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CRD POSITION ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN SIERRA LEONE

Same-sex marriage is not recognized in Sierra Leone, and the country's laws prohibit male homosexual activity, punishable by life imprisonment, although enforcement is rare. Female same-sex activity is not explicitly criminalized.

Key Human Rights Concerns:

- **Discrimination:** LGBT individuals face widespread discrimination in employment, education, and housing, with many forced to hide their sexual orientation to avoid persecution.
- **Violence and Harassment:** LGBT individuals are vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse, including "planned rapes" aimed at "correcting" their sexual orientation.
- **Limited Access to Healthcare:** LGBT individuals may avoid seeking medical help due to fear of stigma and discrimination, exacerbating health issues like HIV/AIDS.
- **Lack of Legal Protection:** The Sierra Leone constitution does not protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity^{2 3 1}.

Recent Developments:

- In 2023, the Employment Act was passed, banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace.
- Despite this progress, LGBT individuals in Sierra Leone continue to face significant human rights challenges².

Human Rights Implications:

The same-sex marriage that took place in Waterloo, Sierra Leone, highlights the tension between the country's laws and the human rights of LGBT individuals. While the law prohibits same-sex

activity, it is essential to recognize the fundamental human rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Looking Forward:

Efforts to promote understanding, acceptance, and inclusivity are crucial in addressing the human rights concerns faced by LGBT individuals in Sierra Leone. By acknowledging and respecting the rights of all individuals, Sierra Leone can work towards creating a more equitable society.

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