



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 LGBT 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](http://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 LGBT 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 LGBT people at Kakuma refugee camp are being "accommodated" together in "Block 13", so they have the solidarity of other LGBT people but they are also targeted and attacked as LGBT 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. LGBT 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 LGBT 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 LGBT friendly and anti-racist. 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 LGBT 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 LGBT 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



A supporter is raising money and providing direct assistance to plug the gaps left by UNHCR by way of food and medical assistance.

[You can donate here](#)



# 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:

#CloseBlock13

#SisterhoodAndSolidarity

@UKinKenya

@JaneMarriottUK

@foreignoffice

@S\_cansizoglu



# EMAIL UNHCR



Ask UNHCR to release those LGBT 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,**

**According to The Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the 'essential function of 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 safety and with dignity'**

**FiLiA believes that the residents of Block 13 in Kakuma camp are not being protected or having due regard to their safety or dignity. LGBT Refugees in Kakuma Camp are facing violent attacks on a daily basis and in six years, UNHCR has proven that protecting them in the camp is not possible. UNHCR operates the camp at Kakuma and the neighbouring Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement  
- <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kakuma-refugee-camp>**



**UNHCR's own Guideline No. 9, which deals with claims based on sexual orientation and / or gender identity, recognises that non-state actors may be agents of persecution where the state is unwilling or unable to protect them. The residents in Block 13 are experiencing harm capable of amounting to persecution and have no recourse to protection from the state or apparently from UNHCR.**

**Article 5 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights confirms that nobody shall be subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.**

**UNHCR's Guideline on Gender-Related Persecution, which deals with sex and gender in refugee claims, acknowledges that gender-based violence encompasses persecution on the basis of sexual orientation, and that sexual violence is capable of amounting to persecution. Women in Block 13 are at risk due to both their sex and their sexual orientation.**

**Article 7 of the same - all are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection against discrimination.**

**Article 14 - everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution.**

**The conditions in Kakuma for those who are resident in Block 13 fail on these counts. Having sought asylum from persecution in their countries of origin, they are exposed to continued persecution and to inhuman and degrading treatment and discrimination due to their sexual orientation. This undermines the purpose of the Refugee Convention and compounds the suffering of the refugees in Block 13.**

**→ We demand that you IMMEDIATELY ensure that movement passes are issued for all LGBT refugees to leave Kakuma Camp.**

→We demand that you give your protection for all LGBT refugees to transit safely from Kakuma Camp to Nairobi and to be protected for the duration of their time in Kenya.

Please send this to the addresses below Right Now.

**Nairobi:**

**englbrec@unhcr.org**

**alish@unhcr.org**

**kenna@unhcr.org**

**Kakuma**

**UNHCR Protection office in Kakuma:**

**KENKA@unhcr.org**

**kenkaprt@unhcr.org**

**Geneva**

**swibe@unhcr.org**

**CC: Tayyar Sukru Cansizoglu,**

**Head of Sub Office Kakuma.**

**cansizog@unhcr.org**

**VOLUNTEER  
COUNSELLORS**



It would be wonderful if we can recruit more volunteer counsellors. Contact [Sally@filia.org.uk](mailto: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**