

EQUALITY RISING

2014 GLOBAL EQUALITY REPORT



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN
FOUNDATION™

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INTRODUCTION

A number of advances on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights occurred in 2014. Countries across the world extended rights to same-sex couples. Pride celebrations were held from New York City and New Delhi to a beach in Uganda, raising the visibility of LGBT communities. Celebrities and political leaders voiced their support at public events around the world. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim unequivocally voiced their support for LGBT human rights. Mozambique took steps to decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity. And through legislatures and courts, restrictive and cumbersome requirements to change one's gender have been removed, granting many transgender people recognition of their gender identity.

In contrast, in numerous places around the world, hatred and persecution of LGBT people persisted or worsened, and discrimination and violence against them continued. Russian President Vladimir Putin continued to assail civil society following the passage of the so-called "anti-propaganda bill," which led to an escalation in anti-LGBT attacks throughout the country. In Uganda, the passage of an anti-LGBT law, which was eventually invalidated by the constitutional court, led to intensified violence and hatred toward LGBT people. And in Asia, the world's largest continent with half the global population, there is not a single country with marriage equality.

There are many reasons why we can expect progress on LGBT human rights. Devoted activists have combined strategic advocacy with tireless efforts to build coalitions and find allies to work toward equality for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. But the complex causes of persistent homophobia and transphobia are more challenging to combat. Hatred toward, and persecuting minorities, are common strategies adopted by autocratic leaders and governments to shore up their base. Scapegoating minorities can be a means of uniting otherwise fractious political opponents. Religious extremists also target LGBT people with rhetoric that leads to odious laws and violence.

This report is not an exhaustive accounting of progress or setbacks for LGBT people throughout the world during 2014. Rather, we present snapshots of situations where activists have achieved victories and places where people's lives are at risk, simply because of who they are or who they love.

RELATIONSHIP RECOGNITION

The number of countries and jurisdictions granting legal status to same-sex relationships increased steadily in 2014. Three countries, as well as parts of Mexico and the United States, opened up their doors to marriage equality. The year ended with almost 20 countries allowing for marriage equality either in part or in full.¹

Relationship recognition laws advanced in the Americas, Asia and Europe. In the Americas, the Mexican state of Coahuila joined the Federal District of Mexico City and Quintana Roo in legalizing same-sex marriage,² and the Mexican Supreme Court ruled against same-sex marriage bans in the states of Oaxaca and Baja California.^{3,4} In addition, the Mexican Supreme Court determined that legally married same-sex couples or those in civil unions should be granted access to government benefits provided to different-sex couples.⁵

Farther south in Costa Rica, the country's social security program extended medical benefits to same-sex couples, and President Luis Guillermo Solís, even though he does not support full marriage equality, said LGBT Costa Rican couples should be granted more rights.⁶ In El Salvador, a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage failed in the Legislative Assembly, with only 19 of 84 lawmakers supporting it.⁷

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In the United States, a 2013 Supreme Court decision opened the door for legal challenges to same-sex marriage bans in states across the country — and as a result the number of states allowing marriage equality more than doubled in 2014 to 35.⁸ As states continued to grapple with the changing legal landscape, public opinion shifted markedly, with more than half of Americans expressing support for marriage equality.⁹

In Europe, a growing number of jurisdictions began to recognize same-sex relationships. Even though a 2014 ballot measure in Croatia succeeded in amending the constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman, the legislature responded by approving legislation allowing same-sex couples to register as "life partners."¹⁰ Estonia, meanwhile, became the first former Soviet nation to recognize same-sex partnerships through a narrow margin in parliament, and the new civil union legislation will take effect in January 2016.¹¹ Additionally, the parliaments of Malta and Gibraltar approved legislation providing for same-sex partnerships and adoption rights.

¹ Kyle Knight, "LGBTI Rights Around the World: A Work in Progress," Huffington Post, Sept. 15, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 17, 2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kyle-knight/lgbti-rights-around-the-w_b_5820598.html.

² "Mexican state of Coahuila approves same-sex marriage," BBC, Sept. 2, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-29028305>.

³ Andrew Potts, "Judge rules Oaxaca, Mexico ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional," Gay Star News, April 25, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/judge-rules-oaxaca-mexico-ban-same-sex-marriage-unconstitutional250414>.

⁴ Michael Lavers, "Mexican Supreme Court rules against same-sex marriage ban," Washington Blade, June 25, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/06/25/mexican-supreme-court-rules-sex-marriage-ban/>.

⁵ J. Lester Feder, "Mexican Supreme Court Upholds Equal Public Benefits For Same-Sex Couples," BuzzFeed, Jan. 30, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 12, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/mexican-supreme-court-upholds-equal-public-benefits-for-same>.

⁶ Zach Dyer, "Costa Rica to offer medical benefits to same-sex couples," Reuters, May 23, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://news.yahoo.com/costa-rica-offer-medical-benefits-same-sex-couples-170118561.html>.

⁷ "Attempt To Ban Gay Marriage Fails In El Salvador," On Top Magazine, Feb. 9, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.ontopmag.com/article.aspx?id=17752&MediaType=1&Category=24>.

⁸ Freedom to Marry, (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/states/>.

⁹ "Changing Attitudes on Gay Marriage," Pew Research Center, Sept. 24, 2014 (retrieved May 12, 2015), <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/09/24/graphics-slideshow-changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>.

¹⁰ "Croatia adopts long-awaited law on gay partnerships," AFP, July 15, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/2/9/106334/World/International/Croatia-adopts-long-awaited-law-on-gay-partnerships.aspx>.

¹¹ Jari Tanner, "Estonia approves same-sex partnerships," Associate Press, Oct. 9, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://news.yahoo.com/estonia-approves-same-sex-partnerships-094551203.html>.

Europe was also home to the three countries that adopted marriage equality in 2014. In Luxembourg, the parliament overwhelmingly voted to approve marriage and adoption by same-sex couples,¹² and Finland's parliament voted to allow same-sex marriage.¹³ In the United Kingdom, regional Scottish legislators voted overwhelmingly to join England and Wales in legalizing marriage equality.¹⁴ And Ireland, in which a large majority of voters support marriage equality, announced that a referendum on marriage would be held in 2015.¹⁵

In Asia, a bill to allow same-sex marriage was introduced in the parliament of Taiwan in 2012 and is under consideration despite vociferous opposition from conservative Christian extremists who claim marriage equality is a threat to "traditional" families.¹⁶ Vietnam's legislature, meanwhile, considered extending equal protection to same-sex couples in an amendment to its Marriage and Family Law. This law regulates all marriages and family affairs in the country. The measure ultimately failed, but it opened a dialogue that led to the lifting of the ban on same-sex marriage effective January 1st 2015.¹⁷ Nepal's efforts to extend marriage equality to its citizens have been caught up in political gridlock. The parties in the constituent assembly have been unable to agree on a new constitution, which would likely permit marriage equality as per a landmark Supreme Court verdict in December 2007.¹⁸

VISIBILITY

In 2014, LGBT people and their allies were visible on the streets, among global political leaders, among corporate leaders and in popular culture. Their presence in these spaces promoted dialogue and greater acceptance of the LGBT community. Groups gathered for pride celebrations throughout the year, and public figures ranging from entertainment stars to leaders of global institutions found ways to demonstrate their support of equality. But that visibility came with new challenges, as anti-equality elements in some countries pushed back against the perceived threat created by this growing visibility and acceptance.

Anti-equality elements in some countries pushed back against the perceived threat created by this growing visibility and acceptance.

¹² "Luxembourg Approves Gay Marriage," Huffington Post, June 19, 2014 (retrieved May 12, 2015), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/19/luxembourg-gay-marriage-_n_5511360.html

¹³ "Finnish Parliament approves same-sex marriage," Yle, Nov. 28, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 2, 2014), http://yle.fi/uutiset/finnish_parliament_approves_same-sex_marriage/7657759.

¹⁴ "Scotland's same-sex marriage bill is passed," BBC, Feb. 4, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 11, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-25960225>.

¹⁵ Henry McDonald, "Ireland to hold referendum on gay marriage in May," The Guardian, Dec. 16, 2014 (retrieved May 12, 2015), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/16/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum-may>.

¹⁶ Andrew Jacobs, "For Asia's Gays, Taiwan Stands Out as Beacon," The New York Times, Oct. 29, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 14, 2014), http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/30/world/asia/taiwan-shines-as-beacon-for-gays-in-asia.html?_r=0.

¹⁷ Minh Hung, "Vietnam's marriage bill a step backward: gay-rights activists," Thanhnien News, May 29, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/vietnams-marriage-bill-a-step-backward-gayrights-activists-26737.html>.

¹⁸ Gopal Sharma, "Nepal's Push for Gay Marriage Gives Hope to Other Minorities," Huffington Post, February 17, 2015 (retrieved May 11, 2015) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/17/nepal-same-sex-marriage-_n_6697210.html.

On The Street

People in 125 countries celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) on May 17th 2014 — including in 20 countries where homosexuality is illegal.¹⁹ In honor of the day, British bank Barclays put a pro-LGBT message on its ATMs throughout the country — ensuring that millions of Britons would see this demonstration of the growing support for equality by the private sector.²⁰

Toronto hosted 2014 WorldPride. Representatives from more than 50 countries and several Canadian politicians and elected officials, including Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, the first openly lesbian provincial leader in Canada, marched in the 12,000-person parade.²¹

Madrid held Europe's largest pride parade, with hundreds of thousands of people in attendance.²² Tens of thousands of people marched in Istanbul's 11th annual pride parade — the largest in a Muslim-majority country.²³ Additionally, thousands of people participated in Cyprus' first-ever pride parade despite condemnation from extremist Christian groups and the Orthodox Church.²⁴

More than a hundred Ugandans came together on a beach for a secret pride celebration in a country where a harsh anti-LGBT law has had a devastating effect on LGBT Ugandans and narrowed the space for free speech and civil society activity.²⁵ In solidarity with the Ugandan LGBT community, activists in Kenya donned wigs and masks to protest the law outside the Ugandan High Commission in Nairobi.²⁶ And 200 people participated in events to mark IDAHOT in Lesotho, where male same-sex sexual activity is illegal.²⁷

There were a number of pride events in Asia. In India — where same-sex relations are punishable with up to 10 years in jail and where sodomy had just been recriminalized — a record 5,000 people turned out for Mumbai's seventh annual pride parade.²⁸ In the midst of a government clampdown on public events, Chinese activists risked arrest to hold pride "strolls" without official permits or approval.²⁹ LGBT South Koreans also defied authorities to hold a pride parade — claiming that authorities gave in to pressure from Christian groups to revoke their permit.³⁰ Singapore's Pink Dot event in June 2014 attracted more than 26,000 revelers, the largest number of participants since the annual celebration was started in 2009.³¹

¹⁹ Denis LeBlanc, "IDAHOT anti-hate campaign: Even in 20 anti-gay nations," Erasing 76 Crimes, May 16, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 18, 2014), <http://76crimes.com/2014/05/16/idahot-anti-hate-campaign-even-in-20-anti-gay-nations/>.

²⁰ Tris Reid-Smith, "Millions of Brits get gay rights message with cash at ATMs," Gay Star News, May 16, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 18, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/millions-brits-get-gay-rights-message-cash-atms160514>.

²¹ "WorldPride Parade Party Rolls Through Downtown Streets," CBC News, June 29, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014) <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/worldpride-parade-party-rolls-through-downtown-streets-1.2691238>.

²² "High heels and wigs cram Madrid in Europe's biggest pride parade," The Strait Times, July 6, 2014 (retrieved May 12, 2015), <http://www.straittimes.com/news/world/europe/story/high-heels-and-wigs-cram-madrid-top-pride-parade-20140706>.

²³ Irene Monroe, "The two sides of Turkey: A country divided on LGBTIs," Gay Star News, Nov. 18, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 10, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/two-sides-turkey-country-divided-lgbtis181114>.

²⁴ Menelaos Hadjicostis, "Thousands march in Cyprus' 1st gay pride parade," Associated Press, May 31, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 18, 2014), <http://news.yahoo.com/thousands-march-cyprus-1st-gay-pride-parade-171053163.html>.

²⁵ Liam Johnson, "Ugandans celebrate Pride in secret, despite anti-gay laws," Gay Star News, July 5, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/ugandans-celebrate-pride-secret-despite-anti-gay-laws050714>.

²⁶ "Wearing rainbow masks and wigs, gays in Kenya protest against homosexuality bill in Uganda," Associated Press, Feb. 10, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 18, 2014), <http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2014/02/10/gays-in-kenya-protest-against-ugandan-bill>.

²⁷ Colin Stewart, "Marching against homophobia in anti-gay Lesotho," Erasing 76 Crimes, May 20, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 18, 2014), <http://76crimes.com/2014/05/20/marching-against-homophobia-in-anti-gay-lesotho/>.

²⁸ Sylvia Tan, "Record turnout for gay pride march in Mumbai," Gay Star News, Feb. 2, 2014 (retrieved May 12, 2015), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/record-turnout-gay-pride-march-mumbai020214>.

²⁹ Derek Yiu, "Chinese activists brave arrest to 'stroll' for IDAHO," Gay Star News, May 17, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 17, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/chinese-activists-brave-arrest-stroll-idaho170514>.

³⁰ Jeyup Kwaak, "Seoul Gay Pride Parade to Defy Official Disapproval," Wall Street Journal, May 29, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://blogs.wsj.com/korearealtime/2014/05/29/seoul-gay-pride-parade-to-defy-official-disapproval/>.

³¹ Mong Palatino, "Singapore's 'Pink Dot' LGBT Rally was Larger than Ever, Despite #WearWhite Opponents," Global Voices, July 4, 2014 (retrieved May 11, 2015), <https://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/07/04/anti-gay-rights-groups-wear-white-pink-dot-singapore/>.

World Leaders Speak Out

Throughout the year, influential political figures added their voices to the chorus of support for equality. In his inaugural address at the U.N. Human Rights Council in September 2014, the new U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein stated that there is “no justification ever” for degrading or exploiting people based on their sexual orientation.³²

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Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom made history by speaking about gay and lesbian issues for the first time — praising the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard, which has provided an outlet for LGBT Britons who call to talk about coming out, social isolation and safe sex for more than 40 years.³³

In Latin America, there was a burst of political support for LGBT rights. Chilean President Michelle Bachelet took office after campaigning for marriage equality and greater rights for transgender people.³⁴ Newly elected Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solís flew a rainbow flag over the presidential palace in honor of IDAHOT and stated that he stands for equality and against discrimination.³⁵ In Peru, Carlos Bruce, a popular congressman and former vice presidential candidate, came out as gay and lobbied for a bill to allow same-sex civil unions.³⁶ Angélica Lozano became the first open lesbian elected to Colombia's congress, and President Juan Manuel Santos endorsed same-sex unions.^{37,38}

In Japan, the prime minister's wife, Akie Abe, who has previously supported LGBT rights through her work for UNAIDS and *The Lancet* medical journal, stood alongside a drag queen on a float in the Tokyo pride parade. She later wrote on her Facebook page, “I want to help build a society where anyone can conduct happy, enriched lives without facing discrimination.”³⁹

³² “Jordanian Prince Zeid's inaugural speech as the UN's new High Commissioner for Human Rights,” Sept. 8, 2014 (retrieved May 13, 2015), <http://blog.unwatch.org/index.php/2014/09/08/jordanian-prince-zeids-inaugural-speech-as-the-uns-new-high-commissioner-for-human-rights/>.

³³ Joe Morgan, “Queen Elizabeth II backs gay Britain for the first time,” *Gay Star News*, March 7, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 18, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/queen-elizabeth-ii-backs-gay-britain-first-time070314>.

³⁴ Michael Lavers, “Pro-LGBT Chilean president takes office,” *Washington Blade*, March 11, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/03/11/pro-lgbt-chilean-president-takes-office/>.

³⁵ Zach Dyer, “Costa Rica's Presidential Palace Displays Gay Pride Flag,” *Reuters*, May 16, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/18/costa-rica-palace-gay-pride-_n_5340021.html.

³⁶ J. Lester Feder, “Boost for LGBT Rights in Peru as Leading Politician Comes Out,” *Buzzfeed*, May 25, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/peruvian-politician-coming-out-could-be-a-turning-point-for>.

³⁷ Michael Lavers, “Lesbian elected to Colombian Congress,” *Washington Blade*, March 11, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/03/11/lesbian-elected-colombian-congress/>.

³⁸ J. Lester Feder, “Watch the President of Colombia Endorse Marriage Equality—Mostly,” *Buzzfeed*, May 22, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/watch-the-president-of-colombia-endorse-marriage-equality-mo#yOfsxf>.

³⁹ “First lady Akie Abe joins Tokyo Rainbow Pride parade,” *The Japan Times*, April 27, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/04/27/national/first-lady-akie-abe-joins-tokyo-rainbow-pride-parade/>.

In Pop Culture

As part of the United Nations' Free & Equal campaign, popular Indian actress and former Miss India Celina Jaitley released a Bollywood music video calling for the acceptance of same-sex relationships. The video, titled "The Welcome," went viral and has been watched more than 2.3 million times — making it the most watched U.N. human rights video of all time.⁴⁰

Transgender women in the United States made a splash in 2014. Laverne Cox, star of the popular TV show *Orange Is the New Black*, became the first openly transgender actress to be nominated for an Emmy award. Cox was also named "Woman of the Year" by *Glamour* magazine and became the first transgender woman to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine for a story called "The Transgender Tipping Point." She was joined in the spotlight by author Janet Mock, whose memoir, *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More*, entered *The New York Times* best sellers list at number 19.

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Other prominent transgender icons emerged, including Geena Rocero, a model born in the Philippines and now living in New York City. Rocero came out as transgender in a widely praised and inspiring TED talk that has been viewed more than 2.5 million times.⁴¹ In addition, Michael Sam came out as the first openly gay American football player to be drafted in the U.S. National Football League, and Hollywood actress Ellen Page came out as lesbian at the Human Rights Campaign's Time to Thrive conference.

In Europe, Austrian drag performer Conchita Wurst gained remarkable attention when she won the popular Eurovision Song Contest. While LGBT performers have won the contest before, Wurst's gender stereotype-defying persona and her vocal support for LGBT rights galvanized European supporters and anti-LGBT activists alike. Austrian President Heinz Fischer said her win was "not just a victory for Austria, but above all for diversity and tolerance in Europe."⁴² Vienna's tourism board even used Wurst's image to market to LGBT tourists.⁴³

Meanwhile Googoosh, Iran's "queen of pop," became the first Iranian public figure to denounce homophobia when she released a video for her song "Behesht (Heaven)" that depicted a lesbian couple.⁴⁴ Also in Western Asia, Michelle Demishevich became Turkey's first openly transgender TV reporter. Demishevich was initially fired from her job at a TV station, which she blamed on bias against transgender people, but soon found employment at another news site.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ "The Welcome," UN Free and Equal, <https://www.unfe.org/en/actions/the-welcome>.

⁴¹ Geena Rocero, "Why I Must Come Out," TED Talk, Mar. 31, 2014 (retrieved May 13, 2015), https://www.ted.com/talks/geena_rocero_why_i_must_come_out?language=en.

⁴² Caroline Davis, "Conchita Wurst pledges to promote tolerance after jubilant welcome home," *The Guardian*, May 11, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 17, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2014/may/11/conchita-wurst-pledges-to-promote-tolerance>.

⁴³ Natalie Paris, "Conchita Wurst's Eurovision win grants Vienna gay tourism boost," *The Telegraph*, May 13, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 17, 2014), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/austria/vienna/10827475/Conchita-Wursts-Eurovision-win-grants-Vienna-gay-tourism-boost.html>.

⁴⁴ Saeed Kamali Dehghan, "Iran's Queen of Pop Promotes Gay Rights in New Music Video," *The Guardian*, Feb. 18, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 19, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/18/iran-googoosh-gay-rights-music-video-behesht>.

⁴⁵ Mitch Kellaway, "Turkey's First Trans Reporter Fired After Alleged Dispute Over Lipstick," *The Advocate*, Sept. 20, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.advocate.com/politics/transgender/2014/09/20/turkeys-first-trans-reporter-fired-after-alleged-dispute-over>.

TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX RIGHTS

The transgender and intersex communities made significant progress in 2014 despite continued violence, discrimination and harassment against them. In addition to becoming more visible, they won significant victories in the courts and through the legislative process.

Transgender Indians benefited from a landmark ruling that declared “it is the right of every human being to choose their gender.”

Court Rulings

Transgender Indians benefited from a landmark ruling that declared “it is the right of every human being to choose their gender” and that gave transgender individuals the right to legally identify as third gender and receive easier access to jobs and education.⁴⁶ Similarly, an Australian court recognized a non-specific gender category for the first time, as a petitioner won the right to be recognized as neither male nor female.⁴⁷

In Colombia, where military service is mandatory for men, the courts delivered two rulings that recognized transgender women. In the first case, the constitutional court ruled that a transgender woman could be compensated after she was denied employment by the Bogota city government because she did not hold a military exemption card to prove her employment eligibility, since exemption cards are not required for women. In the second case, the High Tribunal of Bogota ruled that transgender women should be given exemption cards for military service, thereby acknowledging that they were not required to serve.⁴⁸ Also in Latin America, El Salvador’s Supreme Electoral Tribunal ruled that transgender individuals must be allowed to vote, a right that was previously denied to many transgender Salvadorans because their physical appearance differed from the gender marker on their government-issued documents.⁴⁹

Elsewhere, Kenya’s High Court delivered a landmark ruling in 2014, which required its National Examinations Council to change the name of a transgender woman on her academic certificates.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ “India court recognises transgender people as third gender,” BBC News, April 15, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27031180?post_id=568011753_10152460418561754#_=_.

⁴⁷ “Gender ruling: High Court recognises third category of sex,” ABC.net, April 2, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-02/high-court-recognises-gender-neutral/5361362>.

⁴⁸ Steven Cohen, “Colombia LGBTI community celebrates big day for trans rights,” Colombia Reports, Aug. 13, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://colombiareports.co/colombia-lgbti-community-celebrates-big-day-trans-rights/>.

⁴⁹ Danielle Marie Mackey and Gloria Marisela Moran, “Transgender people voted for the first time in El Salvador’s history,” Global Post, March 26, 2014 (retrieved May 13, 2015), <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/rights/el-salvador-transgender-vote-first-time-history-lgbt>.

⁵⁰ “Kenya court victory for transgender activist Audrey Mbugua,” BBC News, Oct. 7, 2014 (retrieved May 13, 2015), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29519881>.

Legislative Victories

Legislators from Chile to Australia debated how to eliminate barriers that make it difficult for the gender of transgender individuals to be recognized by their governments. In Chile, the senate advanced a transgender rights bill, which would allow Chileans to legally change their name and gender without having gender reassignment surgery.⁵¹ In Denmark, lawmakers eliminated requirements that transgender individuals undergo a psychiatric evaluation, gender reassignment surgery, and sterilization for their gender to be recognized.^{52,53}

In Australia, state lawmakers in New South Wales put a hold on a bill that would remove the requirement for transgender people to undergo gender-reassignment surgery and divorce their spouses before being issued an updated birth certificate.⁵⁴

In addition to removing barriers to government recognition, some countries took steps to protect and recognize their transgender communities. Malta added language to its constitution protecting transgender people from gender-identity discrimination — the first country in Europe to have this protection in its constitution.⁵⁵ And the Indian census released its first count of transgender people, with almost 500,000 people identifying as transgender, an important first step for advocates pushing for policies promoting protection, inclusion and equality, who can now provide data on their population size when lobbying policymakers for legal protections for LGBT people.⁵⁶

VIOLENCE, PERSECUTION AND DISCRIMINATION

While many nations began to extend unprecedented legal recognition and protection to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in 2014, it was still dangerous to be LGBT in much of the world. In 76 countries, same-sex relationships were still criminalized, and in 10 countries they could be punished by death. Three countries — Lithuania, Nigeria and Russia — explicitly restricted the freedom of speech and association of equality supporters using so-called “anti-propaganda” laws.

Many anti-LGBT activists claimed that human rights are a Western construct, promoted by countries trying to impose their values on other societies and cultures. LGBT people were often used as a scapegoat by leaders trying to hold onto or consolidate their power, who claimed that their anti-LGBT policies and rhetoric demonstrated their commitment to standing up for so-called traditional family values and against Western influence.

In addition, many who supported anti-LGBT measures were not motivated by hate or animus but were simply unfamiliar with openly LGBT people. This was often because in a hostile environment individuals were scared of being openly identified as LGBT, and therefore they were not out in their communities.

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COUNTRIES

In 76 countries, same-sex relationships were still criminalized, and in 10 countries they could be punished by death.

⁵¹ Michael K. Lavers “Chilean transgender rights bill advances,” Washington Blade, Jan. 21, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.washingtonblade.com/2014/01/21/chilean-transgender-rights-bill-advances/>.

⁵² “Denmark Ends Forced Sterilisation for Sex Change,” Agence France-Press, June 11, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/denmark-ends-forced-sterilisation-for-sex-change-539834?curl=1402491090>.

⁵³ “World must follow Denmark’s example after landmark transgender law,” Amnesty International, June 12, 2014 (retrieved May 18, 2015), <http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/news-item/world-must-follow-denmark-s-example-after-landmark-transgender-law>.

⁵⁴ Lucy Carroll, “Transgenders won’t have to divorce partners under new law,” Sydney Morning Herald, March 1, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.smh.com.au/national/transgenders-wont-have-to-divorce-partners-under-new-law-20140228-33r44.html>.

⁵⁵ “Malta votes to constitutionally protect against gender identity discrimination,” Pink News, April 15, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 23, 2014), <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/04/15/malta-votes-to-constitutionally-protect-against-gender-identity-discrimination/>.

⁵⁶ Rema Nagarajan, “First count of third gender in census: 4.9 lakh,” The Times of India, May 30, 2014 (retrieved May 18, 2015), <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/First-count-of-third-gender-in-census-4-9-lakh/articleshow/35741613.cms>.

Throughout Europe, hatred toward LGBT people was on the rise as far-right parties gained prominence. In France, even as the country extended the right to marry to same-sex couples,⁵⁷ one study found a 78 percent increase in “homophobic acts,”⁵⁸ and the country’s anti-LGBT and anti-Semitic National Front party won its first two seats in the French Senate. In Greece, the Golden Dawn, a far-right anti-LGBT political party, won three seats in parliament,⁵⁹ and in Slovakia the parliament passed a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage — becoming the seventh EU country to do so.⁶⁰

Macedonia’s ruling party has attempted to amend the constitution to outlaw same-sex unions three times since coming to power in 2006. Despite the fact that the amendment might violate European human rights law, the ruling party has been using it to appeal to anti-LGBT sentiment as way of bolstering support for a broader nationalist agenda.⁶¹ According to one activist, “Homophobia is being used as a political weapon.”⁶² This pattern appeared across Europe.

Russia continued to be a major player in the race-to-the-bottom of anti-LGBT laws in the run-up to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Russia continued to be a major player in the race-to-the-bottom of anti-LGBT laws. In the run-up to the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, the focus was not on sport but on the sweeping law passed in June 2013 that imposed fines on anyone promoting “non-traditional sexual relationships” to minors. In practice, the law was used to investigate, harass and punish LGBT people. The law had a chilling effect on free expression in the region; it was accompanied by a clampdown on pride events and LGBT-rights demonstrations, and a rise in anti-LGBT rhetoric and violence.⁶³ City governments denied permits for pride celebrations in Moscow, St. Petersburg and elsewhere — including in the newly annexed territory of Crimea.⁶⁴

Unfortunately, despite strong condemnation from world leaders like U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.S. President Barack Obama, the controversy around the Sochi Olympics did nothing to weaken Russian President Putin’s resolve. Putin was defiant in the face of criticism, saying that LGBT people visiting Sochi should “leave children alone.”⁶⁵ The mayor of Sochi went so far as to claim that there were no gay people in his town.⁶⁶ The president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said he raised the issue of LGBT rights with the Russian organizers, but because the IOC is not a political or international institution, it could not get a government to change its laws.⁶⁷ Several months after the Sochi games, the IOC voted to add language prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation to its charter, which should make it harder for countries that formally discriminate against lesbian, gay, and bisexual people to host the games. Disappointingly, the change did not address discrimination against the transgender community.⁶⁸

⁵⁷ “France: Anti-gay National Front wins first Senate seats,” Pink News, Sept. 29, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 18, 2014), <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/09/29/france-anti-gay-national-front-wins-first-senate-seats/>.

⁵⁸ “France sees 78 percent rise in homophobic acts,” The Local, May 13, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.thelocal.fr/20140513/homophobia-gay-france-attacks-rise>.

⁵⁹ “Greece: Homophobic extreme-right party gains European seats for the first time,” Pink News, May 26, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/05/26/greece-homophobic-extreme-right-party-gains-european-seats-for-the-first-time/>.

⁶⁰ J. Lester Feder, “Slovakia Becomes the Seventh EU Country to Ban Same-Sex Marriage,” BuzzFeed, June 5, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/slovakia-becomes-the-seventh-eu-country-to-ban-same-sex-marr#0fsxf>.

⁶¹ Liam Hoare, “What’s Happening to LGBTQ Rights in Macedonia?,” Slate, Oct. 13, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2014/10/13/lgbtq_rights_in_macedonia_the_ruling_party_profits_by_attacking_gays.html.

⁶² Dan Littauer, “Macedonia local elections whip up anti-gay hate,” Gay Star News, Feb. 5, 2013 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/macedonia-local-elections-whip-anti-gay-hate050213>.

⁶³ Joshua Keating, “The Chilling Effects of Russia’s Anti-Gay Law, One Year Later,” Oct. 9, 2014 (retrieved on May 18, 2015), http://www.slate.com/blogs/outward/2014/10/09/russian_lgbt_activists_on_the_effects_of_gay_propaganda_law.html.

⁶⁴ Joe Morgan, “Crimea bans Pride as Russia anti-gay law is imposed,” Gay Star News, April 14, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/crimea-bans-pride-russia-anti-gay-law-imposed140414>.

⁶⁵ Shaun Walker, “Vladimir Putin: Gay People at Winter Olympics Must ‘Leave Children Alone,’” The Guardian, Jan. 17, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 29, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/17/vladimir-putin-gay-winter-olympics-children>.

⁶⁶ “Sochi 2014: No Gay People in City, Says Mayor,” BBC, Jan. 26, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 29, 2014), <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-25675957>.

⁶⁷ “Olympic President Says IOC Cannot Act as ‘World Government’ to Resolve Anti-Gay Laws in Russia,” Pink News, Feb. 3, 2014 (retrieved Sept. 29, 2014), <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/02/04/olympic-president-says-ioc-cannot-act-as-world-government-to-resolve-anti-gay-laws-in-russia/>.

⁶⁸ Philip Hersh, “IOC moves to support gay rights in Olympics,” Chicago Tribune, Dec. 8, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 10, 2014), <http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/breaking/chi-ioc-moves-to-support-gay-rights-in-olympics-20141208-story.html>.

Inspired by the success of the Russian law, extremists in nearby nations sought similarly repressive legislation. In Kyrgyzstan, a bill was introduced that would punish dissemination of “gay propaganda” to minors with a one-year jail sentence — a far harsher punishment than the civil penalty associated with the Russian law. The bill’s definition of “gay propaganda” was left vague, opening the door to widespread abuse and harassment of LGBT people.⁶⁹ In neighboring Kazakhstan, the nationalist group Bolashak has called for a similar law. The group’s leader, Dauren Babamuratov, said the law was needed because “LGBTs no longer hide their orientation,” and claimed that “it is very easy to identify a gay person by his or her DNA. A blood test can show the presence of degeneratism in a person.”⁷⁰

In east Africa in February 2014, the notorious Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act, which imposed harsh sentences for same-sex relationships and “promotion” of LGBT rights, was signed into law. This new law was broader than Uganda’s colonial-era anti-sodomy statutes that simply forbade same-sex relationships. It went much further, criminalizing promotion of or support for, LGBT rights and imposing harsher punishments, including life imprisonment, for some offenses. A number of governments condemned the Ugandan law and, in response, some Western countries and the World Bank withdrew or suspended select streams of foreign assistance funding. The United States redirected millions of dollars in aid from the Ugandan government to civil society groups, restricted visas for Ugandans who were involved in human rights violations more broadly and canceled plans for a regional military exercise in Uganda.⁷¹ The World Bank suspended a \$90 million loan to the nation’s health ministry because of concerns that LGBT people would be denied access to healthcare services (although this suspension was eventually removed).⁷² Yet President Yoweri Museveni and his government remained defiant. When asked about the impact the law could have on foreign aid, a government official said “well, we can do without it [foreign aid].”⁷³

In February 2014, the notorious Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill, which imposed harsh sentences for same-sex relationships and “promotion” of LGBT rights, was signed into law.

This law took its toll on Uganda’s LGBT community. A study by Sexual Minorities Uganda found “a 20-fold increase in incidents of anti-LGBT harassment, including blackmail, eviction, and torture” since the bill was passed.⁷⁴

Fortunately in August 2014, the Ugandan Constitutional Court struck down the law on procedural grounds. The law’s supporters quickly vowed to reintroduce it.

In addition to the Anti-Homosexuality Act, Ugandans were dealt another blow when Museveni signed a law making transmission of HIV a crime, a move that public health officials say will make treating HIV and halting its spread more difficult. Uganda already suffers from a severe HIV epidemic, which is now likely to worsen.⁷⁵ This move harms men who have sex with men and transgender women because they are disproportionately affected by HIV and lack access to information and preventive measures.

⁶⁹ Olga Dzyubenko, “Gays fear new law will drive them out of Kyrgyzstan,” *Thompson Reuters*, Nov. 2, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/thomson-reuters/141102/gays-fear-new-law-will-drive-them-out-kyrgyzstan>.

⁷⁰ Dinara Urazova and Tatyana Kuzmina, “Kazakhstan looks to ban gay ‘propaganda’ and identify gays by searching for degeneratism in their DNA,” *Tengri News*, Sept. 13, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), http://en.tengrinews.kz/laws_initiatives/Kazakhstan-looks-to-ban-gay-propaganda-and-identify-gays-by-searching-for-256105/.

⁷¹ Lesley Wroughton, “U.S. Cuts Aid to Uganda, Cancels Military Exercise Over Anti-Gay Law,” *Reuters*, June 19, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 14, 2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/06/19/us-uganda-anti-gay-law_n_5512856.html.

⁷² Remington Gregg, “Uganda Poised to Receive Previously Withheld \$90 Million Loan,” *Human Rights Campaign Blog*, May 7, 2014 (retrieved May 18, 2015), <http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/uganda-to-receive-previously-withheld-90-million-loan>.

⁷³ Andrew Potts, “Ugandan Government spokesman says ‘we don’t need your aid’ to US over gay issue,” *Gay Star News*, Feb. 18, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 2, 2014), <http://www.gaystarnews.com/article/ugandan-government-spokesman-says-we-don%E2%80%99t-need-your-aid-us-over-gay-issue180214>.

⁷⁴ J. Lester Feder, “Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act Struck Down by Constitutional Court,” *Buzzfeed*, Aug. 1, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 2, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/ugandan-anti-homosexuality-act-struck-down-by-constitutional#yOfsxf>.

⁷⁵ J. Lester Feder, “Ugandan President Signs Law Criminalizing HIV Transmission,” *Buzzfeed*, Aug. 19, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 2, 2014), <http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/ugandan-president-signs-law-criminalizing-hiv-transmission>.

The Ugandan law has inspired a raft of anti-LGBT legislation in other parts of Africa. In The Gambia, where same-sex relationships were already illegal, the national assembly passed a bill whose language mirrored that of Uganda's by making consensual same-sex activity punishable by life in prison.⁷⁶ Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has called gays and lesbians "vermin" and warned LGBT Gambians against seeking asylum, saying, "Some people go to the West and claim they are gays and that their lives are at risk in the Gambia, in order for them to be granted a stay in Europe. If I catch them, I will kill them."⁷⁷ After passage of the bill, more than a dozen people who were suspected of being LGBT were arrested, held incommunicado, and some were tortured. There was swift international reaction to the law, with international LGBT and human rights activists taking up the case, calling for sanctions against President Jammeh and his associates. Not long after, the United States withdrew preferential trade status from The Gambia, citing human rights concerns.

Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has called gays and lesbians "vermin" and warned, "If I catch them, I will kill them."

In Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan quietly signed a bill further criminalizing same-sex relationships and forbidding gay Nigerians from public assembly or forming LGBT advocacy groups. Immediately afterward, gay men were jailed, whipped and threatened with violence.⁷⁸ According to a report, the law led to an increase in human rights violations, driving LGBT Nigerians into the shadows, and caused a significant decrease in the number of gay men being treated for HIV or accessing preventive care.⁷⁹

Shockwaves from passage of these laws in Uganda, The Gambia and Nigeria were felt throughout Africa. A bill modeled on Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act was introduced in the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo — one of the few African countries where same-sex relationships are not explicitly banned.⁸⁰ In Kenya, a fringe group proposed a bill that would punish same-sex relationships with death by stoning,⁸¹ and the majority leader of the lower house of parliament said that homosexuality was "as serious as terrorism."⁸² In Chad, a country that does not currently criminalize same-sex relationships, a proposal was introduced that would punish same-sex relationships with up to 20 years in prison.⁸³

The situation for LGBT people in the Middle East and North Africa is also challenging. Six men faced up to three years in jail in Morocco for being gay,⁸⁴ and a British man was arrested in the country and charged with "committing homosexual acts."⁸⁵ The situation in Egypt also deteriorated. There was a stark rise in arrests, as police allegedly sought out LGBT people, using social media apps to track down gay men.⁸⁶ Homosexuality is not explicitly illegal in Egypt — instead, gay men are charged with crimes like "debauchery" and "shameless public acts."⁸⁷ After a high-profile trial at the end of the year, eight men were sentenced to three years in prison after appearing in a video that allegedly showed a same-sex wedding. Weeks later, 25 men

⁷⁶ Robbie Corey-Boulet, "Gambia lawmakers pass bill to jail gays for life," Associated Press, Sept. 8, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/gambia-lawmakers-pass-bill-jail-gays-life>.

⁷⁷ "Gambia: Jammeh issues threat to asylum seekers," Star Africa, May 8, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 10, 2014), <http://en.starafrica.com/news/gambia-jammeh-issues-threat-to-asylum-seekers.html>.

⁷⁸ Lisa Schlein, "Nigerian Writer: Country's Homophobic Law Driving Gays Into Shadows," Voice of America, Feb. 7, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 10, 2014), <http://www.voanews.com/content/nigerian-writer-countrys-anti-gay-law-driving-gays-into-shadows/2540025.html>.

⁷⁹ "SSMPA implication on human rights and HIV prevention services," The Initiative for Equal Rights, July 21, 2014 (retrieved May 19, 2015), <http://www.theinitiativeforequalrights.org/ssmpa-implication-on-human-rights-and-hiv-prevention-services/>.

⁸⁰ Valerie Bah, "Congo-Kinshasa: DRC Looks to Follow in Uganda's Footsteps With Anti-Gay Bill," All Africa, March 11, 2014 (retrieved May 19, 2015), <http://allafrica.com/stories/201403111646.html>.

⁸¹ Colin Stewart, "Hostile reception for Kenyan bill to stone gays," Erasing 76 Crimes, Aug. 18, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://76crimes.com/2014/08/18/hostile-reception-for-kenyan-bill-to-stone-gays/>.

⁸² John Ngirachu, "Homosexuality a Serious Problem as Terrorism, Says Kenyan Assembly Majority Leader," The Daily Nation, March 26, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/news/Homosexuality-a-serious-problem-as-terrorism--says-Duale/-/1950946/2258336/-/format/xhtml/-/jety1g/-/index.html>.

⁸³ David Smith, "Chad becomes 37th African state to seek ban on homosexuality," The Guardian, Sept. 22, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 18, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/22/chad-37th-african-state-seeking-ban-homosexuality>.

⁸⁴ Massoud Hayoun, "Morocco convicts six men for homosexuality," Al Jazeera America, May 15, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/5/15/morocco-convicts6menforhomosexualityamidnationaldialogueongays.html>.

⁸⁵ "Exclusive: British man jailed for 'homosexual acts' in Morocco," Pink News, Oct. 4, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2014/10/04/exclusive-british-man-jailed-for-homosexual-acts-in-morocco/>.

⁸⁶ J. Lester Feder, "Grindr Warns Egyptian Users as Six Accused of Homosexuality Are Convicted Over Facebook Post," BuzzFeed, Sept. 25, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/grindr-warns-egyptian-users-as-six-accused-of-homosexuality?utm_term=.32if3q2#y0fsxf.

⁸⁷ "Egypt Arrests 25 Men in Bath House Raid," Associated Press, Dec. 8, 2014 (retrieved Dec. 10, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2014/12/08/world/middleeast/ap-ml-egypt-homosexuality.html>.

were arrested and dragged naked out of a bathhouse when an Egyptian journalist, Mona Iraqi, teamed up with the Egyptian police to boost her ratings and publicly humiliate those who were arrested. Weeks after the bathhouse raid, a transgender woman was arrested for posting videos of herself dancing on YouTube. Many believe that this brutal crackdown was an attempt by Egyptian president and coup leader Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to rally support and push back on allegations that he is too secular.⁸⁸

In Asia, in spite of some gains, there were notable setbacks. India continued to grapple with an unexpected December 2013 Supreme Court decision that recriminalized consensual male same-sex sexual relationships by striking down a lower court decision that had declared Section 377 of the penal code unconstitutional. The Supreme Court ruled that this was a matter for parliament to resolve. An appeal was filed, and the Supreme Court said it will revisit its decision. Advocates also urged immediate legislative action to ensure that same-sex relationships were made legal in India. They were concerned that recriminalization would marginalize LGBT Indians and provide cover for violence, extortion and police brutality.⁸⁹

In the Indonesian province of Aceh, sex between men is now punishable under Shariah law with a brutal lashing on a public stage, out in front of jeering and gawking crowds.

In Malaysia, LGBT people have enjoyed more rights and freedom than in other Muslim-majority countries, but in 2014 there were increasing instances of the government harassing, humiliating and arresting LGBT individuals. LGBT activists reported that social attitudes were becoming more hostile as hardline Islamist parties in the multiethnic nation of 30 million vied for influence and ratcheted up their anti-equality rhetoric and support for harsh interpretations of Sharia law.⁹⁰ The case of main opposition leader and a former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, was illustrative of how anti-LGBT laws can be used to curtail political and personal freedoms. After being imprisoned for the “crime” of sodomy in 2000, Ibrahim was acquitted in 2004. He was arrested again and jailed on sodomy charges in 2014 after leading the opposition to a near victory in elections in May 2013.

In the Indonesian province of Aceh, sex between men is now punishable under Shariah law with a brutal lashing on a public stage, often carried out in front of jeering and gawking crowds. In an attempt to boost his popularity among the country's majority-Muslim population and attract investment from elsewhere in the Islamic world, the sultan of Brunei enacted a harsh law that could soon punish same-sex relationships with death by stoning.⁹¹ The law sparked a worldwide campaign against the Dorchester Collection of luxury hotels owned by the sultan.⁹² The campaign became international news when it was joined by Western celebrities such as Jay Leno, Ellen DeGeneres, Anna Wintour, and Richard Branson.

⁸⁸ J. Lester Feder, “LGBT Egyptians Go Into Hiding as Regime Cracks Down,” BuzzFeed, Sept. 23, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 18, 2014), http://www.buzzfeed.com/lesterfeder/why-egypts-regime-has-launched-a-mass-crackdown-on-lgbt-righ?utm_term=.32if3q2#y0fsxf.

⁸⁹ Dhananjay Mahapatra, “Supreme Court makes homosexuality a crime again,” The Times of India, Dec. 12, 2013 (retrieved May 19, 2015), <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Supreme-Court-makes-homosexuality-a-crime-again/articleshow/27230690.cms>.

⁹⁰ “LGBT Malaysians face rising threats from a more militantly religious government,” LGBT Weekly, July 8, 2014 (retrieved Oct. 4, 2014), <http://lgbtweekly.com/2014/07/08/lgbt-malaysians-face-rising-threats-from-a-more-militantly-religious-government/>.

⁹¹ Per Liljas, “Is Brunei's Harsh New Form of Shari'a a Godly Move or a Cunning Political Ploy?,” Time, May 27, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://time.com/107012/brunei-sharia-hudud-sultan/>.

⁹² Josh Koblin and Matthew Schneier, “Dorchester Hotels Falling Out of Fashion,” The New York Times, May 23, 2014 (retrieved Nov. 13, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/25/fashion/dorchester-hotels-falling-out-of-fashion.html>.

CONCLUSION

Looking back at 2014, while the focus has often been on the setbacks for the LGBT community, the impressive victories that have been won through hard-fought efforts of many brave activists around the world must also be celebrated. The global LGBT movement saw significant legal progress and social change, including marriage equality in an accelerating number of places, as well as more and more laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination. There is also increasing evidence that equality benefits all society, not just the LGBT community. A recent study showed that countries with LGBT-inclusive policies generally have stronger economies, and that countries that discriminate against and persecute their LGBT communities might be losing billions.⁹³ And while authoritarian regimes might target LGBT people for short-term political gain, in the long run history is not on their side.

Yet even as we celebrate these successes, we recommit ourselves to working for those have yet to benefit from them. The Human Rights Campaign will continue working to achieve equal rights for all people in all places, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

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For questions or additional information, please contact us at EqualityRising@hrc.org.

⁹³ M.V. Lee Badgett et al, "The Relationship between LGBT Inclusion and Economic Development: An Analysis of Emerging Economies," The Williams Institute, Nov. 11, 2014 (retrieved May 19, 2015) <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/international/lgbt-incl-econ-devel-nov-2014/>.

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