

# Show Up With No Shame

Pride Around  
the World  
in 2024

June 2025



**OUTRIGHT**  
INTERNATIONAL



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### **Outright International works together for better LGBTIQ lives.**

Outright is dedicated to working with partners around the globe to strengthen the capacity of the LGBTIQ human rights movement, document and amplify human rights violations against LGBTIQ people, and advocate for inclusion and equality.

Founded in 1990, with staff in over a dozen countries, Outright works with the United Nations, regional human rights monitoring bodies, governments, humanitarian and development institutions, and civil society partners. Outright holds consultative status at the United Nations, where it serves as the secretariat of the UN LGBTI Core Group.

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**Right:** The Corrida do Orgulho #LGBT+ (LGBT Pride Run) opened Pride Week in São Paulo, Brazil, in June 2024. Credit: APOLGBT-SP Collection.



# Executive Summary

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The 2025 *Pride Around the World* edition is Outright International's fifth annual report tracking the global visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) people through Pride events. This report captures where and how Pride was held in 2024, revealing that, despite ongoing crackdowns, Pride remains a cornerstone of public acceptance, crucial for reaffirming LGBTIQ people's existence, strength in community, and continued resilience.

Outright's research found that public-facing Pride or LGBTIQ visibility events occurred in at least 100 of 193 UN member states in 2024. These events included various formats—parades, marches, festivals, drag shows, workshops, healing spaces, performances, sports events, mental health talks, film screenings, fashion shows, and more. They illustrate the creative and cultural breadth of global LGBTIQ organizing. In at least 65 countries, Pride was held in multiple cities, reflecting growing local ownership, authenticity, and societal normalization beyond urban centers. However, in 93 UN member states, no public-facing Pride or LGBTIQ visibility events could be held in 2024. Activists commonly cited safety concerns, legal restrictions, and political repression as barriers, underscoring the continued need for global solidarity and advocacy for LGBTIQ people's rights.

Outright bases the findings in this report on 330 survey responses from 77 countries in seven languages, 38 semi-structured interviews with global LGBTIQ activists and other key informants, and a literature review of social media, news articles, and reports by state institutions, nonprofits and non-governmental organizations to validate how and where Pride events took place. The report begins with an analysis of data from around the world, showing where Pride took place, where visibility was impossible, and why activists continue to find Pride to be an essential organizing tool.

It then delves into seven in-depth case studies, one shorter "snapshot," and one first-person commentary that are illustrative of the different facets of Pride. In **Japan**, Tokyo Pride celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2024, marking three decades of progress toward greater social acceptance, recognition, and visibility, and paving the way for historic law and policy change. In **Brazil**, while São Paulo Pride is one of the biggest globally, transgender activists have designed trans-specific marches to recenter political activism for increased legal protections for the country's transgender and gender-diverse marginalized populations. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, Pride is a private community event. Still, activists—predominantly lesbian, bisexual, queer, and trans activists—have created a safe environment for LGBTIQ people to engage in needed discourse, celebrate, and exist freely for Pride month. In **Canada**, several queer Indigenous peoples' groups exist to create inclusive and healing spaces for 2Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (2SLGBTIQ+) individuals. In addition, Black migrants in Canada have established two Pride events for refugees and newcomers, and for Black queer people. The report also covers the second in-person edition **Global Black Pride**, in 2024 in Atlanta, Georgia, bringing together Black queer people from Africa,

the Caribbean, and the Americas. In **Sweden**, Stockholm Pride's 2024 event centered refugees and migrants on a mainstream LGBTIQ platform to highlight their diverse experiences and challenges. Finally, we share a **first-person account** of the complexities of engaging with Pride in Europe from the perspective of an activist living in North Africa, a snapshot of what **political solidarity** looked like at Prides in 2024, and a case study on the inclusion of **people with disabilities at Prides** around the world.

This report examines how Pride can serve different purposes in countries moving toward inclusion and greater recognition of rights like Japan; countries where activists are seeking to repoliticize Pride, like Brazil; countries with relatively stable recognition of queer people's rights like Canada; and countries where Pride cannot be held publicly, like Côte d'Ivoire. In Japan, Pride is the cornerstone of public acceptance, transforming mindsets among ordinary citizens and achieving legal change. In Canada, Indigenous queer people, known as "Two-Spirit" or 2S, along with Black people, migrants, and refugees, have contributed to the development of diverse Pride events that reaffirm the existence and needs of underserved communities and push for inclusion through legal and social change. In both Côte d'Ivoire, where Pride is not held publicly, and Brazil, which hosts the world's biggest Pride event, community-focused Pride events are building grassroots and trans-inclusive movements and strengthening solidarity. Findings reaffirm that LGBTIQ communities greatly rely on Pride to resist, organize, build community, raise awareness, and achieve systemic change. In addition, the global LGBTIQ movement is simultaneously expanding and under threat. While Pride continues to reach new cities, platform marginalized voices, and intersect with global justice movements, it also faces increased political repression, safety concerns, and uneven inclusion, especially for people with disabilities, migrant populations, Black queer communities, Two-Spirit communities, and conflict-affected communities.

In 2024, Pride events incorporated elements of political solidarity, affirming connections between LGBTIQ struggles and other global justice movements. Pride events in Canada, Germany, the United States, Viet Nam, and elsewhere expressed solidarity with communities affected by conflict and oppression in Palestine, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ukraine, Haiti, and beyond. This intersectional political engagement reflects the evolving role of Pride as not just focused on LGBTIQ issues, but also as a vehicle for broader social justice, anti-colonial, and anti-war advocacy. However, not all respondents reported engagement with political solidarity, indicating varied priorities and local contexts within the global LGBTIQ movement.

This year's report also specifically highlights disability inclusion in Pride events—a critical and often overlooked aspect of full participation. Responding to Outright's global survey, several respondents were unsure or unaware of disability-inclusive practices at local Prides, highlighting persistent gaps in access and awareness. Nevertheless, examples of inclusive design emerged across a number of Pride events. Pride Amsterdam, Oslo Pride, Pride Toronto, York Pride, Bi Pride UK, and Pride in London incorporated features like sign language interpretation, sensory spaces, accessible routes, captioning, rest areas, and Braille signage. Activists in North Macedonia, Nepal, and Suriname provided accessibility accommodations while recognizing structural and financial constraints. In Viet Nam, deaf queer groups led cultural education efforts during Pride, reflecting the power of peer-led accessibility work. True inclusion, respondents noted, means centering the voices of queer people with disabilities in planning and leadership, rather than treating accessibility as an afterthought. The report affirms that achieving disability justice in LGBTIQ spaces is an indispensable element of equity, dignity, and participation.

As this report was finalized in June 2025, Hungarian lawmakers had banned Pride events through a constitutional amendment, which the police in Budapest used to deny Pride organizers the permit required to hold events this June. The European Commission consequently condemned this law as a violation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Union's espoused values of democracy, equality, and human rights. Budapest Pride remains scheduled for June 28, 2025. WorldPride took place in Washington, DC, in June 2025, but in addition to fears about the safety of trans and gender-diverse travelers shared by organizers and some European countries, several corporate sponsors had pulled out of the event due to fear of reprisals as a result of U.S. President Donald Trump's crackdown on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Outright International co-led the March For All campaign as part of WorldPride to "celebrate Pride by marching for those who can't." Despite activists' and allies' legitimate concerns and fears, WorldPride took place in the U.S. capital with the presence of communities from all over the world, standing up for queer, trans, intersex, and asexual people and sending a powerful message to the Trump administration that inclusion and queer joy will triumph over hatred and exclusion.

In 2024 and 2025, Pride is a mirror of collective resistance and celebration, a demand for visibility and rights, and a reaffirmation that LGBTIQ people belong everywhere. In the 93 countries where Pride events were not held in 2024, and where marching safely was not possible, as in Côte d'Ivoire, it remains pivotal to hold the line for queer people. This work can be undertaken through quiet support for civil society and public advocacy, such as through initiatives like Outright's March for All campaign. As global LGBTIQ movements evolve, intersectionality, accessibility, solidarity, and resistance will be essential to building a future where Pride is possible and safe for all.



**Right:** Attendees pose for a photo in the Parada do Orgulho LGBTQ de São Paulo (São Paulo LGBTQ Pride Parade) on June 2, 2024. Credit: APOLGBT-SP Collection.

# Methodology

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This report is our fifth in the series and is a result of an online survey in seven languages, semi-structured interviews with LGBTIQ individuals and activists, and a literature review of news reports, social media posts, and reports by non-governmental organizations and institutions. We distributed our online survey using Outright's network of activists and organizations and on social media, with a focus on collecting information on Prides and LGBTIQ visibility events that took place in 2024. The survey was distributed in English, Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), French, Indonesian, Portuguese, and Spanish, and responses were allowed in any language. In the survey, we defined Pride as "public-facing, open, and visible events to affirm the existence of LGBTIQ people, demanding recognition and protection of our rights, and/or celebrating progress. This may include not only events labeled as 'Pride,' but also IDAHOBIT, Trans Visibility Day, and other similar events if they are public-facing."

Our survey also asked about where Pride was or was not held, locations of Pride events within and outside capital cities, new Pride events in 2024, and personal experiences related to Pride. We received 330 responses from 77 countries. We also specifically sought information on Prides focusing on political solidarity, disability inclusion, inclusion of Black queer people, Indigenous peoples, and other racialized communities, in addition to other forms of social inclusion, although we received minimal responses on these themes.

Based on survey responses, we designed the section "Pride by the Numbers." We utilized a literature review of relevant texts, Outright's institutional knowledge, and our participation in events to select countries and Pride events for the case studies and snapshots: Global Black Pride in Atlanta (United States); Black Pride YYC, queer Indigenous peoples Pride, and Newcomers, Migrant and Refugee Pride (Canada); Tokyo Pride (Japan); São Paulo Pride and two new trans marches (Brazil); Pride in Côte d'Ivoire; Pride events that catered to migrant and refugee populations, including Stockholm Pride (Sweden); a personal account on participating in Pride in Europe from an activist living in North Africa, and disability inclusion in Pride.

Between August 2024 and May 2025, Outright's research team conducted 38 individual semi-structured interviews, in person at Global Black Pride in Atlanta and remotely via video link with activists from Namibia, the United Kingdom, the U.S., Bulgaria, Sweden, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Jamaica. These interviews aimed to aid in understanding the legal, political, historical, and social contexts in these countries, the motivations for attending Pride outside of home and resident countries, the motivations for founding thematic Pride events, and the evolutions of Pride in countries, as well as the challenges and successes of these Pride events. We supplemented the information shared during these semi-structured interviews and the online survey responses with online research of news reports and social media posts to verify information and confirm the existence of Pride events in certain countries. In other cases, we contacted activists via email or messaging apps to confirm whether Pride or similar LGBTIQ visibility events had taken place in their countries and what form these events took.



In terms of limitations, Outright recognizes that interviewees' and survey respondents' perspectives on Pride do not necessarily represent their entire countries' movements or communities. Every participant in a Pride event anywhere in the world has a unique experience and perspective, and beyond this report, there are many more stories to be told.

On the language and terminology in this report: Firstly, Outright typically refers to interviewees by their full names on first usage and subsequently by their surname, if they consent and can safely be cited publicly, and by pseudonyms, including a first name and last initial, if preferred by an interviewee for reasons of safety and privacy. In conducting the research for this report, several interviewees and survey respondents expressed other preferences, such as being referred to by their given name or chosen name rather than their surname. Outright has respected those preferences. Secondly, Outright typically uses the acronym LGBTIQ when referring to movements, laws, or events that are truly relevant to and inclusive of the range of identities included in the acronym. In some cases in this report, we report on events that, to our knowledge, did not include intersex people, or on laws that only target people based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and not based on sex characteristics. In these cases, we use the acronym "LGBTQ," omitting the "I" for "intersex." We sometimes also use "queer" as an inclusive catch-all. In addition, in discussing the sections on queer Indigenous peoples and Pride, and some Pride events in Canada, we use the acronym "2SLGBTIQ+" to attempt to accurately reflect these communities. We recognize our choice of terms and acronyms may be at times inconsistent and imperfect as a result of gaps in our knowledge, the complexity and fluidity of our communities, and identities that no term or acronym can perfectly capture.



# I. Introduction: Pride By the Numbers

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In 2021, when Outright International began documenting Pride events globally, we described Pride as “a central element of the global LGBTIQ movement” and a “loud and visible expression” declaring that “this is who we are, we are here, we deserve to be seen, recognized, respected, and protected.”<sup>1</sup> Today, socio-political developments have necessitated that Pride remains this central element. Pride cannot be taken for granted. The ability to publicly and safely hold Pride events remains delicate amid a global political landscape marked by attacks, bans, and backlash.

Outright identified 100 of the 193 United Nations (UN) member states where public-facing Pride and similar LGBTIQ visibility events were held in 2024, with at least 65 of these countries holding Pride events in more than one city. In 93 UN states, no public-facing Pride or similar LGBTIQ visibility events were held, but activists in many of these countries have been organizing events and safe spaces in private to commemorate Pride, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), Trans Day of Remembrance, Intersex Visibility Day, and other key dates for LGBTIQ people.

Pride events around the world in 2024 included parades, marches, demonstrations, festivals, workshops, panel discussions, parties, healing and spiritual events, cultural events, raves, sports events, yoga sessions, mental health talks, drag shows, film events, plays, art performances, dancing, poetry readings, hikes, care activities like massages and medical screenings, and fashion shows. For the purposes of this annual report, Outright collects information from activists on both public and private events, but our tally of 100 countries is based on the definition of Pride as “public-facing, open, and visible events to affirm the existence of LGBTIQ people, demanding recognition and protection of our rights, and/or celebrating progress.”

Our first Pride report, *Pride Around the World*, identified 102 countries that had held any kind of public Pride event in recent years and highlighted new and notable Prides. The 2022 report, *Visible: Pride Around the World in 2021*, found that in 2021 alone, 107 countries held visibility events. The 2023 report, *We Remain Resilient: Pride Around the World in 2022*, found that public Pride events were held in 105 countries, and in 63 of these, Pride was held in multiple locations, including outside capital cities. In the 2024 report, *Beyond the Rainbows and the Glitter: Pride Around the World in 2023*, we found that 101 of 193 United Nations (UN) member states held Pride marches or other public-facing LGBTIQ visibility events in 2023, with at least 61 of those countries holding Pride events in more than one city.

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<sup>1</sup> Outright International, *Pride Around the World*, February 15, 2021, [https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Outright\\_PrideAroundTheWorld2021.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Outright_PrideAroundTheWorld2021.pdf), 2.

The total of 100 countries in which we documented Pride in 2024 represents a slight drop in countries where public Prides could be held, while there was also a slight increase, from 61 to 65, in countries in which we documented Pride events in more than one city. Although the number of countries where Pride can be publicly held has not altered dramatically, there have been shifts in social and legal contexts that negatively impact the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms of expression and assembly through Pride by LGBTIQ populations. In Georgia, activists could not hold Pride for safety reasons for the first time in years. In Vanuatu, activists could also not hold Pride given that government officials declared that there would be no tolerance or support for LGBTIQ activities, amounting to a de facto ban.

In countries ranging from Türkiye to South Korea, Pride events in 2024 took place but faced attacks and bans. These cases reinforce human rights violations against some of the world's most marginalized groups. Other issues can also impact Pride. In Barbados, an activist pointed out that in 2024, Hurricane Beryl forced organizers to reschedule the parade, resulting in a low turnout of attendees.<sup>2</sup>

Among the 100 countries where Pride events were held, at least 65 countries held Pride events in multiple locations: within and outside their capital cities. Holding Pride beyond capital cities and in small towns is often a signifier of widening acceptance, normalization, and the authenticity of Pride events in a country. Poland is a notable example. Following parliamentary elections in 2023 that ushered in a political sea change after years of right-wing authoritarian rule, Prides were organized in a string of new locations in 2024: Strzelce Krajeńskie on May 25, Kołobrzeg on June 22, Świdnica on June 22, Stargard on June 29, Rawicz on July 6, Gliwice on August 10, Włocławek on August 24, and Śrem held on September 21.<sup>3</sup> In Croatia, Pula Pride was held for the first time, making four Pride events in the country.<sup>4</sup> The development of new Prides is often enabled by funding, the increased participation of LGBTIQ people, growing visibility and public acceptance, and political or legal progress.<sup>5</sup> In Poland, the Polish Prides Alliance came up with the idea to organize Pride events in small towns and facilitated funding access along with national strategy congresses to promote a "sense of community and

<sup>2</sup> Nas, survey response 136; National Weather Service, "Hurricane Beryl 2024: June 28 to July 11, 2024," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.weather.gov/ich/2024Beryl>.

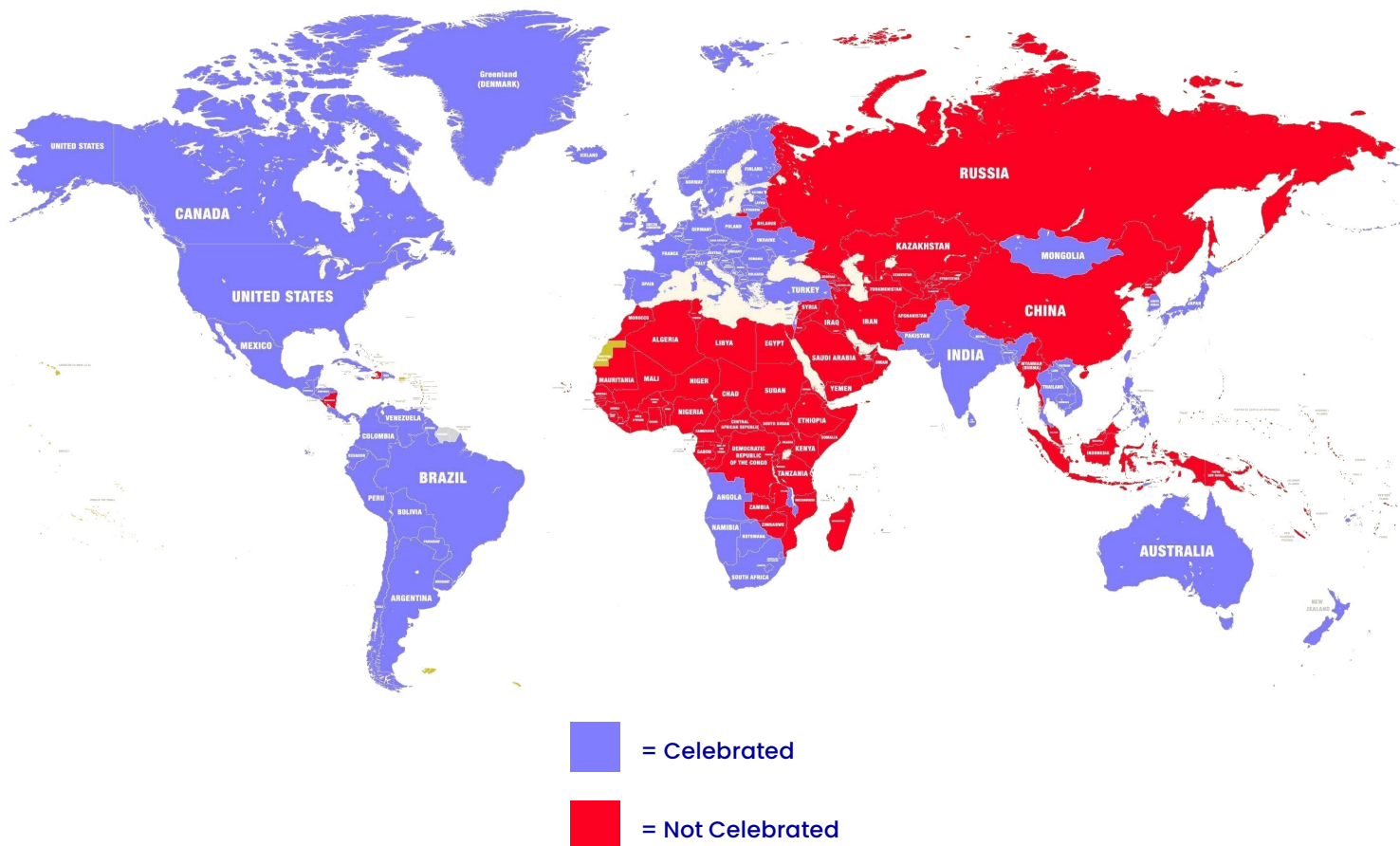
<sup>3</sup> Aleksandra Muzinska, co-founder of LGBTQ+ organization Fundusz dla Odmiany / For a Change Fund, survey response 185; TęczArt, "1 Marsz Równości w Strzelcach Krajeńskich NIECH MIŁOŚĆ W NAS ZAPŁONIE / "1st Equality March in Strzelce Krajeńskie LET LOVE IGNITE IN US," Facebook, May 25, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1613297686175649>; Równy Brzeg, "Pierwszy Marsz Równości w Kołobrzegu! | Kołobrzeg Pride!" June 22, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/869679605174690>; DZIEŃ DUMY W ŚWIDNICY! / "PRIDE DAY IN ŚWIDNICA!", Facebook, June 22, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/2797283633772820>; Mozaika, "1 Marsz Równości w Rawiczu," "1st Equality March in Rawicz," Facebook, July 6, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/938843637924311>; Tęczowy Stargard, "1 Marsz Równości w Stargardzie," / "1st Equality March in Stargard," Facebook, June 29, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/996723228480358>; Marsz Równości Gliwice (@teczowe\_gliwice), "1 Marsz Równości Gliwice," / "1st Equality March Gliwice," Instagram, August 10, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/teczowe\\_gliwice/](https://www.instagram.com/teczowe_gliwice/); Marsz Równości Włocławek, "Oficjalnie Ogłaszamy Datę Pierwszego Marszu Równości we Włocławku," / "We Officially Announce the Date of the First Equality March in Włocławek," Facebook, August 24, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1052374866229003>; Działamy Razem dla Śremu, "1 Karnawał dla Równości w Śremie" / "1 Carnival for Equality in Śrem," Facebook, September 21, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/events/459527373381791>. See other Polish Pride events here: "Marsze Równości 2024 Kalendarz marszów równości 2024," Homokomando, accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.homokomando.pl/marsze/2024>.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Adam, Coordinator of Zagreb Pride, survey response 5; Renato Samardžić, "Ove godine čak četiri Prajda: u Zagrebu, Splitu, Karlovcu i prvi put u Puli," / "This Year, Four Prides: In Zagreb, Split, Karlovac and for the First Time in Pula," CROL, May 29, 2024, <https://www.crol.hr/index.php/politika-aktivizam/10684-ove-godine-cak-cetiri-prajda-u-zagrebu-splitu-karlovcu-i-prvi-put-u-puli>.

<sup>5</sup> Survey responses 10 (Thailand), 13 (India), 29 (Jamaica), 68 (Uruguay), 74 (Mexico), 97 (Jamaica), 115 (Nepal), 135 (China), 164 (Germany), 180 (Nepal), 183 (Thailand), 185 (Poland), 273 (Eswatini), 319 (Trinidad and Tobago), 325 (Thailand), and 330 (the United Kingdom).

solidarity between people living in different towns.”<sup>6</sup> This engagement strategy led to increased intergenerational awareness and involvement of “very young activists who have come to the fore without complexes or shame and are deciding to act in their local communities.”<sup>7</sup>

In many of the 93 UN member states where there were no public-facing Pride or similar LGBTIQ visibility events in 2024, activists and LGBTIQ individuals cited safety concerns as primary reasons for being unable to exist visibly.



<sup>6</sup> Aleksandra Muzińska, co-founder of LGBTQ+ organization Fundusz dla Odmiany / For a Change Fund, survey response 185.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



## II. Overview: Pride Around the World in Many Ways

### Pride as Political Advocacy

Pride events have helped drive progress through increased visibility, acceptance, and resistance to exclusion and discrimination, and facilitated advocacy for legal protections for LGBTIQ people. Activists around the world described the ways in which local Pride events have accelerated progress for their communities in diverse ways, including by directly advancing legal and policy change.

In Suriname, activists are working to achieve comprehensive non-discrimination legislation for LGBTIQ people. According to Nirul H. (pseudonym):

Pride Month in Suriname is a time of celebration and an essential part of the ongoing advocacy for legal reforms. Some activities focus on lobbying for policy changes to protect LGBTIQ+ individuals from discrimination and violence.<sup>8</sup>

Colombian LGBTIQ groups have designed Pride to honor victims, past and present, and demand justice:

The LGBTIQ pride marches in Colombia focus on preserving the memory of LGBTIQ victims in the context of the armed conflict and demanding the transformation of justice against impunity. In 2024, marches focused on the worrying number of people killed by war and violence, and on the social exclusion suffered by LGBTIQ populations at the national level, especially those located in the so-called deep Colombia, which are precisely the areas where the LGBTIQ population is most threatened and where armed actors (guerrillas and paramilitaries) have claimed the greatest number of LGBTIQ victims.<sup>9</sup>

Ángel R. (pseudonym), a representative of the organization Intersex Venezuela, pointed out that Pride “provides a platform to discuss our specific realities, which are often ignored even within the LGBTIQ movement.” They described Pride as “a reminder that our identities and bodies are not a mistake, but a natural part of human diversity.” Ángel R. added:

**Right:** Transmasculine March in São Paulo, Brazil, March 3, 2024.  
Credit: Camila Tigre (@camilatigre).

<sup>8</sup> Nirul H. (pseudonym), survey response 45.

<sup>9</sup> Diego Ruiz Thorrens, director of organization CONPÁZES, survey response 100.



It's also a time to demand justice, because in Venezuela, there is still a long way to go before our rights are recognized and protected, especially those of intersex people. Pride is one of the few opportunities we have to make our demands visible in a country where LGBTIQ communities continue to be marginalized. Although much remains to be done, the march and related events help educate society, put pressure on institutions, and create support networks [for] intersex people.<sup>10</sup>

For another Venezuelan activist, Luis P. (pseudonym):

Pride is a civic platform to promote civil rights in a context of precariousness, risk, and survival. It's a way to build community and empower future generations in the fight for equality, dignity, and democracy.<sup>11</sup>

Luis P. also pointed out, however, that Pride events in Venezuela were used for politically-motivated agendas and campaigning across the political spectrum, rather than advancing a unified human rights message:

In Valencia, Carabobo state, there was an LGBTIQ+ march openly promoting Chavismo, and another march organized by independent, non-partisan organizations and activists.<sup>12</sup>

## Pride as Affirmation of Identity

Whether or not Pride events advance concrete legal and political demands, they perform a crucial function as an organizing tool: affirming identities. LGBTIQ people everywhere in the world absorb early lessons in denial and even self-hate; Pride reverses those currents, assuring LGBTIQ people that the demands they may have for justice and equality are valid, because *they* are valid.

In Poland, Aleksandra Muzinska described one of the multiple new Prides:

I participated in several Prides in 2024, but the highlight for me was the march in Strzelce Krajeńskie, funded by a grant from my organization. Strzelce Krajeńskie is the smallest city in Poland to have organised Pride so far (9,600 inhabitants). Maybe about 30-40 people took part in Pride. It was a very important event for the queer youth of the town and their parents. They were able to walk the streets of their city with dignity for the first time.<sup>13</sup>

In Uganda, LGBTIQ activists cannot march publicly. Although several public Pride events took place between 2012 and 2016, subsequent crackdowns have made organizing such events impossible since then. Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023 has increased penalties for consensual same-sex sexual conduct, in some cases, up to and including the death penalty.<sup>14</sup> It also criminalizes any form of advocacy in support of LGBTIQ people's human rights.<sup>15</sup> Activists continue to hold private Pride events. As Jonah O. (pseudonym) expressed:

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<sup>10</sup> Intersex Venezuela, survey response 147. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>11</sup> Luis P. (pseudonym), activist from Movimiento Somos, Venezuela, survey response 318. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. On "Chavismo," see Vincent A. Dueñas, "Venezuela: The Origins and Enduring Legacy of Chavismo – Part I," *The Sais Review*, June 20, 2017, <https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/venezuela-chavismo-part-i>.

<sup>13</sup> Aleksandra Muzińska, co-founder of LGBTQ+ organization Fundusz dla Odmiany / For a Change Fund, survey response 185.

<sup>14</sup> Neela Ghoshal, "What does Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill Mean for Humanitarians, Development Partners and the Private Sector?" *Outright International*, March 29, 2023, <https://outrightinternational.org/humanitarian-response-to-uganda>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

In Uganda, where LGBTQ+ people face both state and community persecution, societal rejection, and violence... Pride is more than just an event. I believe it is a statement of existence, resilience, and defiance against oppression of all forms.<sup>16</sup>

Ray A. (pseudonym), also from Uganda, added:

Pride is an act of courage. It is about finding ways to exist and support each other in a country that actively seeks to erase LGBTQ+ identities. While public Pride parades may not be possible, the spirit of Pride lives on through underground organizing, mental health support, legal advocacy, and digital activism. Every small gathering, every online campaign, and every act of resistance is part of the broader fight for LGBTQ+ rights in Uganda.<sup>17</sup>

A trans activist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo said:

Pride, for me, means valuing oneself [and] contributing one's part to the community's social development, despite one's sexual and gender identity. Pride takes on the meaning of accepting oneself, asserting oneself, having esteem and confidence, and working for the benefit of social inclusion.<sup>18</sup>

## Pride as Visibility

Globally, public Pride events are a crucial platform for promoting visibility about the existence and authenticity of gender and sexual diversity. During Pride events, LGBTIQ individuals and activists engage with the public on a unique level, reclaiming spaces and helping normalize diverse identities within the social consciousness of a country.

Yevgen, from Ukraine, said that Pride was crucial for “ensuring that LGBTIQ people's rights remain on the agenda, even during wartime.”

In Ukraine, Pride has always been more than a celebration; it is a form of activism, a demonstration of existence in the face of adversity. Even in the current conditions, visibility efforts help sustain the movement, provide support to the community, and push forward discussions on legal protections and social acceptance.<sup>19</sup>

For Vietnamese respondent Zoé, who attended one of the few LBQ-focused events in their city:

It was meaningful because of the immense queer joy that I can only find in spaces like that. Pride is one of the boldest things we do in this movement, because we are never more unapologetically visible than we are during Pride. We compromise a lot in our

**Right:** Barbados Pride Parade 2024, July 14, 2024. Credit: Equals Barbados.

<sup>16</sup> Jonah O. (pseudonym), survey response 296.

<sup>17</sup> Ray A. (pseudonym), survey response 243.

<sup>18</sup> Zuri O. (pseudonym), survey response 234. This response was given in French and translated into English for this report.

<sup>19</sup> Yevgen, survey response 190.





lives and our work to be able to exist and sustain what we do, but during Pride, we put our community first, we talk about us, and show up with no shame.”<sup>20</sup>

Jean C. (pseudonym), a refugee in Kenya, said that Pride is an opportunity to advance the visibility of LGBTIQ people in online spaces. Jean described this online activism as “an act of resistance and survival” in a country where visibility, especially for queer refugees, “is both powerful and dangerous.”<sup>21</sup>

However, Imran B. (pseudonym) from Bangladesh shared a different perspective on online-only events, yearning for more public visibility, which is not currently safe in Bangladesh. Imran B. said that where Pride is not held physically due to safety reasons, “it reinforces a sense of marginalization and invisibility, preventing us from celebrating our identities and advocating for our rights in a public, unifying manner. The absence of such events denies the opportunity for solidarity, visibility, and collective empowerment, which are essential for both personal and community-wide resilience.”<sup>22</sup>

## Pride as Community Building

In 2023, Namibian transgender activist Jholerina Timbo told Outright that, “Pride for me is like ubuntu – I am because you are.”<sup>23</sup> This has been a salient factor of Pride since the 1969 Stonewall Riots up to today. LGBTIQ people consistently express the irreplaceable feelings of community and solidarity derived through organizing, participating in, and even being aware of Pride events in one’s country.

In California, U.S., Kai J. (pseudonym), shared that “Pride is huge to me because I didn’t get to meet other queer people as a kid, so seeing that I’m not alone is important to me. Seeing that we can come together and build community is wonderful.”<sup>24</sup>

Shanelle P. (pseudonym) in Jamaica helped in organizing Pride events, and “it was meaningful to me to be in community and to offer my care and services in this new way.”<sup>25</sup> She described Pride as:

the knowledge that I deserve equality and access as a full citizen of my country without restriction due to my sexual identity. Pride as a celebration reminds us that we’re never alone and we have so much power together.<sup>26</sup>

**Right:** Drag queens pose with an attendee of a Pride march in São Paulo. Credit: APOLGBT-SP Collection.

<sup>20</sup> Zoé, survey response 291.

<sup>21</sup> Jean C. (pseudonym), survey response 298.

<sup>22</sup> Imran B. (pseudonym), survey response 126.

<sup>23</sup> Outright interview with Jholerina Theodora Timbo, Program Coordinator at Positive Vibes Namibia, virtual, April 2023. See in Outright International, *We Remain Resilient: Pride Around the World in 2022*, June 2023, [https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Outright\\_PrideReport\\_2023.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Outright_PrideReport_2023.pdf), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Survey response 167.

<sup>25</sup> Shanelle P. (pseudonym), survey response 29.

<sup>26</sup> Shanelle P. (pseudonym), survey response 29.





Heather attended Pride in the United Kingdom and found it to be “a space where I can be visible, safe, and connect with community.”<sup>27</sup> Similarly, to Safiyyah A. (pseudonym), from Trinidad and Tobago:

Being in the same space with the LGBTIQ+ community members is special because we aren’t together often. Pride is like our Christmas. Pride allows activists to come together in a social setting to bond with the community and to strengthen our advocacy.<sup>28</sup>

Zhi W. (pseudonym) shared from Taiwan: “This event brings together many people who support LGBTIQ people. It makes me feel the power of the community and makes me believe that I am not alone.”<sup>29</sup>

A representative from the organization Intersex Venezuela discussed intersex community building at Pride in Caracas:

[A]s an intersex person, I have often felt invisible or misunderstood. At the march and the workshop, I felt that my identity was valid and that I was not alone. I was able to connect with others who have gone through similar situations, such as non-consensual medicalization in childhood, and that gave me a lot of strength to keep fighting.<sup>30</sup>

Aryo S. (pseudonym) from Indonesia has found community through Pride:

I get to be a part of a growing community. The sense of community and belonging felt amazing. And it’s great to see people gaining confidence in being themselves when surrounded by like-minded people. We may be changing lives.<sup>31</sup>

## Barriers to Pride

In many countries, widespread queerphobia and transphobia contribute to unsafe conditions, such that LGBTIQ people cannot hold Pride events, and hostility forces them underground. In other cases, efforts to hold Pride are confronted with bans and crackdowns by the authorities and violence from queerphobic extremist groups and members of the public.

Where Pride cannot take place publicly, even as some activists drew solace from private community events, others remarked on a sense of second-class citizenship that stems from being forced to exist in the shadows. A nonbinary individual from Papua New Guinea shared that, while the private Pride events help them to reflect on their lived experiences:

Papua New Guinea at most times term itself as a ‘Christian Nation’...existing punitive and discriminatory laws hinder progress, and in short, can not allow us to actively and openly celebrate Pride and other visibility events as public-facing, as religious values, cultural and traditional norms and the legal settings create huge barriers in our visibility<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Heather P., survey response 330.

<sup>28</sup> Safiyyah A., survey response 319.

<sup>29</sup> Zhi W. (pseudonym), survey response 255. This response was given in Chinese (Traditional) and translated into English for this report.

<sup>30</sup> Intersex Venezuela, survey response 147. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>31</sup> Aryo S. (pseudonym), survey response 173.

<sup>32</sup> Brandon P. (pseudonym), survey response 108.

Maryan from Somalia responded that:

The inability to hold Pride in Somalia severely limits visibility, solidarity, and advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights. It forces us to operate in secrecy, increasing the risk of persecution, isolation, and mental health challenges. Any perceived support for LGBTQ+ rights can provoke severe backlash, including arrests and violence.<sup>33</sup>

In Venezuela, while public Pride events exist, organizers nonetheless face challenges, including “the lack of funding, the humanitarian emergency in Venezuela, and the politically motivated tension and repression, the reduction of civic space in Venezuela, and the migratory influx of LGBTQ+ people.”<sup>34</sup> Another respondent said that in Mérida, “police approached the organizers of Pride to intimidate them, saying they had received a message from the mayor about ‘nudity’ and the presence of children.”<sup>35</sup>

Imran B. (pseudonym) told Outright that Bangladeshi Pride events, which are only held online, “remain deeply impacted by the rise of anti-trans movements and conservative opposition, which continues to challenge the community’s visibility and inclusion.”<sup>36</sup>

**Right:** Arraial Lisboa Pride, June 22, 2024. Credit: Vadim/Adobe Stock.

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<sup>33</sup> Maryan, survey response 254.

<sup>34</sup> Jau Ramírez, director of Movimiento Somos and founder of the LGBTIQ+ Center, survey response 318. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>35</sup> Luis P. (pseudonym), activist from Movimiento Somos, Venezuela, survey response 318. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>36</sup> Imran B. (pseudonym), survey response 126.



# III. Pride Under Attack: Crackdowns on Pride in 2024

In some countries, government institutions regularly fund and participate in Pride and LGBTIQ visibility events.<sup>37</sup> But in others, in addition to and separate from the criminalization of same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults, there are increasing legal restrictions to fundamental rights and freedom of expression, assembly, and association.<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere, even if Pride is allowed to take place, governments and politicians may take insufficient steps to counter—or may even encourage—violent backlash by far-right groups and members of the public.

## Bans on Pride

Under international law, everyone—including people celebrating Pride—has the right to participate in peaceful demonstrations. When it comes to queer people, however, many governments disregard that right and seek to silence LGBTIQ communities.<sup>39</sup>

In the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu, LGBTIQ visibility events have taken place since 2021.<sup>40</sup> But in 2024, officials declared that they would not support “any LGBTQIA+ activities, including those funded by development partners or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).”<sup>41</sup> VPride Foundation, the organizers of the VPride Fashion Show, announced that although the event was “instrumental in supporting social inclusion,” it would not be held in 2024.<sup>42</sup> VPride was directly attacked by the government: Albert Nalpini, the National Human Rights Coordinator at the Ministry of Justice and Community Services, announced intentions to appoint a committee to draft a national policy banning LGBTIQ advocacy “because V-Pride’s activities contradict our Constitution’s preambles, Christian principles, and Melanesian values.”<sup>43</sup>

In Türkiye, Outright has documented “bans, attacks, and escalating violent reprisals at Pride in Türkiye beginning with the first attempt in 1993 and resuming in 2015 with crackdowns

<sup>37</sup> “Most events are funded by the State [in Uruguay].” – Karina Núñez Rodríguez, survey response 68.

<sup>38</sup> ILGA World, *Laws on Us: An Overview of Legal Progress and Backtracking on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics*, May 2024, [https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Laws\\_On\\_Us\\_2024.pdf](https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Laws_On_Us_2024.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Outright International, “Protection Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, In Relation to the Human Rights to Freedom of Expression, Association and Assembly: Submission to the Office of the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity,” May 2025, <https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/IE%20SOGI%20freedom%20of%20assembly%2C%20association%2C%20expression.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> VPride, “VPride Fashion Show 2021,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.vpridevanuatu.org/vpride-fashion-show-2021>; VPride, “International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHO),” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.vpridevanuatu.org/international-day-against-homophobia-transphobia-and-biphobia-idoaho>.

<sup>41</sup> Doddy Morris, “Vanuatu Gov’t Against LGBTQIA+ Advocacy,” *Daily Post Vanuatu*, September 14, 2024, [https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vanuatu-gov-t-against-lgbtqia-advocacy/article\\_99deell8-d2b9-5811-afa6-d0837cbfefce.html](https://www.dailypost.vu/news/vanuatu-gov-t-against-lgbtqia-advocacy/article_99deell8-d2b9-5811-afa6-d0837cbfefce.html).

<sup>42</sup> VPride, “Port Vila, Vanuatu – It is with a heavy heart that we announce the VPride Fashion Show will not be held this year. As one of the most anticipated events in Vanuatu’s cultural calendar, VPride Fashion Show has been a powerhouse of creativity, inclusion, and economic empowerment over the years, bringing together diverse local designers to showcase their artistry to national and international audiences,” Facebook, October 10, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/VPrideFoundation/videos/1450014542332325>.

<sup>43</sup> Adorina Massing, “National Policy to Advocate Against LGBTQIA+ in Vanuatu: MoJCS,” *Daily Post Vanuatu*, October 31, 2024, [https://www.dailypost.vu/news/local\\_news/national-policy-to-advocate-against-lgbtqia-in-vanuatu-mojcs/article\\_bc5f1253-340d-5831-bafc-51efa6aacf93.html](https://www.dailypost.vu/news/local_news/national-policy-to-advocate-against-lgbtqia-in-vanuatu-mojcs/article_bc5f1253-340d-5831-bafc-51efa6aacf93.html).

every year since.”<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, Pride in 2024 was no different.<sup>45</sup> In Antalya, the governorship banned all events across the province for 15 days, targeting Pride events held in July.<sup>46</sup> After activists pushed through to organize an event and read a press statement in public, police arrested at least four people.<sup>47</sup> In Istanbul, the governor’s office also prohibited Pride, and the police “blocked central Istanbul to prevent the march from taking place, shutting down metro stations and blocking traffic on the main streets” and arresting 15 people.<sup>48</sup> The prosecutor’s office also filed a lawsuit against eight attendees of the Istanbul Pride March for attending an “unauthorized” march in violation of the law.<sup>49</sup>

In Romania, Oradea Pride organizers shared that officials banned their Pride event because they had already approved another event by Christian churches.<sup>50</sup> In September 2024, the Georgian parliament adopted a sweeping anti-LGBTIQ law that prohibits public gatherings aimed at “popularizing” queer identities, effectively banning Pride.<sup>51</sup>

Restrictions on Hong Kong’s Pride March started in 2019, when police banned the march for the first time since it was launched in 2008, as part of a broader crackdown triggered by mass protests against the Extradition Bill.<sup>52</sup> The march has not been held since.<sup>53</sup> Activists shifted to holding static Pride events in markets and bazaars, but in June 2024, Gay Harmony, a group organizing Pride month events, had to cancel its activities after the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) refused to issue permits.<sup>54</sup>

Pride in Seoul, South Korea, celebrated its 25th anniversary in June 2024 with 150,000 people reportedly participating, but for the second year in a row, municipal authorities denied a

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<sup>44</sup> Outright International, *Beyond the Rainbows and the Glitter: Pride Around the World in 2023*, 10.

<sup>45</sup> Defne Güzel, “2024 Report on Violations Against Pride Month Events and Protests,” *Kaos GL*, July 10, 2024, <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/2024-report-on-violations-against-pride-month-events-and-protests>.

<sup>46</sup> Kaos GL, “Antalya Governorship Put a Ban on Pride Month Events!,” July 3, 2024, <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/antalya-governorship-put-a-ban-on-pride-month-events>.

<sup>47</sup> “Antalya Police Attack LGBTI+ Pride March, Detain Four,” *Duvar English*, July 14, 2024, <https://www.duvarenglish.com/antalya-police-attack-lgbti-pride-march-detain-four-news-64666>.

<sup>48</sup> “Turkey Arrests at Least 15 Protesters at Pride Rally,” *Reuters*, June 30, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-arrests-least-15-protesters-pride-rally-2024-06-30/>.

<sup>49</sup> “Lawsuit Filed Against Eight People Who Attended the Istanbul Pride March,” *BIA News Center*, December 11, 2024, <https://bianet.org/haber/istanbul-onur-yuruyusune-katilan-sekiz-kisiye-dava-acildi-302604>.

<sup>50</sup> Organizers called for a protest in front of the City Hall in response. See Ark Oradea (@arkoradea), “Protest in Front of the Oradea City Hall,” Instagram, August 9, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-cZiK0g5zy/?igsh=MWExdDV3bWl2enU3>; “Organizatorul Oradea PRIDE îl acuză pe primarul Florin Birta că „încalcă valorile liberale și restrânge drepturile comunității LGBTI” / “Oradea devine primul municipiu din România care urmează exemplul Poloniei, încercând să fie ‘LGBTI free,’” *G4 Media*, August 9, 2024, <https://www.g4media.ro/organizatorul-oradea-pride-il-acuza-pe-florin-birta-ca-incalca-valorile-liberale-si-restrange-drepturile-comunitatii-lgbti.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Michelle Yesudas and Neela Ghoshal, “Rights in Retrograde? Borderless Tyranny Requires Queer Global Resistance,” *Outright International*, December 13, 2024, <https://outrightinternational.org/insights/rights-retrograde-borderless-tyranny-requires-queer-global-resistance>.

<sup>52</sup> Amnesty International, “Hong Kong’s Protests Explained,” September 24, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/09/hong-kong-protests-explained>; Outright International, *Beyond the Rainbows and the Glitter: Pride Around the World in 2023*, June 10, 2024, <https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/human-rights-research/beyond-rainbows-and-glitter-pride-around-world-2023>, 47–48.

<sup>53</sup> In addition, the 2024 Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, also known as Article 23, outlaws criticism of the Hong Kong or Chinese government, potentially subjecting protesters of any kind to up to ten years in prison. Outright International, *Beyond the Rainbows and the Glitter: Pride Around the World in 2023*, 47–48.

<sup>54</sup> “Gay Harmony Cancels Pride Month Bazaar Due to Lack of Government License,” *Marketing Interactive*, June 28, 2024, <https://www.marketing-interactive.com/gay-harmony-cancels-pride-month-bazaar-due-to-lack-of-government-license>; Gay Harmony, “Pride Month Bazaar Cancelled,” Instagram, June 25, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8oyuTtR39/?igsh=MW9xb2pnYno2Z3ZyMQ>. Gay Harmony had held its human rights conferences prior to this and is set to hold Pride events in June 2025. See Gay Harmony on Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/gay\\_harmony\\_hk/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/gay_harmony_hk/?hl=en).



permit for Pride's traditional venue in front of Seoul City Hall, citing scheduling conflicts.<sup>55</sup> A permit for a smaller Pride event in Seoul's Museum of History was also rejected, with the mayor stating that he "personally can't agree with homosexuality."<sup>56</sup> In a positive turn of events, in October, the National Human Rights Commission found that the city's denial of venues to hold Pride is discriminatory.<sup>57</sup>

In Colombia, the mayor's office in Santiago de Cali canceled Pride hours before the event, leading President Gustavo to declare that: "the right to assembly is a fundamental right. You don't ask for permission; you just inform us about the meeting."<sup>58</sup>

## Attacks on Pride by Law Enforcement

In Türkiye, as noted above, the authorities have suppressed various LGBTIQ activities for a decade, although the crackdowns at times appear random and inconsistent. On May 31, 2024, Metu Pride March, a students' Pride event, was held without interference from state actors for the first time in years, although there was a police presence.<sup>59</sup> However, on June 9, 2024, police attacked activists planning to hold a Pride march in Eskişehir. Ten activists were detained, and activists reported that they were "subjected to torture."<sup>60</sup> In anticipation of Istanbul's Trans Pride March on June 23, 2024, police officers closed metro stations and set up blockades in Istanbul's Beyoğlu and Şişli districts.<sup>61</sup> Organizers chose to gather at various points in the city and hang trans flags instead, rather than march, and police detained two people who were sitting in a café.<sup>62</sup> Activists in İzmir circumvented the police by holding their Pride march on June 29, 2024, a day before the official date, and there was no state intervention.<sup>63</sup>

**Right:** São Paulo LGBT+ Pride Parade, June 2, 2024. Credit: Wagner Vilas/Adobe Stock.

<sup>55</sup> AFP News Agency, "Tens of Thousands of South Koreans Celebrate Pride Despite Backlash," *France 24*, June 1, 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240601-tens-of-thousands-of-south-koreans-to-celebrate-pride-despite-backlash>.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Park Boram, "Watchdog Finds Denial of Space Rental for LGBT Festival Infringes on Right to Equality," *Yonhap News Agency*, October 28, 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20241028008800315>.

<sup>58</sup> Ana María Noriega, "Presidente Petro se manifiesta tras cancelación del 'Día del orgullo gay' en Cali," *Radio Nacional*, June 30, 2024, <https://www.radionacional.co/noticias-colombia/dia-del-orgullo-gay-cali-hoy-cancelado>.

<sup>59</sup> UniKuir, "A First in a Long Time at Metu: Police Did Not Intervene in the Pride March," May 31, 2024, <https://www.unikuir.org/haberler/odtu-de-uzun-zaman-sonra-bir-ilk-onur-yuruyusune-polis-mudahale-etmedi-31-05-2024>

<sup>60</sup> Kaos GL, "LGBTI+ Activists Detained in Eskişehir Pride March Released," June 11, 2024, <https://kaosgl.org/en/single-news/lgbti-activists-detained-in-eskisehir-pride-march-released>; See videos from the event on Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C8APY2oJQn/?igsh=YXJwbXVkbWhuc29x>.

<sup>61</sup> "Turkish Gov't Blockades Istanbul in Fear of Trans Pride March," *Duvar English*, June 23, 2024, <https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-govt-blockades-istanbul-in-fear-of-trans-pride-march-news-64556>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid; ILGA Europe, "The Turkish LGBTI+ Community Resists Bans on Pride Events Again this Year, Amid Increased Repression from the Turkish Government," July 29, 2024, <https://www.ilga-europe.org/blog/the-turkish-lgbti-community-resists-bans-on-pride-events-again-this-year-amid-increased-repression-from-the-turkish-government>.

<sup>63</sup> İzmir LGBTİ+ Onur Haftası (@izmirpride35), "12. İzmir LGBTİ+ Onur Yürüyüşünü şanlıttık," X, June 29, 2024, <https://x.com/izmirpride35/status/1807078469899026664>.



Crackdowns by the authorities on Pride events were not always related to queerphobia. There were sometimes attempts to shut down other forms of speech. Police arrested protesters at the Internationalist Queer Pride Berlin (IQP) on July 27, 2024, and “dozens of people were hurt, including pepper spray burns, bruises, and concussions, several needing hospital treatment for their injuries. At least 25 people were detained, and several were taken to police stations.”<sup>64</sup> A respondent to Outright’s survey shared that “the IQPB usually faces a lot of police appearances due to the Palestinian block in the last 3 years (2021, 2022, 2023). When the pride became all for Palestine in 2024, the police appearance and violence were at their peak.”<sup>65</sup>

## Counterprotests at Pride

Pride organizers must navigate the risk of violence from queerphobic extremist groups and members of the public. At times, the risk is too high to proceed with planned events.

In Georgia, public Pride and visibility events have faced severe violence on multiple occasions since the first such event in 2012, leading activists to debate in recent years whether the event should be held at all or whether it exposes queer Georgians to too much risk.<sup>66</sup> Tbilisi Pride Fest was held but had to be cancelled in 2023, after a mob of nationalists and religious fundamentalists stormed the event.<sup>67</sup> In 2024, Tbilisi Pride organizers decided not to hold Pride events, explaining in a statement, “We anticipated that the summer before the 2024 parliamentary elections would be filled with physical violence encouraged by the government and rhetoric filled with hate and hostility.”<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, fundamentalists organized a march to celebrate “traditional family values” in May 2024, attended by Georgia’s Prime Minister.<sup>69</sup>

Other forms of counterprotests exist on different scales. Violence is often symbolic, but it also carries the threat of physical violence. In the U.S., an organizer of Claremont Pride in California reported that “People kept taking down our flags. Someone had a bottle thrown at them and got a concussion from it.”<sup>70</sup>

During Christopher Street Day in Germany, a crowd of about “700 neo-Nazis” held a counterdemonstration against a Pride march of 1,000 people, and shared videos the next day of counterprotesters burning rainbow flags.<sup>71</sup> In Croatia, a survey respondent shared that “in Zagreb, while the Pride March was passing through the main square, there were a few

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<sup>64</sup> Internationalist Queer Pride (@iqpberlin), “Dearest friends, comrades and lovers of IQPB, On Saturday 27 July, more than 15,000 of us took to the streets as part of @iqpberlin to celebrate...,” Instagram, August 9, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C-cw7fGMQRI/?img\\_index=2&igsh=MTNndDVxbDZpaW5vbQ==](https://www.instagram.com/p/C-cw7fGMQRI/?img_index=2&igsh=MTNndDVxbDZpaW5vbQ==); Udi Raz (@udiraza), “Massive Police Attacks Occurred at the ‘Internationalist Queer Pride’ in Berlin, Where Over 15,000 People Protested Against the Annihilation War in Gaza,” Instagram, July 28, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C999o7xMivu/?igsh=bG9oYjkyZW9uMjl3>.

<sup>65</sup> Amari J. (pseudonym), an organizer of Internationalist Queer Pride Berlin, survey response 164.

<sup>66</sup> Outright International, *Visible: Pride Around the World in 2021*, June 2022, <https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/human-rights-research/2022-pride-around-world-report>, 19–26.

<sup>67</sup> “A Mob Storms Tbilisi Pride Fest Site, Forcing the Event’s Cancellation,” *Associated Press News*, July 8, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/georgia-lgbt-festival-pride-cancellation-ce5alf6a162008e9a7de0d139d067358>; Outright International, *Beyond the Rainbows and the Glitter: Pride Around the World in 2023*, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Tbilisi Pride, “Announcement: No Pride Week in 2024,” Facebook, June 14, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/TiflisPride/posts/pfbid02JAPNYDnbBPo5RLGXxTIQ6rb4Nd3bfzASjsrc5hf5Bxdv99h7W5Fgzft6DEUhZqayl>.

<sup>69</sup> “Georgia’s Prime Minister Joins Tens of Thousands in a March to Promote ‘Family Purity,’” *Associated Press News*, May 17, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/georgia-family-purity-day-lgbtq-rights-cda83d6f050eff2defdc7c0565044a48>.

<sup>70</sup> Kai J. (pseudonym), survey response 167.

<sup>71</sup> Walter Crasshole, “Precarious Pride: Reflections on a Summer of Right-Wing Violence at Queer Demonstrations,” *The Queer Berliner*, September 16, 2024, <https://www.the-berliner.com/politics/precious-pride-queer-berliner-right-wing-violence-csd>; “Attack on CSD: Neo-Nazis Arrested at Potsdamer Platz,” *The Berliner*, July 29, 2024, <https://www.the-berliner.com/english-news-berlin/attack-csd-pride-neo-nazis-junge-nationalisten-arrested-potsdamer-platz>.

smaller groups shouting obscenities.”<sup>72</sup> In Ukraine, Pride events were hindered by both Russian aggression and “counterprotesting by far-right and ultraconservative religious groups.”<sup>73</sup> A respondent explained:

Pride in Kyiv was supposed to pass through the city’s main street, but unfortunately, the march was no more than 100 meters long, as aggressive opponents gathered on the neighboring street. In Kharkiv, the pride march was organized as a car rally, as the city is under constant shelling, so the organizers chose this format.<sup>74</sup>

Governments should take steps to prevent violence by members of the public and assure LGBTIQ people that the state will come to their assistance in case of attacks. In Tijuana, México, a respondent described growing backlash toward Pride from “media outlets, pseudo-influencers,” and “the Catholic, Evangelical, and Christian churches,” mentioning “an alarming trend toward the growth of the right” and the influence of politicians like Donald Trump and Javier Milei. The respondent noted that a rainbow flag was “violently torn down” at the National Work Housing Fund Institute, “but the government put it back up.”<sup>75</sup>

**Right:** Shirt of LGBTIQ group Initiative Tilé worn by a member during a closed-door event for Pride in Côte d’Ivoire in 2024. Credit: Initiative Tilé.

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<sup>72</sup> Ivan Adam, Coordinator of Zagreb Pride, survey response 5.

<sup>73</sup> Andrii Kravchuk, one of the founders of Nash Mir (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Center, Ukraine, survey response 177. For instance, “Odesa and Zaporizhzhia – Attacks and aggression Pride activists in Odesa have repeatedly been targeted by radicals. In 2021, far-right activists attacked participants after the event. In Zaporizhzhia in 2020, police detained more than 20 people who tried to attack marchers.” Survey response 149.

<sup>74</sup> Yulia, survey response 159. See also Liz Cookman, “First Pride March Since Russian Invasion Takes Place in Kyiv: Crowd Dispersed by Police After only 10 Minutes and Redirected to the Subway Due to Threats From Anti-LGBTQ+ Groups, Say Organizers,” *The Guardian*, June 16, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/jun/16/first-ukraine-pride-march-since-russian-invasion-takes-place-in-kyiv>.

<sup>75</sup> Sara Islas, survey response 55, Spanish. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.





# Case Studies and Snapshots

## IV. Case Study. Pride in Tokyo: “Happy, Proud, and Free” for 30 Years

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### Legal and Socio–Political Context

Japan has made significant strides in recognizing LGBTIQ people’s human rights in the past three years. In June 2023, the East Asian nation enacted a law aiming to “promote understanding” of LGBT people and avoid “unfair discrimination,” but fell short of prohibiting discrimination against LGBTIQ persons.<sup>76</sup> While the country has not legalized marriage equality, seven high courts have declared the ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional, with the Tokyo High Court qualifying it as “groundless legal discrimination” in October 2024.<sup>77</sup> Since October 2023, courts have been paving the way for legal recognition of gender identity, with the Supreme Court of Japan and the Hiroshima High Court each ruling against invasive requirements for legal gender marker change as unconstitutional.<sup>78</sup>

Public opinion toward LGBTIQ people in Japan has grown more positive, but is still mixed. According to a 2023 Ipsos survey, 68 percent of respondents in Japan support same-sex marriage, the highest in Asia.<sup>79</sup> 65 percent of Japanese adults surveyed in 2024 agree that trans people should be legally protected from discrimination, which is lower than the average score of 72 percent among the 26 surveyed countries in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.<sup>80</sup> The same 2024 survey ranks Japan among the lowest of 26 countries in terms of LGBTIQ visibility, with 70 percent of respondents claiming they do not have a relative, friend, or colleague who is lesbian or gay, a score significantly higher than the 42 percent average among the 26 European, Asian and American countries.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Kanae Doi and Minky Worden, “Japan Passes Law to ‘Promote Understanding’ of LGBT People,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 12, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/12/japan-passes-law-promote-understanding-lgbt-people>. The law states that “all citizens, irrespective of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, are to be respected as individuals with inherent and inviolable fundamental human rights.”

<sup>77</sup> Michelle Yesudas and Neela Ghoshal, “Rights in Retrograde? Borderless Tyranny Requires Queer Global Resistance,” *Outright International*, December 13, 2024, <https://outrightinternational.org/insights/rights-retrograde-borderless-tyranny-requires-queer-global-resistance>.

<sup>78</sup> Karin Kaneko, “Japan high court backs gender status change without surgery,” *The Japan Times*, July 10, 2024, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/07/10/japan/crime-legal/gender-change-ruling>; Maru Yamaguchi, “Japan’s top court strikes down required sterilization surgery to officially change gender,” *Associated Press News*, October 25, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/japan-lgbtq-transgender-ruling-gender-change-decddbdc9c8dd3658ae86b63ec40c53d>.

<sup>79</sup> Sneha Gubbala, Jacob Poushter and Christine Huang, “How people around the world view same-sex marriage,” *Pew Research Center*, November 27, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/27/how-people-around-the-world-view-same-sex-marriage>.

<sup>80</sup> Ipsos, *Ipsos LGBT+ Pride Report 2024: A 26-Country Ipsos Global Advisor Survey*, June 2024, <https://www.ipsos.com/en/ipsos-pride-survey-2024-gen-zers-most-likely-identify-lgbt>, 29.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

Violence against LGBTIQ people persists, and Human Rights Watch qualifies anti-LGBT bullying in Japan as an “epidemic.”<sup>82</sup> A national survey conducted in 2020 reveals high levels of sexual assault and sexual harassment targeting sexual and gender minorities.<sup>83</sup>

In the political sphere, anti-LGBTIQ rhetoric by conservative politicians linked to the religious right marked debates on the LGBT understanding bill.<sup>84</sup> In October 2024, the Conservative Party of Japan, a political party created to oppose the bill, won three seats in the House of Representatives.<sup>85</sup> A former prime minister fired one of his executive secretaries in early 2023 for saying he “wouldn’t even like to live next door” to LGBTIQ people.<sup>86</sup> At the same time, however, there is some progress. In the 2023 elections, Japan reelected its first openly gay legislator for a second term.<sup>87</sup>

In 2018, Tokyo became the first prefecture in the country to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>88</sup> Since November 2022, same-sex couples in the city have been able to obtain partnership certificates, which are not equivalent to marriage certificates but recognize rights in housing, medicine, welfare, and other areas.<sup>89</sup> While gaps in legal protection for LGBTIQ people persist in Tokyo, like in the rest of the country, the city is home to a vibrant LGBTIQ activist scene that continues to push for equality.

## Tokyo Pride: A 30-Year History

Since 1994, Pride has been celebrated every year in Tokyo, a city at the forefront of LGBTIQ-inclusive reform in the country. The 1994 event had about 1,100 people in attendance, and has since continued in diverse forms.<sup>90</sup> Between 1995 and 2011, Pride in Tokyo was organized by two now-defunct organizations, taking the form of a rainbow festival and a parade, among others,

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<sup>82</sup> Human Rights Watch, “*The Nail That Sticks Out Gets Hammered Down*” LGBT Bullying and Exclusion in Japanese Schools, May 5, 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/05/05/nail-sticks-out-gets-hammered-down/lgbt-bullying-and-exclusion-japanese-schools>, 19.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Civicus, “JAPAN: ‘Links between politics and the religious right have impeded progress on LGBTQI+ rights,’” August 15, 2022, <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/interviews/5961-japan-links-between-politics-and-the-religious-right-have-impeded-progress-on-lgbtqi-rights>.

<sup>85</sup> Makoto Fukatsu, “Will the Japanese Conservative Party ‘Destroy the LDP’? Opposition to the LGBT law has shaken the bedrock,” *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 28, 2024, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20241027/k00/00m/010/038000c>.

<sup>86</sup> Keiko Takahashi, “Japan PM to dismiss secretary for discriminatory remarks against sexual minorities,” *The Mainichi*, February 4, 2023, <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20230204/p2a/00m/0na/002000c>.

<sup>87</sup> Makoto Fukatsu, “日本保守党は「自民党をぶっ壊す」のか LGBT法反発で動いた岩盤,” *Mainichi Shimbun*, October 28, 2024, <https://mainichi.jp/articles/20241027/k00/00m/010/038000c>. In 2007 in Osaka, Japan, Kanako Otsuji became the first openly lesbian politician to run for office. See Justin McCurry, “Japan’s First Gay Politician to Stand in Elections,” *The Guardian*, May 24, 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/may/24/japan.justinmccurry>. She took office in 2013 after another member of the House of Councilors left his seat. She became the first openly lesbian and gay House of Representatives member in Japanese history. See Isabel Reynolds and Emi Nobuhiro, “Japan’s Only Openly Gay Lawmaker Says Same-Sex Marriage Will Take Years,” *Bloomberg*, December 8, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2017-12-08/japan-s-lone-gay-lawmaker-says-same-sex-marriage-will-take-years>. Taiga Ishikawa became the first openly gay man elected into Parliament. See Midnight Poonkasetwattana, “An Interview with Japanese LGBTIQ Hero, Taiga Ishikawa, First Openly Gay Man Elected to Japanese Parliament,” *APCOM Newsroom*, June 5, 2020, <https://www.apcom.org/an-interview-with-japanese-lgbtqi-hero-taiga-ishikawa-first-openly-gay-man-elected-to-japanese-parliament>.

<sup>88</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Tokyo: New Law Bars LGBT Discrimination,” October 5, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/05/tokyo-new-law-bars-lgbt-discrimination>.

<sup>89</sup> Flora Drury, “Tokyo Begins Issuing Same-Sex Couples Partnership Certificates,” *BBC News*, November 1, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63468752>.

<sup>90</sup> “Tokyo Rainbow Pride,” *Contest Japias*, accessed June 11, 2025, <https://contest.japias.jp/tqj2l/210033T/page167.html>.

in different years.<sup>91</sup> It also inspired similar events in other Japanese cities, such as Sapporo, where the earliest Pride march took place in 1996.<sup>92</sup> Presently, Pride is also held in Ishikawa, Osaka, Kansai, and Fukuoka.<sup>93</sup>

In 2011, the organization Tokyo Rainbow Pride (TRP) was formed, and it took over organizing Pride events in 2012.<sup>94</sup> The event has grown in size from 4,500 attendees in 2012 to 270,000 attendees over the course of a two-day event in 2024, with 15,000 people marching—a result of increased participation from LGBTIQ people and allies, increased visibility and social acceptance, and support from individual and institutional stakeholders, including politicians and corporate donors.<sup>95</sup> It registered as a nonprofit in 2015. Founder Shinya Yamagata retired in 2019, transferring leadership and control of the organization to others, including Fumino Sugiyama, a transgender man and rights activist.<sup>96</sup> Tokyo Rainbow Pride now operates under the leadership of co-chairs Yuko Sato, a nonbinary lesbian activist, and Natsumi Yamada, another lesbian activist.<sup>97</sup>

Around 2015, years of community work and movement building began to bear fruit as the public shifted toward greater recognition of LGBTQ issues, and social acceptance increased. This led to the beginning of sustainable funding streams for Tokyo Rainbow Pride, said Shinya Yamagata:

This was a time of drastic change. We started to get more funding, and we were able to pay staff. Social awareness about LGBTQ issues increased, and politicians started to walk and give speeches at Tokyo Rainbow Pride. Until then, nobody looked at the LGBTIQ movement as political, but since 2015, it has become a political issue. We started to see LGBTQ-identified politicians as well.<sup>98</sup>

**Right:** Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024, April 19–21, 2024. Credit: Tokyo Rainbow Pride.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> “Sapporo Rainbow Pride: A Celebration of Diversity and Inclusion,” *LGBT Blog*, September 13, 2024, <https://lgbtblog.exblog.jp/32789430>.

<sup>93</sup> “What is Rainbow Festa?,” Rainbow Festa, [https://rainbowfesta.org/?page\\_id=70](https://rainbowfesta.org/?page_id=70); “Pride 2024 – Osaka Gets Decked in Rainbow!,” *Visit Gay Osaka*, <https://visitgayosaka.com/column/columns/pride-2024.html>; “Kyushu Rainbow Pride 2024,” *Fukuoka Now*, <https://www.fukuoka-now.com/en/event/kyushu-rainbow-pride-2024/>; IGLTA 2024, “Pride Events Nationwide,” *Visit Gay Osaka*, <https://visitgayosaka.com/igltaglobalconvention/pride/>; “Kanazawa University Pride Parade Team Members Wanted!,” *Institute for Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion, Kanazawa University*, <https://ipdi.w3.kanazawa-u.ac.jp/en/183>. Hana N., a lesbian cisgender activist has also attended Pride events in Tokyo, Sapporo and other cities. Outright interview with Hana N. (pseudonym), virtual, April 2025.

<sup>94</sup> Outright interview with Shinya Yamagata, virtual, May 2025. This interview was conducted in Japanese and English with interpretation by Yuko Sato, Co-Chair, Board of Directors, Tokyo Rainbow Pride.

<sup>95</sup> Outright interview with Yuko Sato (she/they), Co-Chair, Board of Directors, Tokyo Rainbow Pride, virtual, May 2025; Tokyo Rainbow Pride, “History,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://tokyorainbowpride.org/profile/history>.

<sup>96</sup> Yamagata interview; “Postcards from Japan – Celebrating Pride with Fumino Sugiyama // Tokyo Rainbow Pride,” *Japan Travel*, June 8, 2023, <https://www.japan.travel/en/uk/inspiration/postcards-fumino-sugiyama-tokyo-rainbow-pride>. Sugiyama’s leadership of the group has also ended with Yuko Sato replacing him.

<sup>97</sup> Tokyo Rainbow Pride, “Message from the CEO,” <https://tokyorainbowpride.org/about>.

<sup>98</sup> Yamagata interview.







Hana N. (pseudonym), an LGBTIQ activist, told Outright that support has increased for Pride and LGBTIQ visibility events:

In the beginning, the attendees of Pride were LGBTQ people themselves, but now, a lot of allies also attend, and we have a lot of support from the general public. Japanese people are supportive of Pride, the goal of same-sex marriage, and laws like an Equality and Nondiscrimination Act that includes LGBTIQ identities.<sup>108</sup>

She sees Tokyo Rainbow Pride as an avenue for her to provide allies and members of the public with information on the efforts toward advancing legal protections for LGBTIQ people in Japan:

I have a responsibility to help sensitize people, and at the same time, I attend Pride events to meet other activists and expand my network so that we can collaborate better. And I attend to enjoy myself, of course!<sup>109</sup>

### Funding and Personnel Constraints

As co-chair of Tokyo Rainbow Pride since 2011, one of Shinya Yamagata's main challenges was retaining activists:

A lot of people would leave after working for one year due to burnouts and because everybody does this work outside of their main jobs, and some are students. The hardest part was keeping people, and I always wanted to make sure that there is space for younger activists to grow and prosper in the organization, so we can pass the baton to the next generation. But as people kept leaving, that was the hardest part.<sup>110</sup>

In addition, there was a period of discontinuity in the organization of Pride in Tokyo. The organization that organized the first Pride of 1994 disbanded after about three years; another took over and also disbanded. It was a challenge to create a sustainable organization, retain activists, and get sufficient funding.<sup>111</sup> When Shinya Yamagata began working on organizing Pride with other activists in 2002, "it was hard to get funding. We didn't have any sustained or corporate support, and funds were raised from LGBTIQ people, including gay magazines and gay bars. We were all working on a volunteer basis, working out of our pockets and contributing our time."<sup>112</sup>

Shinya Yamagata said he had more flexibility in the early years of Tokyo Rainbow Pride than other collaborating activists, given his career as a freelance editor and writer, yet the exponential burdens of building the organization led him to neglect crucial aspects of his personal life and relationships. As he stated, "Every year I would say 'this is going to be my last year. But after the parade, I would hear a lot of feedback thanking me for contributing and ensuring this happens, and so I ended up being a part of this for 20 years.'<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Outright interview with Hana N. (pseudonym), virtual, April 2025; Human Rights Watch, "Q&A: Why the Equality Act Matters," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/EqualityActJapan>.

<sup>109</sup> Hana N. interview.

<sup>110</sup> Yamagata interview.

<sup>111</sup> Yamagata interview; Tokyo Rainbow Pride, "Contest Japias," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://contest.japias.jp/tqj21/210033T/page167.html>.

<sup>112</sup> Yamagata interview.

<sup>113</sup> Yamagata interview.

Funding streams from organized private donors began to trickle in throughout the 2010s, and since then, “the number of participants and the budget have drastically changed. We have had a lot of media coverage, and the number of attendees has increased, not only from the community, but also allies.”<sup>114</sup>

Presently, “the corporate sponsorship for Tokyo Pride has expanded. Companies are willing to pay to attend Pride and be present for those in the community...We currently have about 350 sponsors.”<sup>115</sup>

Still, activists working with Tokyo Rainbow Pride all have full-time jobs, which makes organizing challenging. Yuko Sato said:

All of us are working long hours, and we have meetings at night. It’s exhausting, but we’re just trying to hang in there and make the movement-building happen. We need the jobs for financial and mental stability. We are trying to balance two full-time jobs at the same time, and it is challenging.<sup>116</sup>

Nonetheless, working on these causes provides activists like Yuko Sato with a zest for life and has provided them with a sense of belonging:

It makes me feel like all the challenges I went through are becoming useful, and I can use my experiences to help others going through similar issues. I’m very happy to be able to utilize my challenges in a positive way. It’s very reassuring to be able to do this, and I really appreciate my team at Tokyo Rainbow Pride for supporting me. I’m grateful for this.<sup>117</sup>

Shinya Yamagata shared that, having made such personal, financial, and lifetime contributions to Pride in Japan:

[My] youth and personal life has been dedicated to this movement. I cannot talk about my life without talking about TRP. I have grown so much, learned so much, met so many people, and had such rich experiences I would not be able to do elsewhere. When you’re a cis gay man [of my generation], most people around you are cis gay men. But with this organization, running Pride, you get to meet everyone in the LGBTIQ community working together to achieve our collective goal, and that has been life-changing.<sup>118</sup>

**Right:** Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024, April 19–21, 2024.  
Credit: Tokyo Rainbow Pride.

<sup>114</sup> Yamagata interview.

<sup>115</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>116</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>117</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>118</sup> Yamagata interview.



## Achievements and the Way Forward

Hana N. told Outright that she feels one of the major objectives of TRP is to provide “LGBTIQ people with an awareness of the existence of other LGBTIQ people, and to let more and more people [of the society] know about LGBTIQ people and what kind of issues affect us.”

She added:

Thirty years ago, people did not know we existed in Japan. But not now. Now, they do. And more Japanese people pay attention to our issues, because of Tokyo Rainbow Pride.”<sup>119</sup>

Yuko Sato concurred:

People outside the community are now aware that LGBTIQ people exist. Before, the term people knew was ‘LGBT,’ and the public regarded us like sexual deviants. This has changed within the last ten years...The spread of awareness and knowledge about what LGBTIQ is and the discussions about gender identity would not be moving so fast if Pride wasn’t as successful as it is.<sup>120</sup>

As Yuko Sato told Outright, Tokyo Rainbow Pride aims to “create a society where everybody can live as they are happily and proud. Those who are LGBTIQ or those with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity and sex characteristics can be happy, proud, and free.”<sup>121</sup>

In addition, Pride has helped to establish discourse about legalizing same-sex marriage, legal gender recognition, and non-discrimination protections in the socio-political space.<sup>122</sup> Shinya Yamagata said:

Now that we have about 90 percent of the Japanese population realizing that LGBTIQ people exist, our goal of raising awareness about LGBTIQ people has been achieved. The next goal that the Tokyo Rainbow Pride community hopes to achieve is to ensure that there is a legal system and structure where we have same-sex marriage rights, better legal protections for transgender people, especially in terms of legal gender recognition, and the comprehensive legal protection of LGBTIQ people. Those are the most important contributions TRP needs to make and is trying to achieve.

I am a plaintiff for one of the same-sex marriage lawsuits, and these days, we see a lot more commitment to advocacy for an inclusive movement and same-sex marriage rights. It’s been a lot of social change that started from nobody caring about the LGBTIQ community, moving from a neglected and invisible community to the point where we are impacting legal and political challenges. I really believe that Tokyo Rainbow Pride has contributed to these achievements.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Hana N. interview.

<sup>120</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>121</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>122</sup> Yamagata interview; Amnesty International, “Japan: Groundbreaking Same-Sex Marriage Rulings a Long-Awaited Victory for LGBTI Rights,” March 14, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/japan-groundbreaking-same-sex-marriage-rulings-a-long-awaited-victory-for-lgbti-rights>.

<sup>123</sup> Yamagata interview. Opinion polls in 2021 and 2023 show that at least 70 per cent of people in Japan support the legalization of same-sex marriage. See Anthony Tran Nguyen, “Politics, Religion, and Love: Unravelling Japan’s Stance on Same-Sex Marriage,” *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, February 6, 2024, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/politics-religion-and-love-unraveling-japans-stance-on-same-sex-marriage>.



Hana N. explained that even though there has been some progress, “conservative voices in government are very strong, which is why we don’t yet have an LGBTIQ-inclusive anti-discrimination law. Opposition voices are in support, but religious and conservative politicians in power are the loudest.”<sup>124</sup> Still, marriage equality appears to be an achievable goal, with

numerous lower court wins and a likely Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of same-sex marriage in the next two years.<sup>125</sup> The lower court rulings show that “we are already winning,” Hana N. stated.<sup>126</sup>

As Sato told Outright, the push toward legal advancements is happening because “society recognizes that we exist” as a result of Tokyo Rainbow Pride’s awareness-raising.<sup>127</sup> They added:

The lawsuit pushing for bathrooms usage for transgender people also would have not progressed to court if not for this progress with awareness-raising from Pride. Similarly, the advocacy work for workplace inclusion and accessibility would not have been possible. There’s a long way to go in Japan, but I see a lot of forward movement in this past decade, and I definitely attribute that to Pride.<sup>128</sup>

While continuing to seek to influence policy, Tokyo Rainbow Pride also has internal goals. Until 2024, Tokyo Rainbow Pride invested all its resources in implementing one huge event a year, but this year, it is expanding to hold multiple events.<sup>129</sup> In 2025, the event will be called Tokyo Pride and shifted from April to June under the theme, “Same Life, Same Rights.”<sup>130</sup> The 2025 Pride event will include four new events—a human rights conference, an arts exhibition, a youth-focused event, and a night of music and performance.<sup>131</sup>

Tokyo Rainbow Pride aims to be more “conscious about being inclusive and addressing multiple layers of oppression and identities in our work.”<sup>132</sup> Hana N. pointed out a need for more visible intersex inclusion in Pride events. Yuko Sato also sees room for collaboration with other social justice movements, especially the feminist movement, with the overlap of same-sex marriage advocacy and the fight for women to not change their last names after marriage as the law mandates that married couples use the same surnames and

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<sup>124</sup> Hana N. interview.

<sup>125</sup> Sato interview; Hana N. interview.

<sup>126</sup> Hana N. interview. Seven high courts have now ruled against the marriage ban. See Michelle Yesudas and Neela Ghoshal, “Rights in Retrograde? Borderless Tyranny Requires Queer Global Resistance,” *Outright International*, December 13, 2024, <https://outrightinternational.org/insights/rights-retrograde-borderless-tyranny-requires-queer-global-resistance>; Nobuhisa Ishizuka, “Judicial Action Nudging Japan Towards Marriage Equality,” *East Asia Forum*, December 11, 2024, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/12/11/judicial-action-nudging-japan-towards-marriage-equality>; Kyoka Watanabe and Toshinari Takahashi, “4<sup>th</sup> High Court Rules Same-Sex Marriage Ban Unconstitutional,” *The Asahi Shimbun*, March 7, 2025, <https://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/15659265>; Jiji Press, “Another Japan Court Finds Same-Sex Marriage Denial Unconstitutional,” *The Japan Times*, March 25, 2025, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2025/03/25/japan/crime-legal/japan-same-sex-marriage-ruling>.

<sup>127</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>128</sup> Sato interview; Emiko Jozuka and Jessie Yeung, “Japan’s Top Court Rules Against Bathroom Restriction for Transgender Government Employee,” *CNN World*, July 11, 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/07/11/asia/japan-transgender-bathroom-ruling-intl-hnk>.

<sup>129</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>130</sup> Tokyo Rainbow Pride, “Tokyo Rainbow Pride Rebrands Annual LGBTQ+ Event as ‘Tokyo Pride’ 2025 as it Moves to June 2025 to Celebrate Global Pride Month,” November 28, 2024, <https://tokyorainbowpride.org/news/20241128/3590>.

<sup>131</sup> Tokyo Pride 2025, “What is Tokyo Pride?,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://pride.tokyo/about>.

<sup>132</sup> Sato interview.

cisheteropatriarchal norms stipulate that women change their names.<sup>133</sup> However, noting that “women are more involved in activism in Japan,” she also hopes to “see more cis gay men involved in our movement.”

Tokyo Rainbow Pride has also established an advocacy policy that prioritizes principles on respecting human rights, opposition to violence, equality for all, environmental sustainability, and the elimination of discrimination, which sponsors should comply with.<sup>134</sup>

Tokyo Rainbow Pride has lofty goals in terms of expansion:

We want to be a hub for LGBTIQ people in Japan, connecting with more rural areas and connecting Tokyo Pride to international events. We want more visibility for Pride in Japan and Pride in the APAC region. Our goal is to be better at acting as a hub, and not just one event a year. We also want to create a community center that is diverse and intersectional, including space for LGBTIQ elders, and a hub where people can dialogue and strategize for the future.”<sup>135</sup>

Tokyo Rainbow Pride also hopes to become more visible internationally, “to be a part of the global impact and network. We need to stand up and make our presence known internationally...especially with developments like the Trump administration.”<sup>136</sup>

**Right:** Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024, April 19–21, 2024.  
Credit: Tokyo Rainbow Pride.

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<sup>133</sup> Sato interview; Justin McCurry, “‘Ruining My Career’: Calls Grow for Japan to Change Law on Married Surnames,” *The Guardian*, February 20, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/20/japan-married-surname-law-change>.

<sup>134</sup> Sato interview; Tokyo Rainbow Pride, “Request for Sponsorship of Tokyo Pride 2025,” November 28, 2024, <https://tokyorainbowpride.org/news/20241128/3480/>.

<sup>135</sup> Sato interview.

<sup>136</sup> Yamagata interview.



## V. Case Study. Repoliticizing the Streets through Trans-Specific Marches in Brazil

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Over the past quarter-century, São Paulo Pride has come to epitomize the grand festival model—an annual street party of over four million participants, glittering floats, and multinational corporate sponsorships that have transformed it into a global tourist spectacle. Yet, beneath the rainbow banners and record-breaking turnouts, a new wave of trans-specific mobilizations is quietly redrawing the map of Brazilian Pride. Spearheaded by organizations like ANTRA (National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals) and IBRAT (Brazilian Institute of Transmasculinities), these grassroots marches in Brazilian cities such as São Paulo and Brasília are attracting thousands of attendees and capturing political attention nationally and internationally.

These trans-specific marches mark a boundary where Pride becomes less consumption and celebration-oriented, and more a forum for claims on public policy, social justice, and bodily autonomy. By decorporatizing the spectacle and repoliticizing the streets, these organizers are not only broadening the definition of Pride in Brazil but also charting new pathways for global queer movements to follow.

### São Paulo Pride: A Record Setter

São Paulo's 28th annual Pride march took place on June 2, 2024, on Paulista Avenue in Brazil. It was led, created, and organized by the São Paulo LGBT Pride Parade Association (APOLGBT-SP), a federal coalition of Prides that represents 340 Pride marches around the country. It counted 50 artistic attractions, 16 *trios* (floats), and 20 corporate partners.<sup>137</sup> Its first edition was held in 1997 with 2,000 participants, and it achieved an attendance of 2,500,000 people in 2006, being awarded a Guinness World Record for the biggest Pride march in the world.<sup>138</sup>

Under the motto of calling for conscious voting in the municipal elections, 2024's Pride march gathered more than 70,000 people, according to independent observer counts.<sup>139</sup> Sponsored by several giant corporations, the São Paulo event moves more than 400 million Brazilian Reais (BRL) [US\$70 million], according to the Tourism Municipal Secretary.<sup>140</sup> São Paulo Pride also brings in 90 million BRL [US\$17 million] in taxes for the city, and one of the current objectives of APOLGBT-SP is to direct these resources back to local LGBTIQ communities in the form of welcoming centers and shelters, for example.

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<sup>137</sup> Outright International interview with Diego Oliveira, Director of Culture of the São Paulo LGBT Pride Parade Association (APOLGBT-SP), virtual, May 2, 2025.

<sup>138</sup> APOLGBT-SP, "Sobre a Parada SP," accessed May 22, 2025, <https://paradasp.org.br/sobre-a-parada-sp>.

<sup>139</sup> Alexandre Isaac Siqueira, "Estimativa de Público na Parada do Orgulho LGBT (São Paulo) 02/06/24," *Monitor do Debate Público no Meio Digital*, June 2, 2024, <https://www.monitordigital.org/2024/06/02/estimativa-de-publico-na-parada-do-orgulho-lgbt-sao-paulo-02-06-24>.

<sup>140</sup> Cidade de São Paulo, "Parada LGBT movimentou R\$ 403 milhões na cidade de São Paulo - Prefeitura de São Paulo - Prefeitura," accessed May 22, 2025, <https://capital.sp.gov.br/w/noticia/parada-lgbt-movimentou-r-403-milhoes-na-cidade-de-sao-paulo>.

Official data from the São Paulo City Hall and São Paulo Turismo (SPTuris), the official tourism and events company of the city, translates the 28th edition in numbers.<sup>141</sup> Based on 1,207 interviews conducted on June 2, 2024, their report provides a useful profile of who attends Pride in São Paulo.<sup>142</sup>

- 73 percent of the respondents live in the city of São Paulo
- 0.5 percent of the respondents live in the USA, Germany, and New Zealand
- 49.1 percent of the respondents identify as male
- 47.6 percent of the respondents identify as female
- 3.3 percent of the respondents identify as “other gender”
- 35.1 percent of the respondents identify as gay
- 23.7 percent of the respondents identify as bisexual
- 18.6 percent of the respondents identify as heterosexual
- 18.2 percent of the respondents identify as lesbian
- 4 percent of the respondents identify as pansexual
- 42.6 percent of the respondents identify as cisgender men
- 40 percent of the respondents identify as cisgender women
- 7.8 percent of the respondents identify as travesti or transgender women;
- 5.9 percent of the respondents identify as nonbinary
- 3.7 percent of the respondents identify as trans men

Besides that, 50.4 percent used the metro to reach Paulista Avenue, 27.5 percent took the bus, and 15.3 percent owned a car or came by taxi.<sup>143</sup> The average spend at the event was 155.76 Brazilian Reais [US\$27] per person.<sup>144</sup> Finally, satisfaction was very high, and 96.2 percent of the interviewees intend to return in 2025.<sup>145</sup>

Pride events have previously been effective in placing key equity issues on the national agenda. In 2016, according to Diego Oliveira of APOLGBT-SP, organizers highlighted gender identity issues. In the following months, high-level policy discussions regarding the right to use a “social name” and change one’s legal gender marker in all spheres were implemented. Oliveira sees this as evidence that the seeds planted at São Paulo Pride reverberate in the country, “making people think differently and opening their minds.”<sup>146</sup>

In 2024, the topic was “Enough of Legislative Setbacks in LGBT+ Rights,” in response to a series of proposals from a group of elected representatives in Congress that sought to attack marriage equality and access to restrooms by *travestis* and trans women. For Oliveira, despite new threats of hostile legislation, Pride comes with cause for celebration:

As a Brazilian, cisgender, gay, and Black man, I feel proud of living in Brazil, a country in which I have the freedom to go out, date, and hold hands with my partner, meet my LGBTIQ fellows openly, and even if something bad happens, I know that I will have legal protection.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> São Paulo Turismo Observatório de Turismo e Eventos, *Pesquisa de perfil e satisfação de público: Parada LGBT+ 2024*, July 2024, [https://www.estadao.com.br/blogs/vencer-limites/wp-content/uploads/sites/189/2024/07/pesquisaparada-lgbt-2024\\_260720241045.pdf?srltid=AfmBOorg09fNKy7dip7YIzWDKQmdJ0bpvCFfmt4XXIbGrNR3oKC5qtiP](https://www.estadao.com.br/blogs/vencer-limites/wp-content/uploads/sites/189/2024/07/pesquisaparada-lgbt-2024_260720241045.pdf?srltid=AfmBOorg09fNKy7dip7YIzWDKQmdJ0bpvCFfmt4XXIbGrNR3oKC5qtiP), 3–12.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 3–4.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>146</sup> Oliveira interview.

<sup>147</sup> Oliveira interview.



## The Emergence of Trans-Specific Marches: Decentering Pride, Recentering Politics

Although São Paulo Pride maintains and reinforces political demands, several Brazilian trans activists argue that mainstream Pride parades in Brazil have undergone a profound depoliticization, shifting away from their origins as marches for rights and survival toward spectacle and corporate branding. As entertainment-focused programming takes precedence, calls for policy change around health care, anti-violence measures, or legal recognition are increasingly sidelined or reduced to token gestures. Increasing commercialism not only dilutes the movement's radical edge, trans activists say, but also effectively excludes those who cannot afford branded merchandise or VIP experiences, creating a parade that celebrates visibility without insisting on accountability. In distancing itself from grassroots organizing and structural demands, the parade becomes an event of consumption rather than a collective claim on power, a transformation that movements like the Transmasculine March of São Paulo and Marsha Trans directly challenge.<sup>148</sup>

In parallel with São Paulo Pride, trans activists are organizing Pride events aimed at building autonomous spaces for collective affirmation, community care, policy demands, and mutual aid. These narratives reveal a shared strategy: the anti-commercialism and repoliticization of Pride Marches in Brazil. The trans-specific marches assert a politics of self-determination, demanding symbolic inclusion and structural changes in health care, employment, and anti-violence protections. They recenter questions of race, class, and disability, drawing on coalitions that extend far beyond the traditional Pride coalition.

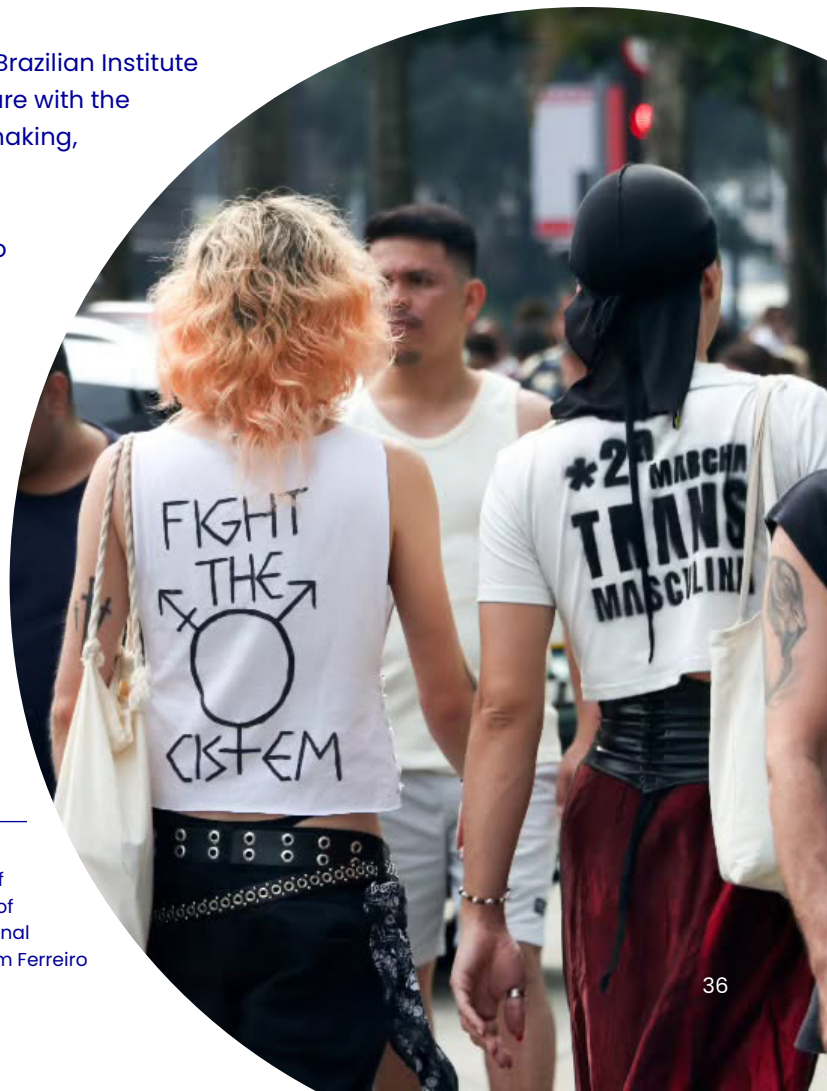
### Transmasculine March – IBRAT

The Transmasculine March of São Paulo, organized by the Brazilian Institute of Transmasculinities (IBRAT), represents a deliberate rupture with the mainstream Pride model, prioritizing horizontal decision-making, material support, and radical inclusion over extravaganzas or corporate sponsorship. Founded in 2013 as a Black-led, transmasculine initiative, IBRAT convened its first São Paulo march on March 3, 2024—with a follow-up on March 30, 2025—not as a festival but as a collective assertion of transmasculine political agency in an electoral year.

The 2024 Transmasculine March was titled “*Traviarcas* and *Traviarcados*: Ancestrality of Brazil’s Trans Population,” centering the event on intergenerational wisdom that has long sustained trans communities in Brazil. By invoking the *traviarcas*, which are the matriarchal figures who guided early *travestis* and trans persons and their *traviarcados*, the broader kin

**Right:** Transmasculine March in São Paulo, Brazil, March 3, 2024.  
Credit: Camila Tigre (@camilatigre).

<sup>148</sup> Outright interviews with Fabian Algarte, IBRAT’s National Coordinator; Kyem Ferreira, Coordinator of the IBRAT São Paulo Branch and Co-Creator of the Transmasculine March; and Enzo Gomes, Deputy-National Coordinator of IBRAT, virtual, April 29, 2025, and with Bruna Benevides, President of the National Association of Travestis and Transsexuals (ANTRA), virtual, May 21, 2025. Kyem Ferreira is the co-creator of the Transmasculine March together with Ravi Spreizner.



networks that carried collective memory, the march honored those who survived and resisted long before Pride was a popular reality.

From the start, said organizers Kyem Ferrero and Fabian Algarte in an interview with Outright, the march was built “organically,” through popular assemblies rather than top-down directives.<sup>149</sup> In 2024, the organizers expected only 300 participants, but 10,000 people showed up on the day, far exceeding expectations. Seventy volunteers and entirely crowdfunded logistics supported this turnout. Volunteers and residents of João Nery Shelter, a shelter for trans men in situations of homelessness or vulnerability, received food, water, and transport to ensure nobody marched on an empty stomach or without means to return home.

Unlike São Paulo Pride, the transmasculine march had no VIP zone, paid sponsorship, or commercialization. Eleven distinct volunteer commissions, from Security and Legal to Communication and Culture, coordinated every detail of the organization. Water was freely distributed so that participants would not be forced to buy it on site. This refusal to create “haves” and “have-nots” on the street was a direct response to past experiences of exclusion at some LGBTIQ events, where VIP attendees enjoyed refreshments, drinks, and food on elevated stages and floats while activists on the ground went thirsty and hungry.

According to the IBRAT team, intersectionality was woven into every layer of planning. Organizers confronted both systemic racism and LGBTIQ-skepticism head-on, forging alliances with the Black Movement and the Landless Workers’ Movement as key backers. That alliance broadened support and underscored the march’s commitment to centering race, class, and territorial justice within transmasculine struggles. Neurodivergent marchers received ear protectors to avoid suffering from the noise and loud music.

The 2025 transmasculine march grew more ambitious, with 150 volunteers, a second cohort of shelter residents supported, a dedicated bloc for people with reduced mobility, and an estimated turnout of 7,000 participants. IBRAT leaders now envision an international federation of transmasculine marches in Latin America, from Colombia to Argentina, where they are in touch with activists organizing similar initiatives. Their goal is to organize a synchronized march in several countries for the world to stop ignoring transmasculine demands of legal gender recognition, affirming health care, and the end of transphobic systems.

By deliberately eschewing top-down structures, IBRAT and transmasculine people in São Paulo and beyond are taking ownership of their own political spaces, organizing locally to affirm their identities and build enduring networks of solidarity. In doing so, they strengthen ties within their immediate territories and model a decentralized form of activism that amplifies transmasculine voices everywhere.

**Right:** National “Marsha” March for Trans Visibility, Brazil, January 2024.  
Credit: Samuel Malta (@filmesdosami).

<sup>149</sup> Algarte, Ferreiro, and Gomes interview.



## Marsha Trans – ANTRA

Marsha Trans emerged in 2023 as a bold, unapologetically political alternative to Brazil's increasingly corporatized Pride parades. Conceived by ANTRA as an act of denunciation and rights-claiming by and for trans people, Marsha Trans intentionally evades the "pink money" logic and festival atmosphere that have come to dominate mainstream Pride. Its name—spelled "Marsha" with an "s" pronounced the same in Portuguese as the word "marcha" ("march")—pays homage to Marsha P. Johnson, invoking Johnson's identity as a Black trans woman, sex worker, and person living with HIV, and recalling her leading role in the Stonewall riot against both police violence and capitalist exclusion.<sup>150</sup>

The inaugural Marsha Trans took place in 2023 in the wake of a coup attempt by supporters of former president Jair Bolsonaro that culminated in the invasion of Brazilian governmental, legislative, and judicial buildings and headquarters in Brasília on January 8. Three weeks later, on January 28, under the rallying cry, "President Lula, look after us," Marsha Trans participants gathered in the federal capital to demand concrete policy changes. Among their demands were inclusion and respect within the public health system, public policies to combat anti-trans violence, and state funding for transgender civil society. All logistics, from grassroots mobilization to the publication of ANTRA's annual comprehensive report on anti-trans violence and transphobic murders—now an international reference—were sustained by crowdfunding, along with political and intellectual capital contributed by ANTRA, IBRAT, and over 30 allied institutions.<sup>151</sup>

In 2024, Marsha Trans expanded to encompass at least fifteen local marches throughout Brazil and a national event embedded within the Transgender Visibility Week celebration in Brasília, financed through a 350,000 Brazilian Reais [US\$62,000] parliamentary appropriation, and free of private or corporate backing. This funding model underscores ANTRA's conviction that popular movements deserve—and must demand—public financing to guarantee freedom of expression. Each Marsha centers unflinching calls for "life, rights, and a future" for trans and travesti communities, explicitly reframing Pride not as a spectacle but as a site of political confrontation. As Bruna Benevides, ANTRA's president, told Outright, "The trans movement is a counter-hegemonic struggle within a counter-hegemonic LGBTQ+ movement."<sup>152</sup> Marsha Trans thus stands as both a critique and renewal of queer mobilization in Brazil by repoliticizing the streets and insisting that true liberation cannot coexist with neoliberal complacency.

For Benevides, author of the yearly groundbreaking report on transphobic violence in Brazil, the travesti and transgender community longs for a better life in Brazil, and the Marsha Trans is part of "dreaming about a future in which they can be free, have their existences celebrated and are allowed to exist as a person integrally."<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Morgan Artyukhina, "'Our armies are rising': Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson," *Liberation School*, October 13, 2020, <https://www.liberationschool.org/our-armies-are-rising-sylvia-rivera-and-marsha-p-johnson>.

<sup>151</sup> Bruna Benevides and ANTRA, *Dossiê de Assassinatos e Violências contra Travestis e Transsexuais Brasileiras em 2024*, January 2025, <https://antrabrasil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/dossie-antra-2025.pdf>

<sup>152</sup> Outright interview with Bruna Benevides, virtual, May 21, 2025.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

## VI. Case Study. Proud to Exist: Pride, Safety, and Community in Côte d'Ivoire

While Outright tracks public, visible Pride events around the world as one indicator of the state of our movements, we recognize that visibility is not safe, constructive, or desirable for all LGBTIQ people or in all contexts. In Côte d'Ivoire, crucial activism is taking place—and it is best served, at the moment, by non-public Pride events.

### Legal and Social Context

In Côte d'Ivoire, same-sex acts are not criminalized, but there are no legal protections for sexual and gender minorities.<sup>154</sup> The 1981 Penal Code criminalized “public indecency consisting of indecent or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex” until 2019, when an overhaul of the Penal Code resulted in the removal of the mention of same-sex acts.<sup>155</sup>

At times, Côte d'Ivoire's LGBTIQ movement has enjoyed some periods of relative safety and tentative efforts at visibility in comparison to many of its neighbors. But in the past year, there have been spates of attacks against queer and trans people, spurred by anti-LGBTQ rhetoric online.<sup>156</sup> Offline, football/soccer fans displayed homophobic messages in signs during an international game between Côte d'Ivoire and Zambia in 2024, an indication of the virality of social rejection of LGBTIQ people and issues in recent times.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Jean Sovon, “Ivory Coast: LGBTQ+ Community is Legally but Not Socially Accepted,” *Global Voices*, September 9, 2024, <https://globalvoices.org/2024/09/09/cote-divoire-lgbtq-community-is-legally-but-not-socially-accepted>.

<sup>155</sup> ILGA World Database, “Côte d'Ivoire,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://database.ilga.org/cote-divoire-lgbti>; République de Côte d'Ivoire, Code Penal (Penal Code), Loi n°2019-574 du 26 juin 2019, <https://www.droit-afrique.com/uploads/RCI-Code-2019-penal.pdf>. Previously, there were “higher penalties for same-sex couples convicted of public acts of indecency.” See Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2017: Events of 2016, 2017*, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world\\_report\\_download/wr2017-web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/wr2017-web.pdf), 213; Robbie Corey-Boulet, “Ivory Coast Officials Refuse to Explain Why Two Gay Men were Jailed: Activists Say if Indecency Law was Applied it would be First Known Instance of it Being Used to Jail Gay People,” *The Guardian*, January 26, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/26/ivory-coast-officials-refuse-explain-gay-men-jailed-same-sex-relationships>.

<sup>156</sup> Emmanuel Djidja, “Côte d'Ivoire: le woubi, quand l'homosexualité fait ébats,” *Le 360 Afrique*, October 5, 2024, [http://afrique.le360.ma/societe/cote-divoire-le-woubi-quand-lhomosexualite-fait-ebats\\_BFGUMDAQLZEFREULGL7R4UCT3I](http://afrique.le360.ma/societe/cote-divoire-le-woubi-quand-lhomosexualite-fait-ebats_BFGUMDAQLZEFREULGL7R4UCT3I). “Woubi” is a term, “popularized in urban areas,” that refers to effeminate men or gay men. See “Côte d'Ivoire: des activistes s'inquiètent d'une vague d'agressions homophobes,” *Le 360 Afrique*, September 5, 2024, [https://afrique.le360.ma/societe/cote-divoire-des-activistes-sinquietent-dune-vague-dagressions-homophobes\\_STABHDLWNFELBJCYETI6UNUSDJ](https://afrique.le360.ma/societe/cote-divoire-des-activistes-sinquietent-dune-vague-dagressions-homophobes_STABHDLWNFELBJCYETI6UNUSDJ); Francesca Difeo, “‘Open Hunt for Gays and Trans’, The Social Hate Campaign Against the LGBTQIA+ Community Ivory Coast is Viral,” *Gay IT*, September 13, 2024, <https://www.gay.it/caccia-aperta-a-gay-e-trans-in-costa-davorio-e-virale-una-campagna-dodio-social-contro-la-comunita-lgbtqia>; Célia Cuordifede, “‘I Just Want to Leave’: In Ivory Coast, Gay Men Abandoned in the Face of Violence,” *Têtu*, November 28, 2024, <https://tetu.com/2024/11/28/afrique-homosexualite-reportage-cote-ivoire-vague-homophobie-anti-woubis>. “Ivory Coast, long considered one of West Africa's most tolerant societies, has recently seen a sting of assaults on L.G.B.T.Q. people after several social media influencers exhorted their followers to ‘hunt’ gay men.” See Elian Peltier, “Gay People Are Hunted Down and Beaten in a Country Once a Refuge,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/25/world/africa/ivory-coast-lgbtq.html>.

<sup>157</sup> Jon Holmes, “Soccer Fans Display Shocking Anti-Gay Banners During March, Coach Denounces Homophobia,” *Out Sports*, September 11, 2024, <https://www.outsports.com/2024/9/11/24101342/ivory-coast-soccer-football-national-team-fans-supporters-homophobic-banners-fifa>; Quentin Prechard, “‘Down with the Woubis!': In Ivory Coast, a Wave of Anti-LGBT Hared Online and in the Streets,” *Les Observateurs de France 24*, September 4, 2024, <https://observers.france24.com/fr/afrique/20240904-woubi-cote-d-ivoire-agressions-haine-lgbt-homosexualite-C3%A9-antiwoubisme-tiktok>.



As LGBTIQ people have become more visible, homophobia, queerphobia, lesbophobia, and transphobia have become even more rife, negatively impacting visibility, safety, and LGBTIQ human rights activism.<sup>158</sup> Disinformation about LGBTIQ issues is rife, perpetuated by politicians and state officials, among others.<sup>159</sup> Marie-Jo L., an activist with Initiative Tilé, an advocacy organization, said that social discourse in Côte d'Ivoire in 2024 was marked by anti-human rights propaganda, including calls for the criminalization of same-sex sexual acts and relationships. Consequently:

There have been issues of harassment, and many people who are attacked verbally, psychologically, or physically. Unfortunately, we also lost a trans sister who was murdered... The trans community is more marginalized, harassed, and stigmatized.<sup>160</sup>

Holding public Pride and LGBTIQ visibility events in this context is impossible and widely unsafe. However, as in dozens of the 92 other countries where Pride is not held publicly, activists have found ways to organize community activities that strengthen movements while prioritizing safety.

### **“Cared for and Counted”: Community, Safety, and Pride**

One of the groups that organizes Pride and IDAHOBIT events in Côte d'Ivoire is Initiative Tilé, an organization founded in 2021 with a focus on human rights, education, financial autonomy and socio-professional integration for lesbian, bisexual, and queer women and trans and intersex people.<sup>161</sup> Initiative Tilé's day-to-day work includes policy advocacy with government officials and the production of “Radio Tilé,” which promotes the right to information and creates awareness campaigns around topics like gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, disability justice, and intersex people's rights and existence.<sup>162</sup>

The organization's program and projects manager, Marie Jo L., told Outright that Pride events are “crucial.” For them, “even if we cannot do a Pride march or parade, we will gather in a space with people from our community to remind us together that we exist and that we are legitimate.”<sup>163</sup> Pride and LGBTIQ community events are held between March and June,

**Right:** Closed-door event for Pride 2024 celebrating LBQ women, Côte d'Ivoire. Credit: Initiative Tilé.

<sup>158</sup> Aude Konan, “The Right to be Different: Could Côte d'Ivoire One Day Become a Safe Haven for LGBTQI+ Communities in West Africa?,” *Africa is a Country*, June 2024, <https://africasacountry.com/2024/06/the-right-to-be-different>; Moïse Manoël-Floris, “Senegalese Refugee Says Ivory Coast is Not Safe for LGBTI+ People,” *Rights Africa*, March 13, 2023, <https://rightsafrika.com/2023/03/13/senegalese-refugee-says-ivory-coast-is-not-safe-for-lgbti-people>.

<sup>159</sup> Outright interview with Marie-Jo L., Program and Projects Manager, and Diane C., Executive Director of Initiative Tilé, virtual, April 30, 2025. The organization was founded in April 2021 to raise awareness on human rights and social justice issues for lesbian, bisexual, queer, intersex and trans women and people in Côte d'Ivoire. See also Initiative Tilé's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/p/Initiative-til%C3%A9-100074380863449/>.

<sup>160</sup> Marie-Jo L. interview.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Marie-Jo L. and Diane C. interview.

<sup>163</sup> Marie-Jo L. interview.



from Women's Month in March to IDAHOBIT on May 17 and Pride month in June.<sup>164</sup> Initiative Tilé's 2024 Pride event was a community celebration centering lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women, attended by "almost 70 people, growing from about twenty in the first year, 2023."<sup>165</sup> It also hosted the annual Queer Arts Festival, held in a private and safe location, with queer artists to promote fashion and diversity, and panel discussions on advocacy strategies for advancing LGBTIQ people's rights.

Marie-Jo L. told Outright that in planning these events:

We must consider different security elements to protect the people who will attend. We hire private security personnel for all events. The events are held privately to prevent people from feeling offended by seeing us. We do not share the location of the events in the media or on social networks, but we send notifications to registered attendees. We also arrange transportation to pick people up. We try to make our events an inclusive and safe space for everyone.<sup>166</sup>

Community members are deeply involved in co-creating these activities:

Individuals are already cared for and counted in the network we've set up. We take their contributions into account because we believe that the movement can't be built without them and that we can't carry out any action without them.<sup>167</sup>

While the events are not open to the public, Marie-Jo L. still sees them as a way "to give visibility to LGBTIQ women, who are not as visible as gay people, as gay people are more acknowledged in the country. It is a way to show that we actually exist."<sup>168</sup>

## Yes, We Exist

Since 2019, the organization Queer and Trans Inclusion (QET Inclusion) has held the "Night of Identities" on the International Day of Trans Visibility, March 31, with a network of trans individuals and organizations in the country. Cedric Soukou, a trans activist, told Outright:

We bring together about 200 people in a secure, closed room to share our experiences. We discuss issues of resilience for transgender people in Côte d'Ivoire, and then we present strategies and progress from different organizations because people who live in remote areas and participate in these events must be aware of our mandates.<sup>169</sup>

This trans-focused event, which also features a Miss Transgender Pageant and a Most Beautiful Dress award, centers self-acceptance, with "beautiful attire" encouraged:

We know how difficult it is to face society expressing one's real gender, especially as transgender people in Côte d'Ivoire. Dressing this way at the event helps people's

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Marie-Jo L. interview.

<sup>168</sup> Marie-Jo L. interview.

<sup>169</sup> Outright interview with Cedric Soukou, Queer et Trans Inclusion (Queer and Trans Inclusion) (QET), virtual, May 2025. Queer et Trans Inclusion (Queer and Trans Inclusion) (QET) was founded in 2015, led by transgender individuals, and works on human rights and health care issues for queer and trans folks, legal protection and advocacy, and initiatives for social inclusion.

confidence and allows them to be themselves. Even if they don't manage to express themselves or their gender identities over 364 days, this activity on the day of inclusion allows them to do so, get together with friends, and share their experiences.<sup>170</sup>

Cedric Soukou of QET shared that LGBTIQ people and activists are “in perpetual confrontation with the systems in Côte d'Ivoire.”<sup>171</sup> Still, when it comes to the Night of Identities, the group contacts friendly police officials to inform them ahead of the human rights-focused event—a way of ensuring security through the support of individual state agents, even when the events do not enjoy the formal support of the state.<sup>172</sup>

Activism, even when such precautions are taken, carries risks. With the rise in anti-LGBTIQ rhetoric in the country, QET began facing harassment on social media. “We have received lots of hate messages on social media platforms, including TikTok,” Soukou said.<sup>173</sup> In 2023, individuals tried to dox attendees of a QET event, identifying them through a picture posted on social media, to find their houses and places of work, “and one transgender person was killed in this period.”<sup>174</sup> Despite these risks, Soukou's determination to continue promoting human rights for queer and trans people in Côte d'Ivoire is marked by the need to demonstrate that, “Yes, we exist.”<sup>175</sup>

As Marie-Jo L. put it, through Pride, lesbian, bisexual, queer, trans, and intersex activists want to show that: “We are proud of who we are, and we are proud of what we accomplish daily. We are proud to be able to exist on the Ivorian territory. We are citizens like everyone else and must have the same rights. We want to demonstrate to the authorities that there is community and resilience.”<sup>176</sup>

**Right:** Closed-door event for Pride 2024 celebrating LBQ women, Côte d'Ivoire. Credit: Initiative Tilé.

<sup>170</sup> Soukou interview.

<sup>171</sup> Soukou interview.

<sup>172</sup> Soukou interview.

<sup>173</sup> Soukou interview.

<sup>174</sup> Soukou interview; Asmara was tortured and killed. See Trans Europe and Central Asia (TGEU), *Trans Murder Monitoring Global Update: Trans Day of Remembrance 2024*, November 2024, <https://tgeu.org/files/uploads/2024/11/TGEU-TMM-TDoR2024-Namelist-1.pdf>, 350. “Ivory Coast, long considered one of West Africa's most tolerant societies, has recently seen a string of assaults on L.G.B.T.Q. people after several social media influencers exhorted their followers to ‘hunt’ gay men.” See Elian Peltier, “Gay People Are Hunted Down and Beaten in a Country Once a Refuge,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/25/world/africa/ivory-coast-lgbtq.html>.

<sup>175</sup> Soukou interview.

<sup>176</sup> Marie-Jo L. interview.





## VII. Case Study. Prides in Canada: Diversity and Inclusion in Action

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In Canada, the first Pride protests were held simultaneously in the capital, Ottawa, and in Vancouver on August 28, 1971.<sup>177</sup> Since then, Pride has evolved to be celebrated and recognized in all ten provinces and three territories, with events ranging from parades to protests, festivals, and human rights workshops. In this section, we discuss three Pride events in Canada promoting inclusive spaces for underrepresented 2Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender intersex, and queer (2SLGBTIQ+) populations.

### Legal and Social Context

Canada has a long documented history of gender expansiveness. In Canada and other parts of North America with Indigenous cultures, “2Spirit” (2S) is an umbrella term, coined in 1990 by Myra Laramee, an Aboriginal awareness consultant and researcher on Indigenous knowledge and practices from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to describe those who embody both feminine and masculine spirits.<sup>178</sup> Since then, the term “has been used as a cultural term for Indigenous people who experience gender diversity, same-sex attraction, and sometimes hold diverse traditional, ceremonial, or community roles.”<sup>179</sup>

Canada has, in recent decades, positioned itself as an ally of LGBTIQ and 2Spirit communities domestically and abroad. It decriminalized same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults in 1969, and in 1996, lawmakers amended the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination.<sup>180</sup> Presently, discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression is also banned under the Act.<sup>181</sup> Same-sex marriage became legal across the country through the Civil Marriage Act of 2005.<sup>182</sup> Adoption by same-sex couples was achieved in piecemeal across the provinces—Alberta, for instance, achieved this in 2007.<sup>183</sup> Legal gender recognition is possible, but only based on the medicalization

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<sup>177</sup> Queer Events, “Queer History: History of Canadian Pride,” accessed June 11, 2025, <http://www.queerevents.ca/canada/pride/history>.

<sup>178</sup> The Enchanté Network (@enchantenetwork), “The History of the Term 2 Spirit,” Instagram, June 21, 2021, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CQYjNxCNUJ0/?igsh=d3Fjb3JyOWQweXNk>; The University of Winnipeg, “Myra Laramee,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/urban-inner-city-studies/faculty/myra-laramee.html>.

<sup>179</sup> The Enchanté Network, *ibid*.

<sup>180</sup> Government of Canada, “Rights of LGBTI Persons,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-lgbti-persons.html>.

<sup>181</sup> Canada, Canadian Human Rights Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. H-6, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/page-1.html#h-256800>, art. 2.

<sup>182</sup> Canada, Civil Marriage Act, S.C. 2005, c. 33, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-31.5/page-1.html>.

<sup>183</sup> “Gay Couples Leaps ‘Walls’ to Adopt Son,” *The Edmonton Journal*, February 19, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160303110241/http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/story.html?id=643c0d39-9ccb-43d8-a7f1-9a034e83b06e&k=27198>.



model in some provinces.<sup>184</sup> However, there are no laws protecting intersex children from nonconsensual and medically unnecessary surgeries (IGM), and a law banning female genital mutilation explicitly creates an exception for IGM.<sup>185</sup>

Although public acceptance of LGBTIQ people is high and there are multiple Pride events annually, LGBTIQ people still “face bullying, violence, and discrimination,” especially in housing, workplaces, and health care.<sup>186</sup> A disproportionate number of unhoused youth identify as LGBTIQ.<sup>187</sup> In addition, Black and queer people have documented discrimination disproportionately impacting their communities in Canada, especially in the workplace.<sup>188</sup>

Black and Indigenous Canadians have been faced with longstanding systemic inequalities and injustices due to historical, colonial, and anti-Black discrimination. Colonialists grabbed lands from Indigenous peoples, perpetuating genocides and leading to social and economic exclusion that now cause Indigenous people to disproportionately experience homelessness, lack of employment, and food insecurity, among other forms of racist inequalities.<sup>189</sup> Black people experienced enslavement, criminalization, immigration bans, exclusions in health care, education, and employment, and similar forms of racism.<sup>190</sup> State policing has also been used to oppress, unduly criminalize, racially target, and stigmatize Black and Indigenous peoples.<sup>191</sup>

As in many other countries that have taken steps to protect the rights of LGBTIQ people, Canada’s inclusive policies have been under attack from increasingly vocal, well-funded, and well-organized anti-gender forces. In Alberta, home of two of the organizing efforts of queer people of color discussed below, provincial leaders have proposed laws restricting the recognition of lived names and pronouns in schools, gender-affirming care for trans children aged 17 and under, and comprehensive sexuality education.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Government of Canada, “How to Access Gender-Affirming Care: Resources,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/sexual-health/how-to-access-gender-affirming-care/resources.html#provincial>.

<sup>185</sup> Hilary Ball, “The Push for Intersex Rights Recognitions in Canada,” McGill Journal of Law and Health (MJLH), February 28, 2022, <https://mjlh.mcgill.ca/2022/02/28/the-push-for-intersex-rights-recognitions-in-canada>.

<sup>186</sup> Outright International, “Country Overview: Canada,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://outrightinternational.org/our-work/americas/canada#:~:text=Under%20the%20Canadian%20Human%20Rights,unhoused%20youth%20identify%20as%20LGBTIQ>.

<sup>187</sup> Government of Canada, *Everyone Counts 2020–2022: Preliminary Highlights Report*, accessed June 9, 2025, <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/pit-counts-dp-2020-2022-highlights-eng.html>; Homeless Hub, “2SLGBTQ+,” accessed June 9, 2025, <https://homelesshub.ca/collection/population-groups/2slgbtq>.

<sup>188</sup> Jumol Royes, “Being Black and queer in Canada,” *Xtra\**, June 30, 2020, <https://xtramagazine.com/power/black-and-queer-in-canada-175340>; David Thurton, “Ottawa backs listing Black and LGBTQ workers under Canada’s workplace equity laws,” *CBC*, December 11, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/workplace-equity-black-lgbtq-1.7055067>.

<sup>189</sup> Kimberly Matheson et al., “Canada’s Colonial Genocide of Indigenous Peoples: A Review of the Psychosocial and Neurobiological Processes Linking Trauma and Intergenerational Outcomes,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 11 (2022): <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/11/6455>.

<sup>190</sup> Amnesty International, “Black and Indigenous Solidarity Against Systemic Racism,” July 20, 2020, <https://amnesty.ca/features/black-and-indigenous-solidarity-against-systemic-racism>.

<sup>191</sup> House of Commons, *Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada: Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security*, June 2021, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/432/SECU/Reports/RP11434998/securp06/securp06-e.pdf>.

<sup>192</sup> Cindy Tran, “Alberta Looks to Add Restrictions on Gender-Affirming Health Care for Youth, Use of Pronouns in Schools,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 31, 2024, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/alberta-ban-gender-surgery-puberty-blockers>; Canadian Bar Association, Alberta, “Response to Bills 26, 27 and 29,” December 3, 2024, <https://cba-alberta.org/our-impact/submissions/response-to-bills-26-27-and-29>; Avery Zingel, “Three N.W.T. Candidates Oppose Alberta’s Youth Gender-Affirming Care Ban – Banning Treatments for Youth Under 16 ‘Affects My Children Directly’: N.W.T. Parent,” *CBC News*, April 23, 2025, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nwt-ab-bill-26-1.7513502>.

Daphne Dike-Hart of Black Pride YYC, whose Pride events in Calgary are discussed below, told Outright:

We're in a province that hates some of our people. It's one of the worst times to be queer and trans. The trans community is under attack because of the conservative government, and so this year we've been doing a lot of advocacy work, protests, speaking, and writing letters to achieve policy change that protects trans people.<sup>193</sup>

Dike-Hart, who is from Nigeria, emphasized that the proposed bill's requirement that schools must obtain the consent of the parents of trans students to effect gender and name changes is particularly dangerous for kids from African and Caribbean families, given the background of religious and cultural conservatism:

How many Black immigrant kids who are trans can speak to their parents about these issues? A lot of these kids view schools as a safe space, and some parents in these communities can put kids in difficult positions.<sup>194</sup>

In one case, when a 37-year-old transgender man in Alberta died by suicide, his family reported that "the rise of anti-trans hate" and discourse following the proposed hostile legislation led to his death.<sup>195</sup>

### Black Pride YYC, Calgary, Alberta

Black Pride YYC is a Black queer-led organization based in Alberta, Canada founded in July 2023 by Daphne Dike-Hart (she/they) to support queer African, Black, and Caribbean communities through platforming their visibility and providing safe spaces, resources, and community events.<sup>196</sup> Arriving in 2021 from Nigeria as a newcomer in Canada with community organizing experience, Dike-Hart volunteered with various organizations in Calgary as a way to connect with queer folks but found this difficult:

One of the things that I found lacking was a space where Black people could feel welcome. It could be just having our food represented or our music represented. I would

**Right:** Black Pride YYC in Calgary Pride 2024, Alberta, Canada.  
Credit: Black Pride YYC.

<sup>193</sup> Dike-Hart interview; Black Pride YYC's founder was a witness speaking in a hearing on the anti-trans bills in Alberta. See Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "The lives of Black, young and 2SLGBTQ+ individuals are very much important, just like every other human being. They deserve the right to live their lives as they please, happy and freely!," Instagram, December 15, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DDnQMenoMUT/?igsh=b2c0NTdjc25vYWw>; Calgary Pride, "Calgary Pride Responds to Anti-Trans Policies Tabled in Alberta," November 1, 2024, <https://calgarypride.ca/calgary-pride-responds-to-anti-trans-policies-tabled-in-alberta>.

<sup>194</sup> Dike-Hart interview,

<sup>195</sup> "Alberta Doctor Says Province's New Policies Contributed to Suicide of Transgender Nephew," *CityNews*, February 27, 2024, <https://calgary.citynews.ca/2024/02/27/alberta-doctor-transgender-suicide>.

<sup>196</sup> Black Pride YYC, "Black Pride YYC's History," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.blackprideyyc.org/about>; Outright interview with Daphne Dike-Hart, founder of Black Pride YYC, virtual, April 2025. "YYC" refers to Calgary's international airport but is colloquially used to refer to Calgary.



go to events, and there would be almost no Black people present, not because there are no Black people in Calgary, but because they wouldn't go where they don't feel welcome.<sup>197</sup>

These gaps led Dike-Hart and their wife to start organizing social events for Black queer people in their home in 2023, until the number of attendees began to grow: "That's how Black Pride YYC was born. My wife and I put in all our resources to create this safe space as the first and only Black Pride YYC for everyone who is Black and queer, whether you're out or not."<sup>198</sup>

The organization prioritizes the safety of all attendees, many of whom are immigrants, at its events.<sup>199</sup> In addition, the organization works with many people who are unhoused and for whom it has had to pay rent. Dike-Hart told Outright:

It is tough creating security for people in this context, many of whom are not out because of family members or other people from home countries whom they know here. I hope we can create safe and secure housing for queer newcomers.<sup>200</sup>

However, as a young, Black and queer organization, resourcing the work is difficult. Much of the fundraising for community events is done within Dike-Hart's social circle because "fundraising is tough."<sup>201</sup> The organization is now a recipient of federal funding to counter racial discrimination against Black queer people in Calgary.<sup>202</sup> However, core operational funding is still non-existent: "We still do this out of pocket, and members also contribute often in fundraising. Some members also sign up for monthly donations, and these help a lot."<sup>203</sup>

As Dike-Hart explained, Black Pride YYC's purpose is to address the social exclusion of Black and queer communities, counter economic barriers through financial literacy and employment access training and promote access to health care, including mental health care.<sup>204</sup> Dike-Hart describes her Black Pride YYC community as a "family," with many partners and members contributing to ensure the launch and growth of the organization.<sup>205</sup>

The organization is strategic in adopting partnerships. It prioritizes ensuring that everyone the group works with is serious about Black queer inclusion, not seeking to collaborate for performative reasons. For instance, in 2024, Black Pride YYC collaborated with a South Asian organization, Rang de Pride, to host an event for Black and Brown queer people called the

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<sup>197</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>198</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>199</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>200</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>201</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>202</sup> Aryn Toombs, "Black Pride YYC to Receive Federal Funding to Combat Discrimination for Black LGBTQ2S+ Calgarians," *Live Wire Calgary*, October 17, 2024, <https://livewirecalgary.com/2024/10/17/black-pride-yyc-to-receive-federal-funding-to-combat-discrimination-for-black-lgbtq2s-calgarians/>.

<sup>203</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>204</sup> Dike-Hart interview. See Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "HIV Awareness Training," Instagram, June 27, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8uOF4uN6L8/?igsh=enJvN29nc2liaTNI>; Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "Yoga is for Everybody," Instagram, June 25, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8qCvdfClt/?igsh=MWJ0ZDEwbHZNMGZtNA==>; Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "Black Pride Party," Instagram, July 16, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C9f4p47tZo6/?igsh=MWlwd24lbWhqZDFneA==>; Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "Pride and Juneteenth – More than Rainbows, Parades & Parties," Instagram, June 14, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8NA0S0p8X6/?igsh=c2R2b3BiNDlia2pv>; Black Pride YYC (@blackprideyyc), "Our Charity Event for Black Queer Individuals," Instagram, February 26, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C302PAXLuNs/?igsh=cTBnMXRpazJ3a2Jo>.

<sup>205</sup> Dike-Hart interview.



“Melanin & Masala Party.”<sup>206</sup> Partnerships have also led to opportunities for Black Pride YYC, such as a sponsorship to participate in Calgary Pride in 2024 for the first time and obtain a truck for the float.<sup>207</sup> On participation in Calgary Pride, Dike-Hart shared while Black queer communities are understandably conflicted as to whether they should participate in events that involve the police, her organization opted for engagement:

There’s a lot of friction when it comes to parades and Pride because of the presence of the police, which I understand. So many people within the Black Pride community are immigrants from homophobic countries who had never experienced Pride before, and we walked the parade because we didn’t want to take away that experience from our members. We want to create spaces where people feel celebrated.<sup>208</sup>

Walking in the parade, one member of Black Pride told Dike-Hart that they felt so important that “the city shut down the busiest street to celebrate them and they never could have dreamt of having such a moment.”<sup>209</sup> Dike-Hart dressed in Igbo traditional attire for the occasion. “People were very excited to see us marching with our float. We gave out African beads, fans, and cowries – things that can create awareness of and bring people back to the Motherland.”<sup>210</sup>

Black Pride YYC hopes to spread across other Canadian cities and has taken steps toward this goal by incorporating an organization, “Black Pride Canada.”<sup>211</sup> As they told Outright, “I want us to grow to the point where we have a nationwide Black Pride Parade, where everyone in Canada attends, from the French cities and different provinces, like the UK Black Pride.”<sup>212</sup>

In the interim, the organization hopes to continue to advocate for and create spaces that authentically include Black 2SLGBTQI+ people across Canada.<sup>213</sup>

**Right:** Black Pride YYC in Calgary Pride 2024, Alberta, Canada.  
Credit: Black Pride YYC.

<sup>206</sup> Dike-Hart interview; Rang de Pride (@rangdepride), “Melanin & Masala Party,” Instagram, August 1, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-JYoHKSjTN/?igsh=MTBqd20zNGI3cGc5MQ==>.

<sup>207</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>208</sup> Dike-Hart interview; Black Pride YYC, “We are still buzzing from the joy and love we felt marching at Calgary Pride 2024!,” Instagram, September 7, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/reel/C\\_oHWDN6F/?igsh=MTFmZmVoa3h0ZTUwA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C_oHWDN6F/?igsh=MTFmZmVoa3h0ZTUwA==).

<sup>209</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>210</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>211</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>212</sup> Dike-Hart interview.

<sup>213</sup> Dike-Hart interview.





## Refugees and Newcomers Pride, Alberta, Canada

Adebayo Chris Katiiti, a Black queer and trans man, is the founder of RaricaNow, an organization for LGBTIQ refugees and newcomers in Alberta, Canada.<sup>214</sup> The organization's full name is "Rights for LGBTIQ Newcomers and Refugees in Canada Now, Reason of Hope."<sup>215</sup>

After being arrested by the police in Uganda in 2016, following the raid of a closed LGBTQ event, Katiiti had to stay in a safehouse until he landed in Canada for a swimming competition representing Uganda.<sup>216</sup> Katiiti remained in Canada as an asylum seeker, as he had experienced violence and abuse from both family members and members of the public, and his home situation had grown too dangerous to live in.

While seeking asylum, Katiiti had a difficult time and was unhoused: "People opened their doors to me. I would sleep on someone's couch for two weeks, another's for a week, and so on. Even though it was tough, I had an overwhelming amount of support."<sup>217</sup> New migrants and refugees commonly face homelessness, especially when Black or brown and queer.<sup>218</sup>

In 2017, Katiiti founded RaricaNow, which organizes community and LGBTIQ visibility events for Black queer and trans refugees, newcomers and individuals. RaricaNow seeks to address a range of challenges, which Katiiti described as including housing, mental health, language barriers, and the expectation that newcomers "adapt to this new culture" while leaving their cultures behind.<sup>219</sup> Katiiti traces these experiences to be outcomes of anti-Black racism, even within queer spaces:

We often don't talk about anti-Black racism when it comes to the queer community because we think we're outside of it, or immune. But we work in systems that are very oppressive to Black bodies, to Black trans and queer bodies.<sup>220</sup>

To address the unmet needs of Black queer refugees and newcomers in Canada, RaricaNow recently launched a holistic housing initiative:

[Individuals] can stay in the shelter for four to six months; within these months, it's not just shelter we will provide them. We will provide them with customized individual support. It is a space for them to heal and access wellness and mental health support and services. It is a space for them to review their lives and get help applying for jobs and employment. We want to provide any support to meet their needs, because they will differ. So every resident

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<sup>214</sup> RaricaNow, "Who We Are," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.raricanow.ca/about-us>.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Outright interview with Adebayo Chris Katiiti, virtual, April 2025. See also a documentary by Katiiti on Telus Storyhive, "Unpacking Black Trans Legacy," YouTube video, August 1, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fxFf46ISnc>; Laura Osman, "Persecuted Ugandan Swimmers Compete in International LGBT Championship in Edmonton," *CBC News*, August 10, 2016, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/persecuted-ugandan-swimmers-compete-in-international-lgbt-championship-in-edmonton-1.3714270>.

<sup>217</sup> Katiiti interview.

<sup>218</sup> Government of Canada, "Homelessness Data Snapshot: Homelessness Experienced by Newcomers to Canada," December 21, 2022, <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/data-newcomers-donnees-nouveaux-arrivants-eng.html>; Kwame Addo, *An Investigation into the City's Decision to Stop Allowing Refugee Claimants into Base Shelter System Beds: Ombudsman Toronto Report*, December 10, 2024, <https://www.ombudsmantoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/An-Investigation-Into-the-Citys-Decision-to-Stop-Allowing-Refugee-Claimants-into-Base-Shelter-System-Beds.pdf>.

<sup>219</sup> Katiiti interview.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

will have access to a support worker from the moment they enter the house to when they transition to their new homes.<sup>221</sup>

Katiiti views this as “a great privilege to organize and bring people with similar experiences from different parts of Africa. It has been a privilege to hear their stories, to create a space for them to be themselves and to care for one another.”<sup>222</sup>

Building affirming Black queer spaces, however, has sometimes clashed with the priorities of other 2SLGBTIQ organizations, including around Pride. In 2018, RaricaNow and another organization representing queer people of color held a demonstration at the annual Pride parade, calling for an end to police and military participation.<sup>223</sup> Following the protest, the organization held a series of meetings with the Edmonton Pride Festival Society, which then organized Edmonton Pride, demanding equitable representation of Black trans individuals in festival events and for the organization to disinvite the police, an institution seen as perpetrating violence against immigrants and people of color, from the annual Pride parade.<sup>224</sup> Katiiti explained:

I should not be anxious about going to Pride. When I see the police, there is a level of intergenerational trauma and current trauma that these institutions have perpetrated. A space like Pride is a space for us to be. You do not come and march in Pride and wave a Pride flag, and tomorrow, you kill my people.<sup>225</sup>

The meetings did not bear fruit, and in 2019, Edmonton Pride cancelled the Pride parade, citing the “political and social climate.”<sup>226</sup> Edmonton Pride Festival Society eventually disbanded, but a pride parade organized by a different group is scheduled in August 2025, for the first time in seven years.<sup>227</sup>

These events led RaricaNow to co-organize the Stonewall Rally in 2019, a political march by and for queer and trans Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in New York City and featuring speeches from “Black queer sex workers, elder trans folks, and so on.”<sup>228</sup> In 2020, the Stonewall commemoration was held online due to COVID-19, but Katiiti organized public events around the police killings of George Floyd in Minnesota and Tony McDade in Florida: “The media

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Jordan Omstead, “Directors Vote to Cancel 2019 Edmonton Pride Festival,” *CBC News*, April 10, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-pride-festival-cancelled-2019-1.5093276>.

<sup>224</sup> Katiiti interview.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid. See for instance, Shanifa Nasser, “Members of LGBTQ Community Demand Answers After Black Trans Woman Dies in Police Custody,” *CBC News*, November 3, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/black-trans-woman-crisis-toronto-siu-1.5787990>; The 519, “#TPSWhatHappened,” November 2, 2020, <https://www.the519.org/news/what-happened>; Daniella Barreto, “Pride 2020: What has Pride Got to do With Police Violence and Racism?,” *Amnesty International*, June 24, 2020, <https://amnesty.ca/features/pride-2020-what-has-pride-got-to-do-with-police-violence-and-racism>.

<sup>226</sup> Katiiti interview; Alex Antoneshyn, “Parade or Protest? Police Presence or Not? For Second Year, Pride Conversations at a Stalemate,” *CTV News*, June 16, 2020, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/edmonton/article/parade-or-protest-police-presence-or-not-for-second-year-pride-conversations-at-a-stalemate>.

<sup>227</sup> Edmonton Pride Festival, “Edmonton Pride Parade,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://edmontonpridefest.com/pride-2025-2/parade>.

<sup>228</sup> Katiiti interview.

were silent regarding our communities, so I organized Black Trans Lives Matter protests in Edmonton and Calgary.”<sup>229</sup>

In 2021 and 2022, the Stonewall Rally was also held online due to funding restrictions and state officials restricting gatherings around certain city facilities.<sup>230</sup> In 2024, RaricaNow held a Trans Lives Matter Rally in Edmonton in November, ahead of Trans Day of Remembrance.<sup>231</sup> Katiiti recollected:

Hearing the reflections from Black trans people has been just powerful... More than 200 people showed up. We had our elders. We had our trans parents, as mothers, mothers of trans folks. It was powerful and beautiful. We remembered our people who passed away and were murdered, including those in the U.S.. Bringing together Black trans women, Black trans artists, trans men of all ages, and trans people of all ages was a dream come true, and it showed how powerful we are and how powerful it is when you create spaces for Black trans people.<sup>232</sup>

### Queer Indigenous Pride and Organizing: 2Spirit Manitoba

The organization Two-Spirited People of Manitoba (2Spirit Manitoba) is based in the Treaty One Territory in Canada, the lands of original and Indigenous peoples in present-day Manitoba.<sup>233</sup> Formed in 1986 to provide support and create community events for Two-Spirit people, the organization informs the community and the public on policies and legislation, conducts legal and policy advocacy, and assists with managing the 2Spirit land.<sup>234</sup> It also promotes non-discrimination and inclusion within broader Indigenous communities, seeking “to ensure that their spaces are safe for 2Spirit people because of the amount of identity violence and spiritual violence that can happen within spiritual spaces.”<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Primary among Katiiti’s concerns were the killings of Tony McDade, a Black transgender man, by Florida police and other violent killings of Black trans people in North America. He organized a Black Trans Lives Matter march in protest. See Lauren Boothby, “Calls for Justice for Black Trans Lives in Edmonton Stonewall Anniversary March,” *Edmonton Journal*, June 28, 2020, <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/calls-for-justice-for-black-trans-lives-in-edmonton-stonewall-anniversary-march>; Adebayo Chris Katiiti, “Black Trans Lives Matter Stonewall Open Rally,” Facebook, June 28, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/events/beaver-hills-house-park/black-trans-lives-matter-stonewall-open-rally/246298833339052>.

<sup>230</sup> Katiiti interview; Calgary, “Safe & Inclusive Access Bylaw,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.calgary.ca/bylaws/safe-and-inclusive-access-bylaw.html>; Noah Brennan, “Legal Challenge Over Calgary’s Protest Bylaw Heads to Court – The Bylaw was Introduced in Response to Protests Outside City Pools and Libraries, Many of Which were Aimed at the LGBTQ+ Community,” *Calgary Herald*, February 25, 2025, <https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/legal-challenge-calgary-protest-bylaw-court>.

<sup>231</sup> Katiiti interview.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid; Katiiti Wellness Show, “Trans Lives Matter Rally, Edmonton Alberta, November 2, 2024,” YouTube video, November 4, 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm2\\_-Pz2iWA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm2_-Pz2iWA). Reports state that 350 transgender people were killed in 2024. See Trans Europe and Central Asia (TGEU), “Will the Cycle of Violence Never End? TGEU’s Trans Murder Monitoring Project Crosses 5,000 Cases,” November 13, 2024, <https://transrespect.org/en/trans-murder-monitoring-2024>; Rasha Younes, “Trans Day of Remembrance Marked with Grim Murder Data – More Than 5000 Killed in Past 16 Years due to Lack of Legal Protections,” *Human Rights Watch*, November 20, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/20/trans-day-remembrance-marked-grim-murder-data>.

<sup>233</sup> Outright interview with Sommer Bousquet (any pronouns) and Chelsea Mulvale (they/she), activists with 2Spirit Manitoba, an organization working to safeguard the rights of Indigenous LGBTQI+ people in Manitoba, Canada, virtual, May 2025. See also 2Spirit Manitoba, “About Us,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://twospiritmanitoba.ca/about-us>; Treaty One, “Who We Are,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://treaty1.ca/t1n>; Treaty One, “Questions and Answers,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://treaty1.ca/questions-answers>.

<sup>234</sup> Bousquet and Mulvale interview.

<sup>235</sup> Mulvale interview.

Sommer Bousquet and Chelsea Mulvale of 2Spirit Manitoba told Outright they had identified several challenges that impact Two-Spirit people, especially in the territory.<sup>236</sup> For instance, said Mulvale, “a large population of people that we serve are unhoused and that can present as a pretty significant barrier for access to services when folks are often in survival mode.”<sup>237</sup> Queer Indigenous people can also disproportionately experience barriers in employment and income, impacting 2Spirit Manitoba’s intervention efforts, so the organization tries to provide small per diems and incentives like bus tickets for participants at events.<sup>238</sup> In addition, Mulvale said:

Employment issues are connected with food security issues. So, whenever we have an event, even a small engagement, we usually try to have a meal or snack provided. This also addresses a cultural component of organizing in the North. We do this to demonstrate to the community our understanding of that cultural value and for reciprocity, because we sometimes collect information from the community. Importantly, it meets very practical needs around food security and poverty due to unemployment.<sup>239</sup>

For Mulvale, working with First Nation communities comes with several barriers:

There is a barrier in access to information – the media, email, internet, that kind of thing. And when we hold activities, we sometimes have low engagement because folks can’t access the information. It is a huge barrier but we’re proactive in ensuring that we’re sharing as much as we can with as many organizations and connecting with organizations to create new partnerships and connecting with community members who are also able to help share as much as they can and let folks know by word of mouth what’s going on.<sup>240</sup>

The group also reaches out to shelters to “get word out about some of our different services.”<sup>241</sup>

Sommer Bousquet observed that:

In the last few years, there’s been a huge uprise in organizations that serve a larger population of [queer] folks, and within the government, including themselves in the reconciliation process and wanting to connect and create partnerships with us with the intention that they wanted to ensure that they were being inclusive to the 2Spirit Community. I think there’s been a vast improvement of overall inclusivity of the 2Spirit Community or Indigenous queer folks [among wider 2SLGBTIQ+ organizing].<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Bousquet and Mulvale interview.

<sup>237</sup> Mulvale interview. See National Indigenous Feminist Housing Working Group, *Homeless on Homelands – Upholding Housing as a Human Right for Indigenous Women, Girls, 2Spirit, and Gender-Diverse People: Submission to the Federal Housing Advocate, Keepers of the Circle*, June 2022, <https://womenshomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/Indigenous-Housing-Claim-June-14-2022.pdf>, 6: “Indigenous women, girls, 2Spirit, and gender-diverse people are experiencing some of the most egregious right to housing violations across Canada. We are over-represented in almost all aspects of housing insecurity, homelessness, and poverty, and are disproportionately impacted by violence and trauma linked to precarious living situations.” See also Egale Canada, *Housing Challenges, Barriers, and Realities Among 2SLGBTQI People in Canada*, November 2024, <https://indd.adobe.com/view/d2674a3a-1d8f-4c54-aae5-6a3bb28b513b>.

<sup>238</sup> Bousquet interview.

<sup>239</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>240</sup> Bousquet interview.

<sup>241</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>242</sup> Bousquet interview.



Agreeing, Mulvale added that these partnerships have led to increased resources for queer Indigenous folks and some mainstream organizations “are starting to hire more 2Spirit folks. It has been helpful to grow the collective movement of anti-oppression and inclusivity within organizations. It could be better, but [there’s growth].”<sup>243</sup>

## Pride, 2Spirit Sundance and Queer Indigenous Community Events

2Spirit Manitoba holds several events to promote community for queer Indigenous people in the region. For instance, the organization hosted Canada’s first-ever 2Spirit Sundance, a spiritual and healing ceremony, in 2023, attracting around 300 people “from all over the country and internationally.”<sup>244</sup> The organizers prohibited taking photos and videos of any kind during the event: “We want to ensure that it stays sacred, and this is a common practice within Indigenous communities and folks who run or lead Sundances.”<sup>245</sup>

2Spirit Manitoba held a second Sundance in 2024, and will organize the 2025 events in August 2025.<sup>246</sup> Leading up to the Sundance, the group holds preparation meetings and “On the Land” days, “where people come and work on the land together and be in community. We have a garden there, so people plant and then at the end of the year, they harvest.”<sup>247</sup>

During Pride month, 2Spirit Manitoba works with Pride Winnipeg to promote visibility and inclusion for queer Indigenous people during the general LGBTIQ-focused event:

We usually connect with Pride Winnipeg and start coordinating where we fit within Pride that year, whether it’s just that we’re in the entries for the Parade floats or managing bigger projects. One year, we applied for funding and managed a community stage for the whole festival weekend. This year, we applied for funding to create a float and purchase items like hand fans and branded water bottles for a float so that we can hand those out during Pride.<sup>248</sup>

Funding for queer Indigenous organizing can pose challenges in Manitoba. Bousquet said that although the organization has received grants, “we have noticed a common occurrence, especially in the past, where we’ve not received the funding we applied for. When we looked at the approved recipients, the 2SLGBTQ+-specific funding provided by the government or within these programs was awarded to organizations with no mandate to work with 2SLGBTQ+ people.”<sup>249</sup> On other occasions, said Mulvale, the project-based funding available requires 2Spirit Manitoba “to work within government priorities rather than the community’s priorities.

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<sup>243</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>244</sup> Mulvale interview; 2Spirit Manitoba (@2spirit.mb), “TWO-SPIRIT SUNDANCE,” Instagram, August 17, 2023, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CwD4tO7soF-/?igsh=MWx3bmRmbDk0c2xndg==>; 2Spirit Manitoba (@2spirit.mb), “On behalf of the 2SM co chairs, board and staff thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2 spirit Sundance,” Instagram, August 31, 2023, [https://www.instagram.com/p/CwnkUYqvy3a/?igsh=d2ttaGlyY2lrMXlu](https://www.instagram.com/p/CwnkUYqvy3a/?igsh=d2ttaGlyY2lrMXlu;); Ashleigh LaFournaise, “Reflections on the 2Spirit Sundance by Youth Rep Ashleigh LaFournaise,” *2Spirit Michif Local*, September 19, 2023, <https://2smichiflocal.ca/2023/09/reflections-on-the-2Spirit-sundance-by-youth-rep-ashleigh-lafournaise>.

<sup>245</sup> Bousquet interview.

<sup>246</sup> 2Spirit Manitoba (@2spirit.mb), “Sundance Save the Dates,” Instagram, January 29, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DFbD5L6JHYA/?igsh=Z2ZmOWVocGljZGIq>.

<sup>247</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>248</sup> Bousquet interview; Pride Winnipeg, “Joint Statement by Pride Winnipeg, Queer People of Colour Winnipeg, 2Spirited People of Manitoba, Like That at Sunshine House and Queer View Winnipeg,” May 26, 2017, <https://pridewinnipeg.com/joint-statement-by-pride-winnipeg-queer-people-of-colour-winnipeg-2Spirited-people-of-manitoba-like-that-sunshine-house-and-queerview-winnipeg>.

<sup>249</sup> Bousquet interview.

So, we have to fit our needs as an organization and the community into something we're doing for the government. That does limit the services and support that we're able to provide.<sup>250</sup>

At the same time, Mulvale pointed out that:

Many funds don't consider trauma-informed care or services, and the extra expenses that come with that. So, things that we can do to support folks who are unhoused or unemployed are limited. We then have to be creative when implementing the projects. Still, we want to be a trauma-informed workplace because we also employ 2SLGBTQ folks who have experienced trauma, and even working within the system is a re-exposure to trauma because you face colonial dynamics every single day within the workplace. All of those things I think present as barriers with funders because we just don't get the additional dollars to care for people's well-being.<sup>251</sup>

As Bousquet explained to Outright, despite these challenges, 2Spirit Manitoba is fulfilling its primary goal: "to provide care to our relatives and be able to advocate for them and ensure we're trying to improve their lives. Even if we've achieved this in a minuscule amount, it still makes a difference."<sup>252</sup> Mulvale added:

Working with 2Spirit Manitoba has been the best and most fulfilling because I feel we are challenging some colonial dynamics and doing it with the community. As a disabled person, I feel like I can be myself [here] and that we are all highlighting each other's gifts and understanding each other's struggles in a way that we can work together, uplift each other, and find healing together.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>251</sup> Mulvale interview.

<sup>252</sup> Bousquet interview.

<sup>253</sup> Mulvale interview.

## VIII. Case Study. Refugee and Migrant Inclusion in Stockholm Pride and Beyond

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Outright's 2024 report on Pride Around the World in 2023 began to examine the accessibility and relevance of Pride events for LGBTIQ migrants and refugees, who often have a complex relationship to LGBTIQ organizing in general, and Pride in particular, in their host countries. Some LGBTIQ migrants and refugees have left their countries of origin because of queerphobia, and they may be able to be more open as LGBTIQ people in their host countries, but they are also likely to face new challenges in the form of xenophobia and racism. Pride events in parts of the Global North can also lend themselves to homonationalism, pinkwashing, and white saviorism, with governments touting their human rights bona fides at Pride, based on queer-inclusive policies, while simultaneously violating other human rights, such as through restrictive immigration policies and financial backing of abusive military forces abroad. In these contexts, LGBTIQ migrants and refugees shared mixed feelings as to whether they feel represented, or want to lend their support, to mainstream Prides.

Outright asked survey respondents if any 2024 country Pride events focused on or intentionally included migrants and refugees. Of the 154 people who responded to this question, only 41 shared that they were aware of Pride events on these themes.

A respondent pointed out that Poland is acting as a host country for queer refugees from Ukraine and globally, which ensures that "these themes are present at Prides, especially taking into account the needs of queer people from migrant and refugee communities."<sup>254</sup> In Armenia as well, Pride events included these themes: "With the growing number of migrants and refugees in Armenia from Russia and other countries in the MENA region, inclusion has become a key priority."<sup>255</sup>

Kenya has been a host country to LGBTIQ people fleeing more hostile and dangerous situations in countries like Uganda and Sudan.<sup>256</sup> Ruth B. (pseudonym), an activist with a Kenyan organization that organized community events, reported:

Our inclusive Prides provide safe spaces, legal aid booths, and storytelling platforms for LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees. However, barriers like xenophobia, lack of documentation, and exclusion from mainstream LGBTQ+ spaces still persist. For true inclusion, Pride events must ensure that LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees are not just present but actively supported.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Aleksandra Muzińska, co-founder of LGBTQ+ organization Fundusz dla Odmiany / For a Change Fund, survey response 185.

<sup>255</sup> Mamikon Hovsepyan, Executive Director of Pink Armenia, survey response 39.

<sup>256</sup> Tyler Walicek, "Fleeing Violence, LGBTQ+ Ugandan Refugees Face Long Journey to Resettlement: LGBTQ+ Ugandans Must Navigate Both Dangerous Homophobia and the Hostility and Stigma that can Come with Being a Refugee," *Truth Out*, September 25, 2023, <https://truthout.org/articles/fleeing-violence-lgbtq-ugandan-refugees-face-long-journey-to-resettlement>.

<sup>257</sup> Ruth B., (pseudonym), survey response 237.

A Ugandan asylum seeker in South Africa reported that, “The Joburg Pride was one of the biggest Pride events in Africa, it was huge. But as an asylum seeker from Uganda, I felt we were not given visibility despite holding the Ugandan flag.”<sup>258</sup>

### “Change is Possible” at Stockholm Pride

In Stockholm, Sweden, the leading Pride organization is working to ensure that its doors remain open to everyone, in a deteriorating climate.

Pride first took place in Stockholm in 1977.<sup>259</sup> The annual Stockholm Pride festival began in 1998, also marking the first year EuroPride was held in Stockholm.<sup>260</sup> Since then, Pride has been held every year in Stockholm, organized by the group Stockholm Pride.<sup>261</sup> The Pride event is enormous, with about 50,000 people in the Parade, but “with more than half a million people in the streets cheering us on. That is essentially the entire population of the city,” Michal Budryk, President of Stockholm Pride, told Outright.<sup>262</sup>

Budryk shared that a large percentage of the Swedish population has roots in other parts of Europe and the world, and it’s normal in Swedish society—and at Pride—that “different people with roots in different parts of the world are here with us, including myself.”<sup>263</sup> Unfortunately, the rise of right-wing populist nationalism in Sweden and across Europe has led to anti-migrant and racist rhetoric, with Sweden taking a “rapid u-turn” on immigration as political parties capitalize on economic and social anxiety and growing xenophobia.<sup>264</sup>

In December 2014, Sweden was by far the most pro-immigrant country in the European Union (EU), with 72 percent of Swedish respondents to a Eurobarometer survey holding positive views on the immigration of people from outside the EU,

**Right:** Stockholm Pride Parade, August 3, 2024. Credit: Stockholm Pride.

<sup>258</sup> Mandy J., survey response 91.

<sup>259</sup> RFSL, “History,” June 2, 2020, <https://www.rfsl.se/en/about-us/organisation/history/#:~:text=The%20first%20liberation%20demonstration%20was,become%20the%20organisation's%20member's%20magazine>.

<sup>260</sup> Outright interview with Michal Budryk, President of Stockholm Pride, virtual, April 2025; European Pride Organizers Association, “The first time EuroPride was hosted by Stockholm Pride, in 1998!,” Facebook, May 12, 2018, [https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2161716130535951&id=318020541572195&set=a.2161715880535976&locale=pt\\_BR](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=2161716130535951&id=318020541572195&set=a.2161715880535976&locale=pt_BR).

<sup>261</sup> Budryk interview; Stockholm Pride, “About the Association,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.stockholmpride.org/om-oss>.

<sup>262</sup> Budryk interview; Brian Webb, “Stockholm Pride 2024: A Celebration of Love and LGBTQ+ Unity in the Heart of Sweden,” *The Homo Culture*, August 11, 2024, <https://thehomoculture.com/stockholm-pride-2024-celebration>.

<sup>263</sup> Budryk interview; Government of Sweden, “Sweden and Migration: Sweden Has a Long History of Migration. Get the Bigger Picture Here,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://sweden.se/culture/history/sweden-and-migration>.

<sup>264</sup> Peter Sznawa, “Swedish Right-Wing Populism is Here to Stay,” *Clingendael Spectator*, July 25, 2024, <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/swedish-right-wing-populism-here-stay>; UNHCR, “Sweden Fact Sheet,” September 2024, <https://www.unhcr.org/europe/sites/europe/files/2024-10/bi-annual-fact-sheet-2024-09-sweden.pdf>; Holly Ellyat, “Sweden told people to open their hearts to immigrants 10 years ago. Its U-turn has been dramatic,” *CNBC*, October 7, 2024, <https://www.cnbcm.com/2024/10/07/swedens-immigration-stance-has-changed-radically-over-the-last-decade.html>.





compared to the 35 percent EU average.<sup>265</sup> Ten years later, in November 2024, while the EU average was seven points higher at 42 percent, Sweden's score dropped by ten points to 62.<sup>266</sup>

Between those two surveys, anti-immigrant rhetoric increasingly gained legitimacy in the public sphere, which is best captured by the rise of the Sweden Democrats. The far-right party advocates against immigration based on a nationalist "Swedish culture first" ideology, and has been criticized for amplifying anti-semitic and Islamophobic racism.<sup>267</sup> From holding 20 seats in the Riksdag, the country's unicameral parliament, in 2010, the Sweden Democrats are now the second-largest party after winning 73 seats in 2022.<sup>268</sup> The party backs the ruling center-right coalition, which has led Sweden's increasingly anti-immigrant policies.<sup>269</sup> Political xenophobia has exacerbated violence and societal discrimination against immigrants and refugees.<sup>270</sup> Those who are trans or have a non-heterosexual orientation report even more heightened levels of discrimination and physical and sexual violence.<sup>271</sup>

The growing anti-human rights rhetoric led Stockholm Pride to craft a Pride event in 2024 that was intentionally inclusive of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.<sup>272</sup> Budryk told Outright that one of the organization's core values is "anti-racism, and we want equality for everyone." He shared that:

We decided we needed to highlight the issues affecting refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who are queer because many people don't realize that LGBTIQ refugees face a whole different set of problems from those who are LGBTIQ and from those who are refugees and are not queer.<sup>273</sup>

In designing the event, Stockholm Pride worked with Rainbow Refugees, an organization that provides support for asylum seekers and refugees.<sup>274</sup> The Office of the UN High Commissioner

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<sup>265</sup> European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 82 – Autumn 2014: Public Opinion in the European Union*, December 2014, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/api/deliverable/download/file?deliverableId=48005>, 61.

<sup>266</sup> European Commission, *Standard Eurobarometer 102 – Autumn 2014: Public Opinion in the European Union*, November 2024, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/api/deliverable/download/file?deliverableId=95656>, 136.

<sup>267</sup> Ding Gang, "Swedes' rising support for far right driven by sense of crisis in ideology, or Swedish culture," *Global Times*, October 19, 2022, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202210/1277475.shtml>; Anne-Françoise Hivert, "In Sweden, the far right is waging open war on the Swedish Committee for Combating Antisemitism," *Le Monde*, October 24, 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/24/in-sweden-the-far-right-is-waging-open-war-on-the-swedish-committee-for-combating-antisemitism\\_6730279\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/24/in-sweden-the-far-right-is-waging-open-war-on-the-swedish-committee-for-combating-antisemitism_6730279_4.html); Adrián Groglopo, Fereshteh Ahmadi, and Jimmy Stephen Munobwa, "Unveiling Islamophobia: navigating its presence in Sweden." *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2025): <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2025.2451129#abstract>.

<sup>268</sup> Leo Sands, "Sweden election: How an ex neo-Nazi movement became kingmakers," *BBC News*, September 15, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62913356>.

<sup>269</sup> Miranda Bryant, "From 'open hearts' to closed borders: behind Sweden's negative net immigration figures," *The Guardian*, August 19, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/aug/19/sweden-negative-net-immigration-figure-record-low-asylum-application-global-displacement>.

<sup>270</sup> Sweden Equality Ombudsman, *The State of Discrimination 2023*, June 2, 2023, <https://www.do.se/choose-language/english/reports/the-state-of-discrimination-2023>.

<sup>271</sup> Erica Mattelin, Frida Fröberg, Laura Korhonen, and Amal Khanolkar, "Health and health-related behaviours in refugees and migrants who self-identify as sexual or gender minority—A National population-based study in Sweden." *EClinicalMedicine* 52 (2022): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36313143/>; Nkulu Kalengayi, Faustine Kyungu, Mazen Baroudi, and Anna-Karin Hurtig, "Prevalence of perceived discrimination, determinants and associations with self-rated general and sexual health, healthcare utilization and self-perceived integration: a cross-sectional survey of migrants in Sweden." *BMC public health* 24, no. 1 (2024): <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-024-18160-2>, 699.

<sup>272</sup> Budryk interview.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid. See Rainbow Refugees Sweden, "A Safe Community for LGBTQ+ Asylum Seekers," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.rainbowrefugees.se>.

for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Nordic and Baltic Countries also marched for refugees and asylum seekers' rights during the 2024 Stockholm Pride Parade.<sup>275</sup>

The event was not without its critics. Some pointed out that the people who make up the leadership of Stockholm Pride are not refugees or people of color, which casts doubts on the credibility of the organization to effectively include the diverse plights of refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, especially those who are Black or people of color.<sup>276</sup> One of the challenges raised in this respect was that Stockholm Pride's work is led by volunteers whose contribution is entirely unpaid.<sup>277</sup> Many refugees and asylum seekers, by virtue of their status, are battling employment insecurity and may not have the luxury of volunteering in such spaces.

However, these experiences have led the organization to broaden its approach in designing future Pride events:

We are reaching out to a wide range of organizations that do very varied work, and we are changing the organization on a larger scale to work on these diverse issues. We are discussing with various human rights organizations the changes they would like to see in the festival to be more inclusive to everyone. We are also inviting large human rights organizations that work on an international scale. We want to make our human rights conference a two-day event focusing on global issues. We also want to broadcast the Pride events on TV. Locally, we want to work with groups in the suburbs, join their festivals, and invite them to our Pride events. We want to invite people from countries where Pride cannot be held to help encourage them not to lose hope and to show that change is possible.<sup>278</sup>

Funding for the Pride event remains stable. However, it is a crucial part of the organizational identity to remain entirely volunteer-run.<sup>279</sup> Michał Budryk views his work at Stockholm Pride as:

My way of giving back. My background is non-Swedish, and I've got a chance at a good life here. My whole voluntary work is to give back to this society. I remember very well how attending my first Pride event changed my life, where I could be myself freely and fully, and I want to give that experience to others. New LGBTIQ people are born every day, and they also go through a process. They need to have that community.<sup>280</sup>

**Right:** Stockholm Pride Parade, August 3, 2024. Credit: Stockholm Pride.

<sup>275</sup> UNHCR Nordic and Baltic Countries (@UNHCR\_NE), "Today, UNHCR is marching in the #StockholmPride parade to advocate against all forms of discrimination and for fundamental human rights so that the world's most vulnerable, incl. forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ people, are protected. We invite you to join us," X, August 3, 2024, [https://x.com/UNHCR\\_NE/status/1819689704649843177](https://x.com/UNHCR_NE/status/1819689704649843177).

<sup>276</sup> Budryk interview.

<sup>277</sup> Budryk interview.

<sup>278</sup> Budryk interview.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Budryk interview.



## IX. Pride in First Person: Dancing on the Edge of Liberation

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By Noor Sultan

*[Editor's note: Beginning with our report on Pride Around the World in 2022, we have offered space for Outright staff members and partners to share their own first-person experiences of Pride, lending a personal touch to our reporting. This year, we share the voice of our LBQ Program Officer Noor Sultan, who is from and based in North Africa.]*

In the summer of 2018, I found myself standing on a boat on a canal in Amsterdam, surrounded by a sea of rainbow flags, glitter, music, and joy. It was my first Pride. Boats glided by, filled with dancing bodies, colorful banners, and loud affirmations of queer identity. People cheered from balconies and sidewalks. It was electrifying, a celebration of visibility and freedom I had never experienced before.

I wept with joy for the freedom I witnessed. I danced on the edge of liberation. But I also felt the weight of my people, my friends, my chosen family back home, those who could not be with me, who could not even dream of this scene. Pride, for me, became a dual experience: celebration and exile, joy and solitude.

As my boat passed under a bridge, I saw a small group gathering at the top. They held signs, not in support of Pride but against it. It was an anti-Pride protest. I squinted, not believing what I saw; among them were faces I recognized, people like me, but they carried the complex experience of queerness shaped by exile, illegality, and marginalization. They carried bold, handwritten lettering on cardboard and fabric banners. One read "Visibility Without Justice is Erasure," "No Pride in Pinkwashing," another "Corporations Don't Make Us Free."

So while I marched that day in Amsterdam with a mix of hope and sorrow, others from my region stood on the sidelines to challenge the very nature of what Pride had become. They were not anti-queer. They were protesting the version of Pride that seemed to leave them behind, one that felt far removed from the struggles they still face, both in Europe and back home.

It's important to be honest about the discomfort many feel with the commercialization of Pride. What was once rooted in political resistance, sparked by Stonewall and led by the most marginalized, has, in many cities, transformed into a corporate-sponsored spectacle. Major banks, tech firms, airlines, and alcohol brands now fund and headline Pride events. Their involvement, while often framed as inclusion, raises important questions about pinkwashing the co-opting of queer identities to build brand loyalty, obscure unethical practices, or sanitize public image.

For some, especially queer migrants and refugees, this shift feels alienating. When Pride becomes a marketing platform rather than a space of resistance, the needs and realities of



those most at risk are pushed aside. Housing insecurity, detention, asylum discrimination, police violence—these are not issues typically addressed by floats paid for by global corporations.

This tension within Pride, between visibility and commodification, between liberation and branding, is not new. But for those of us from criminalized contexts, it takes on sharper dimensions. We are often asked to be grateful just for being tolerated in European cities, even as we face racism, xenophobia, and ongoing marginalization. Pride, when stripped of its radical roots, risks reinforcing this dynamic, offering representation without justice.

In North Africa, being LGBTIQ remains a legal and social risk. But even there, resistance takes place quietly, in networks of care, in underground organizing, in art, and in online expression. These efforts are rarely recognized in the global Pride narrative, which often centers Western experiences and symbols. The over-commercialization of Pride doesn't just flatten its politics; it erases the complexities of queerness outside the Global North.

As a North African queer person, I don't reject Pride. I've seen what it can mean. But I also refuse to accept a version of it that is disconnected from struggle. Pride cannot be only for those who are safe enough, visible enough, or profitable enough to be included. It must remain, at its core, a collective refusal, a demand for change, not just recognition.

The way forward requires redefining Pride beyond parades and parties. Pride must be reclaimed as a space of political solidarity, one that includes those who cannot march, who live in hiding, and who are still criminalized. It must challenge power, not just celebrate inclusion in it. That includes questioning which institutions participate and why, and how their involvement might impact “or silence” the voices of the most vulnerable. A meaningful Pride must be uncomfortable in the right ways, willing to question power, challenge institutions, and reflect the full spectrum of queer existence, especially those still fighting to be heard. If we want Pride to endure as more than a seasonal display, it must become a space where celebration and resistance are not opposites, but partners, where no one is left standing on the margins, watching a movement that was meant for all of us pass them by.





## X. Snapshot: Pride and Political Solidarity

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In this year's Pride survey, as activists around the world spoke out against Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, we asked respondents about the advent of Prides in 2024 that centered political solidarity with Palestine or "any other places or peoples experiencing conflict and oppression, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Sudan, the Rohingya people, or Ukraine." We found salient examples of this. Many of these responses came from Global North countries, where Palestine solidarity at Pride events has been extensively documented. Countries in the Global South and East also played a role, however, with Hanoi Pride in Viet Nam, for instance, hosting "a fundraising campaign for Palestinian people."<sup>281</sup> Political solidarity with global events was widespread but not universal, with many respondents unaware of any Pride events in their countries that focused on or included any issues of political solidarity.<sup>282</sup>

In March 2024, Toronto's No Pride in Policing Coalition, which was formed in 2018 to support Black Lives Matter with a call for "an end to Institutional Police participation in the Pride Toronto festivities," issued a statement announcing an Abolitionist Pride 2024 event in opposition to the "ongoing genocide in Palestine, the Congo and Sudan and everywhere else in the world where lives, including those of queers and trans, are being annihilated."<sup>283</sup> The group also criticized Pride Toronto, the organization behind Canada's largest Pride parade, for failing to condemn "the genocide in Palestine and the vicious police attacks, intimidation tactics and arrests, of so many pro-Palestinian protesters – many who are queer and trans."<sup>284</sup> In response, Pride Toronto issued a statement on March 28, 2024, expressing solidarity with Palestinians and calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.<sup>285</sup> This stance did not change the position of No Pride in Policing, which called for a boycott, in part as a result of Pride sponsor TD Bank's "investments in General Dynamics, a U.S. aerospace and defence corporation."<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Zoé, survey response 291.

<sup>282</sup> Out of the 160 people who answered this question, 70 (44%) of respondents stated that "I am not aware of Pride events in my country that are focused on or include any issues of political solidarity."

<sup>283</sup> No Pride in Policing Coalition, "From Tkaronto to Palestine and Beyond: Abolitionist Pride 2024," March 2024, <https://www.noprideinpolicing.ca/events/abolitionist-pride-2024-statement>.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Pride Toronto, "Pride Toronto's Statement on the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza," March 28, 2024, <https://www.pridetoronto.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Pride-Toronto-Statement-on-Humanitarian-Crisis-in-Gaza.pdf>.

<sup>286</sup> No Pride in Policing, "NPPC member Gary Kinsman's Letter of Resignation from Pride Toronto: The Struggle Continues!" April 18, 2024, <https://www.noprideinpolicing.ca/statements/pride-toronto-resignation>; Kevin Maimann, "Opposition and Rage: Queer Groups Challenge Pride to Divest from Israel," *The Breach*, June 7, 2024, <https://breachmedia.ca/opposition-and-rage-queer-groups-challenge-pride-to-divest-from-israel>.

In advance of the main Pride parade scheduled for June 30, Queers for Palestine Toronto marched on June 28 and 29, 2024 with allied groups like Jews Say No to Genocide and Labor for Palestine at the Toronto Trans and Dyke Marches—events that are typically more political in nature than Toronto Pride.<sup>287</sup> On Parade Day, June 30, an “ad hoc coalition of queer and trans activists,” blocked the parade, demanding that Pride Toronto boycott, divest from and sanction institutions that support Zionism, divest from corporations involved in exploiting Native people in Canada, address anti-Palestinian racism, and remove police presence from Pride.<sup>288</sup> The rest of the Parade was cancelled.<sup>289</sup> Abolitionist Pride went ahead in the form of a community picnic on June 30.<sup>290</sup>

In Berlin, on July 26, 2024, Dyke\* March organizers issued a statement condemning genocide in Gaza, with participants chanting slogans in support of the people of Palestine and Sudan.<sup>291</sup> The Internationalist Queer Pride was held on July 27, 2024, in support of Palestinian liberation and as an expression of political solidarity with various groups experiencing “colonial violence.”<sup>292</sup> IQP also held blocs for LGBTIQ Jews, disability justice, and anti-imperialist Asian justice at the event.<sup>293</sup> Participants reported that both events were infiltrated by the police, with violent arrests and interruptions of the demonstrations, including pushing, “hitting and manhandling queers protesting the genocide in Gaza.”<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Queers 4 Palestine TO (@queers4palestine), “No Pride in Genocide – Join Queers 4 Palestine at the Toronto Trans March & Dyke March,” Instagram, June 25, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C8pnPKCSlwl/?igsh=dHdoZG0yb3BlaXJh>.

<sup>288</sup> Coalition Against Pinkwashing, “Press Release: Pride Toronto Parade Disrupted by Ad Hoc Coalition of Queer and Trans Activists,” <https://drive.proton.me/urls/12TQP748YR#PiHZ7JHNNWQqy>. See more about No Pride in Genocide here: <https://linktr.ee/noprideonpalestine2024>.

<sup>289</sup> Coalition Against Pinkwashing (@nopinkwashing), “We Shut Down Pride – Here’s Why: We Demand that Pride Toronto Boycott Genocide,” Instagram, July 16, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9fxM86SYfI/>; Coalition Against Pinkwashing (@nopinkwashing), “No Pride in Genocide: An ad hoc coalition of organizers bring Toronto Pride’s 2024 parade to a halt, demanding it ceases its partnership with companies profiting off of Palestinian murder,” Instagram, July 3, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C892H\\_Tg4AG/?igsh=MXhldmZlbmpxbWZs](https://www.instagram.com/p/C892H_Tg4AG/?igsh=MXhldmZlbmpxbWZs); Mark Colley, “Thousands Sing, Dance and Celebrate at Pride Parade Until Protesters Strand Marchers and Floats Mid-Route,” *Toronto Star*, June 30, 2024, [https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/thousands-sing-dance-and-celebrate-at-pride-parade-until-protesters-strand-marchers-and-floats-mid/article\\_397ddf84-3730-11ef-a004-53173fd80f80.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/thousands-sing-dance-and-celebrate-at-pride-parade-until-protesters-strand-marchers-and-floats-mid/article_397ddf84-3730-11ef-a004-53173fd80f80.html).

<sup>290</sup> No Pride in Policing Coalition, “Abolitionist Pride 2024,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.noprideonpolicing.ca>.

<sup>291</sup> Dyke\* March Berlin (@dykemarch\_berlin), “Statement by the Organizers on the Solidarity Bar at Möbel Olfe on July 7<sup>th</sup> and on the Dyke\* March Berlin 2024,” Instagram, July 13, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C9YCioZtbnF/?img\\_index=5&igsh=a3M2Ym50aTk5amc3](https://www.instagram.com/p/C9YCioZtbnF/?img_index=5&igsh=a3M2Ym50aTk5amc3); Perrxs del Futuro Berlin (@perrxs.del.futuro.berlin), “No Dyke Pride in Genocide,” Instagram, July 14, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9Z97nVse9Q/?igsh=NGkwbWp6bHE4cjdy>.

<sup>292</sup> The group’s political statement partly reads “We are and continue to be in solidarity with liberation, freedom, and justice struggles from around the world. **Abya Yala, Turtle Island, Iran, Peru, Western Sahara, Palestine, Kurdistan, Darfur, the Syrian Revolution, Aotearoa, Tamil Eelam, Kashmir, West Papua, the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, the Amazigh, the Mapuche, the Uyghur** and all the people who are resisting ongoing colonial violence.” Internationalistische Queer Pride, “Political Paper – Our Internationalist Queer Pride for Liberation is Not a Race! It is a Fight!,” July 2024, <https://iqpberlin.org/en/political-paper>.

<sup>293</sup> Internationalist Queer Pride (@iqpberlin), “Join The Jewish Bloc!,” Instagram, July 23, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9xBG-5s26u/?igsh=d3Nyb3Eyb3Vudjhi>; Internationalist Queer Pride (@iqpberlin), “Join the Anti-Imperialist Asian Bloc!,” Instagram, July 24, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C9zotA2sj\\_V/?igsh=dXZ6OGgzYmMzYzM5](https://www.instagram.com/p/C9zotA2sj_V/?igsh=dXZ6OGgzYmMzYzM5); Internationalist Queer Pride (@iqpberlin), “Disability Justice Bloc,” Instagram, July 25, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9lvsYCMn3H/?igsh=MTI3NmllaWFwdzdweQ==>.

<sup>294</sup> Walter Crasshole, “Precarious Pride: Reflections on a Summer of Right-Wing Violence at Queer Demonstrations,” *The Queer Berliner*, September 16, 2024, <https://www.the-berliner.com/politics/precarious-pride-queer-berliner-right-wing-violence-csd>; Dyke\* March Berlin, “At the Dyke\* March Berlin 2024, on July 26, there were massive police operations,” <https://dykemarchberlin.com>; Middle East Eye, “A Pro-Palestine Protester Being Detained in Germany was Comforted by an Elderly Woman Sitting Just Beside Her,” Facebook video, July 28, 2024, <https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=9223451551004900>. An Outright staff member who attended the IQP protest also personally witnessed police violence.

In New York, the 2024 Dyke March, under the theme “Dykes Against Genocide,” expressed solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Palestine, Sudan and Ukraine.<sup>295</sup> The Washington, DC Dyke March 2024 also adopted the theme “Dykes Against Genocide,” while its 2025 pride theme is “Dykes Against Fascism.”<sup>296</sup>

**Right:** Tokyo Rainbow Pride 2024, April 19–21, 2024.  
Credit: Tokyo Rainbow Pride.

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<sup>295</sup> NYC Dyke March, “NYC Dyke March 2024 Theme: Dykes Against Genocide,” Facebook, May 30, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=858977602936252&id=100064720594774&set=a.560722509428431>; NYC Dyke March, “NYC Dyke March 2024 Theme Statement,” accessed June 11, 2025, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z-jjq7v\\_w-4jadLGWCgmUVmlZf3j2ybu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z-jjq7v_w-4jadLGWCgmUVmlZf3j2ybu/view); NYC Dyke March (@nycdykemarch), “A Revised Statement from the Current NYC Dyke March Committee,” Instagram, March 14, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHMGtYZRczk/?igsh=MWxna3UyOGw2aTJmeQ==>.

<sup>296</sup> DC Dyke March (@dcdykemarch), “Dykes Against Genocide,” Instagram, April 1, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C5PJ5rwOoC2/?igsh=MTBqMDNhTBoazc4eQ==>; DC Dyke March (@dcdykemarch), “Dykes Against Fascism,” Instagram, March 7, 2025, [https://www.instagram.com/p/DG6K\\_cNyjmr/?igsh=MThqc3l0eTYxYTI3MA==](https://www.instagram.com/p/DG6K_cNyjmr/?igsh=MThqc3l0eTYxYTI3MA==).



# XI. Case Study. “You Can Walk in the Streets with Your Head Up High”: Global Black Pride 2024

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## Background

In some countries, Pride has been seen as the province of the privileged, with people of color, in particular, often excluded or marginalized. As a result, as noted in the Canada section, various activists from racialized communities have stepped up to organize events centering their communities.

In the United Kingdom, UK Black Pride was founded in 2005 by Phyll Opoku-Gyimah (also known as Lady Phyll) and other Black lesbian activists, and has grown into one of the largest Pride events for Black and Brown people. The Pride’s 2024 theme, Freedom & Justice, “addresses global injustices, including the rise of racism, fascism, and violence in the UK.” There are several Black Prides in U.S. cities and countries like Brazil and France, along with Canada.

In Venezuela, an activist said that the march in Mérida focused on “underrepresented groups within the LGBTIQ+ movement,” including trans people, rural people, people with disabilities, and racialized and Black people.<sup>297</sup> In the Nordic countries, for Indigenous Peoples, Sápmi Pride is set up “for the Indigenous people of Norway, Sweden and Finland,” as the Pride “moves around each year within the Sápmi territory, without regard for country borders.”<sup>298</sup>

## Global Black Pride Takes Root

Global Black Pride was founded in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the objectives of recognizing and celebrating Black queer folks’ contributions to the global LGBTIQ movement.<sup>299</sup> The first in-person event was in Toronto in 2022, and the second was the 2024 Atlanta event.<sup>300</sup> Global Black Pride is led by co-founder and President Micheal Ighodaro, and Vice-President Rikki Nathanson, both of whom are also associated with Outright International.<sup>301</sup> In 2024, Global Black Pride took place from August 27 to September 2 with a series of events including

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<sup>297</sup> Luis P. (pseudonym), activist from Movimiento Somos, Venezuela, survey response 318. This response was given in Spanish and translated into English for this report.

<sup>298</sup> Michelle Moland, Queer Disability Justice activist, survey response 86.

<sup>299</sup> Sophie Hurwitz, “Global Black Pride is Coming to Toronto – And It’s Bigger and Better than Ever: ‘Black Pride is a Political Act Whether We’re Protesting or Dancing,’” *Xtra*, December 6, 2021, <https://xtramagazine.com/power/global-black-pride-toronto-2022-214058>.

<sup>300</sup> Heather Cassell, “Toronto to Host First In-Person Global Black Pride in 2022,” *Gay City News*, December 2, 2021, <https://gaycitynews.com/toronto-to-host-first-in-person-global-black-pride-2022/>.

<sup>301</sup> Global Black Pride, “Global Black Pride Announces Its Leadership Team,” November 18, 2021, <https://globalblackpride.org/global-black-pride-announces-its-leadership-team>. Micheal Ighodaro is also a co-founder of the organization Global Black Gay Men Connect and board member of Outright International. Riki Nathanson is Outright’s Senior Advisor, Global Trans Program.



a two-day human rights and health conference, an awards dinner, and a march.<sup>302</sup>

An Outright researcher attended Global Black Pride.

The conference included sessions on criminalization issues impacting Black queer folks, HIV initiatives, legal empowerment, and the role of the media.<sup>303</sup> Britt Hudson, Director of Programs at Enchanté Network, one of Canada's most extensive networks for 2SLGBTIQ+ organizations, presented a study on the experiences and needs of Black 2SLGBTIQ+ across Canada. As Hudson told Outright:

We explored things like housing, employment, education, everything that could impact someone's life to understand what the core needs of Black queer and trans populations are because we have not been given that space to be understood in this way.<sup>304</sup>

Hudson emphasized participatory approaches to their research:

We wanted to use an Afrocentric lens within it, realizing that if we were going to truly celebrate our Blackness, we had to do it in a community format. Everything we did came with community consensus, from gathering the data to having those consultations to even forming the report itself, like we had over 100 people be able to, like, give us feedback and give us more input into the things that we were missing.<sup>305</sup>

Friedel Dausab, a Namibian LGBTIQ activist who successfully challenged Namibia's criminalization of same-sex sexual acts in the High Court, attended the Pride event "to speak about the High Court victory, and what it meant for Namibia and within the wider African context."<sup>306</sup> He told Outright that:

I was curious, and I was pleasantly surprised, first of all, that it brought together different speakers working in public health and human rights, that spoke specifically about the Black experience, including the African experience of being Black and being Black in the diaspora, and try to sort of really address the gaps, but also commonalities in our experiences, Black gay people in Africa and elsewhere.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Global Black Pride, "Meet our Line-up," <https://globalblackpride.org>. See also the summary and appreciation email from Micheal Ighodaro, President of Global Black Pride, "Heartfelt Thanks for Making Global Black Pride 2024 Unforgettable," October 21, 2024, <https://mailchi.mp/3d1922dc414f/heartfelt-thanks-for-making-global-black-pride-2024-unforgettable?e=b56d5744c4>.

<sup>303</sup> Outright's global researcher and other staff attended the event. Outright also hosted a breakout session titled "Advancing Legal Empowerment: Advocacy Strategies for Human Rights," with speakers Kenita Placide, (they/them), Executive Director, The Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality, Rikki Nathanson (she/her), Senior Advisor, Global Trans Program, Outright International,

Njeri Gateru (she/they), Executive Director, National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Kenya and moderator Ohotuowo Ogbeche (she/her), Global Researcher, Outright International.

<sup>304</sup> Outright interview with Brittan "Britt" Hudson, virtual, October 2024. See the report here: The Enchanté Network, *Back 2 Our Roots*, 2024, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-D4CqwFwCtL00udAjqG\\_DoWH2GtoUkgH/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-D4CqwFwCtL00udAjqG_DoWH2GtoUkgH/view).

<sup>305</sup> Hudson interview.

<sup>306</sup> Outright interview with Friedel Dausab, virtual, September 2024; Michelle Yesudas, Thiruna Naidoo and Neela Ghoshal, "Breakthroughs and the Bench: What We Can Learn From Last Year's Rulings on Queer Rights in Ghana, Malawi and Namibia," *Outright International*, January 23, 2025, <https://outrightinternational.org/insights/breakthroughs-and-bench-what-we-can-learn-last-years-rulings-queer-rights-ghana-malawi-and>.

<sup>307</sup> Dausab interview.

Nik Harris, the Vice-President of Strategic Outreach at the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), who attended Global Black Pride as a conference speaker, told Outright they were grateful “to show up at this important time” in reference to the 2024 U.S. Presidential elections.<sup>308</sup> They added, with regard to areas where Pride cannot be held, that resistance pays off:

When we fight, we win. It sounds cliché, but it’s not. When we collectively stand up together, we can make a difference. We can see that in movements that have happened all over the world.<sup>309</sup>

Harris hoped that Pride would aid in moving people to show up and vote, and in recognition that “some issues facing queer folks here are facing folks in other places around the world. We understand we not only have common problems, but we need to find common solutions.”<sup>310</sup> For example, one session was devoted to a discussion of Project 2025, a queerphobic and xenophobic plan advanced by U.S. think tank The Heritage Foundation. Friedel Dausab from Namibia said he found the session valuable in “pushing back the false narratives that diverse sexual identities are not part of African tradition and cultural set-up.”<sup>311</sup>

The human rights conference was followed by a festival and march, where Outright’s global researcher met with and interviewed attendees. The festival included performances from various artists, including renowned American performer Billy Porter, and Nigerian artists Yemi Alade and Omawumi.

Friedel Dausab commented to Outright, “This is really Black Pride because people are free. People are sitting, people are dancing. People are free. This is really beautiful, being among Black people in a safe space.”<sup>312</sup>

Marie-Solange Ndeley (Masol) is a transmasculine nonbinary queer individual born in Cameroon who lives in London, United Kingdom. Masol affirmed that:

I’m so glad I came because Global Black Pride is how we connect the dots internationally. It’s not focusing on Black queer people from Atlanta or America alone. It’s how we connect the dots between our whole lineage around the world.<sup>313</sup>

Having lived in Cameroon and moved to the UK when they were ten, and being raised in a conservative background, Masol insisted that:

We need Pride, but not just the Pride events. We need pride in ourselves – Pride begins in ourselves. We need to find ways of connecting with our [Queer and Black] siblings and the people we know do not have the space to go outside themselves. We need to find how to support them in the ways they need now. That’s what is essential.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Outright interview with Nik Harris (she/they), Atlanta, September 1, 2024.

<sup>309</sup> Harris interview.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> Dausab interview.

<sup>312</sup> Outright interview with Friedel Dausab, Atlanta, August 31, 2024.

<sup>313</sup> Outright interview with Marie-Solange Ndeley (Masol), virtual, February 2025.

<sup>314</sup> Masol interview.

Masol added that there is so much meaning in Pride:

Pride is not just when we come on a day and party, DJs, marching; it's your everyday life. In every single day and moment. It is remembering who you are, whether you are intersex, whether you are trans, nonbinary, gay, lesbian, bi, poly, pansexual – it's all divine.<sup>315</sup>

Every Pride event comes with lessons. Several participants remarked that Global Black Pride was not as truly international as they would have liked, with U.S.-based speakers dominating the human rights conference, for example.<sup>316</sup> Others had a different critique: that it could be helpful “to be more engaged with the local Black movement, more of their faces during the conference and in the panels, and other events.”<sup>317</sup> Ayodeji O., who is originally from Nigeria, expressed a desire to see the conference do more to support queer Black, African and Caribbean people who “are using their voices and doing work to uplift their communities, and telling stories that people aren’t even getting to hear.”<sup>318</sup>

For many of the international participants who did make it to Atlanta, however, there were valuable takeaways despite the shortcomings. Ayodeji O. explained that, “coming from Nigeria, there is no Pride where you can walk in the streets with your head up high declaring that this is who I am.”<sup>319</sup> Ayodeji O. added:

For me, Global Black Pride is the coming together of queer Africans from different parts of Africa and finding an intersection not just with the queer Africans, but also with queer Americans and Caribbeans. Everyone coming together not just to share the joy of being queer, but to share the joy of being ourselves. As someone who lives in the United States and is constantly fighting to be seen as more than just an immigrant or asylum seeker, I love the space Global Black Pride created. African spaces in America are not safe for queer people, not welcoming. I loved this space so much, and I’m looking forward to being in more spaces like that.<sup>320</sup>

Joseph O., an activist from Cameroon who was attending his first public Pride event, told Outright:

This is my first time being part of this kind of space. I enjoy it a lot, and it’s great to see how people can create space for the community. It is difficult to have in Africa, but we must try hard to do this [hold Pride publicly].<sup>321</sup>

**Right:** Second ever in-person Global Black Pride in Atlanta, U.S.A., August 27–September 2, 2024. Credit: Ohotuowo Ogbeche/Outright International.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Outright interview with Renae Green, Kingston, October 2024; Hunter interview.

<sup>317</sup> Dausab interview; Hunter interview.

<sup>318</sup> Outright interview with Ayodeji O., filmmaker and poet, virtual, September 2024.

<sup>319</sup> Ayodeji O. interview.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> Outright interview with Joseph, a Cameroonian LGBTIQ people’s rights activist, Atlanta, September 1, 2024.



Living in Namibia and experiencing Pride from the Namibian and now the Global Black Pride perspective, Dausab felt that Global Black Pride serves to “challenge the notion that being Black and being gay cannot sit together” that is prevalent in African contexts.<sup>322</sup>

Black American participants also shared their joy in being in a global Black queer space. Jasmine J. (pseudonym), an employee at Atlanta’s Positive Impact Health Center, a group providing health care access for marginalized populations, told Outright that, “as a Black trans woman, it really makes me feel heard and seen. It gives me value. It rejuvenates me to keep doing the work that I’m doing.”<sup>323</sup> Daly, a queer American, shared that attending the festival made them feel a sense of “unguided relief, compared with other Prides I have been to before.”<sup>324</sup> Chester (she/they), who lives in rural Georgia, travelled to Atlanta for Global Black Pride and told Outright that she loved “being surrounded by people that look like me. I really love that part.”<sup>325</sup> Kevin (he/him) said attending the festival felt “like home, I feel centered, knowing that we’re here to protect each other.”<sup>326</sup>

Todd Valentino, a queer rapper from Atlanta who performed at the festival, expressed excitement to be a part of the global stage:

Born and raised here in Atlanta, this is my life. To see it at a global capacity where the world can see makes me happy. I hope that everyone can make it to a place where they can be themselves, and I also hope that one day their homes can be that place.”<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Dausab interview.

<sup>323</sup> Outright interview with Jasmine J. (pseudonym), Atlanta, September 1, 2024.

<sup>324</sup> Outright interview with Daly (they/she), Atlanta, August 31, 2024.

<sup>325</sup> Outright interview with Chester (she/they), Atlanta, August 31, 2024.

<sup>326</sup> Outright interview with Kevin (he/him), Atlanta, August 31, 2024.

<sup>327</sup> Outright interview with Todd Valentino (he/him), Atlanta, August 31, 2024.



## XII. Case Study. “Ensuring Pride is for Everyone”: Disability Inclusion in Prides

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In Outright’s 2024 report on Pride Around the World in 2023, we documented *Disability Inclusion, Access, and Visibility at Pride* at Grenland Pride in Norway, Pride events in Bangkok and Nepal, and Sydney WorldPride.<sup>328</sup> Our *Pride in My Country* survey for this report asked if people were aware of Pride events in 2024 focusing on or inclusive of queer disability issues. Of the 156 people who responded, 50 were unsure, and 48 were unaware of such events.

Yet 58 respondents were aware of Pride 2024 events that made efforts to be queer disability-inclusive, including some of those discussed under the *Pride and Political Solidarity* heading. This section highlights some of the Pride events Outright’s research team found through literature review and our global survey responses, noting, however, a paucity of information comprehensively addressing disability and queerness.

Pride Amsterdam describes itself as placing “a high importance on accessibility” and collaborating with disability justice-focused organizations in designing its 2024 events.<sup>329</sup> Organizers provided sign language interpreters, information on events with loud music and bright lights, sensory spaces, viewing areas, video and audio captions, vehicle pickup for participants, and wheelchair accessibility for facilities and events, including festivals and Parade routes.<sup>330</sup>

In Norway, Oslo Pride provided wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, parade routes, festivals and other Pride events, sensory spaces, captions and sign language interpretation, earplugs for loud noise and sensory overload, viewing areas, buses, posters and signs in braille, accessibility assistants, and accommodations for people with hidden disabilities (the Sunflower program).<sup>331</sup> Organizers worked with an advisory committee for disability justice in designing the Pride events.<sup>332</sup> Michelle Moland, a participant at Oslo Pride and organizer at Grenland Pride, who responded to Outright’s survey, stated that:

Oslo Pride has become VERY good at disability inclusion thanks to their collaboration with us in Landsforeningen for Skeive Funkiser/Disabled Queers Norway! We work very closely with them and they are doing the very most, it’s great to see. As an organizer of a small town pride [Grenland Pride], we also do our very best to make our pride inclusive. We have a much more limited budget, limited selection of venues, etc., but it is a strong focus, and we do what we can with the resources we have.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Outright International, “Beyond the Rainbows and Glitter”: *Pride Around the World in 2023*, June 2024, [https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Outright\\_Pride\\_Report\\_2024\\_v2.pdf](https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/Outright_Pride_Report_2024_v2.pdf), 36–41.

<sup>329</sup> Pride Amsterdam, “Accessibility,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://pride.amsterdam/en/toegankelijkheid>.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

<sup>331</sup> Oslo Pride’s page has been updated to reflect accessibility accommodations for the 2025 Pride events. See Oslo Pride, “Facilitation at Oslo Pride,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.oslopride.no/p/tilrettelegging>. See more about the Sunflower Program here: Hidden Disabilities, “What is the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower?,” accessed June 11, 2025, <https://hdsunflower.com>.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid.

<sup>333</sup> Michelle Moland, queer disability justice activist, survey response 86.

During Pride Toronto's festivals, the organization provided captions and sign language interpretation, wheelchairs and mobility aids, wheelchair-accessible venues and bathrooms, viewing areas and vehicular assistance, and accessibility assistants. It also worked with an accessibility committee to design these.<sup>334</sup> In Dublin, the parade had designated sensory spaces called NeuroPride zones, captioning and Irish Sign Language interpretation, viewing areas, wheelchair accessibility for the routes and bathrooms, and vehicular support for participants as needed.<sup>335</sup>

In the United Kingdom, three events stood out for queer disability inclusion. York Pride had designated sensory spaces, captions and sign language interpretation, wheelchair-accessible routes and bathrooms, viewing areas, pickup buses, earplugs, a quiet hour, a Quiet Tent and other rest areas, assistance dogs, and an accessibility committee working to design these interventions.<sup>336</sup> Bi Pride UK's 2024 event featured accessible guides and maps, designated sensory spaces, wheelchair-accessible routes and bathrooms, earplugs, and access assistants for people needing diverse forms of help.<sup>337</sup> Finally, Pride in London designed a wheelchair-accessible venue and bathrooms, an accessible website and guides, captioning and sign language interpretation, designated sensory spaces, and assistants to provide aid as needed.<sup>338</sup>

A participant in two Pride events in North Macedonia shared that two Pride events, the Skopje Pride and the Trans Visibility March, have made efforts to be accessible, such as rest areas, designated sensory spaces, and wheelchair-accessible restrooms, but there are still challenges when it comes to full inclusion.<sup>339</sup> They described that wheelchair-accessible streets are limited in Skopje sidewalks and roads, and "getting to Pride events can be a challenge for some people with disabilities due to the limited public transportation options available in Skopje."<sup>340</sup> In addition, "designated sensory zones with noise reduction and other accommodations are not yet a standard part of the event."<sup>341</sup>

**Right:** São Paulo Pride, 2024. Credit: APOLGBT-SP Collection.

<sup>334</sup> "At Pride Toronto, we are committed to creating an accessible experience for people with disabilities no matter how they choose to interact with us, whether it's as an Attendee/Guest, Volunteer, Artist/Performer, Vendor, Job Applicant, Employee, Board Member, Partner, or Sponsor." Pride Toronto's page has been updated to reflect accessibility accommodations for the 2025 Pride events. See Pride Toronto, "Accessibility for Festival Weekend," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.pridetoronto.com/accessibility-for-festival>.

<sup>335</sup> Dublin Pride, "Everything You Need to Know About Accessibility at Dublin Pride 2024 – Dublin Pride is Committed to Improving the Accessibility Support Available at this Year's Parade and Festival," GCN, May 20, 2024, <https://gcn.ie/accessibility-dublin-pride-2024>.

<sup>336</sup> York Pride's page has been updated to reflect accessibility accommodations for the 2025 Pride events. See York Pride, "Accessibility," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://www.yorkpride.org.uk/accessibility>.

<sup>337</sup> Bi Pride UK, "Accessibility and Welfare – Accessibility Report 2024," <https://biprideuk.org/accessibility-2024/#:-text=The%20step%2Dfree%20entrance%20to,and%20foyer%20on%20the%20right>; Bi Pride UK, "About Bi Pride UK – We Will Continuously Create a Safe Space for Bi People in the UK," <https://biprideuk.org/about>.

<sup>338</sup> Pride in London's page has been updated to reflect accessibility accommodations for the 2025 Pride events. See Pride in London, "Accessibility," accessed June 11, 2025, <https://prideinlondon.org/parade/accessibility>.

<sup>339</sup> Lila M., survey response 75.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid



In Poland, accessibility is “an increasingly common standard,” with Polish Sign Language interpretation being available, platforms and routes being adapted for wheelchair users, and large events designating quiet zones for neurodivergent people.<sup>342</sup> In Jamaica, a respondent told Outright that Community Fest Ja’s Spectral Rave “had an outdoor area with seating for those unable to stand for the entire event. This zone is also quieter for those who cannot manage excessive noise.”<sup>343</sup>

In Malawi, an activist reported that the challenges with accessibility made it difficult for participants to fully experience and enjoy the Pride events.<sup>344</sup> A respondent based in the U.S. shared that, “I have attended Pride in San Diego, Los Angeles, and New York. None were accessible in any capacity—visual and audio needs, as well as physical access needs, were not considered.”<sup>345</sup> Dhaka Pride in Bangladesh remains virtual, given the contextual challenges, but a participant shared that there were no accommodations made for people with visual or hearing needs: “There is no mention of provisions such as sign language interpretation, captions for videos, or Braille guides that would have enhanced accessibility for the deaf and blind communities.”<sup>346</sup>

Respondents cited inadequate financial resources as the primary challenge preventing them from creating disability-inclusive spaces.<sup>347</sup> Yet some groups with minimal resources undertook to at least take steps toward accessibility. In Suriname, an activist acknowledged that, “Not all activities were accessible but we try to ensure that we have safe venues, sign language interpreter at some of the events, wheelchair accessible locations (if these were not available [an]other participant would help the person in the wheelchair), [and] accessible washroom facilities.”<sup>348</sup> A Nepali group also strives to achieve disability inclusion: “Due to structural barriers in our country and lack of funds, I have not been able to install sensory, earplugs, ramps everywhere possible, and so on. We have, however, met with other accessible needs like sign language interpretation, captioning, and braille signage.”<sup>349</sup>

Meanwhile, queer activists with disabilities organize around sensitization and awareness-raising for other LGBTIQ groups. In Viet Nam, “During VietPride Week in HCMC [Ho Chi Minh City], a deaf LGBTIQ+ group hosted a community event where everyone came to learn about deaf queer culture and sign language.”<sup>350</sup>

In Kenya, where there are no public Pride events, disability justice and inclusion remain indispensable: “We normally prefer disability friendly facilities for our safe space meetings, or Pride events and entertainment. True inclusion means centering the voices of queer people with disabilities in leadership, advocacy, and visibility—ensuring Pride is for everyone, not just the nondisabled.”<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Aleksandra Muzińska, co-founder of LGBTQ+ organization Fundusz dla Odmiany / For a Change Fund, survey response 185.

<sup>343</sup> Nicolette Bryan, Chief Organizer of Community Fest Jamaica, survey response 269.

<sup>344</sup> Joel Sibale, survey response 236.

<sup>345</sup> Alex S. (pseudonym), survey response 293.

<sup>346</sup> Imran B. (pseudonym), survey response 126.

<sup>347</sup> Survey responses 234 and 323 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

<sup>348</sup> Nirul H. (pseudonym), survey response 45.

<sup>349</sup> Pratichhya Chapagain, Vice President of Rainbow Disability Nepal, survey response 115.

<sup>350</sup> Zoé, survey response 291.

<sup>351</sup> Ruth B., (pseudonym), survey response 237.



## XIII. Conclusion

This report affirms that Pride in all its forms is a crucial force for LGBTIQ visibility, inclusion, and resistance. LGBTIQ communities have braved intensifying political repression, legal restrictions, and safety concerns to creatively affirm their existence and demand inclusion. Globally, Pride reflects the diversity and resilience of LGBTIQ organizing and new approaches to centering historically excluded voices and forging connections with broader social justice movements. As the year 2025 progresses, the rights of LGBTIQ people to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, including through Pride and LGBTIQ visibility events, remain under attack globally. There is an increased urgency for our movements to hold the line and protect the right to protest through Pride, as well as for sustained advocacy efforts to surmount oppressive regimes. The threat to human rights protections requires our collective effort and the uplifting of underrepresented 2SLGBTIQ+ populations. Pride organizers globally should adopt more equitable approaches to center people with disabilities, Black and Indigenous queer communities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and queer people in conflict zones in order to contribute to creating the world we want—a world characterized by radical inclusion, standing in sharp contrast to the exclusionary and divisive political agenda that would seek to limit our freedoms.

Outright is steadfastly committed to protecting LGBTIQ lives everywhere. We call on LGBTIQ movements to recommit to solidarity for all, show up safely and in diverse ways with equitable representation, and preserve our ability to protest, celebrate, march, and reimagine Pride as a safe and accessible space for all LGBTIQ people.





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Outright is deeply grateful to the 2SLGBTIQ+ activists and people interviewed for this report, as well as the respondents to our online surveys. We extend our appreciation to organizers of Prides and other LGBTIQ visibility events worldwide, in different challenging contexts. As always, we work in solidarity with you to build a world in which all LGBTIQ people are free, safe, and able to be visible.

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# Annex: Status of Pride Around the World in 2024

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**In 2024, activists in the following 100 UN member states around the world held at least**

**one public Pride or LGBTIQ visibility event:** Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, The Bahamas, Bangladesh (online only), Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Eswatini, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, The Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saint Lucia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad & Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

**Among these 100 UN member states where Pride was held in 2024, activists in at least 65**

**states were able to hold Pride events in more than one city:** Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

**In the following 93 UN member states, Outright did not identify any public Pride or LGBTIQ visibility events in 2024:**

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo (Republic of the), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Dominica, DRC, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Rwanda, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Vincent & The Grenadines, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, The Comoros, The United Arab Emirates, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.



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