



Uganda – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 December 2012

Are there any reports of police mistreating/torturing homosexuals in Uganda over the past 3 years?

An Amnesty International press release states:

“A Ugandan cabinet minister today raided a workshop being run by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activists in Entebbe, prompting Amnesty International to call on the government to end its outrageous harassment of people involved in lawful activities. The Minister for Ethics and Integrity, Simon Lokodo, who was accompanied by police, announced that the workshop was illegal and ordered the rights activists out of the hotel where it was being held. He told activists that if they did not leave immediately, he would use force against them.” (Amnesty International (14 February 2012) *Uganda: Government raid on LGBT-rights workshop*)

An Agence France Presse report on this incident states:

“Lokodo told AFP that he had broken up the gathering in his capacity as the ‘conscience of this country’ but said he had not been accompanied by police. ‘I got a whistleblower’s message that there was joy and jubilation in celebration that gays and lesbians had broken the boundaries that Uganda had set for them,’ the minister said. ‘I advised them to disperse. I would have gone even so far as arresting them,’ Lokodo said, adding that the meeting dispersed peacefully. ‘The message is clear, Uganda does not promote, encourage or applaud in any way this form of association,’ he said. Amnesty condemned the raid as ‘an outrageous attempt to prevent lawful and peaceful activities of human rights defenders in Uganda.’ Ugandan police spokesman Asuman Mugenyi said: ‘Gay activities are illegal activities under our law and our law has not been amended.’” (Agence France Presse (14 February 2012) *Uganda raids gay rights workshop*)

An article published by the Vancouver Sun states:

“A prominent Ugandan gay and lesbian rights activist with a history of being harassed by the authorities has been forced into hiding after police raided the hotel where she was participating in a workshop on the rights of sexual minorities. Ugandan Ethics and Integrity Minister Simon Lokodo personally joined police on the raid in Entebbe Tuesday and ordered the arrest of Kasha Jacqueline, who was profiled in The Vancouver Sun in 2010. She escaped and is in hiding, according to her Facebook page.” (Vancouver Sun (15 February 2012) *Anti-gay bill forces activist to go into hiding*)

See also Vancouver Sun article which refers to the alleged treatment of a Ugandan lesbian as follows:

“A woman in her late 20s stands outside a hotel in Kampala waiting for her colleagues to arrive for a meeting. Bulky trousers, a loose-fitting dress shirt and a sweater-vest dwarf her tiny frame, making her appear bigger than she really is. Her short hair is plaited in corn-row braids and she is wearing men’s shoes. Two men take offence at her presence and begin heckling her. They flash police badges, grab her roughly by the arm and tell her she must come to the station for questioning. She considers screaming or making a scene, but decides the crowd on the street poses a greater threat to her safety than the two men. They drag her to the police station, take away her cellphone and wallet, and lock her in a prison cell with a badly beaten man who looks at her with wild eyes. The cell smells like stale blood. She is terrified. The woman is Pepe Julian Onziema. This time, she is released from jail without charge after a couple of hours. A law under consideration by the Ugandan parliament would send her to the gallows. Onziema is a lesbian, which makes her a criminal in the eyes of her country’s legal system. Homosexuality is already punishable by up to 14 years in prison in Uganda. (Vancouver Sun (15 May 2010) *A fight for the right to live their lives: In Uganda, homosexuality brings up to 14 years in jail, but a new bill could mean death*)

A Radio Netherlands Worldwide report states:

“Armed police officers stormed Kampala’s National Theatre late Wednesday, bringing a premature end to what was meant to be a premiere performance by the Talented Ugandan Kuchus, TUK for short. ‘Kuchu’ is a traditionally derogatory word for ‘homosexual’, which has recently become a proudly self-epithet in the local gay community.” (Radio Netherlands Worldwide (8 November 2012) *Ugandan police storm premiere of gay theatre production*)

A Voice of America News report states:

“Police on Thursday arrested the producer of a play about homosexuality in Uganda that was staged last month in Kampala. David Cecil, a British national, has been charged with disobeying lawful orders for failing to get official authorization to show ‘The River and the Mountain,’ the story of a Ugandan businessman who comes out as gay and is later killed by his employees. In Uganda, where homosexual activities are illegal, the staging of the play immediately sparked controversy. Government officials forced the cancellation of scheduled performances at the National Theater last month, but it was instead shown at two Kampala locations, including a cultural center that Cecil manages. After requiring Cecil to file a statement last week, police then released the producer. Reporting for a court arraignment Thursday, however, Cecil was denied bail for failure to produce his passport, which police had confiscated. He is currently in jail pending a Monday bail-application hearing. If found guilty, he faces up to two years in prison.” (Voice of America News (14 September 2012) *Uganda Jails Brit for Play About Homosexuality*)

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.

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