



**St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status,**

Jason Jones People's Foundation,

Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality,

and

ILGA-North America and the Caribbean

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The Advocates for Human Rights (“The Advocates”) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law since its founding in 1983. The Advocates conduct a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States, including LGBTIQ+ individuals who have experienced discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. The Advocates also partner with a global network of LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders on reporting to the United Nations.

The Advocates had the expert support of **Khaleem Ali** in writing this report. Khaleem is a Trinidadian Attorney-at-Law and human rights defender based in Saint Lucia with more than a decade of experience in activism. He attended multiple sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and meetings of the UN Human Rights Committee (“ICCPR”) as an expert on human rights issues in the Caribbean Region, namely, the death penalty and LGBTIQ+ rights. He has previously Chaired the Working Group on Women and Gender at the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty and now Chairs the Latin America and Caribbean Working Group for UNODC’s GenJust Programme. Khaleem currently serves on the board of the Greater Caribbean for Life; a regional entity focused on the abolition of the Death Penalty.

Jason Jones People’s Foundation (JJPF) is a membership led, international human rights organization based in the Caribbean, working for the representation and enforcement of fundamental human rights as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The JJPF is committed to supporting vulnerable communities through human rights advocacy, scholarship and

social programs. The foundation works steadfastly towards ensuring that Caribbean nations ensure human rights standards and are guided by international frameworks enshrined in human rights instruments that secure equitable and dignified representation to all citizens. Additionally, the organization intensively advocates for the constitutional reforms required to harmonize with UN charters of human rights. The JJPF is managed by Caribbean advocates and is sustained through membership subscriptions and grant funding. In addition to the foundation's global outreach missions, the JJPF hosts a media platform for Caribbean scholarship. The organization supports research, training and social programs which facilitate and strengthen the continued work of team leaders in their respective areas of expertise in human rights advocacy.

Eastern Caribbean Alliance for Diversity and Equality (ECADE) is an independent umbrella of human rights organisations operating in the small islands in the eastern Caribbean from the Virgin Islands to Grenada. The Alliance's core membership comprises organisations representing the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) community in the sub-region. Associate membership comprises organisations working intersectionally. ECADE currently serves twenty-six organisations in nine countries. Over the last decade, ECADE has supported varying UN, OAS, and Commonwealth high-level advocacy efforts, with the CSW and the UPR mechanisms being the most frequently utilized reporting and engagement opportunities.

ILGA-North America and the Caribbean (ILGA-NAC) is a regional network of civil society organizations committed to advancing the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) people across the United States, Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean. As part of the global ILGA World federation, ILGA-NAC works to strengthen regional collaboration, support advocacy efforts, and promote inclusive, rights-based policy and legal frameworks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual activity (“CSSSA”) between adults significantly impacts the lives of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and other gender or sexual minorities (“LGBTIQ+”) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (the “State”). Namely, it contributes to the risk of violence, discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of protection from law enforcement. LGBTIQ+ individuals also report widespread harassment in public spaces, schools, workplaces, and within their families.
2. The State lacks legal protection for LGBTIQ+ people against discrimination in housing, education, and employment. The laws do not provide transgender and non-binary individuals with legal gender recognition; do not prohibit, or otherwise, regulate so-called “conversion therapies;” do not prohibit medically unnecessary interventions aimed at modifying the sex characteristics of intersex minors without their free, prior, and full informed consent; nor may same-sex couples register their partnerships as a civil union or marriage.
3. First-hand information from LGBTIQ+ Vincentians, gathered through interviews and reports by international organizations, shows the Government has failed to uphold its human rights obligations regarding sexual and gender minorities in several key areas—resulting in widespread violence, stigma, and marginalization. The Government, now under new leadership for the first time in almost 30 years – with a supermajority in the Parliament – has the opportunity to advance an inclusive legislative agenda.¹
4. In this report, we use the acronym LGBTIQ+ to refer to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and other sexual and gender minorities. These terms necessarily do not include everyone who may experience violations of their human rights on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and/or sex characteristics (“SOGIESC”), which is why we also include a “+” with the acronym. Any use of a modified acronym is intentional in that we are speaking only about certain members of the LGBTIQ+ population.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

National Human Rights Institution (“NHRI”); National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow Up (“NMRF”)

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented

5. In its Third-Cycle review, the Government received and accepted twelve recommendations to establish an independent NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles, including the completion of a feasibility study related thereto.² The State also received and accepted one recommendation pertaining to the establishment of a human rights institution to observe the national human rights situation and implement international human rights treaties.³
6. The Government established the National Human Rights Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in May 2016, which is inter-ministerial and endowed with the ability to consult

with other stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in the implementation of its mandate.⁴ The State does not, however, currently have an independent NHRI that satisfies the minimum standards of the Paris Principles.⁵

7. The Organization of American States, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, created a five-year strategy for the Caribbean which includes “creating greater observance of and guarantees of human rights.”⁶ This strategy includes providing technical assistance and capacity building to all actors and deepening links with NHRIs.⁷
8. In its Second-Cycle review, the Government accepted the recommendation to establish an NHRI and conduct a feasibility study, with support from international partners.⁸ In March 2022, the Government reaffirmed its commitment to establish an NHRI and noted that it “would liaise with interested members of the international community to expedite its progress.”⁹ As of January 2024, however, the Government had yet to conduct a feasibility study or implement an NHRI.¹⁰

Equality & Non-Discrimination

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented

9. In its Third-Cycle review, the State received and noted 17 recommendations pertaining to LGBTIQ+ people, including to decriminalize CSSSA by reforming or repealing Sections 146 and 148 of the Criminal Code, to launch awareness campaigns with civil society organizations addressing discriminatory norms and attitudes against LGBTIQ+ people, and to adopt legislation that prohibits any form of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.¹¹ The Government has undertaken no voluntary commitments to implement these recommendations.
10. Sexual conduct between consenting adults of the same sex remains a crime. Section 146 criminalizes anal sex by punishing anyone who “commits buggery with any other person” or “permits any person to commit buggery with him or her” with imprisonment of up to ten years.¹² Section 148 punishes anyone who, “whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another person of the same sex, or procures or attempts to procure another person of the same sex to commit an act of gross indecency with him or her” with imprisonment of up to five years.¹³
11. Further, the Criminal Code specifically defines rape as an act done by a man to a woman, which means that non-consensual sex between people of the same sex, while criminal, does not meet the legal definition of rape.¹⁴
12. In *Johnson v. Attorney General*,¹⁵ two gay men who were born in the State – but now live abroad because they fear persecution at home – challenged the constitutionality of Sections 146 and 148 of the Criminal Code, citing violations of their fundamental rights, including the rights to privacy, liberty, freedom of expression, and protection from inhumane treatment.¹⁶ The Attorney General for the State argued the law should be upheld because of public morality and the “increasingly high cost of supplying medication to persons [living] with HIV.”¹⁷ Justice Esco Henry – sitting as a High Court Judge within the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court – ruled against the claimants in February 2024.¹⁸ Although the argument that decriminalizing CSSSA between adults increases the number of HIV cases has been disproven, Justice Henry stated that the threat of a “public health crisis occasioned

by an unstemmed deluge of new HIV cases is a real and serious concern, which reasonably justifies a public health response of the kind embedded in [Sections 146 and 148].”¹⁹

13. Justice Henry also pointed to the testimonies of a coalition of Christian churches as evidence that criminalizing CSSSA between adults was “an accurate reflection of the public morality standards by which Vincentian society governs itself.”²⁰ The High Court ultimately ruled against the claimants on procedural grounds stating that since neither claimant was a resident of the State any longer, they had no legal standing to bring such a case and had, in any event, failed to provide sufficient evidence of historic rights violations that demonstrate the harm caused to them by the existence of the law.²¹ Justice Henry acknowledged that Sections 146 and 148 infringed on the claimants’ right to freedom of expression, but concluded this interference was justified by the State’s interest in public health and morality. Justice Henry stated that she “[harbored] no doubt that [criminalizing CSSSA has] a rational connection to [public health and public morality concerns] within the context of [the State’s] limited resources and the mores relied on.”²²
14. Interested parties were permitted to participate in the litigation by presenting both written and oral arguments.²³ A coalition of ten Christian churches mobilized politically and presented oral arguments.²⁴ In November 2019, the coalition organized a rally in Kingstown under the theme “A Call to Righteousness, Calling Our Nation to God” to demonstrate against the *Johnson* case. The leader of the coalition, Mandella Peters, described the case as “an assault on Christian beliefs about sexual relations” and asserted that the litigation was the first step of an “LGBT Agenda” in the State, aiming to “legitimize same-sex marriage” and “the promotion of transgenderism.”²⁵ Reverend Davis, who was also a fervent speaker at the rally, testified in the case. He expressed that the repeal of the law would “enable the LGBT agenda to be forced upon a community whose religious ethos is totally at odds with it.”²⁶ Finally, Pastor Haynes, another coalition member, testified that the rights of churches and their members “would be adversely affected” with the repeal of Sections 146 and 148, including their right to seek and disseminate information in opposition to consensual same-sex sexual activity, their equality before the law, their right to enjoy a healthy environment, and their right to freedom of religion, among others.²⁷
15. In *Johnson*, former Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Richard Browne, testified that although the police has the power to arrest people for CSSSA, “such offenses are neither investigated nor prosecuted.”²⁸ He further testified that “consenting adults, whether male or female, are not generally prosecuted under [Sections 146 and 148].”²⁹ Despite these assertions, there is no *de jure* moratorium on the enforcement of this law, leaving LGBTQ+ vulnerable to police officers’ whims. The criminalized nature of this matter, as understood by the public as opposed to what is actually codified in law, creates a culture where extortion is plausible.³⁰ Even when not specifically asked, an LGBTQ+ person is often disempowered in a confrontation and make confessions out of fear for any perceived consequences of significance to them.
16. The Grenadines Chapter of the Caribbean HIV/AIDS Partnership, called VincyCHAP SVG, also participated in the proceedings by filing written arguments.³¹ In reaction to the ruling in *Johnson*, VincyCHAP stated: “It is a dark day in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for minorities who are LGBT persons. This has now [weaponized] hate, it has now [weaponized] discrimination, it has now [weaponized] homophobia, sanctioned by the highest court.”³²

17. The ruling in *Johnson* puts Saint Vincent and the Grenadines out of step with its Eastern Caribbean neighbors who are departing from anti-LGBTIQ+ colonial-era laws. Between 2022 and 2024, courts in four countries – Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis – struck down laws that criminalized CSSSA.³³ Belize also struck down their CSSSA law in 2016.³⁴ The State now remains one of a handful of Caribbean nations that still prescribes jail terms for LGBTIQ+ individuals.³⁵ The State is one of only five UN Member States in the Americas that have legal frameworks that explicitly criminalize CSSSA.³⁶ Despite the ruling in *Johnson* and Uganda’s Constitutional Court upholding the Anti-Homosexuality Act in 2024,³⁷ rulings upholding criminalization remain outliers.³⁸
18. Anti-LGBTIQ+ laws, such as those criminalizing CSSSA between adults, hinder the efforts to protect public health and tackle the HIV epidemic. Studies show that these laws have negative health outcomes and drive people underground and away from vital health services, including HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and care.³⁹ Instead, it is vital that everyone has equal access to essential services without fear, stigma, or discrimination.⁴⁰
19. Laws that criminalize CSSSA between adults encourage physical abuse and discrimination even when the law is rarely, if ever, enforced.⁴¹ Laws like Sections 146 and 148 help legitimize ostracism, hostility, and abuse against LGBTIQ+ people, where both State and non-State actors feel emboldened to discriminate and/or be violent.⁴² Some individuals interviewed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in 2023 explicitly linked such discrimination to the “buggery” and “gross indecency” provisions of the Criminal Code.⁴³
20. According to the HRW report, a 25-year-old gay man stated that “[p]eople feel they can harass us because of the laws. If people are having an argument, that’s [their] justification for homophobia. They say it’s the laws, that it’s illegal.”⁴⁴ Additionally, a 28-year-old lesbian, when asked about whether police have been helpful in the face of violent acts committed against her, stated: “Nothing would come from going to the police. Because of the laws, same sex [relations] are illegal. [The police] would ask, ‘what triggered him?’ ‘Me being gay.’ ‘Okay, then he has the right.’”⁴⁵
21. Nearly all of the LGBTIQ+ people interviewed by HRW reported at least one recent incident of physical or verbal abuse, threats, sexual violence, or harassment. Those that sought police assistance were ignored and, in some cases, police openly discriminated against them.⁴⁶ Most interviewees stated they generally did not think to ask the police for help as they expected to experience discrimination. Others stated that they believed that the laws criminalizing same-sex sexual activity contributed to their experiences of violence, insecurity, and lack of support from the police.⁴⁷ Refer to Appendix A for more personal narratives relating to incidents of abuse.
22. LGBTIQ+ people in the State have reported experienced harassment by police when reporting other crimes. A 25-year-old non-binary person went to the police in March 2022 after someone tried to burn down the building where they live. The police officer used a homophobic slur to refer to the non-binary person.⁴⁸
23. LGBTIQ+ people have also reported violence and harassment by non-State actors. HRW documented experiences of verbal abuse and intimidation in public spaces based on sexual orientation and/or gender expression.⁴⁹ Most LGBTIQ+ people interviewed by Human Rights Watch in 2023 said they had been verbally intimidated, often just when walking

down the street. For some interviewees, such harassment is part of daily life, and they live in fear of a situation escalating and being physically attacked as a result. Refer to Appendix A for personal narratives relating to violence and harassment by non-State actors.

24. Some LGBTIQ+ people believe their gender expression triggered mistreatment. A 27-year-old transgender woman was attacked in October 2022 because of the way she dressed and looked. She stated: “I came into town. I had a crop top on. Someone threw a bottle at me and said, ‘fire upon you.’ The bottle didn’t hit me. It’s very hard. Being trans, you have to try to be straight. People can kill you. People throw stones and bottles.”⁵⁰
25. For cisgender men, being perceived as feminine may lead to harassment. A 25-year-old bisexual man stated: “I am more masculine passing now than before, than when [I was] growing up. My teenage years and early 20s were hard. Because of puberty, I changed, but I also changed because you want to be under the radar. A bit of this is deliberate. Even if you are comfortable with who you are, people still point out like, ‘You’re being feminine. Why is your voice so high?’”⁵¹ He also stated: “Walking down the street, people would say [homophobic] stuff to you. I have really bad anxiety, so it leads to many panic attacks. If they think you’re walking with [other] queers, you are subjected to much verbal harassment.”⁵²
26. In addition to generalized violence and discrimination in public spaces, LGBTIQ+ people often endure mistreatment and abuse by their families.⁵³ Most of the LGBTIQ+ people interviewed by HRW said their family members had physically and verbally abused them. For many interviewees, family violence deprived them of a social safety net, sometimes leading to a precarious life, such as experiencing homelessness. Others said that family rejection was often couched in moralistic terms, echoing the homophobic rhetoric preached in some churches, which are a cornerstone of social life and shape social attitudes. Refer to Appendix A for personal narratives relating to mistreatment and abuse by families.
27. LGBTIQ+ people have also reported bullying at school, prompting several of them to drop out—and interrupting their right to education—after receiving no support from teachers or administration officials. One gay man recalled how his classmates beat him and broke his arm.⁵⁴
28. The Constitution does not explicitly include SOGIESC as protected grounds for discrimination.⁵⁵ During its Third-Cycle review, however, the Government asserted that the constitution protects against all forms of discrimination, including those based on sexual orientation.⁵⁶ Yet the State still lacks legislation that explicitly protects individuals on the basis of SOGIESC.⁵⁷
29. The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court established a legal framework for sentencing homicide that sets out factors to be considered in elevating a homicide to the category of “exceptionally serious” and potentially justifying life imprisonment.⁵⁸ Sexual orientation is one such factor.⁵⁹ In all other respects, the State does not prohibit incitement to hatred, violence, or discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC.⁶⁰
30. There is also a significant lacuna of laws that create barriers to LGBTIQ+ people’s full enjoyment of their human rights. These include: no protection against discrimination in housing⁶¹ or healthcare⁶² based on SOGIESC; no laws permitting civil unions or same-sex marriage;⁶³ there are no bans on or regulations of so-called “conversion therapies;”⁶⁴ and

there are no laws restricting medically unnecessary interventions aimed to modify the sex characteristics of intersex minors without their free, prior, and full informed consent.⁶⁵

31. In addition, there are no laws that permit legal gender recognition or non-binary identities.⁶⁶ This means that individuals are only recognized as their sex assigned at birth—no matter their gender expression—which can have serious implications for transgender and non-binary individuals, principally identification that does not match an individual’s outward appearance.
32. There are no laws that prevent discrimination in employment based on SOGIESC.⁶⁷ For job seekers that identify as LGBTIQ+, employment discrimination is common. While unemployment is generally high in the State, LGBTIQ+ people face significant barriers to employment.⁶⁸
33. Many people interviewed by HRW said they were not hired, or had been fired, explicitly because of their sexual orientation.⁶⁹ Some lesbian and bisexual women that were interviewed stated that they faced sexual harassment at work because of their sexual orientation, gender, or both.⁷⁰ Such barriers to employment are especially detrimental for LGBTIQ+ people who do not have a social or familial safety net upon which to rely.⁷¹ Refer to Appendix A for personal narratives relating to discrimination in the workplace.
34. Every LGBTIQ+ person interviewed by HRW said they wished to leave the country and envisioned their future abroad due, in part, to homophobic or transphobic violence and discrimination by State and non-State actors.⁷²
35. Anti-LGBTIQ+ laws and stigma have real economic costs in terms of the lost human capital and productivity of talented people who have migrated to more inclusive countries, in addition to diminishing their likelihood of returning. This diminishes competitiveness in the region, with clear costs to businesses and the economy.⁷³

Gender-based violence

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Partially Implemented

36. In its Third-Cycle review, the State received and noted one recommendation pertaining to gender-based violence against women, which called on the State to enact legislation criminalizing sexual harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.⁷⁴ The Government has undertaken some measures to implement this recommendation.
37. Although sexual violence remains a major challenge in the Caribbean, gender-based violence has diminished in the State through anti-violence campaigns and government initiatives.⁷⁵ For example, the Government joined the international campaign for 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, which occurred in late November 2021.⁷⁶ The Government also put in place anti-violence campaigns in schools and communities.⁷⁷ And with support from Canada’s Build Back Equal Project, the Government developed a gender-based violence task force to improve prevention, coordination, data analysis, case management, and survivor services.⁷⁸
38. Section 13 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.⁷⁹ But there is no comprehensive sexual harassment legislation that would protect LGBTQ+ people from

abuse outside of domestic partners or that would provide a legal pathway for civil damages in the event of sexual harassment in the workplace.⁸⁰ Nor is there a safe home available anywhere in the country for individuals fleeing sexual or gender-based violence.⁸¹ Although the Government criminalizes rape, the language is too narrow, as it only defines rape as non-consensual intercourse by a cisgender man against a cisgender woman—excluding rape by a woman against a man or rape between men or between women.⁸² As there is no legal gender recognition, transgender and non-binary people are also only classified as their sex assigned at birth and, thus, may not be able to file charges of rape.⁸³

39. An intersectional approach is critical to understanding and addressing gender-based violence against women. “Woman,” does not just reflect female sex, it encompasses a diverse and vast group of individuals with varying gender identities and sexualities.⁸⁴ The binary understanding of sex and gender, “male” and “female,” is overly simplistic and does not reflect the actual lived experiences of the full spectrum of humanity.⁸⁵ The Government is entrusted with the core protection of the individuals which it serves and violence against LGBTIQ+ women is prevalent in the State.⁸⁶ The absence of legal recognition for transgender individuals and the lack of protections for diverse gender identities in the State perpetuates a culture of violence against all women.
40. For example, many lesbian and bisexual women experience sexual violence and sexual harassment in addition to other forms of violence related to their sexual orientation.⁸⁷ Rather than rely on the Government to protect them from violence, some women have resolved to equipped themselves with tools and techniques to stand-up to potential attackers.⁸⁸

Right to education – General

Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Partially Implemented

41. In its Third-Cycle review, the State received and noted two recommendations pertaining to education and sexuality, including to incorporate reproductive health education in the mandatory school curriculum and to align the existing family life education curriculum with the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education.⁸⁹ The Government has undertaken some measures to implement these recommendations.
42. In 2023, the Caribbean Examinations Council revised its Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate Examination Social Studies syllabus to explicitly address the LGBTQ+ community. In the module on the “Individual, Family and Society,” students “examine causes and effects of contemporary social issues that influence and affect persons in Caribbean family life” with content relating to the social issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community.⁹⁰ Although some teachers have expressed discomfort in addressing these subjects due to their personal beliefs, most are embracing the idea that teaching about LGBTQ+ matters encourages tolerance and prepares students for the diverse workplaces and communities they will encounter.⁹¹
43. The Government has yet to implement a comprehensive sexuality education.⁹² The lack of safe and inclusive school environments contributes to bullying and other forms of violence, which impact the right to education of LGBTIQ+ children and adults.⁹³

44. Most of the people interviewed by HRW experienced stigma and discrimination from teachers and fellow students. Many endured physical and verbal abuse, often accompanied by sexual harassment and violence, which led to some leaving school early, setting them on a path to economic and social marginalization.⁹⁴ When interviewees recounted instances where they were bullied many said teachers were not helpful and did not feel that they could ask them for protection.⁹⁵ Refer to Appendix A for personal narratives relating to discrimination and abuse in education.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

45. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines:

- Leverage the existing NMRF mechanisms to collect data and report on discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals and to develop research and oversight of LGBTIQ+ rights.
- Engage with regional international organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, to access resources to conduct a study on the feasibility of developing an NHRI.
- Repeal Sections 148, 146(a), and 146(c) of the Criminal Code.
- Enact comprehensive legislation that explicitly protects individuals from discrimination by State and non-State actors on the basis of SOGIESC.
- Enact legislation that prohibits incitement to hatred, violence, or discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC.
- Enact legislation that restricts medically unnecessary interventions aimed to modify the sex characteristics of intersex minors without their free, prior, and full informed consent.
- Enact legislation that prohibits or restricts so-called “conversion therapies.”
- In collaboration with non-governmental organizations serving the LGBTIQ+ community, draft and enact legislation that permits legal gender recognition, including recognition of non-binary identities.
- Enact legislation that makes civil unions and marriages available to same-sex couples.
- Collect and publish data on gender-based violence against women and its intersection with sexual orientation and gender identity on an annual basis.
- Annually publish data on progress made toward the goals related to LGBTIQ+ rights in collaboration with LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations.
- Develop, implement, and report on the use of public education and anti-stigma campaigns to address homophobia, transphobia, and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, fostering a culture of respect and inclusion in wider society.
- Amend Section 123 of the Criminal Code to explicitly criminalize rape regardless of the assailant’s or victim’s sex, gender identity, or sexuality.
- Facilitate community development by meaningfully engaging with NGOs that provide essential services to victims of gender- and sexuality-based violence, such as through

funding, data collection and analysis, regulatory support, strategic partnerships, and capacity building.

- Provide professional development and training to educators on how to create a safe space for LGBTIQ+ students in both primary and secondary school.
- Implement comprehensive sexuality education in line with international standards and that includes unbiased and scientific information on LGBTIQ+ people and sexuality.
- Establish anti-bullying and discrimination policies for secondary and primary schools that create a mechanism to report and adjudicate incidents.

¹ Dánica Coto, *One of the World's Longest Serving Democratic Leaders Loses Election in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, ASSOCIATED PRESS NEWS, November 28, 2025, accessed [Apr. 2, 2026], <https://apnews.com/article/st-vincent-grenadines-gonsalves-godwin-friday-election-19dae7a73c91ccad643ade4b1ed08cba>.

² Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, (Jan. 6, 2022), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/10, ¶¶ 81.33 Establish and operationalize the national human rights institute in accordance with the Paris Principles, in consultation with stakeholders, in particular human rights organizations (Haiti); ¶ 81.34 Continue to take substantive measures to establish a national human rights institution and develop a national action plan of human rights for systematic and comprehensive actions for promotion and protection of human rights for all people in the country (Indonesia); ¶ 81.35 Consider establishing an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (India); ¶ 81.36 Consider establishing an independent national human rights institution, with a broad mandate to protect human rights, with adequate human and financial resources, and in accordance with the Paris Principles (Peru); ¶ 81.37 Advance the goal to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Malaysia); ¶ 81.39 Establish an independent national human rights institution, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Mexico); ¶ 81.40 Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Ukraine) (Chile) (France); ¶ 81.41 Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles as a matter of priority (Australia); ¶ 81.42 Continue its efforts to create a national human rights institution with a broad mandate to protect human rights and with sufficient financial and human resources for its implementation (Algeria); ¶ 81.43 Establish an independent national human rights institution compliant with the Paris Principles (Finland); ¶ 81.44 Advance steps towards completion of feasibility studies related to the establishment of the national human rights institution (Georgia); ¶ 81.45 Continue its efforts to establish a national human rights institution that complies with the Paris Principles (Iraq).

³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, (Jan. 6, 2022), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/10, ¶ 81.38 Establish a human rights institution to observe the national human rights situation and in pursuance of an improvement to follow-up on recommendations and implementation of international human rights treaties (Marshall Islands).

⁴ Human Rights Council, *National Report Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 5 of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21*, (Oct. 15, 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/39/VCT/1, 4, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3949780/files/A_HRC_WG.6_39_VCT_1-EN.pdf.

⁵ Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, “Caribbean and the Americas,” accessed Jan. 31, 2026, <https://cfnhri.org/members/caribbean-and-americas>; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “SDG Indicators,” accessed Jan. 31, 2026, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database> (filtering database by indicator 16.a.1 from 2021 to 2024).

⁶ Organization of American States: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Five-Year Strategy for the Caribbean (2023–2027)*: Organization of American States, 12, accessed Feb. 5, 2026, https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/2024/PE2327_Caribbean_Report.pdf.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Human Rights Council, *National Report Submitted in Accordance with Paragraph 5 of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21*, (Oct. 15, 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/39/VCT/1, 4, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3949780/files/A_HRC_WG.6_39_VCT_1-EN.pdf.

⁹ Press Release, Human Rights Council, “Human Rights Council Adopts Outcomes of Universal Periodic Review of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Papua New Guinea, Tajikistan and Tanzania,” Mar. 23, 2022, accessed [Apr. 2, 2026], <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/human-rights-council-adopts-outcomes-universal-periodic-review-saint-vincent>.

¹⁰ St. Vincent Times, *St. Vincent Should Vow to Improve Human Rights Protection in 2024*, Jan. 1, 2024, accessed [Apr. 3, 2026], <https://www.stvincenttimes.com/st-vincent-should-vow-to-improve-human-rights-protection-in-2024>.

¹¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, (Jan. 6, 2022), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/49/10, ¶¶ 81.47 Launch, in dialogue with civil society organizations, awareness campaigns aimed at addressing discriminatory gender norms and attitudes, including those that affect the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex population (Uruguay); ¶ 81.48 Consider adopting legislation which provides full and effective protection against discrimination and prohibits direct, indirect and intersecting discrimination, including measures for its effective implementation, with

a particular emphasis on discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression (Chile); ¶ 81.49 Take all steps necessary to end discrimination against and stigmatization of LGBTI+ persons, including by amending the Criminal Code to decriminalize CSSSA (Ireland); ¶ 81.50 Decriminalize consensual adult same-sex relations and combat discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Italy); ¶ 81.51 Decriminalize sexual relations between consenting adults of the same sex and undertake concrete measures to combat stigma and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Portugal); ¶ 81.52 Reform laws under section 146 and 148 of the Criminal Code of 1988 related to discrimination and gender-based violence against women and LGBTQI+ persons, including by repealing provisions that may be used to criminalize consensual, same-sex sexual activity between adults, and establishing a law criminalizing domestic violence (United States of America); ¶ 81.53 Reaffirm its commitment to the principle of non-discrimination by encouraging the necessary debates for the prompt decriminalization of consensual sexual relations between adults of the same sex (Uruguay); ¶ 81.54 Adopt national anti-discrimination legislation, in particular for the LGBTQI+ population, including decriminalization of consensual same-sex relations (Costa Rica); ¶ 81.55 Decriminalize same-sex conduct between consenting adults by amending section 146 and 148 of the Criminal Code (Denmark); ¶ 81.56 Decriminalize same-sex relations and remove the buggery laws with respect to sexual acts between consenting adults (Israel); ¶ 81.57 Do not criminalize consensual sexual conduct between people of the same sex (Mexico); ¶ 81.58 Decriminalize consensual same-sex conduct, by abolishing section 148 of the Criminal Code (Netherlands); ¶ 81.59 Decriminalize consensual same-sex relations and review anti-discrimination legislation to ensure it provides comprehensive protection (Australia); ¶ 81.60 Decriminalize consensual sexual relationships between adults of the same sex and expand anti-discrimination legislation, to include a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (Iceland); ¶ 81.61 Decriminalize consensual homosexual relationships between adults and include legislation that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Spain); ¶ 81.62 Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including by repealing all laws criminalizing sexual relations between consenting adults (Canada); ¶ 81.134 Further strengthen legislation to prohibit any form of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or social status and especially to prevent any form of discrimination and harassment against women by including domestic violence as a criminal offence in the Domestic Violence Act (Marshall Islands).

¹² Criminal Code of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, chapter 8, § 146 ([1988]), accessed [Apr. 3, 2026], https://www.oas.org/en/sla/dlc/mesicic/docs/mesicic5_svg_annex8.pdf.

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¹⁴ Ibid, 13.

¹⁵ *Javin Johnson v. Attorney General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, SVGHCV 2019/0110, consolidated with *Sean MacLeish v. Attorney General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, SVGHCV 2019/0111 (Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, Feb. 16, 2024), <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/Javin-Johnson-v-Attorney-General-of-St-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines-Judgment.pdf>.

¹⁶ ILGA, *Laws On Us: A Global Overview of Legal Progress and Backtracking on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics*, by Lucas Ramon Mendos and Dhia Rezki Rohaizad (Geneva: ILGA, May 2024), 61, accessed [Apr. 3, 2026], https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Laws_On_Us_2024.pdf; *Javin Johnson v. Attorney General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, SVGHCV 2019/0110, consolidated with *Sean MacLeish v. Attorney General of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, SVGHCV 2019/0111 (Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court, Feb. 16, 2024), <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/Javin-Johnson-v-Attorney-General-of-St-Vincent-and-the-Grenadines-Judgment.pdf>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/06/svg-high-court-rejected-opportunity-uphold-human-rights>; Cristian González Cabrera, *SVG High Court Rejected Opportunity to Uphold Human Rights*, Human Rights Watch, May 6, 2024, accessed [Apr. 3, 2026], <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/05/06/svg-high-court-rejected-opportunity-uphold-human-rights>.

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²⁵ Ibid.

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Appendix A

Incidents of Abuse, Harassment, and Discrimination by the Public and/or Law Enforcement

- A 20-year-old gay man went to the Kingstown police station and gave a statement after he was attacked by a group of 10 men hurling homophobic slurs in Calliaqua, but he never heard back from the police. He did not follow up with them, partly because he felt they are not always helpful: “If I know the [policeman], then I go and tell him But sometimes they discriminate, depends on who is working.”⁹⁵
- A 58-year-old bisexual man interviewed in October 2022, stated he suffered a homophobic attack that caused permanent damage to his speech, vision, motor functions, memory, and balance. When he went to the police, they laughed at him and called him homophobic slurs.⁹⁵
- A 19-year-old gay man tried to file complaints at the Kingston Police Station several times, all related to harassment in public spaces, but he gave up once the police appeared to be unwilling to help. He stated: “You can’t walk in peace, people harass you. But I don’t feel like I can trust the police. They see me and they know I am gay, they don’t let us [gays] in the station. That isn’t right. If the police officer knows you’re gay, they will call you ‘bullerman’ or say, ‘How [come] your mother didn’t kill you, you’re a disgrace.’ They like to torment you. They talk in a way that [makes] you feel bad. They are supposed to protect, but they talk this kind of [language].”⁹⁵
- A 58-year-old bisexual man was hit in the head with a bottle in an attack that cracked his skull and put him in a coma.”⁹⁵
- Jeshua Bardoo, founder of Equal Rights, Access and Opportunities SVG Inc., held a pride event in public in June 2023. Bardoo was physically and verbally abused.⁹⁵
- A 22-year-old gay man stated he feels unsafe on a daily basis due to homophobia in his village, stating: “I don’t feel safe [in the village] because I’m afraid of homophobic attacks. Every time I go to the village, my neighbors say, ‘Your kind is not welcome.’ This happens every day, it happens because I’m gay. People throw bottles and rocks and stuff at me pretty much every day. I try not to look because violence is everywhere.”⁹⁵
- A 28-year-old gay man reported being verbally harassed with homophobic comments in public: “the verbal attacks on the street hurt more than the physical attacks”⁹⁵
- A 19-year-old gay man expressed feeling a constant, daily sense of insecurity due to violence he believes was motivated by homophobia. He has had items thrown at him while walking.⁹⁵
- A 43-year-old gay man from Bequia has been called “battyman” and sticks have been thrown at him. He stated: “Everyone feels like they can say anything.”⁹⁵

Incidents of Mistreatment or Abuse by Families

- A 26-year-old lesbian experienced verbal abuse and other forms of discrimination from both her mother and extended family because of her sexual orientation: “All the time I am told that I should change. Family members say that I need to take some dick to change. I take everything very seriously, but I don’t show it. My mother used to kick me out a lot, get in fights with me a lot, intentionally. She called me ‘street dog,’ all kinds of stuff. My mom kicked me out of the house. I was 19. [A friend] was generous enough to let me stay at her home for a couple of months. My mom got pregnant and called me to come help with my baby sister. I went back, and then I got kicked out again. She kicked me out because of my sexual orientation. I live at home now again, but any time she can come and kick me out again.”⁹⁵

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- A 26-year-old lesbian experienced verbal abuse and other forms of discrimination from both her mother and extended family due to her sexual orientation.⁹⁵
 - A 21-year-old bisexual woman said her family, particularly her mother and grandmother, is extremely homophobic. She stated: “If my mom sees gay people in TV shows, she says ‘we have to kill them,’” King explained. When King was 16 years old, a girl who had a crush on her told her mother that King was sleeping with multiple girls. Though the girl’s claim was not true, it triggered long-lasting discriminatory treatment and other difficulties for King at home: My mother sat me down, and told me I have to stop, ‘you can never do this again,’ and then she told me I had to go get tested for STDs. My mother took me to church [after this incident]. She has been incredibly cold towards me since. It was scary. I contemplated suicide because of this.”⁹⁵
 - A 29-year-old gay man was kicked out of his home by his brother because he was gay, which resulted in him experiencing homelessness. He stated: “My mom and dad died when I was seven years old. My aunt supported me [financially]. I was living with my brother and my aunt. Last October, my brother kicked me out of the house . . . I am living on the street right now. It is hard to find a place to live. I don’t have any money to rent a place. Many people live with their family, I can’t. When I see them [my family] on the street, they don’t speak to me.”⁹⁵
 - A 20-year-old gay man, who left home at a age 15 due to homophobia, lived on the street for around five years. He stated: “I used to sleep in an old, abandoned school, I survived by begging.”⁹⁵
 - A 22-year-old gay man faced homophobia from his uncle and grandmother when he lived with them. He became depressed and attempted suicide before being permanently thrown out. He stated: “[My uncle and grandmother] used to beat me a lot to change, especially when I would wear dresses. They threw me on the road because I was homosexual. I never looked back. This sent me to depression. I took a knife and started to cut my wrists and tried to take my life. This happened while I was living on the street for a year and some. I slept in an abandoned house in Kingstown, near a water pipe where I got water.”⁹⁵

Incidents of Mistreatment or Discrimination in the Workplace

- A 19-year-old gay sought a job at a supermarket in July 2022. He stated, that in reference to his sexuality and effeminate manner: “The person responsible [for hiring] said, ‘What would the customers say?’” The same man stated that he previously held a janitorial job at a dentist’s office until October 2022 when his boss told him that he “must stop working because the customers are talking, ‘why do they have a gay cleaning?’”⁹⁵
- A 29-year-old gay man got a job helping at a supermarket. His supervisor often talked negatively about gay people. When he was fired after only two months, his supervisor stated explicitly he was fired because he was gay. As a result, he does not have a job and begs for money on the street.⁹⁵
- A 27-year-old trans woman noted it was “very hard to get a job” and despite spending a lot of time submitting many applications she has never gotten a call back. She stated: “I even call [the employers], but nothing. More than one time, they have told me that they can’t hire someone ‘like me.’ When they see me, they say, ‘I will lose customers.’”⁹⁵
- A 22-year-old gay man tried to get a job at a supermarket and the person responsible for hiring told him, in reference to his sexuality: “The [other] workers will not be pleased about having [his] kind working [there].”⁹⁵
- A 25-year-old non-binary person works as a nurse. They stated they have experienced discrimination from his coworkers, even with patients present: “My coworkers make discriminatory comments. In the ambulance, there are three seats in the front. In the back, we put the patients. We are not required to sit with the patient once they are in the ambulance, and the back is really only for relatives. When I started working, I noticed it was very common that a lot of male attendants weren’t comfortable riding in the front with me because they probably have [a] preconceived notion that I was gay because of the way I dress, my hair, so they sat in the back.”⁹⁵

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- Two bisexual women work in their respective family businesses, but they expressed fears of discrimination if they ever needed to find another job. One of them, 21-years old, stated that “I work for myself and my mom. I’m afraid in the future, if I work for someone else, I will face discrimination. I’m afraid of sexual harassment in the workplace if they would ever find out that I am gay.”⁹⁵
 - A 19-year-old gay man resorted to begging because of the discrimination he faced in finding a job, he stated: “Sometimes I am so hungry It is hard for me as a gay in this country.”⁹⁵

Incidents of Discrimination and Abuse in Education

- A 19-year-old gay man stuck up for himself and developed a reputation for being tough in primary and secondary school, so bullies did not “come after” him. But due to a lack of family support, he dropped out of school when he was 15 years old.⁹⁵
- A 25-year-old bisexual man said that fellow students “don’t need concrete evidence [of your sexual orientation] to start teasing you.” He recalled a homophobic primary school classmate that would “batter [him and other gay students] with slurs, until [they] felt embarrassment and [would have] to leave.” And while he never got into physical altercations with schoolmates, he recalled someone throwing a glass bottle at him at school.”⁹⁵
- A 22-year-old gay man said bullying, including actual or attempted physical violence, in school was an everyday occurrence. He stated: “My classmates threw desks, pencils, and stools at me, and would say, ‘your kind are not welcome here.’” And he recalled being 17 years old when a group of classmates beat him and broke his arm.⁹⁵
- A 26-year-old lesbian said sexual harassment was acute when she was just 13 years old. She recalled a time where her friends set her up: “A girl and I, we went into a room [at school] together. And then she left the room, and I tried to get the door open but couldn’t. Then a boy came in the room. The boy tried to rape me. I kept screaming. My friends came to the door and opened the door. I reported the matter to a teacher. The principal and the police got involved. The boy got expelled from school. Sometimes the boy would pop up at the school, and I was scared. I got him thrown out. It wasn’t my fault, but I was scared because you don’t know what he could do [in retaliation].”⁹⁵