



Fact Sheet

The Implementation of the Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Around the World

2023



All human beings should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear no matter who they are or whom they love. Around the globe, LGBTQI+ activists are fighting for equal protection under the law, freedom from violence, and recognition of their fundamental human rights. The United States belongs at the forefront of this struggle — speaking out and standing strong for our most dearly held values.”

— President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

The promotion of human rights, including the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons, remains central to U.S. foreign policy. Countries and democracies are stronger when all people—regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics—are treated with dignity and respect and are fully recognized as free and equal members of their societies. Every day, the U.S. Government is working to advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons in furtherance of President Biden’s [Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World](#). On behalf of the Departments of State, Treasury, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States International Development Finance

Corporation (DFC), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the Peace Corps, the Secretary of State submitted to the President the annual interagency report on progress achieved in 2022 in furtherance of the Presidential Memorandum. Highlights from the report include:

Combatting Criminalization of LGBTQI+ Status or Conduct Abroad

U.S. agencies, including the Department of State, USAID, and MCC, engaged with countries in all regions around the world to advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons globally and to combat criminalization and pathologization (the official designation of homosexuality as medically or psychologically abnormal). For example, the MCC met with foreign heads of state to discuss the implications of anti-LGBTQI+ actions or bills on MCC eligibility criteria on upholding human rights. **Although same-sex conduct or status remains criminalized in more than 60 countries and territories, four countries decriminalized same-sex status or conduct** (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Singapore) and Vietnam officially depathologized LGBTQI+ identities and conduct in 2022.

CASE STUDY: U.S. embassies also worked closely with like-minded countries to tackle discrimination and stigma against LGBTQI+ persons. The U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland, led a year of action as the “Likeminded Embassies Coordinator” on LGBTQI+ issues. In honor of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, Interphobia, and Biphobia, the U.S. Ambassador hosted an event with representatives of the national government, local governments, civil society, the business sector, and the diplomatic community—highlighting both the importance of tolerance and the contributions of the LGBTQI+ community to Poland’s response to the Ukraine refugee crisis. The embassy also organized the first in-person meeting of working-level diplomatic contacts to promote the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons, reigniting work across missions to plan activities for Pride month. Additionally, the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw acted as a conduit for LGBTQI+ organizations to share information with the wider diplomatic community and supported their initiatives, including a roundtable led by seven LGBTQI+ nongovernmental organizations to discuss their respective input for the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review of Poland.



Protecting Vulnerable LGBTQI+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security’s United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) strengthened protection for LGBTQI+ refugees and same-sex couples within refugee resettlement processing, ensuring they are treated fairly and with dignity even in locations in which same-sex relationships are criminalized. The Department of State developed a flagship program to expand access to the United States Refugee Admissions Program

(USRAP) for at-risk individuals, including LGBTQI+ persons, affected by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and engaged bilaterally in neighboring countries to encourage governments to protect the human rights of members of these vulnerable populations.

Foreign Assistance to Protect Human Rights and Advance Nondiscrimination

USAID launched the Rainbow Fund, an incentive opportunity for U.S. missions to integrate LGBTQI+ considerations into activities across a range of sectors, including economic empowerment, access to health services, anti-corruption, education, and food security. USAID partnered with the United Kingdom on a new program to combat gender-based violence against LGBTQI+ persons, and **USAID has supported 225 LGBTQI+ civil society organizations through its Multi-Donor LGBTI Global Human Rights Initiative (GHRI)**, a five-year public-private partnership that supports local efforts to protect LGBTQI+ people from violence and criminalization.

The Department of State launched the Global LGBTQI+ Inclusive Democracy and Empowerment (GLIDE) Initiative, a new program as part of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal that facilitates the participation and leadership of LGBTQI+ community members in democratic institutions. The Department of State also expanded global membership in the Global Equality Fund (GEF), a public-private partnership which supports emergency assistance to LGBTQI+ organizations and

Alliance for Global Equality

USAID launched the Alliance for Global Equality, a five-year public-private partnership with civil society and private sector partners. The Alliance for Global Equality will support LGBTQI+ community-based groups to respond to economic devastation from COVID-19, build leaders' ability to engage in democratic processes, and establish networks for LGBTQI+ workplace and social inclusion.

persons under threat, small grants to grassroots LGBTQI+ organizations, and long-term human rights programming to catalyze positive change. **Since its inception, the GEF has awarded over \$100 million.** Spain announced that it would join the United States and 26 other government and private sector partners to jointly support civil society efforts to promote respect for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons.

The Department of Justice, with funding from the Department of State and USAID, delivered training, mentoring, and technical assistance to law enforcement organizations, correctional institutions, and forensic agencies to ensure that human rights and dignity are key elements of their organizational culture and standard operating procedures. The Department of Justice also deployed experienced prosecutors overseas to promote respect for human rights when reforming foreign justice systems and continued to build capacity in host countries to address gender-based violence and other crimes against members of vulnerable populations, including LGBTQI+ persons.

The Department of Labor added sexual orientation and gender identity inclusive nondiscrimination requirements to all international technical assistance grants.

Building Coalitions of Like-Minded Countries and Engaging International Organizations in the Fight Against LGBTQI+ Discrimination

The Department of State, working closely with partners, helped secure the renewal of the three-year mandate of the UN Independent Expert for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the June 2022 Human Rights Council session and passed a resolution that expanded language on the intersectional dimensions and impact of discrimination. The Department of State expanded membership in the LGBTQI Core Group in New York, a coalition of countries dedicated to advancing respect for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons at the United Nations in New York.

New countries that joined in 2022 include Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, Honduras, Ireland, and Timor Leste.

USAID partnered with the LGBTI Stakeholder Group at the UN High-Level Political Forum to hold a side event on Sustainable Development Goal 4 and LGBTQI+ inclusive education. The USAID Senior LGBTQI+ Coordinator addressed an Organization of American States Permanent Council meeting on LGBTQI+ inclusion, discussing USAID partnerships and programs, inclusive development, and data collection.

The Departments of Labor and State advocated for the rights of LGBTQI+ workers,

including protection from discrimination in employment, in multilateral contexts.

Multilateral Development Banks

The Department of the Treasury, with support from USAID and the Departments of State and Labor, developed and advocated for strong protections for LGBTQI+ persons in the safeguards policy reviews at both the Asian Development Bank and African Development Bank. The Department of the Treasury reinvigorated Bank Management and Board interest in increasing data collection on the costs of exclusion and benefits of inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons at several multilateral development banks to better understand economic inclusion efforts in development.

Intersectional Strategies

The Department of State released, with USAID and the White House, the **2022 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally**, which applies an intersectional framework and, for the first time, includes sections on how gender-based violence affects LGBTQI+ persons and members of other groups at higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence due to structural inequalities, social norms, discrimination, and marginalization. The Department of State also developed the first-ever U.S. Strategy on Global Women's Economic Security, which aims to remove barriers to the full, meaningful, and equitable economic participation and leadership of women and girls in all their diversity, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics.