

Press Release

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South African Institute of Race Relations

The power of ideas

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The Eastern Cape is the most homophobic province - IRR report

Violence against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community is most common in the Eastern Cape Province. This is one of the findings in the IRR's November 2017 Fast Facts report.

Although South Africa boasts one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world, discrimination and violence against the LGBT community remains rampant. Four out of ten LGBT South Africans know of someone who was murdered for being or suspected of being part of the LGBT community. Black LGBT people are twice as likely as white LGBT people to know of someone being murdered on these grounds – which partially explains why only half of black respondents are completely open about their sexuality. Furthermore, a fifth of LGBT people have been threatened with violence.

Some provinces demonstrated much more hostility towards the LGBT community than others – LGBT people in the Eastern Cape are three times more likely to be punched, hit, kicked or beaten than in other provinces.

Positive trends, however, have also been identified in South Africa:

- Almost 80% of LGBT people have indicated that they have not experienced any discrimination by a healthcare provider.
- More than two thirds (67%) of South Africans surveyed have indicated that they would strongly like, somewhat like or not care about living next to homosexuals.
- A slight majority of South Africans (51%) agree that the Constitution should provide protections for lesbian and gay people compared to 29% who disagree and 16% who neither agree nor disagree.
- Six out of ten South Africans disagree that being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex should be criminalised.

Research analyst Gerbrandt van Heerden notes that education can play a key role in shifting people's perspectives on sexuality in a more positive direction. "People with a tertiary education in Africa are almost three times as likely to be tolerant towards homosexuals as people who have no formal education." Van Heerden concludes by saying that "a progressive constitution coupled with an education system that reinforces the value of that constitution can go a long way in promoting tolerance and acceptance of the LGBT community".

Ends.