



THIS IS A STATEMENT BY THE ENTIRE LGBTQIA+ FAMILY IN KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP.

A refugee has the right to safe asylum and freedom of thought, of movement, and freedom from torture and degrading treatment according to UNHCR.

And according to the universal declaration of human rights article 5, “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” We the LGBTQIA+ refugees in Kakuma have for long been living out of the scope of these fundamental human rights.

Hence we have decided to speak in unison to address these and a number of other issues that have either been overlooked or misrepresented by UNHCR giving a false picture of security and safety here in Kakuma refugee camp. In so doing, we have been denied a safe environment resulting in avoidable injuries, loss of personal property and life. This false picture has been painted with the help of external organizations which have come bearing a tag of human rights defenders when indeed their interest has either been monetary or have simply been used to promote the absurd notion that a few material things can make death and injuries resulting from homophobia and transphobia bearable. Based on that notion promoted by these organizations, some of whom have appeared alongside UNCHR while speaking to the press, they have created the narrative that, it's is the fault of the LGBTQIA+ refugees because we are not able to hide who we are. This narrative also has implied that the LGBTQIA+ refugees are simply looking for resettlement in the third country. According to the UNHCR and its agents, it's very unreasonable for the persecuted and dying refugees in Kakuma refugee camp to want a safe environment outside of Kenya and that the horrors that we face on a daily basis are ok. This is a homophobic and transphobic attack on us by the vey institution that purports to protect us from the same.

Therefore, we strongly refute the allegations that we are not peaceful people and that the attacks we have suffered have been provoked. We also strongly refute the claim that Kakuma is not homophobic and transphobic. We continue to struggle to understand why we find ourselves in the same homophobic camp where UNHCR and the Kenyan government had to evacuate the LGBTQIA+ refugees as recently as 2019 to protect them from homophobic attacks. We have been given a shocking impression that upholding the Kenyan encampment policy is more important than saving lives even though this policy can and has been waived in the recent past.

We are disappointed by the casual approach and the laxity which the UNHCR and its partners continue to display in the way they have responded to the attacks on LGBTQIA+ refugees in Kakuma refugee camp which have claimed lives and left many with grave physical and psychological injuries. We read with a lot of shock their inaccurate statements claiming that Kakuma is now hospitable to the LGBTQIA+ and that the majority of us are

living in relative safety. We can confirm that this is not true and that as a whole the LGBTQIA+ group in Kakuma, we continue to face attacks irrespective of which part of Kakuma we live in. Children, women and others in the LGBTQIA+ community continue to face unprovoked attacks, harassment and heavy discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. UNHCR's attempt to make it look like the problem lies within the queer community itself constitutes an attack on our vulnerable community and is out of line with their primary duty to recognize and protect those that are most vulnerable. This is highly regrettable and a strong deviation from their mandate.

We have turned to activists to get basics such as medical care and food, things which should be UNHCR'S obligations. Their attempts to undermine these humanitarian efforts shows that they are not bothered about our wellbeing. As the entire LGBTQIA+ family living in hostile and homophobic Kakuma refugee camp, we reiterate the following to UNHCR:

- 1, We need a safe place where we can live without fear of being attacked for who we are and to prevent further injuries and loss of lives as a result of these homophobic attacks.
- 2, We call on the UNHCR to evacuate us out of Kakuma as a short term measure to prevent further loss of lives.
- 3, We remind UNHCR and it's partners that we are the victims in Kakuma and not the problem and that if our sexuality becomes known for some reason that in itself is not a crime and definitely does not justify an attack on us as they have indicated in their statements.
- 3, We remind UNHCR and that all the challenges that we continue to face in Kakuma are directly associated with us being in an already proven homophobic environment, and that the current security measures in place have failed to protect lives and counting on them to protect us, further endangers our lives.
- 4, We also remind the UNHCR and it's partners that bringing us to Kakuma was a mistake as the death of Chriton Atuhwera and Namubiru Patricia and more recently Arnold Kirenga has shown and not to mention the grave injuries that we continue to sustain as a result of that decision. We urge them to learn from our losses and horrible experiences and undo their fatal decision to keep us in Kakuma.
- 5, We call on the UNHCR to stop covering up clear acts of homophobia and transphobia. Their continued effort to delegitimize attacks on the LGBTQIA+ by blaming the victims is very unfortunate and to say the least shocking.
- 6, We call on the UNHCR to stop endangering the LGBTQIA+ community further by insisting that we meet and dialogue with our attackers. This is not only insensitive to the already traumatized community but also further exposes us without guarantee that it will work.

We the undersigned (288 LGBTQIA+ PERSONS) affirm that this is our statement.

.....ENDS.....

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT

Gilbert Kagarura
kagaruragilbert@gmail.com

or Ssenyonjo John
grahamsjohn4@gmail.com