

2021 CRISIS FOR LGBTQ REFUGEES IN KAKUMA'S BLOCK 13

BACKGROUND & DEMANDS

SUMMARY

On the morning of March 15th, petrol bombs were thrown into a group of LGBTQ+ refugees, allies and their children who live in Block 13 in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. This attack not only set people on fire but also destroyed beddings and personal belongings as many of the refugees sleep in the open air. Two organizers, Ayesigye Jordan and Atuhwera Chriton, barely survived this vicious attack. They both have 2nd-degree burns over major areas of their bodies and have since been airlifted to Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi for medical treatment. Jordan, Chriton, and others in Block 13 continue to experience extreme trauma as they are in fear for their physical safety and mental wellness.

Since 2014, Kakuma has been uninhabitable for LGBTQ+ refugees and allies who face violence from other refugees and Kenyan police. The UNHCR, charged with protecting refugees, has failed in this regard. [Here](#) is a timeline and accounting of attacks in the past year.

Most of the 135 refugees at Block 13 fled Uganda for Kakuma when the anti-gay bill was introduced, a bill which was eventually passed in part due to the urging of American pastor Scott Lively. They cannot migrate to the US given the low refugee ceiling and the difficulties in obtaining asylum.

The 135 residents of Block 13 want the world to know their plight and are asking to be evacuated to safety. Jordan and Chriton are asking that UNHCR evacuate them to a healthcare facility that specializes in burn injuries and wounds.

We call upon resettling countries to make clear your commitments to UNHCR regarding the prioritization of LGBTQ+ survivors from Block 13 for expedited resettlement given the horrific and repeated attacks that put their lives at risk.

We call upon human rights organizations whose mission is to function as defenders of defenders to immediately recognize the Human Rights Defenders who form the leadership of the LGBTQ+ Group from Block 13 and put them under your protection programs for their safety as they play a critical role in defending the human rights we all cherish and are doing so from the most vulnerable position imaginable.

DEMANDS

- ❑ UNHCR must transfer the two severely burned victims who are currently not receiving adequate treatment at Kenyatta National Hospital to a private ward with specialized, competent, and humane burn care treatment.
- ❑ UNHCR must allow the caregivers of the two severely burned victims from the homophobic attack to accompany them at all times. The caregivers will need their movement passes reinstated immediately.
- ❑ As urgent evacuation plans are being put in place, UNHCR must transfer the entire LGBTQ+ Block 13 Group, including allies, to the transit center and provide them with highly accountable 24/7 security tomorrow.
- ❑ UNHCR must evacuate the LGBTQ+ Block 13 Group from Kakuma to Nairobi, and fast-track the LGBTQ+ Block 13 group for expedited resettlement as they are survivors of intensive and unending homophobic attacks.