+ individuals organize ceremonies with traditional healers in hopes that ancestors will change their loved one’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Traditional Healers Forum, however, advocates for the social and institutional rights of LGBTQI+ traditional healers.

The forum educates sangomas and society at large about issues surrounding sexuality and spirituality. Pharie describes the forum as a safe space for people to talk more openly about their sexuality and to challenge beliefs that LGBTQI+ people cannot be sangomas.

Pharie interviewed fellow LGBTQI+ sangomas at a workshop for a [2015 article that originally appeared in GroundUp](#).⁷⁰

Sindiswa Tafeni told the workshop that being lesbian in the township was hard enough, and being a lesbian sangoma was even harder because of the attitude of other sangomas.

“It’s hard to get clients because communities and straight healers speak badly of you. If you go to a traditional ceremony where you meet other healers, they have an attitude of mockery and say that you are faking the healing gift and that being lesbian shows that your ancestors are angry at you,” said Tafeni.

Nokuthula Mbete, who works for the Quaker Peace Center and is a traditional healer and a pastor, said some parents assumed that a child who disclosed that he or she was gay or lesbian was “bewitched” and that the family had been cursed. The children were sent to traditional healers “to reverse the curse and heal the child from the homophobic disease.”

“People take homosexuality as something that can be solved, fixed or cured. I work with youth every day. Some get suicidal because their

parents are giving them traditional medicine to cure the homosexual 'disease'. So even sangomas have to be educated about sexuality, and we have to change their stereotype mindset," Mbete said.

ASIAN RELIGIONS IN AFRICA

Several major religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism — originated in India and now have adherents in Eastern and Southern Africa. Views about LGBTQI+ equality and rights within these religions are complex and greatly influenced by contemporary culture, politics, and societal pressures. Here we look at the largest of these religions, Buddhism and Hinduism.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is the second oldest major world religion after Hinduism. Its largest presence is in Southeast Asia and China. Like all world faiths, Buddhism is tremendously diverse and has undergone a variety of interpretations in the more than 2,400 years since the religion's namesake, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) lived. The two major branches are Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism.

As with Abrahamic texts, Buddhist scholars typically interpret admonitions against or punishment of sexual and gender minorities and relationships as indicative of how the faith's founder viewed LGBTQI+ inclusion. Among the oldest Buddhist scriptures are Theravada Buddhism's [Pali Canon](#)⁷¹, which does

not mention any such admonitions. Rather, scriptures and interpretations by early monks warn against actions that bring disharmony to family and home, including having sex with a child, someone who is engaged or married, or someone who has taken a religious vow of celibacy. Theravada Buddhist monks have, at times, explicitly said that a person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression [have no bearing on sexual misconduct](#)⁷².

The Dalai Lama, the revered leader of Tibetan Buddhists worldwide, has complex and evolving views on sexual and gender minorities, according to [Human Rights Watch](#)⁷³:

On the positive side, he has publicly condemned violence against LGBTQ people and has been reported to have said, "If the two people have taken no vows [of chastity] and neither is harmed, why should it not be acceptable? Yet in a 1997 press conference he commented that "from a Buddhist point of view [lesbian and gay sex] is generally considered sexual misconduct." During a meeting with representatives of the LGBTQ community, the Dalai Lama reportedly showed interest in how modern scientific research might create new understanding of the Buddhist texts, acknowledging a "willingness to consider the possibility that some of the teachings may be specific to a particular cultural and historic context."

Buddhist ethical norms are expressed in the Eight Fold Path and Five Precepts.

They include the overall aim of Buddhism, which is to remove all earthly “attachments.” For Buddhists, that includes suppressing any craving for sensual pleasure and avoiding sexual misconduct—[regardless of sexual orientation](#)⁷⁴, gender identity, or gender expression.

Although sex and lust are generally viewed in Buddhist discourse among monks as a hindrance to reaching an enlightened state, one historical exception is the celebration of love in Japan between young male novices and older monks, as expressed in the [Abhidharma-kosha](#)⁷⁵, a fourth- or fifth-century writing.

Unlike Theravada Buddhism, in which enlightenment can take many lifetimes to achieve, Mahayana Buddhism teaches that a person only needs one lifetime. To assure the speediest path to enlightenment, monks in the fourth century B.C. were forbidden to have sexual relations with any of the [four main sex/gender types](#)⁷⁶ mentioned in the Vinaya, the Buddhist monastic community regulations based on ancient scriptures. These four types were male, female, intersex (ubhatovyanjanaka), and pandaka, which is defined broadly as anything from transgender women to eunuchs to impotent men.

HINDUISM

Despite the 2018 decriminalization of gay sex in India, where the vast majority of Hindus live, most Hindus still [largely eschew](#)⁷⁷ open discussion of LGBTQI+ rights and issues.

Hindu culture has had complex representations of sexual and gender minorities throughout its history, most notably among the faith’s thousands of deities. Hinduism is a monotheistic religion with a supreme being named Brahman, but Hindus are guided in their daily lives by the worship of lesser deities. These deities include a spectrum of sexual and gender minorities who are celebrated at festivals across India. One festival in the northeastern town of Koovagam celebrates “third gender” [hijras](#)⁷⁸. Scholarship in recent years has uncovered a rich historical legacy in Sanskrit references that confirm the existence of this third gender concept going back to Hinduism’s oldest Vedic scriptures.

In their book [“Same-Sex Love in India,”](#)⁷⁹ Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai identify sacred Hindu scriptures that have discussed and debated same-sex desire in myriad ways, from critical to playful to celebratory. Similarly, the book [“Tritiya-Prakriti: People of the Third Sex”](#)⁸⁰ by Hindu monk Amara Das Wilhelm shows examples of how ancient references to sexual minorities were more positive than today’s mixed rhetoric. “Early Vedic teachings stressed responsible family life and asceticism but also tolerated different types of sexualities within general society,” Wilhelm writes.

Depictions of Hindu deities who are intersex, deities who display three gender identities, deities born from a single man or single woman, deities who switch genders, deities who are born from two women or two men, and deities who partner with the same gender or none are all part of the rich representation of Hinduism in its diverse sacred literature.

RELIGION
REPORTING
TIPS

Religion Reporting Tips

Writing and producing stories about religion in ways that resonate with ardent believers, well-read worshippers, spiritual dabblers, and unconcerned agnostics requires skill and commitment. The reporting tips below come from professional journalists who cover religion full time.

COVERING RELIGION WITH ACCURACY, BALANCE, AND INSIGHT

- Be curious and willing to learn about others' beliefs.
- Be willing to work through cultural and language barriers.
- Respect the role of faith in people's lives, but maintain your journalistic skepticism.
- Look beyond institutional religion and delve into informal, unorganized faith practices.
- When possible, be local and national—or local and global—by connecting a story in your community to bigger trends or issues.
- Ask sources to characterize and label their own beliefs rather than making your own generalizations or assumptions.

FINDING AND VETTING SOURCES AND STATISTICS

- Religious groups can be wary of outsiders. Learn how to network and develop relationships with sources.
- Visit houses of worship, bookstores, hobby groups, sports games, conferences, festivals, or meditation centers—wherever people of faith gather.
- Try to find local representatives of national organizations that are tied to specific faiths.
- Visit online chat sites, social network sites, or advocacy and support sites. Sign up for newsletters and Google Alerts on faith topics that interest you.
- Try contacting sources on other journalists' beats or asking your journalism colleagues for help.
- Seek out knowledgeable sources capable of providing accurate information and analysis.
- Always investigate and evaluate the credibility of your sources and consider their motivations and potential biases.
- Strive to include moderate sources in your reporting, not just extreme or powerful voices.

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- Be cautious with statistics. Some religions do not keep accurate membership records, and some advocacy groups promote their own polls. Be specific about what numbers represent and where you found them.
 - Official websites of denominations and religious organizations are generally reliable but sometimes outdated. Make sure the information you gather has been updated recently.
 - Look out for critics of religions who create websites with addresses that are similar to those of whatever group they are criticizing. It's easy to stumble on a site that you did not intend to visit.
 - ReligionLink.com⁸¹ is a helpful website created by journalists who cover religion. It features thousands of story ideas, resources, and sources on a wide range of issues related to religion, public policy, and culture.

VISITING PLACES OF WORSHIP

- Journalists should experience worship services first-hand whenever possible.
- Consider letting religious leaders know in advance that you will be attending a service.
- If a worship service is open to the public, you can consider what is said to be "on the record," even if the house of worship is private property.
- Be respectful. This may mean following customs such as standing, being silent during prayer, and even observing modesty customs regarding head coverings, etc.

- Research gender expectations of other faiths and know what to do about segregated seating, head coverings, and handshakes ahead of your visit.
- Ask permission in advance if you wish to photograph, film, or record a worship service.

REVEALING PERSONAL BELIEFS

- Be prepared to handle questions about your personal beliefs from sources.
- Become familiar with and follow any ethical guidelines set by your media organization regarding such questions.
- Assure your source that you will listen to them and that you are committed to representing their faith in a fair and accurate way.
- It's perfectly fine to decline to answer questions about your own beliefs or to ask why the person is curious. Use your discretion.

HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS

- Remember that your job is to report, not comment or judge.
- Maintain fairness in your story by representing multiple sides. Use counterclaims so that one person's quotes or accusations do not stand alone. This will help show how prevalent your source's views are within a faith tradition.
- Adding context can accurately characterize a person's beliefs.

Using quotes from an expert or a fact can quickly show your audience whether a source is on the fringe or in the mainstream.

- If you decide that you won't be able to accurately and fairly report on someone you disagree with, courteously bow out and ask that another reporter be assigned to cover the story.

THE MAJOR "DON'TS" OF RELIGION REPORTING

- Do not preach, teach, or proselytize in a story.
 - Never promote your faith tradition above others or endorse its beliefs in a story.
 - You can report on your own religion. Just make sure to avoid conflicts of interest such as writing about your own congregation.
- Never assume a source knows what deities, angels, or demons are up to. For example, write that a source says she saw an angel rather than that an angel appeared in front of the source.
 - Don't assume that because someone is a leader or member of a faith group they necessarily agree with all of that group's policies and beliefs. Make sure to clarify their views on a topic.
 - Don't use terminology that defines the depth or commitment of someone's faith or religious practices unless a source describes themselves as such ("devout," "practicing," etc.).
 - Don't forget to double-check and clarify your sources' quotes.
 - Don't wait for a story to "break." Actively seek out topics that interest you.

**SOURCE SAFETY
AND DIGITAL
SECURITY**

Source Safety and Digital Security

Journalists have a duty to allow marginalized people to speak for themselves and in their own voices. We also have a duty to minimize harm, which means doing everything we can to protect the safety and security of the sources and communities we spotlight in our coverage.

Sexual, gender, and religious minorities are sometimes understandably reluctant to speak to the press if they or people they know have been sensationalized or stereotyped in past reporting. The best way to build trust with sources is to consistently produce responsible and ethical journalism that demonstrates a commitment to fairness, accuracy, and sensitivity.

Be sure sources understand the potential ramifications of being interviewed and quoted on sensitive topics. Clearly tell them where your story will appear and its likely audience. If they provide information off-the-record or on background, respect that. If they ask not to be photographed or that their real name not be used in a story, respect that too. Your editors should have a policy on pseudonyms and source anonymity. If they don't, find out how other ethical

news outlets handle such requests and suggest that your newsroom follow suit.

The [Samir Kassir Foundation's Journalist Survival Guide](#)⁸² offers several tips on protecting source identity, which have been updated for this guide:

ESTABLISHING THE TERMS

Before conducting the interview, establish the rules under which the information you get can be reported.

- Can you use their real name?
- Can you identify their place of work or position within an organization?
- Can you quote them directly?

As a journalist, it is important that you reveal as much information about your sources as possible to establish their, and your, credibility with your audience. When negotiating these terms, try not to make too many suggestions. Let your sources reflect and decide how much information they want revealed about themselves.

Avoid saying you WILL keep their identity secret, because there may be circumstances where you are compelled to reveal it. Instead say you will do EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER to keep their identity secret, and then be specific about how you intend to do that.

As always, take careful notes during these discussions, and secure those notes. Use a single notebook for all of your reporting on a confidential source. Do NOT put their contact information in that notebook. If possible, commit their contact details to memory, and identify them in your notes by using numbers or symbols.

Do not discuss the identity of your source or the information you have obtained with friends or family.

FIRST CONTACT

The best way to get information that cannot be traced is to have an in-person conversation in a private place. You should operate on the assumption that online communications, text messages, and phone calls can be monitored, logged, and recorded.

Bring a small compact camera capable of shooting video with you to the meeting, even if you intend to do a full interview later. It's always possible that the source will only agree to speak with you once. Do not use a smartphone camera or anything that is online.

In many cases, an in-person interview won't be possible and you will need

to communicate electronically. Wi-Fi networks are notoriously insecure. You should familiarize yourself with the technology that exists to conceal your own identity. Secure internet services such as TOR will mask your computer's IP address. Secure chat rooms and email services provide another level of security. Keep in mind that the very presence of safe mail or proxy internet software on your computer may look suspicious to authorities.

FILMING ANONYMOUS SOURCES

If your source agrees to an on-camera interview, there are several production techniques you can use to protect their identity. One of the most commonly used techniques is blurring the face in edit after the interview is completed. Be careful if you do this because your raw video files will, of course, reveal the person's face. Shooting "in shadow" is also not particularly secure. Facial recognition software can easily identify people by their profiles or the shape of their ears. Even if the face looks completely blacked out on your camera monitor, there is a good chance the dark areas contain more information than you think.

Another technique is using face scarves or masks to hide everything but the eyes, but eyes like fingerprints are unique to individuals. Your interview subject can be identified by their irises alone.

You may decide to film your interview without showing the source's face. Be aware that clothing, hands, and gestures can still reveal their identity.

One effective solution is to focus the camera on your own face with the back of the subject's head in the foreground. If they wear a scarf or a hood you can protect their identity and still maintain a visually interesting shot. Be aware of any reflections that might show their face.



Ghanaian journalist Prince Appiah photographs a source from behind to protect his identity.

SECURING YOUR MEDIA

You should always use a camera with removable memory cards and record onto those rather than the camera's built-in storage. Bring at least two memory cards with you to the interview.

As soon as your interview is shot, immediately remove the memory card and secure it. Replace the card with a fresh one, and once you are clear of your source, shoot some new material, for example, a street scene or a marketplace. That way if you are stopped and your camera is confiscated, you will have a plausible explanation for what you were doing because the new media will be time-stamped. If the memory card in the camera is blank, whoever confiscates it might be more suspicious.

EDITING VIDEO FOOTAGE

Video journalists who routinely deal with confidential sources will often keep two computers, one for general use and another that never goes online. If you have two computers, use the offline one to import and edit your media. If you don't have two computers, avoid being online while you're working with the material.

Once your edit is complete, you may export the finished project and delete your source files and any proxy files created during the edit. The original memory card should be the only archive you need. If you need to transfer or upload your finished report via the internet, copy it onto an external drive and plug that into your online computer.

Your particular circumstances may require you to devise new systems to protect the identity of confidential sources. Just remember to be careful about what you promise, stick to those promises, and continuously educate yourself about technological changes that could make your work safer or more dangerous.

OTHER RESOURCES

The Samir Kassir Foundation has [short animated video tutorials](#)⁸³ on other topics including how to protect your computer from malware and hackers, how to get a secure internet connection, and how to secure your Skype account.

Although it is no longer being updated, the [Security in-a-Box community focus guide to digital security tools and tactics](#)

[for the LGBTI community in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)⁸⁴ remains an excellent resource for journalists reporting on sexual and gender minorities in the region.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation features [surveillance self-defense guides](#)⁸⁵ for Journalists on the Move and LGBTQ Youth.

The Committee to Protect Journalists has a curated list of [Digital Safety DIY Guides](#)⁸⁶.

**JOURNALIST
SAFETY AND
WELLNESS**

Journalist Safety and Wellness

Reporting on divisive or taboo human rights topics can be risky for sources, but we also need to safeguard ourselves from legal and social backlash.

Constitutions and laws that prohibit defamation, libel, blasphemy, or “gay propaganda” may be weaponized to censor us. Members of our communities -- including friends, neighbors, colleagues, and even family members -- may turn their backs on us for daring to broach sensitive topics. Complete strangers may attack us on social media with hateful messages or threats of physical harm. Some may even follow through on these threats, putting us and our colleagues and loved ones in harm’s way.

These personal and professional risks are real, but even just the fear of legal punishment, social ostracization, financial loss, or physical attack can induce psychological trauma.

Faced with these threats, how can journalists cover sensitive issues around religious, sexual, and gender minorities while staying physically safe and mentally sound?

1. KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Before tackling a controversial topic, research local laws and cultural sensitivities that might limit your ability to freely report on the issue. Once you understand these legal and social limits you’ll be better placed to determine your own limits and decide how far you’re willing to push a story.

2. LET SOURCES SAY WHAT YOU CAN’T

Include alternative voices in your reporting—people who can express ideas and opinions you can’t or who represent identities that are often absent or distorted in the press. This might sound like a basic principle of good reporting (it is), but it’s also a powerful way to air dissent and to highlight local controversies and debates. If including such quotes could potentially endanger your sources, consider how to mitigate those threats before publishing.

3. WRITE ANONYMOUSLY

If you care more about reporting the facts than seeing your byline, consider writing anonymously or pseudonymously. Don't think for a second that doing so will make you untouchable. If you're reporting on sensitive issues, you still need to take every precaution to avoid being traced, tracked, or identified. If you fail to do so, you're not only compromising your own safety but also that of your sources. Start with some basic online privacy tips from the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)⁸⁷, [Tor](#)⁸⁸, [Privacy International](#)⁸⁹, and [Access Now](#)⁹⁰.

4. REPORT FROM EXILE

Hardly ideal, but reporting from exile is often a necessary option. If journalists and citizens are unable to cover sensitive topics from within their countries, they might choose to safely, securely, and anonymously feed information to outsiders who have large international followings. Diaspora journalists living and working abroad still need to consider the safety of family, friends, colleagues, and sources back home. [IranWire](#)⁹¹ is a great example of this kind of reporting.

5. WRITE BETWEEN THE LINES

If you know that certain words like "gay," "transgender," or "sex work" will prompt your editor or publisher to kill a story or your government to censor it, get

creative. "Gender" often just means "women" in policy and development circles. That (incorrect) assumption may allow you to embed transgender issues or include transgender sources when reporting on the topic without attracting much scrutiny. "Key populations" can also provide an "acceptable" framework through which to discuss sexual and gender minorities' realities and concerns. Overreliance on this public health framing risks medicalizing SSOGIE identities, but it can provide a helpful entry point when used appropriately and when your options are otherwise limited.

6. PLAY THE LONG GAME

Before diving into SSOGIE coverage with an ambitious story you know will cause a splash (and backlash), first dip your toes in to test the water. In many societies, reporting on intersex issues may be a journalist's safest entry point to eventually covering broader sexual and gender minority issues. In countries where national strategic frameworks on HIV/AIDS acknowledge key populations, including men who have sex with men and sex workers, try pitching a story about how these policies affect these groups. Establishing a track record that shows editors and sources you can responsibly cover SSOGIE issues should help you nudge the door open to report on more controversial or sensitive topics over time.

7. PREPARE FOR THE WORST

When covering taboo topics, it's usually best to prepare for the worst. That means taking all necessary precautions to protect yourself, colleagues, and loved ones. Reporters Without Borders' [Safety Guide for Journalists](#)⁹² offers risk assessment advice and best practices to safeguard your physical, emotional, and financial health. It's a survival guide more geared to war reporting, but many of its tips are just as relevant to reporting on controversial or divisive issues.

8. COMBAT ONLINE HARASSMENT

If your reporting draws the ire of internet trolls, there are steps you can take to mitigate the hatred. Pen America has a robust [online harassment field manual](#)⁹³ filled with effective strategies and resources journalists can use to defend against cyber hate and fight online abuse. The manual includes tactics for protecting your online presence and accounts; strategies for response, including assessing threats, documenting harassment, navigating social media and email, deploying cyber communities, and practicing counterspeech; advice for practicing self-care and maintaining community; legal responses; and potential sources of support. For a quicker overview, read the Committee to Protect Journalists' [psychological safety note on online harassment and how to protect your mental health](#)⁹⁴. Tips include updating your privacy settings, muting

or blocking harassers, and temporarily disabling your accounts.

9. LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Navigating around taboo topics, interviewing traumatized sources, and bracing for audience backlash can lead to its own form of "[secondary trauma](#)"⁹⁵. Signs of such trauma may include emotional drain, exhaustion, painful flashbacks, guilt, anxiety, stress, depression, burnout, crying, substance use, and other coping mechanisms. If you notice these signs in yourself or in colleagues, know that help is available.

The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma offers resources on [covering trauma](#)⁹⁶ and [managing stress](#)⁹⁷. The International Center for Journalists offers [mental health tips and resources](#)⁹⁸.

Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the Dart Center, advises journalists to "create a self-care plan with assertive boundaries." This might include yoga, exercise, meditation, and keeping a list of what you've accomplished throughout the day to overcome feelings of helplessness.

Reuters has a [journalist mental health and wellbeing advocate](#)⁹⁹ and offers free counseling services to employees, stringers, alumni, and their family members. Not all newsrooms can afford to provide such services, but you can encourage your bosses and colleagues

to create and implement mental health protocols, committees, support groups, and other programs.

If you're struggling with stress, anxiety, or depression, there are many free online therapy programs and courses. The Centre for Interactive Mental Health Solutions offers [Bliss, a free eight-session interactive online cognitive behavioral therapy program for depression](#)¹⁰⁰ you can complete on your own. Palouse Mindfulness offers a [free eight-week online mindfulness-based stress reduction training course](#)¹⁰¹.

In-person or one-on-one online therapy can be expensive, but free and reduced-cost options may still be available. If you have medical aid in South Africa, government-mandated prescribed minimum benefits mean you may be [eligible for up to 15 therapy sessions per year at no additional cost](#)¹⁰². Local clinics, hospitals, or universities may offer free or affordable sessions with a therapist in training under the supervision of a licensed clinician. Many group therapy sessions are free. See what's available in your community.

10. CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY

Journalism can be a lonely profession. It can be especially isolating for freelancers who work from home without the institutional support of a newsroom. Consider joining a journalism association for your region or beat. The [Federation of African Journalists](#)¹⁰³ or the [African](#)

[Editors' Forum](#)¹⁰⁴ may be a good starting point, as may smaller national associations of journalists. If you cover LGBTQI+ issues, contact [NLGJA](#)¹⁰⁵. If your beat is religion, contact [Religion News Association](#)¹⁰⁶ or the [International Association of Religion Journalists](#)¹⁰⁷.

Many countries have associations specifically for freelance journalists ([SAFREA](#)¹⁰⁸ in South Africa, [NAF](#)¹⁰⁹ in Zimbabwe, [AFI](#)¹¹⁰ in Kenya, etc.). [Frontline Freelance Register \(FFR\)](#)¹¹¹ offers representation and a sense of community to international freelance journalists who are exposed to risk in their work. Associate membership is free. The [Rory Peck Trust](#)¹¹² provides practical and financial support to freelance journalists and their families worldwide, assisting in times of crisis and helping them to work more safely and professionally.

**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES
AND READINGS**

Additional Resources and Readings

This section offers a curated list of links to relevant research, reporting guides, media analysis, and stories that can enhance and inspire your reporting on SSOIGIE minorities and religion. All links are valid and accurate as of April 2020. If a link has since broken, you can search for the title online.

RESEARCH

- [State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019: A world survey of sexual orientation laws: criminalisation, protection and recognition](#)¹⁷³ is an annual report by the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA). It provides a good starting point to see where laws protect or criminalize same-sex sexual activity and related identities and can help narrow your investigation to particular countries or regions of concern. It also provides precise references to the actual content of laws, which can aid in your reporting. Compare the 2019 report to the decade of annual reports that preceded it to get a sense
- of where things are improving or deteriorating. The [map](#)¹¹⁴ and regional charts ([Africa](#)¹¹⁵) are also useful for country comparisons.
- The [2017 ILGA-RWI Global Attitudes Survey on Sexual, Gender and Sex Minorities](#)¹¹⁶ uses online surveys to assess public opinion on such issues as equal rights, workplace protections, legal gender recognition, criminalization of same-sex sexual activity, religion, and culture. The survey reached around 116,000 unique respondents in more than 70 countries.
 - [Trans Legal Mapping Report](#)¹¹⁷ is a 2017 report by ILGA that documents how laws in different countries recognize or prevent the rights of trans people to change their identity markers on official documents. Compare the countries in this report to ILGA's State-Sponsored Homophobia report.
 - [The Global Divide on Homosexuality](#)¹¹⁸ is a 2013 Pew Research Center report on global attitudes to homosexuality in 39 countries. On the question, "Should Society Accept Homosexu-

ality,” a majority of people said “No” in the six African countries surveyed, namely South Africa (61% “No”), Kenya (90%), Uganda (96%), Ghana (96%), Senegal (96%), and Nigeria (98%). The survey found that acceptance of homosexuality is most widespread in countries where religion is less central to people’s lives.

- [Good neighbours? Africans express high levels of tolerance for many, but not for all](#)¹¹⁹ is a 2016 study by Afrobarometer that examines attitudes towards people of different religions and sexual orientations in 33 countries.
- [Breaking the Silence: Criminalisation of Lesbians and Bisexual Women and its Impacts](#)¹²⁰ is a 2016 report by the Human Dignity Trust that documents the history of laws criminalizing consensual sexual intimacy between women, and the homophobia anti-LGBT criminal laws foster and perpetuate against lesbians and bisexual women in particular.
- [Making Love a Crime: Criminalization of Same-Sex Conduct in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)¹²¹ is a 2013 report by Amnesty International that analyzes the legal environment and wider context of human rights violations against LGBTI individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa. The report discusses how religion is used to justify anti-LGBTI hate and flags Western preachers including Rick Warren and Scott Lively as actively funding or promoting homophobia in Africa.

- [Violence Based on Perceived or Real Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Africa](#)¹²² is a 2013 report compiled by African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHer) and the Coalition of African Lesbians. The report documents different forms of violence, factors fueling violence, and the impacts of violence on LGBTI individuals in Africa. It is available in English and French.
- [The Export of Hate](#)¹²³ is a 2014 report by Human Rights Campaign that profiles some of the many individuals and organizations advocating anti-LGBT bigotry and policies beyond their borders. The report outlines the connections and associations between them, the nations in which they’re active, and some of the resources at their disposal.
- [Religious Conservatism on the Global Stage: Threats and Challenges for LGBTI Rights](#)¹²⁴ is a 2018 report by the Global Philanthropy Project that documents the main conservative strategies, discourses, funding sources, and actors opposing the rights of sexual and gender minorities at the global level. The report includes an African case study.
- [Harmful Treatment: The Global Reach of So-Called Conversion Therapy](#)¹²⁵ is a 2019 report by OutRight Action International that documents the dangerous effects of “curative” or “reparative” therapy/abuse used to attempt to change, suppress, or divert a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

- [Colonizing African Values: How the U.S. Christian Right Is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa](#)¹²⁶ is a 2012 report by the Rev. Dr. Kapya Kaoma published by Political Research Associates. The report looks at the impact of U.S. religious conservatives on LGBTQ and women's reproductive rights in Africa and tracks the activities of the American Center for Law and Justice (and its African chapters), Family Watch International, the Roman Catholic group Human Life International, and the Transformation Network, which connects African and conservative American churches into a global network and prescribes exorcisms to cast out the "demons of homosexuality". The report shows that U.S. Christian Right groups continue to build organizational strength and campaign to inscribe homophobia and anti-abortion politics in the constitutions and laws of African countries.
- [Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia](#)¹²⁷ is a 2009 report by the Rev. Dr. Kapya Kaoma published by Political Research Associates. It argues that sexual minorities in Africa have become collateral damage to U.S. domestic conflicts and culture wars. The report shows how the U.S. Right, once isolated in Africa for supporting pro-apartheid, White supremacist regimes – has successfully reinvented itself as the mainstream of U.S. evangelicalism. Through their extensive communications networks in Africa, social welfare projects, Bible schools, and educational materials, U.S. religious conservatives warn of

the dangers of homosexuals and present themselves as the true representatives of U.S. evangelicalism, helping to marginalize Africans' relationships with mainline Protestant churches.

- [American Culture Warriors in Africa: A Guide to the Exporters of Homophobia and Sexism](#)¹²⁸ is a 2014 book by the Rev. Dr. Kapya Kaoma published by Political Research Associates. The book includes profiles of the American actors most responsible for the international assault on LGBTQ people and reproductive justice; an overview of their culture war campaigns in Africa; and guidelines for concrete action that can be taken in the U.S. to interrupt the continued export of American culture wars abroad.
- [Globalizing Hatred](#)¹²⁹, published in Harvard Political Review in March 2019, discusses the extreme homophobia American evangelicals have helped cultivate in African countries including Uganda.
- [This Alien Legacy: The Origins of "Sodomy" Laws in British Colonialism](#)¹³⁰ is a 2008 report from Human Rights Watch that traces modern-day laws against "unnatural offences" used to criminalize same-sex sexuality back to the introduction of anti-sodomy laws in British protectorates in the 1800s.
- [The West exported homophobia, not homosexuality](#)¹³¹ is a December 2018 op-ed for News24 in which Gerbrandt van Heerden, a researcher at the South African Institute of Race Relations (IRR), cites historical evidence of

sexual and gender minorities across Africa before and during colonialism.

- [*If you say being gay is not African, you don't know your history*](#)¹³² is a 2015 op-ed by Bisi Alimi that explores how African cultures have historically celebrated diversity and promoted acceptance of sexual and gender diversity.
- [*Homosexuality is not un-African*](#)¹³³ is a 2014 Al Jazeera op-ed by Sylvia Tamale, a professor of law at Makerere University in Uganda, that lists historic expressions of gender and sexual diversity across Africa.
- [*The Splendor of Gender Non-Conformity In Africa*](#)¹³⁴ is a 2017 post on Medium by Shanna Collins that lists numerous examples of diverse gender expressions and conceptions in Africa.
- [*Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies in African Homosexualities*](#)¹³⁵, a 1998 book by Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, list some of the indigenous words used to discuss homosexuality and gender diversity across Africa in the pre-colonial and colonial era. These include *mumemke* (*mume*=man, *mke*=woman), which appeared in the first Swahili-English dictionary in 1882, *shoga* (male homosexual or friend), *mugawe* (Meru men who wore women's clothes and sometimes married men), and *inzili* (intersex people in Kenya and Tanzania).
- [*Keeping the Faith: Working at the Crossroads of Religion & Sexual and Gender Rights*](#)¹³⁶ is a 2019 report pub-

lished by the Heinrich Böll Foundation that explores how faith can bring violence to LGBTQI+ people but can also present opportunities to strengthen human rights and justice.

- [*Faith Positions*](#)¹³⁷, published by Human Rights Campaign, offers an overview of how dozens of different religious groups and faith traditions consider LGBTQI+ people and the issues that affect them.
- [*Homophobia and the Churches in Africa: A Dialogue*](#)¹³⁸ is a report by The Other Foundation synthesizing a two-day conference held in South Africa in April 2016. You can watch video recordings of each session [here](#)¹³⁹.
- [*Stabanisation*](#)¹⁴⁰ is a 2019 report by The Other Foundation that discusses how LGBTI voices can be amplified in the African church landscape.
- [*Criminalising Homosexuality and Understanding the Right to Manifest Religion*](#)¹⁴¹ is a 2016 briefing note by the Human Dignity Trust that discusses how religion and criminalization of homosexuality are connected around the world. The note includes statements by religious leaders from a diversity of faiths on LGBTI issues.
- [*Recognizing religious freedom as an LGBT issue*](#)¹⁴² written by Human Rights Watch's Ryan Thoreson and published in The Hill, says the International Religious Freedom Report for 2017 — an annual survey on the state of religious freedom in 195 countries — offered a mixed bag for LGBT people at a time when religious liberty increasingly is

used as a pretext to license discrimination in the United States. Thoreson argues the State Department should more forcefully promote an inclusive vision of religious liberty that all can enjoy.

- [*A mapping on sexuality, human rights and the role of religious leaders: exploring the potential for dialogue*](#)¹⁴³ is a 2014 report by Hivos that identifies progressive religious leaders, describes and analyzes the various discourses of religious leaders that address sexuality and human rights, and provides pointers on the involvement of these progressive religious leaders for intensified engagement between religious and human rights actors. The report mostly focuses on Africa.
- [*Different Ways of Doing Violence: Sexuality, Religion, and Public Health in the Lives of Same-Gender-Loving Men in Kenya*](#)¹⁴⁴ is a 2015 report by John Blevins and Peter Irungu that highlights how religious leaders' teachings are consistently invoked in the perception and mistreatment of LGBTQI+ persons in Kenya.
- [*ILGA-Europe's Winter 2015/16 magazine*](#)¹⁴⁵ on reconciling sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and religion features a section on the right to freedom of religion or belief and its intersection with other rights.
- [*The Secret History of Leviticus*](#)¹⁴⁶, published in the New York Times in July 2018 by Idan Dershowitz, a biblical scholar and junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows, argues

there is good evidence that an earlier version of the laws in the Bible's Leviticus 18 permitted sex between men.

- [*The Bible and Homosexuality*](#)¹⁴⁷ is a 2015 booklet by Inclusive and Affirming Ministries that analyzes and interprets eight passages of scripture often cited as pertaining to homosexuality.
- [*Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*](#)¹⁴⁸ is a 2010 book by Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle that offers a detailed analysis of how Islamic scripture, jurisprudence, and Hadith, can be interpreted to accommodate sexual and gender diversity.
- [*Canaries in the Coal Mines: An Analysis of Spaces for LGBTI Activism in Southern Africa*](#)¹⁴⁹ is a 2016 report by The Other Foundation that assesses the depth and nature of social exclusion of LGBTI people and analyzes how LGBTI groups are organizing to transform that reality in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- [*We Exist: Mapping LGBTQ Organizing in West Africa*](#)¹⁵⁰ is a 2016 report by what would become the Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest (ISDAO). It constitutes a scan of LGBTQ organizing in the region, reaching a total of 50 groups and organizations and 180 activists from nine West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo).

- [LGBT in West Africa: Arrests, lynchings, discrimination, denial](#)¹⁵¹ is a 2019 post by the African Human Rights Media Network on the Erasing 76 Crimes blog that provides a rare overview of West African nations' attitudes and policies towards LGBTIQ+ people.
- [South Africa LGBTI: Landscape Analysis of Political, Economic & Social Conditions](#)¹⁵² is a 2016 report produced by The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice that provides an overview of South Africa's LGBTI social movement and a summary of the opportunities and challenges activists face as they work to advance LGBTI rights protections and translate them into meaningful change.
- [Under Wraps: A Survey of Public Attitudes to Homosexuality and Gender Non-Conformity in Malawi](#)¹⁵³ is a 2019 report by The Other Foundation that presents data from a survey of 1,300 Malawians. It shows that a majority of Malawians restrict LGBTI people from being openly recognized and safely included in families, communities, workplaces, cultural practices, and public policies
- [2016 Uganda Report of Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)¹⁵⁴, compiled by Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum - Uganda (HRAPF), offers a snapshot of the human rights violations LGBTIQ+ people face at the hands of state- and non-state actors.
- [Where Do We Go for Justice?](#)¹⁵⁵ is a 2015 report by the civil rights

organization Chapter Four Uganda, documents abuse of the rights of sexual minorities in Uganda's criminal justice system.

- [Expanded Criminalisation of Homosexuality in Uganda: A Flawed Narrative](#)¹⁵⁶ is a 2014 report by the rights group Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) documenting more than [21 varieties of traditional African homosexuality](#)¹⁵⁷ and gender diversity from across the continent.
- [Tanzania's Anti-LGBT Crackdown and the Right to Health](#)¹⁵⁸ is a 2020 report by Human Rights Watch that documents increased government repression of Tanzania's LGBTIQ+ community between 2016 and 2019.
- [Silenced Voices, Threatened Lives](#)¹⁵⁹ is a 2015 report documenting the impact of Nigeria's 2014 Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Law on freedom of expression. The report was written by the PEN American Center, PEN Nigeria, and the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice at Fordham Law School in New York City.
- The Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria in South Africa holds a week-long course on sexual minority rights each year. See the course program and key readings on the Centre's [website](#)¹⁶⁰.
- The United Nations' [Free & Equal Campaign](#)¹⁶¹ posts several [fact sheets](#)¹⁶² on LGBTI rights and equality including FAQs, international human rights law, and specific information on criminalization, violence, refuge, and asylum.

- Amnesty International has [information and resources about LGBT rights](#)¹⁶³ on its website.
- The U.K. Department for International Development's [Faith, Gender and Sexuality Toolkit](#)¹⁶⁴ includes sections on sexuality & gender diversity, culture, tradition, and faith.

REPORTING GUIDES AND MEDIA ANALYSIS

- [Investigating Anti-LGBTQI+ Hate: A Reporting Guide for Journalists](#)¹⁶⁵ is a 2019 Taboom Media handbook featuring relevant background, tips, and sources to help journalists investigate and report on how faith groups and NGOs foment anti-LGBTQI+ hatred around the world.
- [Mediating Tolerance: Journalism and LGBTQI+ Coverage in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)¹⁶⁶ (video) was a 2017 panel Taboom Media organized with journalist trainees from our 2016 Cape Town workshop. This flagship panel at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. addresses reporting challenges and opportunities journalists face when covering religion and SSGIE issues in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Namibia, South Africa, and beyond.
- [Who is the message for? Communicating strategically to win public hearts and minds](#)¹⁶⁷ (video) was a panel that took place at the Other Foundation's 2019 Kopano. The panel of journalists and media experts addressed how LGBTQI+ activists frame their public messaging and how such messaging is received by their audiences.
- [Media Representation of LGBTQ People in Africa](#)¹⁶⁸ is a 2019 report written by Brian Pellet for the Arcus Foundation that analyzes 18 months of mainstream LGBTQI+ news media coverage in South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, Kenya, and Uganda.
- [Safety, Dignity and Freedom: A Narrative Study on the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex \(LGBTI+\) People within Mainstream Media in Botswana, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia](#)¹⁶⁹ is a 2019 report by Iranti that includes a 2018 baseline study of mainstream media coverage of LGBTQI+ issues and identifies key thematic areas, trends, and responses of media consumers.
- [Out in the Media? Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of the Media towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Issues and Stories](#)¹⁷⁰ is a 2006 report by Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) that looks at South African media and provides a historic benchmark from which to assess current reporting.
- [Reporting Homophobia in the Zimbabwean and Nigerian Media](#)¹⁷¹ is a 2014 report published by the International Federation of Journalists. Although it contains problematic language and framing, the report provides some useful historical context on media coverage in both countries.

- Iranti's [2019 Reference Guide for Media Practitioners and News Outlets](#)¹⁷² provides a glossary of terms for journalists covering LGBTQI+ issues in Africa and specific tips for writing about transgender, bisexual, and intersex people.
- [ProjektHope's Guidebook to Reporting Gender and Sexuality](#)¹⁷³, published in 2015, offers practical advice for journalists reporting on LGBTI issues in Nigeria. It includes sections on understanding gender and sexuality in the African context and their implications for public health.
- [The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People](#)¹⁷⁴ from 2017 provides useful tips for accurate and sensitive coverage of gender-diverse topics and sources.
- The [Global Investigative Journalism Network](#)¹⁷⁵ put together [this spreadsheet](#)¹⁷⁶ with links to more than 50 international data sets, studies, national groups and places to find expert sources to help journalists investigate issues affecting LGBTQ communities. Included are links to annual surveys on global attitudes and laws, United Nations reports, major regional reports, news sources, NGO contacts, and more.
- GIJN also assembled a collection of [exemplary investigative reporting on issues affecting LGBTQ communities](#)¹⁷⁷ and the following presentations from a [panel on investigating LGBTQ issues](#)¹⁷⁸ held at the 10th Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Johannesburg in 2017:
 - [Investigative Reporting: The Fundamentals](#) by Mark Schoofs¹⁷⁹
 - [LGBTQI + SSOGIE Source Development](#) by Brian Pellot¹⁸⁰
 - [Documenting LGBTQI Hate Crimes & Discrimination](#) by Jabu Pereira¹⁸¹
 - [An Overview Using Data](#) by Brant Houston & Jennifer LeFleur¹⁸²
- [Security in-a-Box's guide to digital security for the LGBTI community in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)¹⁸³ provides tips that are equally relevant for journalists reporting on the community.
- [The Journalist Survival Guide](#)¹⁸⁴ is a series of animated videos produced by the Samir Kassir eyes (SKeyes) Center for Media and Cultural Freedom in Lebanon in 2012. It includes tips on [protecting source identity](#)¹⁸⁵, [journalists' international rights](#)¹⁸⁶, [how to protect your computer against hacking](#)¹⁸⁷, [how to get a secure internet connection](#)¹⁸⁸, and [how to secure your Skype account](#)¹⁸⁹.
- [Digital Security and Source Protection For Journalists](#)¹⁹⁰, published by Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia Journalism School in 2014, offers strategies for reducing source exposure online.
- [Homophobia and Transphobia in Caribbean Media: A Baseline Study](#)¹⁹¹, published by Outright International in 2015, encourages regional media to: promote self-regulation among media groups in the pursuit of ethical and fair-minded coverage; ensure accountability for unethical and unbi-

ased coverage; issue joint statements condemning prejudicial and biased reporting on LGBTI individuals; provide training for journalists on how to ethically cover LGBTI-related events; and promote the voices of LGBTI activists and organizations in media coverage that affect the community. These guidelines have global relevance.

- [The Solutions Journalism Network's Basic Toolkit](#)¹⁹² is an interactive guide that offers tips to help journalists produce rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social issues.
- [Handbook for Conflict Sensitive Journalism](#)¹⁹³, published by International Media Support in 2004, offers tips to help journalists report information to the public in times of conflict without exacerbating tensions. IMS has also created country-specific handbooks for [Zimbabwe](#)¹⁹⁴, [Rwanda](#)¹⁹⁵, and [Kenya](#)¹⁹⁶.
- [Conflict-Sensitive Reporting Guide](#)¹⁹⁷, published by UNESCO in 2009, aims to strengthen media's capacity to contribute to dialogue, mutual understanding, reconciliation, and peace.

STORIES AND NARRATIVES

- Taboom Media's [reporting series on the intersection of LGBTIQ+ rights and religion in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)¹⁹⁸ features dozens of stories that address religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in more than 20 countries on the continent.
- Taboom's [Media Monitoring and](#)

[Response Coalition](#)¹⁹⁹ website includes a database of LGBTIQ+ media coverage from across Africa. The database is searchable by country, topic, identity, and other criteria. Please help us grow the database by [submitting media clips](#)²⁰⁰.

- South Africa's [Mail & Guardian hosts an archive](#)²⁰¹ of Carl Collison's excellent coverage of issues facing queer African communities during his three years as the newspapers Rainbow Fellow (2016-19).
- [Alturi](#)²⁰² is an online hub for news, stories, and advocacy that aims to educate and engage individual supporters who want to help improve the lives of LGBTIQ people worldwide. They send out a weekly roundup of LGBTIQ+ news from around the world. Contact: info@alturi.org.
- [Openly](#)²⁰³ is the Thomson Reuters Foundation's platform for global LGBTIQ+ news coverage. The team sends a weekly newsletter. Contact editor Hugo Greenhalgh: Hugo.Greenhalgh@thomsonreuters.com.
- [Erasing 76 Crimes](#)²⁰⁴ blog focuses on the human toll of anti-LGBTIQ laws around the world and local struggles to repeal them. Contact: stewacster@gmail.com, 76crimes@gmail.com.
- [Arcus Update](#)²⁰⁵ is a biweekly newsletter curated by Cindy Rizzo, vice president of the Arcus Foundation's social justice program. Each edition includes several articles addressing global LGBTIQ social justice. Sign up at getrevue.co/profile/crizzo²⁰⁶.

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- [Mamba Online](#)²⁰⁷ is a South African news and lifestyle website that features stories by and about LGBTQI+ communities.
 - [Boldly Queer: African Perspectives on Same-Sex Sexuality and Gender Diversity](#)²⁰⁸ is a 2015 book published by Hivos that includes articles, essays, stories, and photographs that highlight a growing understanding of LGBT rights struggles and realities on the African continent. It includes contributions from 17 scholars, activists, and writers across Africa.
 - [This Is How the Heart Beats: LGBTQ East Africa](#)²⁰⁹, published in 2020, is part of the Diverse Humanity LGBTQ-Themed Photo Book Series showcasing the rich diversity and complexity of LGBTQ communities around the world. The books spotlight marginalized and frequently persecuted communities that have challenged rigid definitions of family and personhood. The project explores gender diversity, gender expression, and sexual orientation championing a view of humanity that moves beyond binary perceptions.
 - [Queering Cape Town](#)²¹⁰ is a 2016 book curated by Zethu Matebeni that examines some of the intersectional dichotomies that exist within and among “the gay capital of Africa’s” LGBTQI+ communities.
 - [Bombastic](#)²¹¹ is an occasional magazine produced by Kuchu Times in Uganda that addresses the local LGBTQI+ community’s lives and concerns.
 - [Dipolelo Tsa Rona -- Our Stories](#)²¹² is a collection of personal essays published in 2016 by Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LeGaBiBo).
 - Trans Smart Trust started producing the [Purple Royale podcast](#)²¹³ addressing transgender lives in Zimbabwe and Intersex Society of Zambia produces a similar podcast (see their [Facebook page](#)²¹⁴) about regional intersex issues in 2019, both with support from the Children’s Radio Foundation.
 - [Quorum](#)²¹⁵ (video) is a 2015 video series from the Daily Beast featuring LGBT activists from the Global South.
 - [God Loves Uganda](#)²¹⁶ (video) a 2013 film that documents the connection between North American evangelicalism and homophobia in Uganda. The documentary is available on Netflix.
 - [African Pride](#)²¹⁷ (video) is a 2014 film that documents how black lesbians and allied activists are rallying to stop homophobic violence in South Africa’s townships. Contact filmmaker Laura Fletcher to request access to the full film (laura.backstory@gmail.com).
 - [Missionaries of Hate](#)²¹⁸ (video) is a 2010 documentary by Current TV’s Vanguard journalism program that profiles Scott Lively and other American evangelicals who have exported messages of anti-LGBTQI+ hate to Uganda and elsewhere around the world. The documentary is available in full on YouTube.

**SUB-SAHARAN
SOURCE GUIDE**

Sub-Saharan Source Guide:

This section provides contact details for organizations and individuals who can serve as sources or provide leads and story ideas to enhance your coverage of SSOGIE minorities and religion. The source guide is broken down by region (Southern, Eastern, Western, Central, Pan-Africa and International) and clumped together by country. All links are valid and accurate as of April 2020. If a link has since broken, you can search for the organization or individual online.

SOUTHERN AFRICA:

- [Inclusive and Affirming Ministries](#)²¹⁹ (IAM): IAM, based in Cape Town, works as a catalyst for full inclusion of LGBTI people within mainstream churches in Southern Africa and for the celebration of diversity within religious contexts. IAM raises awareness of diversity regarding sexual orientation and faith interpretation, encouraging people to re-examine their beliefs and attitude towards homosexuality and engage in dialogue in affirming and inclusive ways. Contact IAM's director the Rev. Ecclesia de Lange (ecclesia@iam.org.za) or process coordinator Thuli Mjwara (thuli@iam.org.za): info@iam.org.za, +27 21 975 8142.
- [Compassion-Centred Islam](#)²²⁰: Compassion-Centred Islam, based in Cape Town, provides support to Muslims who are marginalized based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. The organization strives to raise consciousness around gender and sexual diversity by engaging faith and beliefs and to encourage collaboration with queer members of the local, national, and international Muslim community. Contact founder Imam Muhsin Hendricks: Muhsin@compassion-centred-islam.net, admin@compassion-centred-islam.net, +27 82 892 3519.
- [Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action \(GALA\)](#)²²¹: GALA is a center for LGBTI culture and education based in Johannesburg. Its mission is to act as a catalyst for the production, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge on the history, culture, and contemporary experiences of LGBTI people in Africa. GALA's archival collections can be viewed by appointment. Contact

director Keval Harie (keval.harie1@wits.ac.za) or archivist Linda Chernis (linda.chernis@wits.ac.za): +27 11 717 4239.

- [Triangle Project](#)²²²: Triangle Project is a non-profit human rights organization based in Cape Town that offers professional services to ensure the full realization of constitutional and human rights for LGBTI persons, their partners, and families. They offer sexual health clinics, counseling, support groups, a helpline, public education and training services, community outreach, and a library. Contact health and support services manager Sharon Cox (health@triangle.org.za) or community engagement and empowerment manager Pharie Sefali, who is also a member of a LGBTQI+ sangoma/traditional healer network (pharie@triangle.org.za, pharieseefali@gmail.com): info@triangle.org.za, +27 21 422 0255.
- [Gender Dynamix](#)²²³: Gender Dynamix, based in Cape Town, works towards the realization of all human rights of transgender and gender nonconforming people within and beyond the borders of South Africa. Contact executive director Liberty Matthyse: director@genderdynamix.org.za, info@genderdynamix.org.za, +27 21 447 4797.
- [Sonke Gender Justice](#)²²⁴: Sonke Gender Justice works across Africa to strengthen government, civil society and citizen capacity to promote gender equality, prevent domestic and sexual violence, and reduce the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS.

Sonke works closely with a range of organizations and individuals including women's rights organizations, social movements, trade unions, government departments, sports associations, faith-based organizations, media organizations, university research units, and human rights advocates. Contact co-executive director Bafana Khumalo: bafana@genderjustice.org.za, info@genderjustice.org.za, +27 21 423 7088, +27 82 578 4479.

- [African Men for Sexual Health and Rights \(AMShEr\)](#)²²⁵: The African Men for Sexual Health and Rights is a Johannesburg-based coalition of 18 LGBT/MSM (men who have sex with men)-led organizations across sub-Saharan Africa that works to address the disproportionate effect of HIV/AIDS on MSM and LGBT individuals; to redress the human rights violations these populations face on the continent; and to increase the visibility of LGBT individuals and their issues. Contact deputy director Juliet Mphande: juliet@amsher.org, communications@amsher.org, +27 11 242 6800.
- [Sex Workers Education & Advocacy Taskforce \(SWEAT\)](#)²²⁶: SWEAT is South Africa's leading sex worker rights organization working on advocacy, human rights defense, and mobilization from its head office in Cape Town. SWEAT works closely with LGBTI rights groups across South Africa. Contact: info@sweat.org.za, +21 21 448 7875.
- [Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria](#)²²⁷: The Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria

in South Africa works towards human rights education in Africa, a greater awareness of human rights, the wide dissemination of publications on human rights in Africa, and the improvement of the rights of women, people living with HIV, indigenous peoples, sexual minorities and other disadvantaged or marginalized persons or groups across the continent. Contact Director Frans Viljoen: frans.viljoen@up.ac.za, chr@up.ac.za, +27 12 420 3228, +27 12 420 3810 / +27 12 420 3034.

- [Iranti-org](#)²²⁸: Iranti-org is a queer human rights visual media organization based in Johannesburg. Iranti-org works within a human rights framework to build local partnerships and movements that use media as a platform for lobbying, advocacy, and educational interventions across Africa. It aims to serve as an archive of queer memory in ways that destabilize numerous modes of discrimination based on gender, sexuality, and sexual orientation. Contact director Jabu Pereira: jabu@iranti-org.co.za, getinfo@iranti-org.co.za, +27 11 339 1476, +27 11 339 1468.
- [The Other Foundation](#)²²⁹: The Other Foundation is an African trust that advances equality and freedom in Southern Africa with a particular focus on sexual orientation and gender identity. It gathers support to defend and advance the human rights and social inclusion of LGBTI people and offers support to groups in ways that enable them to work effectively for lasting change, recognizing the particular dynamics of race, poverty, inequality,

sex, national origin, heritage, and politics in the region. Contact CEO Neville Gabriel: ngabriel@theotherfoundation.org, admin@theotherfoundation.org, info@theotherfoundation.org +27 83 449 3934.

- [Heinrich Böll Foundation Southern Africa](#)²³⁰: The Heinrich Böll Foundation's office in Cape Town works to advance gender and sexual equality in South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The foundation partners with key civil society actors as well as public and religious thought leaders to challenge homophobic policies, legislations, and attitudes. Contact human rights program manager Paula Assubuji: Paula.Assubuji@za.boell.org, info@za.boell.org, +27 21 461 62 66.
- [Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa \(OSISA\)](#)²³¹: Based in Johannesburg, OSISA is committed to deepening democracy, protecting human rights, and enhancing good governance in Southern Africa. OSISA's vision is to promote and sustain the ideals, values, institutions, and practices of open society, with the aim of establishing vibrant and tolerant regional democracies in which people, free from material and other deprivation, understand their rights and responsibilities and participate actively in all spheres of life. Contact LGBTI program manager Ian Southey-Swartz: ians@osisa.org, +27 11 587 5000.
- [Southern Africa Litigation Centre](#)²³²: The Southern Africa Litigation Centre's LGBT and Sex Worker Rights Programme works to end discrimination

and mistreatment faced by people who identify as such throughout Southern Africa. Contact Anneke Meerkotter: enquiries@salc.org.za, +27 10 596 8538.

- [Coalition of African Lesbians](#)²³³: The Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) is a regional network of organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa committed to advancing freedom, justice, and bodily autonomy for all women on the African continent and beyond. It is based in Johannesburg. Contact media and communications manager Caroline: caroline@cal.org.za, info@cal.org.za, +27 11 403 0007, +27 11 403 0158.
- [Intersex South Africa](#)²³⁴: Intersex South Africa is dedicated to raising awareness of intersex issues in South Africa while advocating and supporting all intersex South Africans. Contact chairperson Crystal Hendricks: krystal22122007@gmail.com.
- [Positive Vibes](#)²³⁵: Positive Vibes, based in Cape Town and with additional offices in Namibia, works to ensure that LGBTI people are empowered to respond effectively to discrimination and health challenges. Contact executive director Flavian Rhode: flavian@positivevibes.org, info@postivevibes.org, +27 21 422 4272.
- [Accountability International](#)²³⁶: Accountability International (formerly AIDS Accountability International) is an African-led civil society organization that works to improve accountability to the most marginalized. Contact executive director

Tshepo Ricki Kgositau or senior researcher Lucinda van den Heever: info@accountability.international, communications@accountability.international.

- [Children's Radio Foundation](#)²³⁷: The Children's Radio Foundation trains young reporters across Africa, giving them the radio and broadcast skills to make their voices heard and create opportunities for youth dialogue, community building, and leadership. They have several LGBTQI+ projects including a media advocacy toolkit for civil society activists. Contact executive director Mike Rahfaldt: mike@childrenradiofoundation.org, info@childrenradiofoundation.org, +27 21 465 6965.
- [Tulinam](#)²³⁸: Tulinam is Inclusive and Affirming Ministries' Namibian partner organization. Contact Madelene: madelene.isaacks@gmail.com, +264 8169 47699.
- [Wings to Transcend Namibia](#)²³⁹: Wings to Transcend Namibia advocates and lobbies for the equal rights of transgender citizens and strives to eradicate transphobia, stigma, discrimination, and violence against transgender Namibians. Contact communications and advocacy officer Teddy Kandjou: info@wttnamibia.org, +264 61 237329.
- [Out-Right Namibia](#)²⁴⁰: ORN, based in Windhoek, Namibia, is an LGBTI, MSM (men who have sex with men), WSW (women who have sex with women) human rights organization

that offers psychological counseling and support groups for survivors of gender-based violence, holds conferences and workshops, and raises awareness of issues affecting the LGBTBI community. Contact: advocacy@outrightnamibia.org.na, reception@outrightnamibia.org.na, +264 61 237 329.

- [GALZ](#)²⁴¹: GALZ (originally Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe) was founded in 1990 to serve the needs and interests of LGBTBI people in Zimbabwe and to push for social tolerance of sexual minorities and the repeal of homophobic legislation. It is Zimbabwe's leading LGBTBI organization. Contact Samuel Matsikure (progs@galz.co), Sylvester (Munya) Nyamatendedza (research@galz.co), or Chester Samba (director@galz.co): +263 4741736, +263 4740614. Contact Teddy Munyimani in Bulawayo (teddy@galz.co).
- [Trans Smart Trust](#)²⁴²: Trans Smart Trust is a nonprofit organization that promotes the identification, inclusion, integration, and assimilation of human rights issues affecting transgender persons in Zimbabwe. Contact director Gumisayi Bonzo: bgumisayi@gmail.com, transsmart16@gmail.com, +263 77 275 3387.
- [Sexual Rights Centre](#)²⁴³: The Sexual Rights Centre (SRC) in Bulawayo is a human rights organization that supports marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ people, in Zimbabwe. Contact via the website: sexualrightcentre.org.
- [LeGaBiBo](#)²⁴⁴: LeGaBiBo, originally Lesbians, Gays & Bisexuals of Botswana, is

the most prominent LGBTBI organization in Botswana. Contact Bradley (dblfortuin@gmail.com) or Caine (caineyoungman@gmail.com): legabibo@legabibo.org, +267 316 74 25.

- [Rainbow Identity Association](#)²⁴⁵: Rainbow Identity Association focuses on the needs and rights of Botswana's transgender and intersex communities. It was formed by a group of concerned activists in 2008. Contact advocacy and media officer Urbenia Kgwarae: urbeniakgwarae@gmail.com, rainbowid@aol.com, +267 71 546 011.
- [Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS](#)²⁴⁶: BONELA is a non-governmental organization (NGO) formally established in 2001 to support human rights initiatives in the area of HIV/AIDS and to protect and promote the rights of all people affected by HIV/AIDS. Contact: bonela@bonela.org, +267 393 2516.
- [LAMBDA Association Mozambique](#)²⁴⁷: LAMBDA works to ensure the economic, political, and social rights of LGBTBI citizens in Mozambique. Contact Danilo or Frank on [Facebook](#) or at franklileza90@gmail.com, +258 21 304 816.
- [Eswatini Sexual and Gender Minorities](#)²⁴⁸: Eswatini Sexual & Gender Minorities works to advance the protection of LGBTBI persons' human rights in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). Contact founder and managing director Melusi Simelane: melusi@eswatiniminorities.org, info@eswatiniminorities.org, +268 7906 5354.

- Friends of Rainka: Friends of Rainka started in 2007 as a youth empowerment organization for people living with HIV in Zambia. They advocate for legal reform to benefit marginalized minorities. Contact: info.friendsofrainka@gmail.com.
- [ZANERELA+](#)²⁴⁹: The Zambia Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (ZANERELA+) is a chapter of the international network of religious leaders – lay and ordained, women and men living with, or personally affected, by HIV (INERELA+). They work to challenge stigma and deliver evidenced-based prevention, care, and treatment services. Contact: kenpachunguone@gmail.com, gershomkapa@gmail.com.
- [Transbantu Association of Zambia](#)²⁵⁰: Transbantu Association of Zambia undertakes advocacy, education, empowerment, law, and policy initiatives to enable trans-diverse and intersex people to enjoy their full potential and access social justice. Contact: transbantu@hotmail.com, +260 968953153.
- [Intersex Society of Zambia](#)²⁵¹: Intersex Society of Zambia (ISSZ) works to create awareness and advance human rights protection and support for intersex children and adults. ISSZ uses rights-based advocacy, evidence-based information dissemination, and public education to promote access to affirming sexual and reproductive health services, support research, and challenge discrimina-

tory and oppressive cultural practices and laws relating to sex development variations and gender variance in Zambia. Contact: intersexzambia@gmail.com, +260 770739726.

- [LGBTI Sey](#):²⁵² LGBTI Sey works to provide an open, safe, inclusive space and community committed to challenging sexism, genderism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and heterosexism in the Seychelles. Contact: lgbtisey@gmail.com.
- [Centre for the Development of People](#)²⁵³: CEDEP is an organization based in Malawi that works with media and religious leaders to defend the welfare of marginalized communities, including prisoners, sex workers, and LGBTI people. Contact director Gift Trapence: cedep@cedepmalawi.info, directorcedep@yahoo.com, +265 1761696.
- [Ivy Foundation](#)²⁵⁴: Ivy Foundation is a Malawi-based LBIQ human rights organization that primarily focuses on intersex issues. Contact executive director Sammie Macjessie: samanthamacjessie@gmail.com, +265 881 866 808.
- [Nyasa Rainbow Alliance \(NRA\)](#)²⁵⁵: Nyasa Rainbow Alliance is a LGBTIQ+ rights group based in Blantyre, Malawi. Contact via [Facebook](#) or at nra.mw.14@gmail.com.
- [MANERELA+](#)²⁵⁶: The Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+) is an interfaith networking and advocacy organization that is geared towards bringing together faith leaders who are living

with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS in Malawi. MANERELA+ is the national chapter of the International Network of Religious Leaders living with or personally affected by HIV and AIDS (INERELA+). Contact: amwachande@manerela.org, kachepatsonga@gmail.com.

- [Malawi Centre for Solutions Journalism](#)²⁵⁷: The Malawi Centre for Solutions Journalism (CSJ) based in Blantyre promotes human rights through advocacy, civic education, community outreach programs, stakeholders' engagement, and behavioral change communications. CSJ has conducted media monitoring and led several reporting workshops on LGBTQI+ issues. Contact executive director Brian Ligomeka: drbrianligo@gmail.com, csjmalawi@gmail.com.
- [Sorakanto](#)²⁵⁸ is an organization for arts and culture journalists in Madagascar. Their 2019/20 news media training initiative focuses on LGBTQI+ rights. Contact Domoina Ratsara: domoina.ratsara@gmail.com, +261 32 86 359 39.
- [Seeds of Hope](#)²⁵⁹: Seeds of Hope, formerly Droits Humains Madagascar, is a non-profit human rights organization in Madagascar that promotes the participation of youth in governance and leadership. Contact Rado Harintsoa Rakotosamimanana: rakotosamimanana@gmail.com, sohope@gmail.com, +261 34 72 064 16.
- [Associação Íris Angola](#)²⁶⁰: Associação Íris Angola is an LGBTQI+ rights group based in Luanda, Angola. In 2018 it

became the first civil rights organization that advocates for LGBTQI+ rights to be legally registered by the Angolan government. Contact director Carlos Fernandes: carlos.irisangola@gmail.com, +244 937439100, +244 929082666.

- [Arquivo de Identidade Angolano](#)²⁶¹: Arquivo de Identidade Angolano is a collective of LBTIQ Angolan feminist women who work to improve public perceptions of sexual and gender minorities and the lives of all LGBTQI+ people. Contact Paula Sebastião: arquivodeidentidadeangolano@gmail.com.
- [Young Queer Alliance](#)²⁶² empowers young LGBTI people in Mauritius to promote equality. Contact president Lasavanne Jürgen Soocramanien (jurgenlasavanne@gmail.com, +230 5906-2559) or founder Fokeerbox Najeeb Ahmad (najeeb.af1990@gmail.com, +230 5705-3507): info@youngqueeralliance.com, +230 5807 3829.
- [Collectif Arc en Ciel](#)²⁶³: Collectif Arc en Ciel is an association based in Mauritius that campaigns against homophobia and the various forms of discrimination linked to sexual orientation. Contact director Aschwin Ramenah: info@collectifarcenciel.org, +230 465 4596.
- [Dis-Moi Indian Ocean](#)²⁶⁴: Droits Humains Océan Indien (Dis-Moi Indian Ocean) is a human rights organization in Mauritius that regularly conducts training sessions on human rights education for members of the LGBTQI

community. Contact director Lindley Couronne: info@dismoi.org, +230 466 5673.

- [Monica Tabengwa](#)²⁶⁵: Monica Tabengwa leads Hivos's [Strong in Diversity, Bold on Inclusion program](#), which aims to promote inclusion of LGBT+ people in society and the recognition of their rights by opposing discrimination and stereotyping while also making LGBT+ communities more resilient. The Harare-based program has officers in Dakar, Lagos, Lusaka, Maputo, and Nairobi. She is the former director of Pan Africa ILGA. Contact: mtabengwa@hivos.org, +263 24 2250463, +263 24 2706125.
- [Sakhisizwe Gcina](#)²⁶⁶: Sakhisizwe Gcina is the assistant curator of special projects at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA)'s Curatorial Lab in Cape Town. He co-curated the Curatorial Lab's first project, which investigated LGBTQI+ representation in the context of homophobia and oppression of gay rights in South Africa, and moderated a [LGBTQI+ press forum and workshop](#) in 2017. Contact: sakhisizwe.gcina@zeitzmocaa.museum, +27 87 350 4777, +27 87 350 4755.
- [Melanie Judge](#)²⁶⁷: Melanie Judge is a queer feminist activist and scholar who works as an adjunct associate professor in public law at the University of Cape Town. Melanie is author of *Blackwashing Homophobia: Violence and the Politics of Gender, Sexuality and Race* (2018), *Keeping the Faith: Working at the Crossroads of Religion*

& *Sexual and Gender Rights* (2019), and lead editor of *To Have and To Hold: The Making of Same-sex Marriage in South Africa* (2008). Contact: melanie@justcommunication.co.za.

- [Zethu Matebeni](#)²⁶⁸: Dr. Zethu Matebeni is a senior researcher at the University of Cape Town's Sociology Department. With an interest in LGBT life and activism, black queer studies, photography, and African cinema, Zethu has created works such as *Reclaiming Afrikan: queer perspectives on sexual and gender identities*; *Breaking out of the box: stories of black lesbians*; *Jo'burg TRACKS: Sexuality in the City* and *Queering Cape Town*. Contact: zethu.matebeni@gmail.com, +27 21 650 3416.
- [Carl Collison](#)²⁶⁹: Carl Collison is a freelance journalist based in Cape Town who, as the Other Foundation's Rainbow Fellow at the Mail & Guardian, covered issues facing queer and other marginalized communities extensively. He works with Taboom Media as a co-trainer. Contact: carlcollison3@icloud.com.
- [Isabella Matambanadzo](#)²⁷⁰: Isabella Matambanadzo is a Zimbabwean feminist and co-editor of *A Beautiful Strength – A Journal of 80 years of Women's Rights Movements and Activism in Zimbabwe since 1936*. She is a contributing author to the short story anthologies *Writing Free* and to *Writing Mystery and Mayhem* (published by Weaver Press, Harare); contributor to the book *African Sexualities* (ed. Dr. Sylvia Tamale), and *Beyond Beijing*:

Strategies and Visions Towards Women's Equality (co-ed Patricia Made) amongst other works. She works with Taboom Media as a co-trainer. Contact: info@udugu.org, +263 242 250 602, +263 4 250 400.

EASTERN AFRICA:

- [UHAI-EASHRI](#)²⁷¹ - UHAI-EASHRI, the East African Sexual Health and Rights Initiative, is an indigenous activist fund based in Nairobi. It provides flexible, accessible resources to support civil society activism around issues of sexuality, health, and human rights in the East African region (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) with a specific focus on the rights of sexual minorities. UHAI has an archive of LGBTI media clippings going back to 2008. Contact Roselyn: roselyn@uhai-eashri.org, info@uhai-eashri.org, +254 20 2330050, +254 20 812 7535.
- [Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya \(GALCK\)](#)²⁷²: GALCK acts as an umbrella organization for LGBTIQ+ organizations in Kenya including Minority Women in Action, Ishtar MSM, Tea and Gay Kenya, PEMA Kenya, and Afra Kenya. Its mission is to defend the interests and rights of LGBTI organizations and their members, including their health rights. In 2016, GALCK produced the media toolkit *SSOGIE 101 for the Kenyan Media Professional*. Contact: info@galck.org, +254 20 2426060.
- [Persons Marginalized and Aggrieved \(PEMA\)](#)²⁷³: Persons Marginalized and Aggrieved (PEMA) is an LGBTI rights

organization based in Mombasa, Kenya, that organizes outreach sessions and workshops with local faith leaders. Contact executive director Ishmael Bahati: info@pemakenya.org, pema@pemakenya.org, pemakenya@gmail.com, +254 7 13 68 4341.

- [None on Record](#)²⁷⁴: None on Record is a media organization based in Nairobi that collects the stories of LGBTI Africans and produces media content on LGBTI rights. They have trained East African journalists on how to better report on LGBTI issues and produce the Afro-Queer podcast. Contact: questions@noneonrecord.com.
- [Selly Thiam](#)²⁷⁵: Selly Thiam is a journalist and oral historian whose work has appeared on NPR, PBS and in the New York Times. She was a producer for the Storycorps Oral History Project, PBS' Learning Matters and a Carnegie Fellow at the ABC News Investigative Unit. She is the founder and Executive Director of None on Record, an African LGBT digital media organization. Contact: selly@noneonrecord.com.
- [National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission](#)²⁷⁶: NGLHRC is a Kenyan organization that provides legal aid to advance equality and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ persons. Contact executive director Njeri Gateru: njeri@nglhrc.com, info@nglhrc.com, +254 20 4400525.
- [Jinsiangu](#)²⁷⁷: Jinsiangu is an organization that works to enhance the wellbeing of intersex, transgender,

and gender non-conforming people in Kenya. It does this by establishing safe spaces and through advocacy, research, health services, and psycho-social support. Contact: operations@jinsiangu.org, jinsiangu@gmail.com.

- [David Kuria](#)²⁷⁸: In 2013, David Kuria became Kenya's first openly gay politician to seek office. He writes regularly about LGBTI issues and heads the Kuria Foundation for Social Enterprise, which aims to enhance social inclusion by contributing technical and financial resources to socially excluded persons and groups. Contact: info@kuriafoundation.or.ke, +254 778 003626.
- [Sexual Minorities Uganda](#)²⁷⁹: SMUG is an umbrella non-governmental organization based in Kampala, Uganda that advocates for the protection and promotion of human rights of LGBT Ugandans. Contact Frank Mugisha: info@sexualminoritiesuganda.com, +256 39 2174432.
- [Icebreakers Uganda](#)²⁸⁰: Icebreakers Uganda is a nonprofit support organization for LGBT people in Uganda. It focuses on sexual health, sexual health rights advocacy, community mobilization and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention for all LGBT people. Contact: info@icebreakersuganda.com, +256 392853652.
- [Spectrum Uganda](#)²⁸¹: Spectrum Uganda, based in Kampala, offers support to promote a healthy and empowered community of men who have sex with men (MSM) in Uganda. Contact:

info@spectrumuganda.net,
+256 800100040.

- [SIPD Uganda](#)²⁸²: Support Initiative for People with atypical sex Development (SIPD) Uganda raises awareness about intersex issues and advocates for the human rights and social acceptance of intersex people in Uganda. Contact executive director Julius Kaggwa: sipd.uganda@gmail.com, aissgeastafrika@gmail.com, +256 414 693 861.
- [Kuchu Times](#)²⁸³: Kuchu Times is a media organization based in Kampala, Uganda, that aims to provide a voice for Africa's LGBTI community. It produces the occasional *Bombastic* magazine and provides regular news coverage via its website. Contact Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera: info@kuchutimes.com, kasha@kuchutimes.com.
- [Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum \(HRAPF\)](#)²⁸⁴: HRAPF is an NGO based in Kampala, Uganda. Its mission is to promote respect and observance of human rights for marginalized groups, including LGBTI persons. Contact: info@hrapf.org, +256 414 530683.
- [Freedom & Roam Uganda](#)²⁸⁵: FARUG is a Ugandan organization that works to stop harassment and discrimination against LGBTI people. Contact: info@faruganda.org, +256 392 176977.
- [Uganda Media Women's Association](#)²⁸⁶: Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) is a human rights advocacy and service delivery NGO that helps Ugandan women make informed decisions by providing them

access to information on rights. It also fights for the rights of women working in media and counters negative portrayals of women in local media. Contact: info@umwamamafm.co.ug, +256 393 113 848, +256 772 469 363.

- [Human Rights Network for Journalists - Uganda](#)²⁸⁷: HRNJ works to enhance human rights by defending and building the capacities of journalists in Uganda from its office in Kampala. HRNJ researches, monitors and documents attacks and threats aimed at journalists, as well as abuses of press freedom in Uganda. They also offer legal support to journalists who need these services because of their work. Contact national coordinator Robert Ssempera: coordinator@hrnjuganda.org, info@hrnjuganda.org, +256 800 144155.
- [African Centre for Media Excellence](#)²⁸⁸: ACME is a Uganda-based organization that strives to improve professionalism in the media. They have worked to improve reporting on LGBTI issues and religion in local media. Contact: info@acme-ug.org, mwesige@acme-ug.org, akakaire@acme-ug.org, +256 393 202351.
- [St. Paul's Foundation for International Reconciliation](#)²⁸⁹: St. Paul's Foundation for International Reconciliation works to advance LGBTI equality and acceptance in Africa and the Caribbean through media advocacy. It is affiliated with St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre (SPREC), founded by retired Anglican Bishop in the Church of Uganda Dr. Christopher Senyonjo to reconcile tension among

straight and LGBTI persons. Contact U.S.-based executive director Colin Stewart: info@saintpaulsfoundation.org, +1 949 499 9991.

- [LGBT VOICE](#)²⁹⁰: LGBT VOICE is an LGBT rights organization working to advance equality, diversity, education, and justice in Tanzania. Contact: Info@lgbtvoicetz.org.
- [Community Health Education Services & Advocacy \(CHESA\)](#)²⁹¹: CHESA, formerly Tanzania Sisi Sex Workers Network Unit, advocates for sexual and reproductive health and rights for sex workers and LGBTIQ+ people in Tanzania. The government formally deregistered CHESA in 2019 amid broader LGBTIQ+ repression. Contact: chesa2008@yahoo.com, mta-yaona84@gmail.com, msengezic2@gmail.com, +255 755 970 970.
- [Geoffrey Mashala](#)²⁹²: Geoffrey Mashala is the founder of AMKA Empowerment, a community-based group in Tanzania that works on human rights, empowerment, and health issues of LGBTIQ+ people. He is now based in California. Contact: amkaempowerment@gmail.com or on [Twitter](#).
- [Ethiopia LGBT Archive](#)²⁹³: Ethiopia LGBT Archive aims to be a reference point for everything posted on the web about gay Ethiopians and gay life in Ethiopia. Contact: happyaddis@gmail.com.
- [Hadra Ahmed](#)²⁹⁴: Hadra Ahmed is an Ethiopian freelance journalist working with local and international media outlets including BBC News and the New

York Times. She is also CEO of the pan-African company Nubia Media and Communications. She has reported on LGBTQI+ issues in Ethiopia. Contact: hadraahmed@gmail.com.

- [Afdhere Jama](#)²⁹⁵: Afdhere Jama is an American writer and filmmaker of Somali origin. He wrote the book *Being Queer and Somali: LGBT Somalis at Home and Abroad*. Contact: afdhere@gmail.com.
- [Humure](#)²⁹⁶: Humure is a human rights organization in Burundi that works to fight all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and to fight AIDS within the LGBTI community. Contact: amissi.humure@gmail.com, alsahabo.humure@gmail.com.
- [Christian Rumu](#)²⁹⁷: Christian Rumu, originally from Burundi, is Great Lakes campaigner at Amnesty International in Nairobi. He is the former president of Humure and has served on UHAI-EASHRI's board. Contact: christian.rumu@amnesty.org.
- [Isange Rwanda](#)²⁹⁸: Isange Rwanda is an umbrella coalition of Rwandan LGBTI organizations. Contact: isangerwanda@gmail.com.
- [Rights for All Rwanda \(RIFA\)](#)²⁹⁹: Rights for All Rwanda (RIFA) is an organization that works to improve the health, rights, and protection of lesbian, bisexual and transgender sex workers and individuals in Rwanda. Contact: rifaworwanda@gmail.com, +250 788 645 920.

WESTERN AFRICA:

- [Interfaith Diversity Network of West Africa \(IDNOWA\)](#)³⁰⁰: IDNOWA was founded in 2016, as a regional network of activists, faith-based individuals, LGBTQI persons, advocates, and individual activists working to advance the inclusion of and respect for diverse persons. Network members are based in Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and the Gambia. Contact: interfaithdiversitynowa@gmail.com, +233 50 942 5114, +44 7948 237399.
- [Initiative Sankofa d'Afrique de l'Ouest \(ISDAO\)](#)³⁰¹: ISDAO is an activist-led fund dedicated to strengthening and supporting a West African movement for gender diversity and sexual rights by adopting a flexible approach to grant-making and building a culture of philanthropy committed to equality and social justice. Contact executive director Caroline Kouassiaman: info@isdao.org
- [Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre](#)³⁰²: ARSRC, based in Lagos, Nigeria, aims to promote more informed and affirming public dialogue on human sexuality and to contribute to positive changes in the emerging field of sexuality in Africa by creating mechanisms for learning at the regional level. Contact: info@arsrc.org, +234 1 7919307.
- [The Initiative for Equal Rights \(TIERS\)](#)³⁰³: TIERS is a Lagos-based NGO that works to protect and promote

the human rights of sexual minorities at the national and regional levels. Contact executive director Xeenarh Mohammed: [amohammed@initiative-4equality.org](mailto:amohammed@initiative4equality.org), info@initiative4equality.org, +234 8099111134, +234 8125549015.

- [Queer African Youth Network](#)³⁰⁴: The Queer African Youth Network (QAYN) is a queer and feminist organization founded in 2010 with the aim of establishing an extensive support network to promote the wellbeing and safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in West Africa. It is based in Burkina Faso. Contact co-coordinators Nataka Gmakagni and Solange A. M. Kibibi: contact@qayn.org, +226 25 37 48 29.
- [Rashidi Williams](#)³⁰⁵: Rashidi Williams founded Queer Alliance Nigeria, a human rights, health advocacy, and support group for LGBTI communities in the country. Contact: rashwilliams@gmail.com, +234 8136137852.
- [Cheikh Traore](#)³⁰⁶: Dr. Cheikh Eteka Traore, based in Abuja, Nigeria, works at the intersection of public health and human rights. He has trained journalists on how to better report on LGBTI rights. Contact: cheikh.eteaka@gmail.com.
- [NoStringsNg](#)³⁰⁷: NoStringsNg.com is a Nigerian advocacy media platform for LGBTQI+ news and information. Its aim is to debunk negative stereotypes in mainstream media against the Nigerian LGBTQI+ community. Contact Mike (pseudonym): info@nostringsng.com.

- [Bisi Alimi Foundation](#)³⁰⁸: The Bisi Alimi Foundation promotes and advocates for equal opportunity and social inclusion of LGBT people in Nigeria. Contact: bisi@bisialimi.com, [info@bisialimifoundation.org](http://bisialimifoundation.org).
- [Club des 7 Jours](#)³⁰⁹: Club des 7 Jours advocates for the psychological and social well-being of LGBT people in Togo through cultural events and support for socio-professional integration. It is based in Lomé but also works in Kpalimé, Sokodé, Kara, Tsévié, and Aného. Contact: clubdes7jours@hotmail.com, +228 9075917, +228 91802491.
- [Fid Thompson](#)³¹⁰: Fid Thompson has researched LGBTI rights in Western Africa for Human Rights Watch. Contact: fidthompson@gmail.com.
- [Panos Institute West Africa](#)³¹¹: Panos Institute West Africa, based in Dakar, Senegal, works to democratize communication and strengthen public spaces for open African societies. Contact: info@panos-ao.org, mcoulabaly@panos-ao.org, +221 33 849 16 66.
- [Article 19 Senegal and West Africa](#)³¹²: Article 19 is a British human rights organization that focuses on the defense and promotion of freedom of expression and freedom of information. Article 19 has an office in Dakar, Senegal. Contact director Fatou Jagne: fatouj@article19.org, westafrica@article19.org, +221 33 869 03 22.
- [Association Prudence](#)³¹³: Association Prudence/Senegal Tomorrow is a legal defense fund that seeks to assist

those who face discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Contact Nick Diamond or Djamil Bangoura: nick.diamond@senegaltomorrow.org, prudence12349@hotmail.com, djamilbangoura@yahoo.fr, +221 77 651 5282, +221 77 903 1221, +1 248 931 2115.

- [Espace Confiance](#)³¹⁴: Espace Confiance and its specialized health center Clinique de Confiance work to reduce the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among key populations in Côte d'Ivoire. Contact Dr. Aka Emmanuel: +225 21 25 41 23, +225 21 35 28 62.
- [Charlotte Campo](#)³¹⁵: Charlotte Campo is Associate Human Rights Officer at the West Africa Regional Office of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Dakar, Senegal. Contact: ccampo@ohchr.org, +221 33 869 89 76.
- [REPMASCI](#)³¹⁶: REPMASCI (Réseau des Professionnels des Médias, des Arts, et des Sports pour la Lutte Contre le SIDA et les Autres Pandémies en Côte d'Ivoire) helps fight against stigmatization of LGBTI people in Côte d'Ivoire. Contact President Bintou Sanogo via [Facebook](#) or at +225 22 42 16 94.
- [Thérèse Donu](#)³¹⁷: Thérèse Donu is a lawyer from Togo and JusticeMakers Fellow at International Bridges to Justice, an international organization dedicated to protecting the basic legal rights of individuals in developing countries. Contact: joliethed2000@yahoo.fr, +228 22 43 27 22, +228 91 53 62 14

- [Benin Synergies Plus \(BESYP\)](#)³¹⁸: BESYP is an organization based in Cotonou, Benin, that advocates for the rights of key populations that have the highest risk of contracting and transmitting HIV, including female sex workers and men who have sex with men (MSM). Contact: besypbenin@yahoo.fr, +229 67 18 11 81.
- [Human Rights Advocacy Centre](#)³¹⁹: The Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) is a not-for-profit, independent, non-partisan, research, and advocacy organization set up to advance and protect human rights in Ghana. Contact George Owoo: george@hracghana.org, +233 302 768 733, +233 264 214 018.
- [Solace Initiative](#)³²⁰: Solace Initiative works to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTIQ+ people in Ghana. They also train paralegals to defend the rights of LGBT people in the country. Contact: info@solaceinitiative.org, +233 30 273 6714.
- [Alliance for Equality and Diversity \(AfED\)](#)³²¹: AfED is an LGBTIQ+-led national coalition of organizations, individuals, and professional allies who work to protect and provide a safe haven for queer people in Ghana. Contact: info@afedghana.org, +233 302 273 6714, +233 202 862 132, +233 553 133 577.
- [Stop AIDS in Liberia \(SAIL\)](#)³²²: Stop AIDS in Liberia (SAIL) is a Liberian organization that addresses issues affecting sexual orientation and gender identity minorities and other key

populations at risk of contracting or transmitting HIV, including sex workers and injecting drug users. Contact: smcgill_sail@yahoo.com, +231 77 715 7753.

- [Liberia Women Empowerment Network](#)³²³: The Liberia Women Empowerment Network focuses on women and girls living and or affected by HIV/AIDS in Liberia. They also work with local LGBTI groups. Contact: info@liwenliberian.org, liwen_liwen@yahoo.com, +231 776538809, +231 886133299.
- [Journal Rage](#)³²⁴: Journal Rage is an online news magazine platform that brings sexual minority issues to the spotlight in Liberia. Contact news curator Gboko Stewart via the Journal Rage contact page.
- [Dignity Association](#)³²⁵: Dignity Association is an organization in Freetown, Sierra Leone that campaigns for LGBT rights. Contact: HUDSONT@DIGNITYASSOCIATION.COM.

CENTRAL AFRICA:

- [Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko](#)³²⁶: Rainbow Sunrise Mapambazuko, based in the South Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, facilitates education, coordination, and outreach to those who identify as LGBTI and networks with other organizations to build respect for LGBTI rights in the region. Contact: rainbow.mapambazuko@gmail.com, +243 813 900 273.

- [Jeunialissime](#)³²⁷: Jeunialissime is an advocacy group in Kinshasa that works to fight stigma and discrimination faced by LGBTI youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They produce *Jeuniafrica*, a weekly radio program that seeks to challenge the negative attitudes toward Kinshasa's LGBTI community. Contact founder Patou Izai: jeunialissime@gmail.com, +243 828 683 358.
- [Action pour la Lutte Contre l'Injustice Sociale \(ALCIS\)](#)³²⁸: ALCIS advocates for the rights of sexual minorities in Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Contact co-founder and chairperson Alphonse Mihigo: alcishumanrights@gmail.com, +243 828 247 071.
- [Ligue Centrafricaine des Droits de l'Homme \(LCDH\)](#)³²⁹: The Central African Republic League of Human Rights, based in the capital of Bangui, advances human rights in the country. Contact president Joseph Bindoumi: bindoumi05@yahoo.fr, +236 75 50 76 74, +236 72 28 54 58.
- [Yves Yomb](#)³³⁰: Yves Yomb served as executive director of the LGBTQI+ rights group Alternatives Cameroun in Douala, Cameroon. He works to promote equality, tolerance, and respect for sexual and gender minorities and all people who suffer from social exclusion. Contact: guypoide@yahoo.fr, Alternatives.cameroun@gmail.com, +237 698 48 26 14.
- [Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS \(CAMFAIDS\)](#)³³¹: CAMFAIDS works to

curb the spread of HIV among Cameroon's LGBT community and fights against homophobia and discrimination. Contact executive director Nick-el Kamen Liwandi Rashid: camfaidset-droitshumains@yahoo.fr, +237 694 09 2113, +237 675 35 3835.

- [Humanity First Cameroon](#)³³²: Humanity First Cameroon is an association that combats HIV/AIDS and defends and protects the human rights of vulnerable people including the LGBTQI+ community. Contact human rights officer Yves Tonkeu via Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/humanityfirstcameroon>.

PAN-AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL:

- [ILGA World](#)³³³: ILGA (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) is a worldwide federation of 1,200 member organizations from 125 countries that campaign for LGBTI rights. ILGA's staff is based in Geneva. ILGA's website hosts a [list of member organizations](#)³³⁴ by region and country. The list includes about 200 organizations in about 40 African countries. Contact executive director Andre du Plessis or senior communications officer Daniele Paletta: andre-duplessis@ilga.org, daniele@ilga.org, info@ilga.org, +41 22 7313254.
- [Pan Africa ILGA \(PAI\)](#)³³⁵: PAI is Africa's regional ILGA body. It is a federation of organizations that work to improve human rights based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender

expressions (SSOGIE). PAI is based in Johannesburg. Contact executive director Nate Brown: admin@panafricaailga.org, +27 11 339 1139.

- [Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions \(GIN-SSOGIE\)](#)³³⁶: GIN-SSOGIE, based in South Africa but operating globally, aims to promote interfaith dialogue and to strengthen LGBTQI+ voices within religious institutions and structures. They provide resources, training, and collective programs to help individuals and organizations engage in meaningful, constructive dialogue with religious leaders and to advocate at the regional and international levels for dignity and rights. Contact executive director Toni Kruger-Ayebazibwe or program manager Pierre Buckley: info@gin-ssogie.org, ginsoggie@gmail.com, +27 104461990.
- [OutRight Action International](#)³³⁷: Out-right (formerly known as International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission) is a U.S.-based INGO that addresses human rights violations against LGBTI people. They have an office in Johannesburg that works on Sub-Saharan LGBTI rights. Their website features hundreds of reports dating back to the early 1990s. These country-specific and global reports can be sorted by specific issues including legal discrimination, privacy and family, criminal injustice, crackdowns on activists, trans and intersex rights, and safety and security. Contact executive director Jessica Stern: jstern@outrightinternational.org, hello@outrightinternational.org, +1 212 430 6054.

- [American Jewish World Service](#)³³⁸: American Jewish World Service is an international development and human rights organization headquartered in New York City. AJWS supports women, girls, and LGBT people, as they organize to end discrimination, stop violence, and live with dignity, safety, and health. Contact director of sexual health and rights Javid Syed: ajws@ajws.org, jsyed@ajws.org, +1 212 792 2900, +1 800 889 7146, +1 212 792 2851.
- [GLAAD](#)³³⁹: GLAAD is a U.S.-based media monitoring organization that works to promote understanding, increase acceptance, and advance equality for LGBTQI+ people. GLAAD's [Commentator Accountability Project](#)³⁴⁰ highlights commentators' false, defamatory, and dangerous anti-LGBTQI+ statements and calls attention to the sentiments behind them. Contact senior director of education and training at the GLAAD Media Institute Ross Murray: rmurray@glaad.org, +1 646 871-8040.
- [NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists](#)³⁴¹: NLGJA is a U.S.-based network for LGBTQ media professionals and allies dedicated to the highest journalistic standards in the coverage of LGBTQ issues. They host an annual conference in the U.S. Contact executive director Adam Pawlus: adam@nlqja.org, info@nlqja.org, +1 202 588 9888.
- [Arcus Foundation](#)³⁴²: The Arcus Foundation is a charitable foundation focused on issues related to LGBTQI+ rights, social justice, and conservation. Contact international social jus-

tice program director Adrian Coman (acoman@arcusfoundation.org), international social justice program officer Erica Lim (elim@arcusfoundation.org), or global media director Sebastian Naidoo (snaidoo@arcusfoundation.org): +1 212 488 3000.

- [Human Dignity Trust](#)³⁴³: The Human Dignity Trust is a legal charity based in London that supports those who want to challenge anti-LGBTQI+ laws wherever they exist in the world. They support local activists and lawyers to uphold international human rights law, including the right to dignity, equality, and privacy. Contact director Téa Braun (teabraun@humandignitytrust.org) or head of strategic communications Emma Eastwood (emmaeastwood@humandignitytrust.org): +44 20 7419 3770.
- [Kaleidoscope Trust](#)³⁴⁴: The Kaleidoscope Trust, based in London, works to uphold the human rights of LGBT people in the Commonwealth and beyond, wherever individuals are discriminated against because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Contact: executive director Phyll Opoku-Gyimah or deputy director Jesse Sperling: jesse@kaleidoscope-trust.com, info@kaleidoscope-trust.com, +44 20 8133 6460.
- [Gill Foundation](#)³⁴⁵: The Gill Foundation is one of the United States' leading funders of efforts to secure full equality for LGBT people. Contact president Brad Clark (bclark@gillfoundation.org) or program director Sara Santos (SaraS@gillfoundation.org):

info@gillfoundation.org, +1 303 292 4455, +1 888 530 4455.

- [Fund for Global Human Rights](#)³⁴⁶: The Fund for Global Human Rights has made recent grants to groups working on LGBTI rights in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Contact vice president for programs David Mattingly (dmattingly@globalhumanrights.org) or program officer for Sub-Saharan Africa Tony Tate (ttate@globalhumanrights.org): info@globalhumanrights.org, press@globalhumanrights.org, +1 202 347 7488.
- [ARC International](#)³⁴⁷: ARC International, based in Geneva, Switzerland, advances LGBT rights and facilitates strategic planning around LGBT issues internationally, strengthening global networks, and enhancing access to United Nations mechanisms. They have played a key role in the development of the Yogyakarta Principles on the application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Contact founder Kim Vance-Mubanga (kim@arc-international.net) or director of research and practice Arvind Narrain (arvind@arc-international.net).
- [Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice](#)³⁴⁸: The Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice works exclusively to advance LGBTQI human rights around the globe. The Foundation supports grantee partners in the U.S. and internationally and works for racial, economic, social, and gender justice so that everyone can live freely, without

fear, and with dignity. Contact Africa and Asia program officer Lame Olebile (lolebile@astraeafoundation.org) or strategic communications program manager Raviva Hanser (rhanser@astraeafoundation.org): +1 212 529 8021.

- [The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries](#)³⁴⁹: The U.S.-based Fellowship of Affirming Ministries aims to support religious teachers and laity in moving towards a theology of radical inclusivity. The Fellowship Global provides pastoral care for LGBTI people and supports pioneering efforts to establish open and affirming African Christian movements in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Cote d'Ivoire. Contact executive director Bishop Joseph Tolton: jtolton@blurcommunications.com, tfamannual@gmail.com, +1 415 861 6130.
- [House Of Rainbow](#)³⁵⁰: House Of Rainbow is an inclusive, welcoming, and affirming religious community to all people, including sexual minorities and marginalized people, based in the U.K. It was founded in London by the Rev. Rowland Jide Macaulay, an openly gay African theologian who works with groups across the continent. Contact: jide@houseofrainbow.org, info@houseofrainbow.org, +44 20 8555 9222, +44 7521 130179.
- [The Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa](#)³⁵¹: The Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa, based in Johannesburg, is a pan-African and feminist-led initiative that aims to contribute to the development of jurisprudence

on sexual rights and women's human rights on the continent by providing expertise on strategic litigation.

Contact executive director Sibongile Ndashe: info@the-isa.org, +27 11 338 9024.

- [African Gender Institute](#)³⁵²: The African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town is a teaching, learning, and research institute which focuses on issues of gender and development on the African continent. The AGI has delivered innovative integrated outcomes on gender justice, sexuality, and human rights, peace and conflict studies, and capacity building in relation to gender and women's studies. Contact: genderstudies@uct.ac.za, +27 21 650 2970.
- [Church World Service \(CWS\)](#)³⁵³: CWS works to create a safe space for LGBTI persons, providing both resettlement for LGBTI refugees and protection to those still facing the fear of persecution. CWS currently works with LGBTI communities in both Africa and the United States in order to safeguard the human rights of all persecuted persons and provide services that address the needs of the LGBTI community, engaging faith communities to achieve impact. Contact: media@cwsglobal.org, +1 212 870 2188.
- [Network of African National Human Rights Institutions \(NANHRI\)](#)³⁵⁴: NANHRI is a regional umbrella body that brings together 46 African National Human Rights Institutions. Its SOGIE Project aims to strengthen the capacity of African NHRIs to effec-

tively engage on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) issues as well as the affected communities. Contact program officer Marie Ramtu in Nairobi: mramtu@nanhri.org, +254 718201821, +254 203969000.

- [Human Rights Watch](#)³⁵⁵: Human Rights Watch's website features news, reports, and other resources on LGBTI rights. It also features [Country Profiles on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)³⁵⁶ and [maps of anti-LGBT laws](#)³⁵⁷ from around the world. Contact New York-based director of the LGBT rights program Graeme Reid: reidg@hrw.org, +1 212 290 4700.
- [Neela Ghoshal](#)³⁵⁸: Neela Ghoshal is a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch's LGBT Rights Program. She researches rights abuses affecting sexual and gender minorities and other marginalized groups in several African countries. Contact: ghoshan@hrw.org, +1-202-612-4321.
- [United Nations Free & Equal](#)³⁵⁹: UN Free & Equal is an initiative of the United Nations Human Rights Office that aims to promote global LGBTI rights and combat homophobia and transphobia. Contact: unfe@ohchr.org.
- [Victor Madrigal-Borloz](#)³⁶⁰: Victor Madrigal-Borloz is the UN Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Contact: ie-sogi@ohchr.org, +41 22 917 90 06.
- [Joel Bedos](#)³⁶¹: Joel Bedos is executive director at the [International Day](#)

[Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia \(IDAHOTB\)](#)³⁶². The annual day is observed on May 17 to draw the attention of policymakers, opinion leaders, social movements, the public, and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTI people internationally. Contact: joelbedos@gmail.com.

- [Human Rights Campaign Global](#)³⁶³: Human Rights Campaign's Global team runs programs and campaigns that advance and protect the human rights of LGBTQ people around the world, including those who are immigrants and refugees. Contact HRC Global director Jay Gilliam (jay.gilliam@hrc.org) or the team's founder Ty Cobb (ty.cobb@hrc.org), both based in Washington, D.C.: +1 202 216-1553, +1 202-628-4160.
- [Global Network of Rainbow Catholics](#)³⁶⁴: The Global Network of Rainbow Catholics (GNRC) brings together organizations and individuals who work for pastoral care and justice for LGBTQI+ people and their families. GNRC works for inclusion, dignity, and equality in the Roman Catholic Church and society, representing at least 25 groups on six continents. Contact DignityUSA's executive director Marianne Duddy-Burke: execdir@dignityusa.org, secretary@gnrcatholics.org, board@gnrcatholics.org, +1 800 877 8797.
- [Shareen Gokal](#)³⁶⁵: Shareen Gokal is director of special projects at the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and launched

the program "Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms". Her main focus has been to strengthen advocacy against the use of arguments based on religion, culture, and tradition to justify violations of women's (and LGBTQI+ persons') rights in international human rights spaces and across regions and religions. Contact: sgokal@awid.org, +1 416 594 3773.

- [Michael Heflin](#)³⁶⁶: Michael Heflin is the director of equality for the Open Society Human Rights Initiative, which advocates to promote justice, equality, and participation of all, including [LGBTI individuals and communities](#)³⁶⁷. Contact: michael.heflin@opensociety-foundations.org, +1 212 548 0600.
- [Kapyra Kaoma](#)³⁶⁸: Kapyra Kaoma is an Anglican priest and the former senior religion and sexuality researcher at Political Research Associates. He is the author of *Colonizing African Values, and American Culture Warriors in Africa: A Guide to the Exporters of Homophobia & Sexism* and *Globalizing the Culture Wars: U.S. Conservatives, African Churches, and Homophobia*. Contact: kaoma8john@yahoo.com.
- [Mindy Michels](#)³⁶⁹: Mindy Michels managed Freedom House's Dignity for All LGBTI Assistance Program from Washington, D.C. Dignity for All provides emergency assistance; security, opportunity, and advocacy rapid response grants (SOAR grants); and security assessment and training to human rights defenders and civil society organizations under threat or attack due to their work for LGBTI

human rights. Contact: Michels@freedomhouse.org, +1 202 296 5101.

- [Tiffany Mugo](#)³⁷⁰: Tiffany Mugo is the co-founder and curator of HOLA Africa, a pan Africanist online hub that aims to share the stories of Africa's queer female community and increase the digital visibility of queer African women. Contact: tiffanymugo@gmail.com.
- [Peter Montgomery](#)³⁷¹: Peter Montgomery is a senior fellow at People For the American Way, where he analyzes the Religious Right's global influence and contributes to the [Right Wing Watch](#)³⁷² blog. He has religious conservatism for more than two decades and has written extensively about religion and LGBTQI+ issues. Contact: media@pfaw.org, +1 800 326 7329.
- [American Friends Service Committee \(AFSC\)](#)³⁷³: AFSC is a Quaker organization devoted to service, development, and peace programs throughout the world. Their work is based on the belief in the worth of every person, and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. AFSC has [long worked to support LGBTQI+ people](#)³⁷⁴. Based in Philadelphia but operates globally. Contact: communications@afsc.org, +1 215 241 7000.
- [Muslims for Progressive Values \(MPV\)](#)³⁷⁵: MPV establishes and nurtures vibrant progressive Muslim communities and speaks as a progressive Muslim voice on contemporary issues through policy briefs, by participating in civil discourse, engaging with the media and government entities, and

by partnering with both Muslim and non-Muslim progressive organizations in the U.S. and around the world.

Based in Los Angeles. Contact: info@mpvusa.org, +1 323 696 2678.

- [The Council for Global Equality](#)³⁷⁶: The Council for Global Equality is a coalition of 30 prominent U.S.-based human rights and LGBT advocacy organizations that together encourage a clearer and stronger U.S. voice on human and democratic rights concerns impacting LGBTI communities around the world. Based in Washington, D.C. Contact council chair Mark Bromley (Mark@GlobalEquality.org) or senior advisor Julie Dorf (Julie@GlobalEquality.org): +1 202 719 0511.



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CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

Contributor Biographies



BRIAN PELLOTT

Brian Pellot is [Taboom Media's](#)³⁷⁷ co-founding director. He speaks regularly about LGBTQI+ rights and religion at media and human rights conferences around the world. He is based in Cape Town, South Africa, where he occasionally freelances for international news and media outlets. Before Taboom, Brian served as [Religion News Service's](#)³⁷⁸ director of global strategy, as [Index on Censorship's](#)³⁷⁹ digital policy advisor, and as Free Speech Debate's online editor. He is a volunteer mentor-editor at [The OpEd Project](#)³⁸⁰. Brian graduated from the University of Missouri with dual degrees in International Convergence Journalism and International Studies. He completed a master's degree in Modern Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford University on a Marshall Scholarship. Contact: brian@taboommedia.com.



DEBRA MASON

Debra L. Mason, Ph.D., is a leading scholar and trainer on how religion is portrayed in the media. As Taboom's co-founder, she brings more than 30 years of professional and scholarly experience. She previously served as director of the Center on Religion & the Professions at the world-renowned Missouri School of Journalism where she created the largest repository of religion resources for journalists, including [Religion Style-book](#)³⁸¹ and [ReligionLink](#)³⁸². For nearly 20 years, she served as director of [Religion News Association](#)³⁸³, a secular organization of professional journalists who cover religion in mass media. She is publisher emeritus of [Religion News Service](#)³⁸⁴, the world's only secular news wire that exclusively covers faith, spirituality, religion, and belief. Contact: debra@taboommedia.com.



PAULA ASSUBUJI

Paula Assubuji is the Human Rights Program manager of the [Heinrich Böll Foundation in Southern Africa](#)³⁸⁵. As an economist by training, she developed her expertise on socio-economic issues through years of working in development in Southern Africa and Europe. She has a track record of working with community-based and community-driven projects with a particular focus on gender issues. Among a range of other organizations in Mozambique and Germany, she has worked as the Director of Operations for OneWorld Sustainable Development and led the Secretariat of Slum Dwellers International in Cape Town. Contact: paula.assubuji@za.boell.org.

**ABOUT
TABOOM MEDIA**

About Taboom Media

Taboom’s media training, mentoring, publishing, monitoring, and response programs catalyze ethical journalism and public discourse around taboo topics. By shining light on taboos in the news, we aim to break their power. Our global work challenges stigmas, replacing stereotypes and discrimination with accuracy and respect. We facilitate responsible media coverage to safeguard and champion vulnerable communities and to advance human rights.

Taboom Media’s co-founders Brian Pellot and Debra Mason started collaborating to improve ethical media coverage of taboo human rights topics in 2010 at the University of Missouri’s top-ranked School of Journalism. Over the years, our customized training opportunities for media professionals, faith leaders, and activists have ranged from short lectures and panels in the U.K., Canada, Kosovo, Turkey, France, Spain, Indonesia, Belgium, Austria, Ghana, Madagascar, and Azerbaijan to week-long workshops in the U.S., Italy, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, South Africa, and Myanmar. We have trained, mentored, and edited hundreds of journalists from dozens of countries, elevating human rights topics in local and international media around the world.

To learn more about our work or to download a copy of this guide, visit TaboomMedia.com³⁸⁶.

TABOOM’S MEDIA MONITORING AND RESPONSE COALITION (MMRC)

Taboom’s Media Monitoring and Response Coalition (taboomrc.com³⁸⁷) mobilizes journalists, activists, faith leaders, lawyers, policymakers, and other community stakeholders to rapidly and collaboratively track and combat dangerous and otherwise problematic media portrayals of taboo human rights topics in a unified and systematic manner.

Our inaugural SSOGIE (Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression) MMRC focuses on LGBTQI+ rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the potential to scale up to other regions pending adequate resources.

We establish strategic partnerships with Sub-Saharan stakeholders to regularly monitor, rate, translate, and share local media coverage of SSOGIE-related content with the broader coalition network via this shared platform and centralized database.

Trained media monitors collect and rate media coverage using a 5-point scale. The scale is used immediately to triage coalition responses. Long-term, the scale helps monitor country- and region-specific improvements and deteriorations in SSOGIE-related media coverage over time.

Anyone can [submit media clips via the public portal](#)³⁸⁸. If you would like to join us more formally as a media monitoring partner, please [get in touch](#)³⁸⁹.

ENDNOTES

Endnotes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SORTING SSOIE MYTHS FROM FACTS

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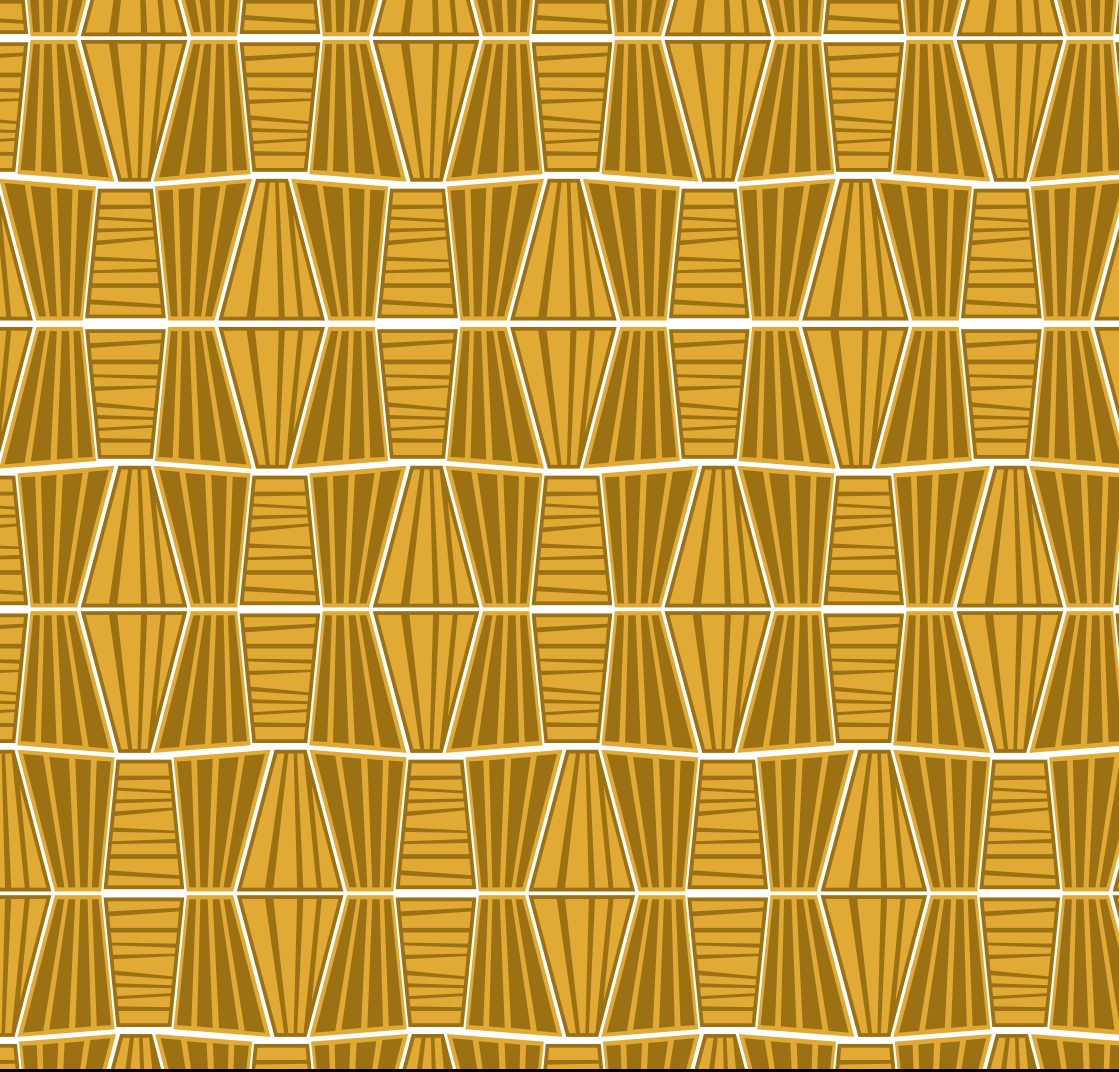
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