



# LGBTQ+ Information in the United Nations and World Contexts

*Gary Oey Steven, President of the Stonewall LGBTQ+ Club*

# My Role and Interest in This Field

- As an LGBTQ+, neurodiverse, and second-generation immigrant interested in studying the **United Nations** and international law, I am strongly passionate in spreading awareness, fostering cultural sensitivity, and creating an LGBTQ+-affirming global society.
- I have been interested in studying this issue and have educated myself since I came out LGBTQ+ in the year 2024.
- Since I never observed other members or leaders leading a discussion specifically on LGBTQ+ information in the UN or international law, I am excited to utilize this session in order to provide members and leaders with new knowledge.





# Disclaimer

We will be discussing information which audiences may find controversial and sensitive. Audiences may develop individual feelings and perspectives as I elaborate on the content of this presentation. Everyone has diverse feelings and perspectives. I respect, consider, and represent everyone's feelings and perspectives regardless of whether it supports or critiques myself as the host.

This session is a safe-space for everyone to be authentic and honest with our feelings and perspectives. That said, we should express our feelings and perspectives in a way which is respectful, civil, and socially appropriate to other members, leaders, and myself.

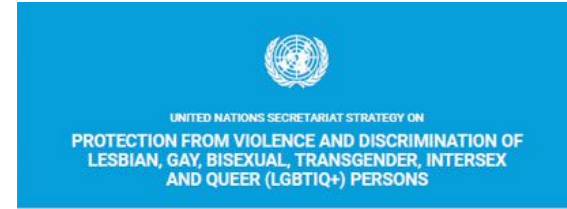
This presentation shall take no longer than one hour. At the end of this presentation, everyone will have time to share their feedback regardless of whether it supports, critiques, or provides me with things I can improve on as Stonewall leads future events.



# UN Stance on LGBTQ+ Rights

# LGBTQ+ Rights Information within the UN

- The UN is committed to ensuring that all individuals, diplomatic members, and staff are safe, respected, and affirmed throughout the UN system and around the world regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics.
- They are currently designing their 2030 Agenda to address and prevent all forms of discrimination, ostracism, abuse, harassment, and stigma from occurring in accordance with international law and universal norms (UN Secretariat, 2024).



UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT STRATEGY ON  
PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION OF  
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX  
AND QUEER (LGBTIQ+) PERSONS

**A. Background, Scope and Coverage**

- 1 The respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every person, without exception, is at the heart of the work of the United Nations and is essential to the advancement of development, peace, security and in humanitarian responses, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international treaties and instruments. All persons have an equal right to live free from violence, persecution, discrimination, harassment and stigma, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) persons.
- 2 This Strategy covers the UN Secretariat. It is primarily focused on internal efforts of the Secretariat to protect and promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of every person without exception, identify gaps and put forward concrete recommendations and proposals to the Executive Committee that will protect specifically the fundamental human rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. The Strategy also aims to strengthen the external approaches of the UN Secretariat to these issues as part of our efforts to leave no one behind.
- 3 In recent decades, there has been progress in the United Nations Secretariat in promoting a safe and inclusive work environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, and in which all people are treated with dignity and respect, including LGBTIQ+ people. There has also been progress in the implementation of a number of policies and initiatives to advance a more inclusive environment for LGBTIQ+ personnel and build internal capacity, and programmes to address these issues. Gaps remain, however.
- 4 Globally, LGBTIQ+ persons continue to face social, political and economic exclusion and human rights violations in all regions of the world. This has resulted in far-reaching negative impacts on families, communities and society, also creating obstacles to the realization of sustainable peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> Positive changes have taken place in recent years, with advances in decriminalizing consensual same-sex relations, protection of LGBTIQ+ persons from discrimination, hate crimes, and harmful practices, advances in social and economic inclusion and recognition of same-sex relationships and the gender identity of transgender persons. However, significant gaps remain in the protection of LGBTIQ+ persons from violence, discrimination and exclusion, worldwide.

**B. Commitments**

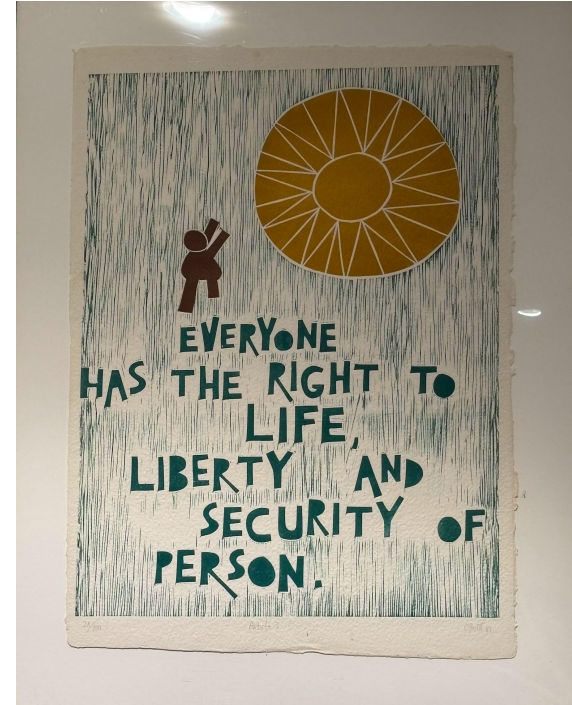
- 5 Internally, we commit to providing a safe, enabling, welcoming and supportive environment that values all United Nations personnel, irrespective of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation or sex characteristics. We will advance equal opportunities, non-discrimination, zero tolerance for prohibited conduct, respect for dignity and rights and effective participation and identify and address barriers that impede the recruitment, retention, mobility and advancement of LGBTIQ+ persons on an equal basis with others, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

<sup>1</sup> See also Joint United Nations statement on ending violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, September 2015.

UN SECRETARIAT STRATEGY ON PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION OF LGBTIQ+ PERSONS 1

# Universal LGBTQ+ Rights Recognition

- UN Secretary-General António Guterres reaffirms that *“we must push to repeal discriminatory laws, combat violence and harmful practices, and end the scapegoating of marginalized communities.”* (Guterres, 2025).
- Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly states that *“everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”* (UNGA, 1948).



# Drag Story Example Used in UN News

Drag queen Born Jun Araki did a drag story hour based in **Japan** to:

- Educate children to accept themselves for who they are.
- Challenge exclusive societal norms.
- Advocate for societal reform in order to establish societal acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals (UN News, 2022).





# Controversy in Recent Universal LGBTQ+ Decision

- ILGA World, ILGA Oceania, and Oceania Pride has condemned the United Nations General Assembly's recent vote to remove LGBTQ+ references in their Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in accordance to an amendment led by **Egypt** (Paletta, 2025).
- While member states do believe in reaffirming the universal human rights of individuals with disabilities from their own cultural perspectives, it is discriminatory towards LGBTQ+ individuals with disabilities when the protection on disability and LGBTQ+ identities overlapping get sidelined in universal decisions.



# Unique Invisibilities in the Global LGBTQ+ Population



# Globally Invisible LGBTQ+ Identities

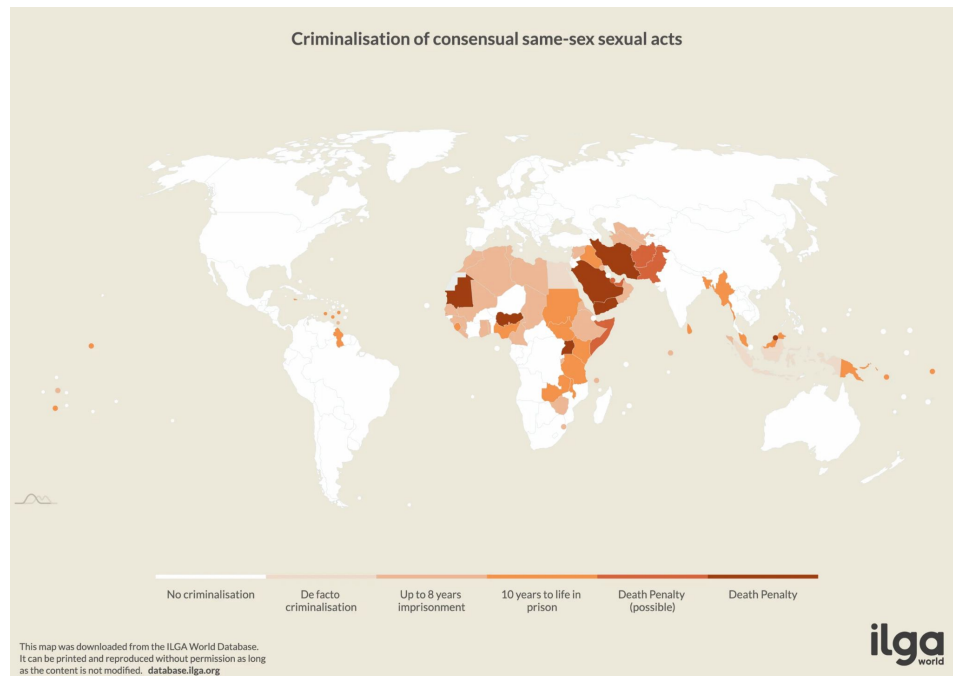
- Bisexual individuals around the world tend to face extra discrimination, ostracism, abuse, harassment, and stigma due to their sexual orientation being uncomfortably questioned or considered invalid by both LGBTQ+ populations and allies (OHCHR, 2018).
- Trans individuals around the world tend to face severe discrimination, ostracism, abuse, harassment, and stigma due to their gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics being considered invalid or culturally condemned (OHCHR, n.d.).



# International Stance on LGBTQ+ Rights

# International LGBTQ+ Rights Condition

- Our globe is still making progress in developing an LGBTQ+-affirming world.
- Even though there is data based on whether individual states legally protect or criminalize the LGBTQ+ population (ILGA World Database, n.d.), there is still discrimination, ostracism, abuse, harassment, and stigma towards the LGBTQ+ population regardless of whether states are supportive or restrictive.



# Exercise - LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in the United States

## Condition - Attempted Rollbacks

- The Stonewall National Monument in the **United States** is the birthplace of modern LGBTQ+ rights activism in commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall Riots.
- The original Rainbow flag has recently been removed in accordance to the National Park Service order.
- When I was Stonewall Vice President last semester, I attended two demonstrations, represented the club, chanted along with the public, and observed demonstrators return the Rainbow flag to where it historically belongs.
- The Rainbow flag successfully remained at where it belongs as I passed the monument two months after the demonstrations.



First



Then



After



# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in the Americas

## Condition - Developing Progress

- **Mexico** - While Mexico is considered progressive for their legal protections towards LGBTQ+ individuals, LGBTQ+ individuals still face violence, homicide, discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes (Beer, 2024).
- **Colombia** - While Colombia has been making improvements in legally protecting LGBTQ+ individuals; conservative populations, criminal groups, authorities, and armed forces still perpetrate violence, killings, discrimination, harassment, and restrict movements of LGBTQ+ individuals (International Crisis Group, 2025).
- **Peru** - There has been a protest against the Peruvian health ministry due to them classifying trans identities as a mental health condition which got many LGBTQ+ rights advocacy groups, international human rights organizations, and the UN World Health Organization involved in order to push back against this action (Kottke, 2024).
- **Dominican Republic** - While the Dominican Republic constitutional court recently abolished a law which criminalized consensual same-sex conduct by police officers and military members, LGBTQ+ individuals still lack legal protection, recognition, and cultural acceptance (Owen, 2025).





# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in Europe

## Condition - Recent Rollbacks

- **United Kingdom** - Two gay veterans were recently forced to resign from the British armed forces and were denied compensation due to their sexual orientation which resulted in a lawsuit being filed against the military system (Gecsoyler, 2026).
- **Germany** - Germany has recently taken a conservative stance on LGBTQ+ rights by deciding not to raise the Rainbow flag above the legislative building during Pride Month as conservative groups organize anti-Pride advocacy (Nicholson, 2025).
- **Italy** - There has been recent national legislation in Italy aiming to restrict LGBTQ+ topics in education and allow more parental oversight over LGBTQ+ curriculum in upper grades (Faiola and Pitrelli, 2025).
- **Poland** - While there has been conservative movements, actions, and decisions which has a lengthy and ongoing history of restricting and stigmatizing the LGBTQ+ population in Poland, there is hope for a strong and resilient LGBTQ+ rights movement (Behrend, 2023).





# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in Africa

## Condition - Limited Rights

- **Nigeria** - A gay man from Nigeria has supportive family in his home state, however he sought asylum in the U.S. due to him and his partner facing patterns of harassment, threats, torture by a private militia, and hesitated to report them to the authorities since consensual same-sex relations are illegal in Nigeria (Nguyen et al., 2019).
- **Ghana** - There has been recent legislative sessions discussing plans to increase the maximum sentencing penalty for consensual same-sex relations in Ghana (Adombila, 2025).
- **Madagascar** - LGBTQ+ rights advocacy groups in Madagascar recently protested against the Malagasy government for refusing recommendations from the United Nations Human Rights Council aiming to combat anti-LGBTQ+ violence and hate (Florisse, 2025).
- **South Africa** - While there was a call from the UN to South Africa to improve the recognition of trans individuals, the South African government only recognizes trans individuals based on diagnosis and gender transformations (Mulaudzi, 2023).





# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in West Asia

## Condition - Full Criminalization

- **Iran** - Two gay asylum seekers were recently at risk of being deported to their home state Iran, where consensual same-sex relations are illegal and punishable by death (Wolf, 2026).
- **State of Palestine** - LGBTQ+ individuals in the State of Palestine face both freedom restrictions under Islamic law and pinkwashing by the Israeli government as a way to justify the human rights abuse of Palestinians (Kilmnick, 2023).
- **Saudi Arabia** - There has been concerns of LGBTQ+ individuals who have to relocate from Saudi Arabia due to having biological families who reject their LGBTQ+ family members and the Saudi government criminalizing LGBTQ+ individuals punishable by death (France 24, 2023).
- **Qatar** - Many LGBTQ+ individuals in Qatar have faced arbitrary arrest, detention, public harassment, systemic violence, and attempts to suppress their LGBTQ+ identities in the lead-up to the 2022 FIFA World Cup (HRW, 2022).
- **United Arab Emirates** - Right Side NGO founder and trans human rights advocate had recently faced arbitrary arrest, detention, systemic neglect by the Emirates airline, and denied entry into the United Arab Emirates (Right Side NGO, 2025).



# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in the Asia-Pacific Region

## Condition - Limited Rights

- **India** - While trans and gender-diverse individuals in India have gained more legal rights, the President of India recently approved an amendment bill which would restrict trans and gender-diverse individuals' rights to self-identify (Amnesty International, 2026).
- **China** - China has been developing their own long-term conservative stance on LGBTQ+ rights by censoring LGBTQ+ content and not recognizing same-sex marriages for a while (Sun, 2025).
- **Hong Kong** - Same-sex married couples in Hong Kong have been experiencing intense barriers to independent living and care, although there has been growing support for LGBTQ+ rights and access to life by supportive populations over the years (Lau et al., 2023).
- **Singapore** - Even though Singapore has taken supportive stances towards LGBTQ+ Singaporeans, individuals from overseas are not allowed to participate in their annual Pink Dot Pride rally (McCormick, 2017).
- **Indonesia** - The Indonesian legislature has been recently making efforts to vote on censoring LGBTQ+ content on social media, other internet platforms, and the broadcasting system in accordance to their conservative stance on LGBTQ+ content (Alaidrus, 2025).



# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in Oceania

## Condition - Developing Progress

- **Australia** - Even though Australia has been making progress in laws which promote equality for the LGBTQ+ population, LGBTQ+ individuals still face violence, discrimination, hate crimes, and family rejection (The CCP Team, 2023).
- **New Zealand** - Trans and non-binary individuals in New Zealand still face healthcare inequities, develop intense trauma, and live with serious mental health conditions (University of Waikato, 2025).





# LGBTQ+ Rights Condition in Other Regions

## Condition - Mixed Nuances

- **Russia** - The Russian Supreme Court has taken a stance on limiting LGBTQ+ rights by labeling the international LGBTQ+ movement as an extremist organization and imposes the highest oversight over LGBTQ+ content on all digital platforms (Bapt and Sandford, 2025).
- **Holy See** - Even though the Pope welcomes LGBTQ+ individuals in the Catholic Church, he explained that societal perspectives must reform their way of seeing the LGBTQ+ population first before Catholic teachings can officially affirm the LGBTQ+ population (Riedel, 2026).



# Personal Anecdote to Various LGBTQ+ Rights Stance

# Personal Anecdote to UN Stance

- As an LGBTQ+ person who is autistic and intellectually disabled, I grew up feeling quietly and strategically ostracized by the broader LGBTQ+ population for not presenting my LGBTQ+ identity in a neurotypical way.
- As an autistic and intellectually disabled person who is bisexual, a femboy, and a drag queen; I grew up not being explicitly exposed to the LGBTQ+ population since the disability support system assumes that individuals with disabilities are not capable of understanding LGBTQ+ populations and identities.
- Throughout my time in primary, secondary, and tertiary education; I feel invalidated when academia does not adequately represent or teach this topic.
- When the UNGA decided to remove specific protections in regards to the LGBTQ+ population from their disability rights resolution, this eliminates the visibility of LGBTQ+ individuals with disabilities.



# Personal Anecdote to Unique Invisibilities

- I grew up being an aviation enthusiast who once had a dream to become a cabin crew member or pilot for either Qatar Airways or Emirates.
- My family is into world traveling, airlines, and brought me to Indonesia via Qatar Airways with a layover at Hamad International Airport in Qatar.
- The broader LGBTQ+ population sees me as either cishet or inconsiderate to other LGBTQ+ individuals whenever I present certain life experiences that they never had access to.
- As I learned more from LGBTQ+ individuals, I eventually discovered the dark sides of the airlines I used to love since they are only focused on promoting luxury, privilege, and are not doing enough to ensure the safety of the LGBTQ+ population.



# Personal Anecdote to International Stance

- LGBTQ+ populations in Indonesia, especially in West Indonesia, tend to hide their identities and socially protect themselves from their families since LGBTQ+ identities are highly stigmatized and culturally pathologized there.
- I have been developing the highest resilience in my life as an LGBTQ+ second-generation Indonesian, due to me having to navigate cultural oversight and restrictions while making excellent progress in fostering a safe-space for the LGBTQ+ population throughout society.
- Finding an LGBTQ+ population who would be present in my life for the long term is challenging when they judge me as an outsider and see me as a threat to their space based on my own cultural dynamics.



# Finding Ways to Make the Human Rights of the LGBTQ+ Population Universal



# Ways to Design Universal Respect to the LGBTQ+ Population

- **Safety** - Research state laws before you travel overseas. Check-in with your state's consular office for more safety tips and support.
- **Research** - Conduct research in order to better understand the needs of the global LGBTQ+ population.
- **Accountability** - Report human rights abuse to international entities specializing in LGBTQ+ issues.
- **Education** - Educate others on overlooked global LGBTQ+ issues.
- **Advocacy** - Advocate for a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and affirming society for LGBTQ+ individuals around the world through writing, speeches, meetings, blogs, demonstrations, and many more.
- **Community-Building** - Design an LGBTQ+-affirming space for all LGBTQ+ individuals of diverse cultures.
- **Cultural Sensitivity** - Try the hardest to hear, understand, empower, and represent the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals from a culturally sensitive perspective; refraining from imposing own perspectives on those with different living experiences.
- **Systemic Reform** - Commit to long-term collaborations, relationships, and partnerships with other LGBTQ+ individuals, researchers, reporters, educators, advocates, organizers, anthropologists, and individuals in authority in order to help our globe develop for the worldwide LGBTQ+ population.





# Additional Resources That Foster Global LGBTQ+ Rights

- **The Yogyakarta Principles ([yogyakartaprinciples.org](http://yogyakartaprinciples.org))** - An international legal principles document specialized in gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics.
- **Queering the Map ([queeringthemap.com](http://queeringthemap.com))** - Global community-building platform used by LGBTQ+ individuals who digitally share LGBTQ+ experiences while overcoming resilience around the world.
- **ILGA World ([ilga.org](http://ilga.org))** - World's largest LGBTQ+ rights federation used to advocate for and promote the broad human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Outright International ([outrightinternational.org](http://outrightinternational.org))** - Another worldwide LGBTQ+ rights organization used to research and expose state conditions on LGBTQ+ rights.
- **Human Rights Watch "LGBT Rights" Division ([hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights](http://hrw.org/topic/lgbt-rights))** - A division of an independent international organization used to research, expose, and lobby those in power to ensure the human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Amnesty International "LGBTI Rights" Division ([amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/lgbti-rights/](http://amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination/lgbti-rights/))** - A division of another independent international organization used to research, expose, and lobby those in power to ensure the human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **UN Free & Equal ([unfe.org](http://unfe.org))** - A UN global campaign used to promote the human rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **UN OHCHR Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity ([ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity](http://ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity))** - A division of the UN OHCHR used to protect LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide from human rights abuse and hold perpetrating states accountable.



# Making Queer and Trans Rights Universal

By Gary Oey Steven



Drawing the globe,

Represents my hope for the entire world.

Drawing the Rainbow flag as outer space,

Represents my hope for an empathetic universe.

Drawing the Trans flag as the ocean,

Represents my hope for trans and genderqueer visibility throughout the entire seas.

Drawing the bisexual flag as the land,

Represents my hope for bisexual and pansexual visibility across all global regions.

Drawing the golden autistic infinity symbol and drag crown in the middle of the Earth,

Represents my hope for a universe that loves and cares for neuroqueer and genderqueer individuals.



# Annotated Bibliography Referencing Third Party Sources



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# Thank You

Questions, Concerns, Input?