



FILIA

KAKUMA CAMPAIGN PACK

LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE
LESBIAN REFUGEES IN BLOCK 13 OF
THE KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP, KENYA.

Escaping violence and lesbophobia in their home country, lesbian refugees are sent by UNHCR to the Kakuma refugee camp. As they are seeking asylum due to their sexuality they are put in the LGB&T Block 13. This identifies them to other refugees in the camp and they suffer ongoing violence and abuse as a result. The UNHCR and Police have been informed of these crimes but do nothing to support them or keep them safe.

DEFENDING WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS
FIND OUT MORE AT: WWW.FILIA.ORG.UK



INTRODUCTION

If you have listened to our FiLiA podcast talking with the women of Block 13 at Kakuma Camp Kenya, you are probably wondering what you can do to help. The good news is there is lots! We have to hold UNHCR to account for their negligent and frankly homophobic handling of the systemic abuse faced by LGB&T people in the camp.

Most of those that we spoke to had fled Uganda after being subjected to abusive forced marriages following someone discovering their sexuality. They have sought humanitarian protection from UNHCR on account of being lesbians, among other reasons, which often include domestic and sexual violence, forced marriage and a lack of their home state protection.

The LGB&T people at Kakuma refugee camp are being "accommodated" together in "Block 13", so they have the solidarity of other LGB&T people but they are also targeted and attacked as LGB&T people by other people at the camp. These attacks include physical attacks, rape, threats, name-calling and a shelter was set on fire.

UNHCR provide shelter, however this is inadequate as there are not enough buildings, so people sleep outside. However, it has been raining so they are packed in the shelters which do not provide enough space for all of them to sleep at the same time. Homophobic attacks in the camp often take place at night.

UNHCR - [Click here](#)

UNHCR provide food, but it is also insufficient. LGB&T people in Block 13 share food. There is a shop and a market but they have been physically attacked when they leave Block 13.

Clearly adequate food, shelter and medical assistance are a priority. UNHCR need to provide some form of security to assist in the safety of the people in the camp and provide legal advice to enable the people to move on with legal immigration status. However, in the meantime, talking can help. More than one of women expressed suicidal thoughts and talking can help greatly in these circumstances. The women expressed their hope that they can be evacuated from the camp as they can not see that it will ever be safe for them.

There is a need for **volunteer counsellors** to talk with LGB&T people in Kakuma refugee camp. If you think of anyone who is looking for counselling experience, please let us know as they need counsellors. Any Counsellor offering sessions would need to be black, and LGB&T friendly. It is useful if suicide training has already been completed since agencies such as Samaritans and mental health support do not exist there. The internet connection is fair, they communicate via video on messenger.

Please bear in mind that this role is not women only, understandably all of the LGB&T people in block 13 have experienced trauma and live with the risk of further violence and so require support. It is possible to express a preference to speak with the women. The person who is holding a mobile phone at the camp, tries to pass the phone to any and all LGB&T people who are in need to talk.

There is a medical and counselling group on messenger. There is no formal supervision.

SOLIDARITY

I have always wondered if there is any woman alive that has gone through what i have gone through in my life, the pain that i have gone through while i was in Uganda, i felt cursed or haunted by some evil spirits. What is happening in Kenya is not any different from what i have gone through in the hands of my own government that is meant to protect me.

I was raped and abused in several kinds of ways which brought me a lot of trauma, hallucination and very bad flash backs that are still very clear in my head but thanks to the UK government that has enables me to get some counselling support. I still get very upset when talk about these memories and they trigger a lot of memories.

I was separated from the people i loved the most and that is my girlfriend Joan, my child and also my family. I was wrongly imprisoned and i had to pay corrupt officials to get out of jails. Through the sexual abuses, i acquired sexually transmitted disease that made feel dirty and i felt like i had lost my dignity as a woman. Also the homophobic treatments from my very own family, their rejection because they believed it was wrong to have a same sex relationship and i had brought shame to the family. They believed a gay person should be kicked out of the clan and should have nothing to do with me again. This made feel like my son will not be safe with them so i just left him with a friend and not a family member. So many women in Uganda are going through the same situations

but have no voice to air out their views. I fear prosecution in Uganda because of my sexuality. I am lesbian, i have been arrested, detained, raped and tortured because of sexual orientation. I still have nightmares, flash backs and recoil into a state of terror.

I am in the UK and i am not yet free i have not seen my son for years but i can tell you i am fighting a different war compared to the one i had to fight back home ,Love is love in this country. Love knows no gender age or colour. Keep on fighting, never give up and one day you shall overcome.

There is an army of women thinking of you and fighting for you.

In solidarity your Ugandan sister SHARON KALUNGI



DONATE



We are raising money and providing direct assistance to plug the gaps left by UNHCR by way of food and medical assistance.

You can [donate to the FiLiA fundraiser here](#) (select Kakuma Campaign) to give directly to the Lesbians in Block 13 or if you want your donation to go towards all of the residents of Block 13, use the alternative [fundraiser managed by Chauncey Dandridge](#).



SIGN PETITION

Please [sign and share this petition](#):



SHARE



You may want to tweet the Kenyan High Commission (UK's representation in Kenya)

Please copy us in if you do @FiLiA_charity and use the hashtags:

#FreeBlock13

#SisterhoodAndSolidarity

@Refugees

@UNHCR_Kenya

@UNHCRUK

@RefugeesMedia



EMAIL UNHCR



Ask UNHCR to release those LGB&T refugees in Kenya at risk of being killed by allowing them to leave the camp where they are being violently attacked.



[Click here to get the below letter in word format.](#) Copy and paste the text and send to the email addresses provided. It takes less than two minutes. Please act NOW to save lives in the Kakuma Refugee Camp.

Dear UNHCR,

As concerned world citizens, we are writing to bring to your urgent attention the dire situation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGB&T) refugees currently living in Block 13 of the Kakuma refugee camp in the Turkana County of northwest Kenya. These courageous people have left their homes and families in their countries such as Uganda and Burundi because they faced violence, rape, even death, and certainly no opportunities to live fulfilling lives. Homophobic attitudes and laws making their very lives illegitimate. In Kakuma camp, which has an enormous population - over 180,000 people in 2021 - they have been placed together in Block 13, which has been designated as a space for LGB&T community members. This has been fortunate in one way, as they have been able to find each other, share resources, and offer support, but in another way it has made it easier for them to be targets of homophobic violence at the hands of other camp residents.

This situation cries out for intervention from the UNHCR. Isolated and marginalized, terrified to leave their quarters at night for fear of attacks, the LGB&T residents of Kakuma have been raped, beaten, and set on fire, sometimes with deadly results. Out of desperation some LGB&T asylum seekers have attempted suicide. In mid-August 2021, a fire destroyed the shelters and meagre possessions of the residents of Block 13. Instead of offering support and protection, camp authorities blamed LGB&T residents for the fire and arrested several. Medical care is often cursory or unavailable. At this date, many of the group are spending nights sleeping outside the compound since it is safer no matter what the weather. And there they are threatened by homophobic men from the camp as they sleep. Lesbians are particular targets of rape and have virtually no access to legal recourse or medical treatment. Many have children that they cooperate to protect. A major worry is the fate of their children if they are killed.

No one could deny that this is an inhumane and potentially disastrous situation. These survivors need immediate help to be relocated to a safe location and prioritized for refugee status and asylum. As concerned citizens, we strongly urge that the UNHCR take a leadership role in safeguarding this most vulnerable population from the daily suffering they are enduring. The simple fact of their survival in these horrifying conditions is a testimony to a strength and sense of community that would be an asset to any society in which they might be relocated.

According to The Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the “essential function of the UNHCR is to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to their problems by facilitating either their voluntary repatriation or their integration into new national communities in safe and with dignity.”

- **We demand that the UNHCR insist that the Kenyan government fast track meaningful asylum (REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION) to all LGB&T asylum seekers around Kakuma and wherever they are in Kenya.**
- **We demand that you give your protection for all LGB&T refugees to transit safely from Kakuma Camp to Nairobi and to be protected for the duration of their stay in Kenya.**
- **We demand the UNHCR immediately offer physical protection to the LGB&T refugees and asylum seekers in block 13 and all over Kakuma camp because they all face homophobia and violence.**
- **We demand the UNHCR clarify whether their intent is to close this camp and if so work with all camp residents to find a satisfactory and safe new residence.**
- **We demand that UNHCR resume the food and water supplies that were being provided but have now been ended including resupplying rice to residents.**
- **We demand the UNHCR immediately stop the attacks and mis-characterising of the LGB&T asylum seekers and refugees under their care and instead perform their mandate to give them protection from the hostile community.**
- **We demand that Kakuma be labeled a hostile environment to LGB&T refugees and asylum seekers and that the UNHCR evacuate LGB&T asylum seekers and refugees to a mutual agreed upon safer place to stop further harm and loss of lives.**

We beg you not to ignore this letter, but to act for justice and human rights in the name of the citizens of the world.

Respectfully,

Please send this letter to your MP, you can find their details [here](#) AND to the contacts below.

If possible, rather than copying everyone into one email, a separate email each will have far more impact. Please remember to copy in sally@filia.org.uk. Thank you

info@refugee.go.ke
refugeeaffairssecretariat@go.ke
refugeeaffairs@interior.go.ke
Kasilimutambo@gmail.com
englbrec@unhcr.org
KENKA@unhcr.org
swibe@unhcr.org

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLORS



It would be wonderful if we can recruit more volunteer counsellors. Contact Sally@filia.org.uk if you can help.



FiLiA

**BUILDING SISTERHOOD AND SOLIDARITY
AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF WOMEN
DEFENDING WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1163473