

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **GHANA: AUTHORITIES MUST END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTI PEOPLE AND LGBTI RIGHTS ACTIVISTS**

Authorities in Ghana must immediately end discrimination against LGBTI people and protect those who are defending their rights, Amnesty International said today after it received information about the raid and closure of the offices of LGBT+ Rights Ghana Association that opened on 31 January in the capital Accra.

Consensual sexual relations between men are still criminalized in Ghana. Over the weekend, media reported that Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo told a religious gathering that legalizing same-sex marriage will never happen under his presidency.

According to information obtained by Amnesty International, LGBT+ Rights Ghana office was raided and shut down on 24 February 2021 by security forces. This was preceded by an outcry from some religious leaders and politicians who publicly called for the office to be closed.

Opened on 31 January, the premises of LGBT+ Rights was rented from a landlord who, according to reports, has since denounced the organisation to the authorities, saying he will not tolerate activities in support of LGBTI persons' rights on his property.

In their official twitter account, LGBT+ Rights Ghana confirmed the raid stating their safety was being threatened. The group added that traditional leaders also previously threatened to burn down the office and the police didn't help.

Amnesty International reiterates its calls on authorities in Ghana to publicly acknowledge the legitimacy and important work of human rights defenders, including LGBT+ rights defenders, who have the right to carry out their lawful activities without any discrimination or fear of reprisals, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Our organisation recalls the 2014 resolution adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights calling on State Parties to ensure that human rights defenders work in an enabling environment that is free of stigma, reprisals or criminal prosecution as a result of their human rights protection activities, including the rights of sexual minorities."

Last year, Amnesty International highlighted the discrimination and violence LGBTI people continued to face amid an increase in verbal attacks against them from religious and political leaders and from the media. Plans to introduce comprehensive sex education in schools in 2019 were met with public outrage, largely due to widespread fear that the new curriculum would teach children about same-sex relations in Ghana.