## **Bangladesh arrests 27 men on suspicion of being gay**

May 19, 2017

ABC News

http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/bangladesh-arrests-27-men-suspicion-gay-47506985

Authorities in [Bangladesh](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/bangladesh.htm) on Friday arrested 27 men on suspicion of being gay, a criminal offense in the Muslim-majority country, and plan to charge them with drug possession, an official said Friday.

A commander of the Rapid Action Battalion, an elite police unit that made the arrests, said the suspects, mostly students aged 20-30 years, had traveled from across the country and were picked up in a raid on a community center at Keraniganj, outside the nation's capital, early Friday.

Zahangir Hossain Matobbar said they recovered illegal drugs and condoms in their possession and plan to charge them with drug offenses and not homosexuality because they were detained before they engaged in sex.

The agency also arrested the owner of the community center where the suspects used to gather every two months and stay overnight for partying.

Last year, suspected militants killed a leading [LGBT](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/issues/transgender-issues.htm) activist and his friend in Dhaka.

The 35-year-old Xulhaz Mannan, a USAID official, was hacked to death in April last year at his home. He had founded the country's only LGBT magazine Roopbaan and was a leading organizer of gays, who are ostracized in Bangladesh.

Since then, many of the gays and lesbians have left the country after they received death threats. Many still live double lives to avoid reprisals.

Homosexuality is a [crime](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/crime.htm) in Bangladesh under a law dating back to the British colonial rule, and it has never been amended. The law is rarely enforced.