

# ALICE NKOM

**Born:** 14 January, 1945, Cameroon

**Organisation:** Association for the Defence of Homosexual Rights

Alice Nkom was Cameroon's first female lawyer and has made it her life's work to campaign for the decriminalisation of homosexuality in her homeland.

Nkom was born just as the Second World War was ending, and now, at 76, she is still fighting for LGBTQ+ people in Cameroon.

After studying law in Toulouse, she started practicing in Douala in 1969, and was the first Black French-speaking woman to be called to the bar in Cameroon. She defended many types of people but fought most often for LGBTQ+ people, as homosexuality is a criminal offence in Cameroon.

In 2003 she founded ADEFHO, the Association for the Defence of Homosexual Rights, before founding Sid'aho, an organisation that supports young people dealing with AIDS.

Her most famous case was in 2005, when she defended a group of men arrested in a gay bar raid. In 2011, she represented a man imprisoned for three years due to "homosexual activity" (sending SMS messages to another man), Jean-Claude Roger Mbede.



***"The situation will not change until there is a minimum level of democracy and respect for human rights values. When power is in the hands of one person and the separation of powers is a sham, you have to divert people's attention to something. Homosexuals are an easy target."*** (*France 24*, October 2021)

Nkom has received countless accolades for her work, including the 7th Human Rights Award (7. Menschenrechtspreis) from the German branch of Amnesty International, and she has also been the keynote speaker at Human Rights conferences in Montreal and Antwerp.

***"When you are doing something that is right, you just do it and take care. Someone has to do this."*** (*GLAAD*, March 2012)

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Alice Nkom, January 2018 (Minette Lontsie)