

# U.S. Mission Belize LGBT Fact Sheet



## U.S. Government LGBT Policy

The U.S. Government is committed to the defense of the human rights of all persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. The U.S. State Department prioritizes the advancement of LGBT rights abroad to eliminate violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. The U.S. Government supports holding perpetrators of violence against LGBT individuals accountable, decriminalizing same-sex activity/relationships, and promoting public acceptance of LGBT.

*“The rights of LGBT people [are] an inseparable part of America’s promotion of human rights around the world. We have and will continue to voice our support for the LGBT and ally community around the world, including Belize. No one should be punished for who they are or who they love because LGBT rights are basic human rights.”*

- Vice President Joe Biden.

## U.S. Mission Belize Supports LGBT Community Through Advocacy

### Visit of Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) Francisco Palmieri

In April 2014, DAS Palmieri met with civil society and LGBT representatives to discuss the challenges facing NGOs and activists in Belize. Issues included the pending legal challenge to Section 53 of the Belize Criminal Code, the dangers and discrimination faced by the LGBTI community, and efforts to internationalize the issue.

### Media

In January 2014, the State Department released a public statement condemning the murder of transgender person Joseph Sanchez. The statement reasserted USG’s support for the human rights of persons from Belize’s LGBT community. In May 2014, U.S. Embassy Belmopan issued a press statement in support of IDAHO and the LGBT community in Belize.

### Visit of Under Secretary Maria Otero

In March 2012, Under Secretary Otero spoke publicly about the U.S. support’s for human rights including LGBT rights, and dispelled the misconception that U.S. foreign aid was linked to Belize’s acceptance of gay rights.

## Digital Resources

Website: <http://belize.us.embassy.gov>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/usembassybelize>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/USMissionBelize>

## U.S. Mission Belize Supports LGBT Community Through Grants

### Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Small Grant Program

In FY2012, U.S. Embassy Belmopan gave a grant to United Belize Advocacy Movement (UniBAM) to undertake further advocacy to reduce LGBT stigma and decriminalization. The project included a conference and national dialogue with the LGBT community to define LGBT policy priorities.

### Ambassador’s HIV Prevention Program

In 2011, U.S. Embassy Belmopan gave UniBAM a grant to support their program focused on raising awareness about reducing homophobia among the general population and conducting prevention education with men who have sex with men.

### Global Equality Fund - The Caribbean Sexual and Gender Rights Litigation Program

In 2012, U.S. Embassy Belmopan supported a presentation by Westin James, Esquire of the Faculty of Law, University of West Indies Rights Advocacy Project that described efforts to challenge Belize’s and Guyana’s sodomy laws.

## U.S. Mission Belize Supports LGBT Community Through Public Outreach

### Professional Development

A board member of a newly formed HIV Education/LGBT NGO, Empower Yourself Belize Movement (EYBM), will attend a State Department International Visitor Leadership Program “Human and Civil Rights for All” to learn more about how the U.S. is working to support LGBT communities in June 2014.

### Digital Outreach

U.S. Mission Belize hosted a LGBT webchat in December 2011 connecting Belizeans with U.S.-based experts on LGBT issues. The Belizean and American audience included NGOs and media representatives from both sides of the LGBT debate.