

Strengthening Services for LGBT Refugees & Asylees

The Rainbow Welcome Initiative

March 21, 2013

9th Quarterly Placement Consultation Meeting



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LGBT Refugees

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) individuals who flee their homes because of persecution they suffered as a result of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- LGBT individuals who resettle in the United States under a different claim not relating to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- Reasons for fleeing
 - State-sponsored violence
 - Community violence
 - Family and domestic violence





LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS IN THE WORLD

ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

MAY 2011

PERSECUTION 76 countries & 5 entities

Death penalty
5 countries and parts of Nigeria and Somalia
Imprisonment/Corporeal punishment
76 countries and 5 entities*

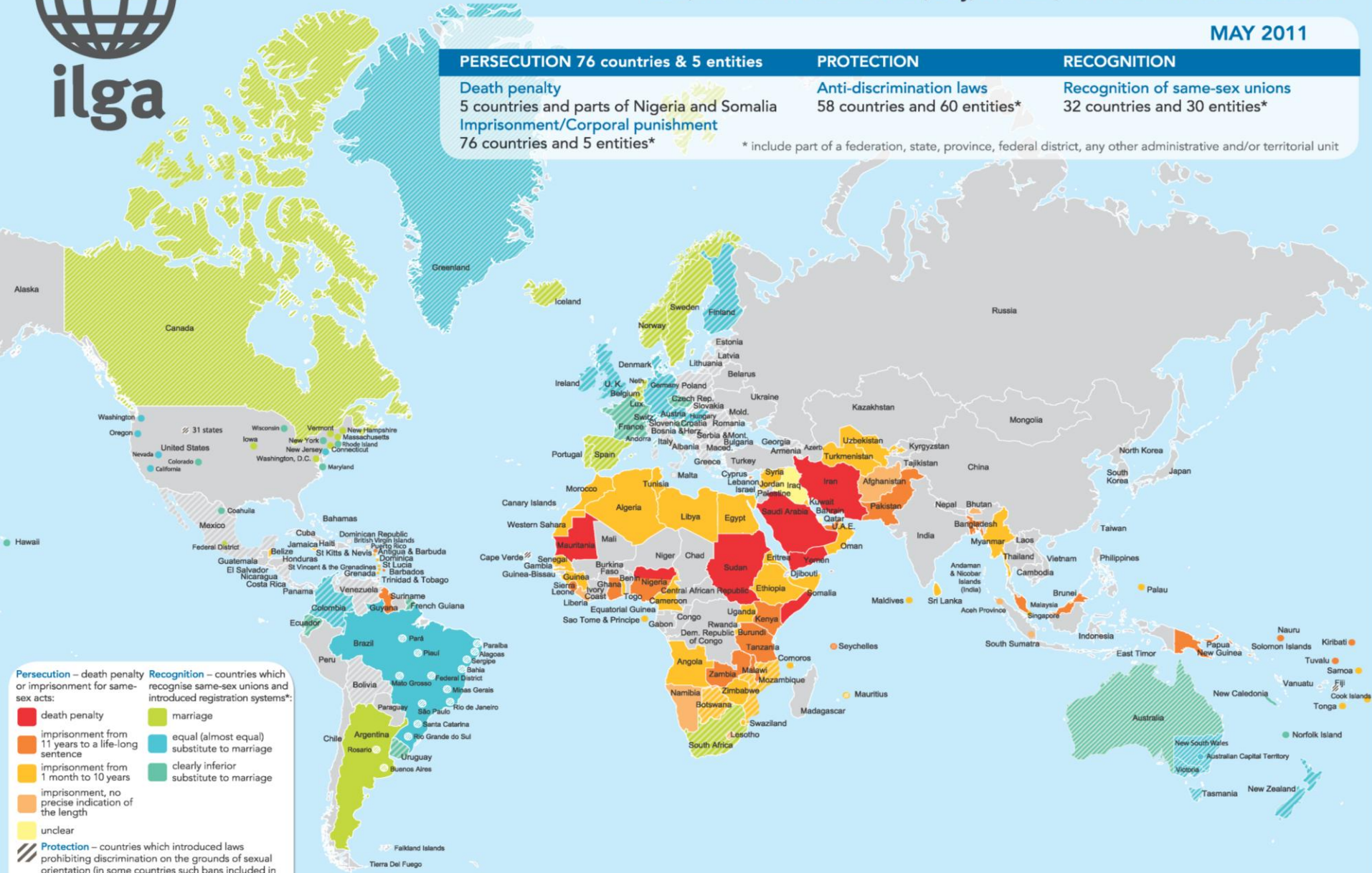
PROTECTION

Anti-discrimination laws
58 countries and 60 entities*

RECOGNITION

Recognition of same-sex unions
32 countries and 30 entities*

* include part of a federation, state, province, federal district, any other administrative and/or territorial unit



Persecution – death penalty or imprisonment for same-sex acts:

- death penalty
- imprisonment from 11 years to a life-long sentence
- imprisonment from 1 month to 10 years
- imprisonment, no precise indication of the length
- unclear

Recognition – countries which recognise same-sex unions and introduced registration systems*:

- marriage
- equal (almost equal) substitute to marriage
- clearly inferior substitute to marriage

Protection – countries which introduced laws prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (in some countries such bans included in national constitutions and in some countries in other laws; areas of protection from discrimination vary).

Protection

No specific legislation

* this category also includes some Australian entities which have no registration systems.

These laws are aimed at lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and at same-sex activities and relationships. At times, they also apply to trans and intersex people. This edition of the world map (May 2011) was coordinated by Stephen Barris (ILGA). Design: Laurence Colson. Data represented in this map is based on "State-Sponsored Homophobia: a world survey of laws criminalising same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults - 2011", an ILGA report by Eddie Bruce-Jones & Lucas Paoli Itaborahy (available on www.ilga.org in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French). ILGA thanks groups which contributed to the annual update.

Issues of (non)disclosure

- Barriers to self-identifying and disclosure
 - Concerns for safety
 - Internalized homophobia
 - Different conceptualization of sexuality or gender
- Encouraging program participants to disclose information pertaining to sexual orientation / gender identity
 - Building trust
 - Giving an incentive
 - Creating 'safe' spaces

Creating a Safe Space

- Inclusive language
 - Conversations
 - Intake paperwork
- Physical markers
- Confidentiality
 - Interpretation considerations



Protection Concerns

- Family violence
 - Child is gender non-conforming or involved in a same-sex relationship
 - Family members feel like they failed; fear loss of status in community
 - Risk of coerced marriage or violence
- Intimate partner violence
 - Underreported
 - Risks and barriers for LGBT couples
- Community violence
 - Harassment within immigrant community
 - Hate crimes
 - Teen bullying

Case Management

- Housing
 - Location
 - Roommates
- Employment
 - Participants' reservations
 - “LGBT-friendly” workplaces
 - Partnerships



Health

- Sexual health
- Gender identity and healthcare
- Mental health
 - Traumatic stress
 - Torture treatment
 - LGBT-affirming mental health providers



Asylees

- Barriers to gaining immigration status
 - Lack access to information on legal proceedings
 - One year filing deadline
 - Detention
 - Segregation
 - Sexual abuse
- Barriers to connecting to refugee resettlement agencies
 - Unaware of services
 - Different set of needs
- Need to strengthen ties between legal service providers and resettlement affiliates

Community Integration

- Double marginalization and continued isolation
- Teaching Tolerance
 - Cultural orientation
 - ESL classes
 - Ambassador allies
- Connecting participants to external resources
 - Faith-based support
 - Recreational / academic interests
 - LGBT organizations

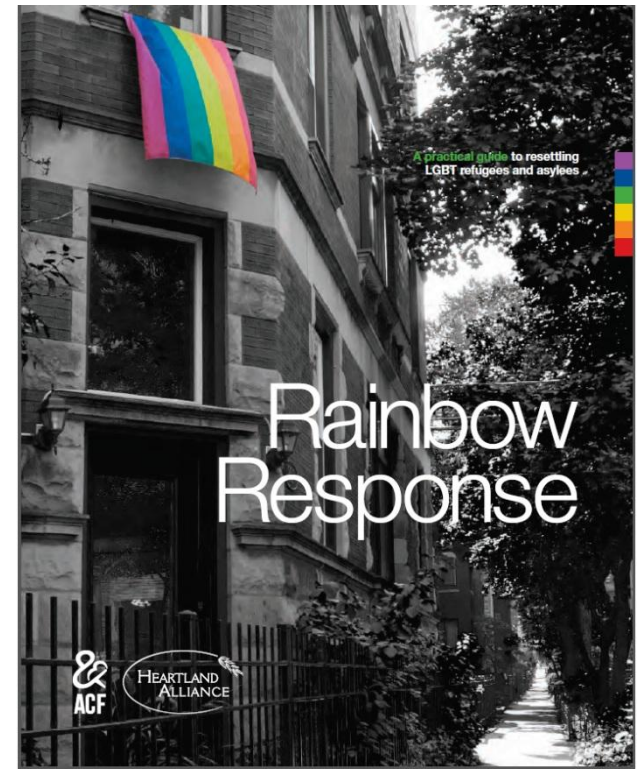


Finding Community

- Secondary migration
 - LGBT refugees often move from less to more supportive communities
 - Does not fit pattern of secondary migration to ethnic/national communities
 - Importance of “critical mass” of LGBT refugees and services
- Getting it right the first time
 - Big differences in legal and social environment
 - Increased VOLAG attention to case allocation
 - Efforts to resettle partners together

Rainbow Welcome Initiative

- Trainings and webinars
 - Refugee Resettlement agencies
 - UAC care providers
 - Torture treatment programs
- Resource materials
 - Needs assessment
 - “Rainbow Response” Field manual
 - www.rainbowwelcome.org



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