



Zimbabwe – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 3 January 2019

Treatment by police/prison officers of homosexual detainees /prisoners

An article from the London-based newspaper New Zimbabwe states:

"The Gays and Lesbians Association of Zimbabwe (GALZ) says over 55% of its members have either been raided or arrested by the police over the past one year.

This was contained in the group's report entitled, 'Assessment of the impact of state sanctioned and unsanctioned raids on GALZ premises and gatherings'.

GALZ produced the report in Bulawayo on Tuesday while during the International Day Against Homophobia which is commemorated on the 17th of May of every year.

In the report, the group bemoaned the continued harassment of its members by the State despite the existence of the new constitution which guarantees freedom of association.

GALZ has over the years experienced raids by the country's police force as well as some armed and individuals usually reluctant to identify themselves.

'At least 55% of the respondents (members) had experienced a raid whilst attending an event organised by GALZ either at its premises or at another venue,' the organisation said.

'GALZ has experienced several incidences of raids and threats to the organisation from the period 2009, which have been perpetrated by police, state agencies, youth militia and unidentified individuals'.

GALZ said in most cases, police would not have followed the country's laws when they conduct the raids." (New Zimbabwe (17 May 2016) *Zimbabwe: Gays and Lesbians Group Says 55 Percent Membership Harrassed By Cops*)

A submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review by the Zimbabwean NGO Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), in paragraph 7, states:

"Furthermore, at police stations and detention facilities, LGBTI individuals are intimidated and physically assaulted by police officers. LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe are often detained for hours at a time, without access to judicial recourse. LGBTI individuals are frequently beaten, mocked, and forced to pay bribes in order to escape custody." (United Nations Human Rights Council (September 2016) *GALZ, Universal Periodic Review of Zimbabwe 26th Session*, p.4)

The 2017 US Department of State country report for Zimbabwe, in a section titled “Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity”, states:

“The police reportedly detained and held persons suspected of being gay for up to 48 hours before releasing them. LGBTI advocacy groups also reported police used extortion and threats to intimidate persons based on their sexual orientation. Members of Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, the primary organization dedicated to advancing the rights of LGBTI persons, experienced harassment and discrimination.” (US Department of State (20 April 2018) *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Zimbabwe*, p.42)

An article published on the gay rights website Erasing 76 Crimes states:

“A 24-year-old Zimbabwean man is facing homosexuality charges after police accused him of being gay. Police made the arrest after finding him and a second man chatting while relieving themselves in the back of a bar in the city of Bulawayo in southwest Zimbabwe.” (Erasing 76 Crimes (20 April 2018) *2 Zimbabweans pee at a bar. Result: Arrest for gay sex*)

This article also states:

“At the police station in Bulawayo, Anerudo said, he was beaten, verbally abused and detained for two days by the police in Bulawayo. Then he was taken to court and charged with sodomy. Anerudo was released on bail after spending several days in prison.” (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

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