



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

Risk of mob violence from community to homosexuals and recent incidences and frequency

A report published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, in a section titled Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (paragraph 3.62), states:

“DFAT assesses that there is a high level of official discrimination and a moderate degree of societal discrimination against LGBTI persons in Zimbabwe. Reported cases of violence against LGBTI persons are infrequent and do not appear to follow a set pattern of victimisation.” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (11 April 2016) *DFAT Country Information Report: Zimbabwe*, p.15)

A submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review by the Zimbabwean NGO Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ), in paragraph 12, states:

“In Zimbabwe, there have been a number of reports citing incidents of violence against LGBTI persons. In many cases, the violence in question is perpetrated directly by state actors. Just in the last few years, there have been multiple reported instances where LGBTI individuals in Zimbabwe have been physically assaulted by police officers while in police custody. Furthermore, there have been a number of instances where the state has also directly committed acts of violence towards individuals who were not detained for criminal matters. The state also allows violence to occur against LGBTI individuals with impunity. Since Zimbabwe’s last UPR cycle, a number of violent incidents have occurred against LGBTI individuals either in social settings, such as neighborhood bars, or after having their sexual orientation revealed to family members or neighbors—and in none of these reported cases have perpetrators been brought to justice.” (United Nations Human Rights Council (September 2016) *GALZ, Universal Periodic Review of Zimbabwe 26th Session*, p.7)

Recent reports of mob violence against homosexuals in Zimbabwe was not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre. A 2014 article from the London-based newspaper *New Zimbabwe* states:

“Armed men left 35 people injured after they stormed a gay party and beat up guests in Harare over the weekend, Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) organisation has claimed.

GALZ said its members were attacked by a dozen of unidentified men who gate crashed the organization’s party which was held at a private venue in the capital.

The gay community holds its meetings in private in fear of the country's laws which criminalize their homosexual activities.

Chesterfield Samba, the GALZ director, said over 12 unidentified armed men forced themselves into the party venue and attacked them." (New Zimbabwe (22 December 2014) *35 injured in anti-gay attack in Zimbabwe*)

A report published by the Zimbabwean gay rights NGO GALZ (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe), in a chapter titled "Assault & Threats", states:

"Assault on LGBTI people took place in different contexts, though mostly in public spaces such as bars, commuter taxi ranks or gatherings. It would appear that vulnerability to assault was greatest where LGBTI are in the presence of a crowd, which would depend on the strength of the large numbers to initiate an attack. GALZ events were also targeted by homophobic mobs, who would most likely be acting on a tip off by either the venue staff or a member of the association attending the event.

A notable number of assault incidents also took place in the neighborhoods of the LGBTI persons, wherein following a tip off, mobs would gather outside the houses of the LGBTI persons and attack, more often than not resulting in eviction orders from the landlords. Another trend observed, involves police officers taking the law into their own hands and verbally and physically attacking LGBTI persons. Such occurrences were recorded as happening at police stations while the complainants were in custody and in public spaces." (GALZ (Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe) (26 July 2018) *Actus Reus: An analysis of human rights violations against LGBTI persons in Zimbabwe*, p.19)

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:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (11 April 2016) *DFAT Country Information Report: Zimbabwe*
<https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-zimbabwe.pdf>
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Sources Consulted:

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DFAT

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European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UK Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

US Department of State