

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	266
Land:	Uganda
Kilde:	Human Rights Watch
Titel:	Uganda: Anti-Homosexuality Act's Heavy Toll
Udgivet:	15. maj 2014
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	4. juli 2014

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
HRW - Human Rights Watch
- **Title:**
Uganda: Anti-Homosexuality Act's Heavy Toll
- **Publication date:**
15 May 2014
- **ecoinet summary:** LGBTI people have reported a surge in human rights violations since the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act on 20 December 2013 [ID 276183]
- **Countries:**
Uganda
- **Original link** <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/14/uganda-anti-homosexuality-act-s-heavy-toll>

Recommended citation:

HRW - Human Rights Watch: Uganda: Anti-Homosexuality Act's Heavy Toll, 15 May 2014 (available at ecoinet)

http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/276183/392258_en.html (accessed 21 May 2014)



Uganda: Anti-Homosexuality Act's Heavy Toll

Discriminatory Law Prompts Arrests, Attacks, Evictions, Flight

May 15, 2014

(Nairobi, May 15, 2014) – [Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex](#) (LGBTI) people in [Uganda](#) have reported a surge in human rights violations since the [passage](#) of the [Anti-Homosexuality Act](#) on December 20, 2013, [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#) said today.

In a country where the climate for LGBTI people was already hostile and discriminatory, LGBTI people have faced a notable increase in arbitrary arrests, police abuse and extortion, loss of employment, evictions and homelessness, and scores have fled the country. At least one transgender person has been killed since the bill was signed, in an apparent hate crime. Health providers have cut back on essential services for LGBTI people, who also fear harassment or arrest if they seek health care. The passing of this discriminatory law has not only opened the floodgates for a range of human rights violations against LGBTI people in Uganda, but has also ensured that victims of these violations are denied access to effective remedies. Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a Kampala-based organization, stated in a recent [report](#) that “the full force of the State, particularly the legislative and executive branches of government, is being used to hunt down, expose, demean and suppress Uganda’s LGBTI people.”

“The Anti-Homosexuality Act is creating homelessness and joblessness, restricting life-saving [HIV](#) work, and bloating the pockets of corrupt police officers who extort money from victims of arrest,” said [Neela Ghoshal](#), senior LGBT rights researcher at Human Rights Watch. “Repealing this law is imperative to ensure Ugandans can live without fear of violence and harassment.”

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International conducted research in Kampala and other Ugandan towns in April 2014, interviewing 38 individuals directly affected by the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, four lawyers and paralegals, and four organizations that provide health services to LGBTI people. Human Rights Watch also interviewed eight LGBTI Ugandans in Nairobi, [Kenya](#), who had fled Uganda between January and March 2014.

President Yoweri Museveni [signed](#) the Anti-Homosexuality Bill into law on February 24, 2014, and it came into force on March 10. The law permits sentences of life in prison for some sexual acts between consenting adults. It criminalizes the undefined “promotion” of homosexuality, a provision that threatens human rights advocacy work and prompted a police raid on a joint [US](#) government-Makerere University HIV research and intervention program. The law also criminalizes “a person who keeps a house, room, set of rooms, or place of any kind for purposes of homosexuality,” a provision that has been used to justify evicting LGBTI tenants. These new provisions [reinforce existing ones](#) in the country’s penal code that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual relationships between men.

Since the bill passed in December 2013, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are aware of at least 17 people who have been arrested based on allegations of consensual same-sex conduct with other adults or, in some cases, simply on the suspicion of appearing to be LGBTI.

In contrast, between 2007 and 2011, the [Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum](#), a Ugandan group that tracks such cases and provides legal defense, reported that they were aware of 23 arrests on the basis of same-sex conduct, none of which resulted in prosecutions. The increase in arrests affects not only those detained, but the broader LGBTI population, since many live in fear of arrest and avoid any dealings with the authorities. LGBTI people who are victims of violence or discrimination say they fear reporting such cases to the police, concerned that they themselves could be arrested.

The most evident impact of the law has been significant uprooting of LGBTI people, many of whom have fled the country, and others who are homeless or in hiding within Uganda. Human Rights Watch interviewed 10 LGBTI people who had been evicted by landlords, who appear to be interpreting the Anti-Homosexuality Act to mean that it is illegal to rent to LGBTI people. Hanifa Q. (her name and most others have been changed for security reasons), a lesbian in Kampala, showed Human Rights Watch an eviction letter she received from her landlord on March 3. Giving her one month to vacate the property, it reads:

You have been nice to me and paying very well. But due to the existing situation in the country plus your behavior with your friends, forgive me to suspect you of being indecent, I cannot allow you to rent my house, I cannot fight the government.

Almost everyone else interviewed had to move to new homes in order to escape threats or scrutiny from neighbors, in some cases after being "outed" by tabloids and on television. At least 100 LGBTI people have fled the country since the beginning of 2014.

The law has also resulted in reduced access to health services and HIV prevention information for LGBTI people. On April 4, police raided the [Makerere University Walter Reed Project](#), a US-funded HIV research and treatment center that provides health information and services to LGBTI people. The police claimed the center was "recruiting" people into homosexuality. Two community-based organizations that provided HIV testing, condoms, and lubricant to men who have sex with men (MSM) closed their doors after the bill became law. They have reinstituted some services, but no longer receive drop-in clients. TASO, Uganda's largest HIV/AIDS organization, has suspended its "Moonlight Clinics," through which it conducted outreach to MSM and other vulnerable groups, offering them HIV testing and education.

Shortly after the Act was signed, the health minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, publicly pledged that health services would be provided to LGBTI people in a non-discriminatory way. Serious concerns for how this could work in practice remain, given that the Ministry has no control over police actions, said Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

Interviews with LGBTI people indicate the risk of health care workers violating patient confidentiality. Jay M., a transgender man, said that when he sought treatment for a fever shortly after the bill was signed into law:

The doctor asked me, "But are you a woman or a man?" I said, "That doesn't matter, but what I can tell you is I'm a trans man." He said "What's a trans man? You know we don't offer services to gay people here. You people are not even supposed to be in our community. I can even call the police and report you...You're not even supposed to be in the country."

In the end, Jay paid the doctor 50,000 Ugandan shillings as a bribe and fled the office.

"As long as the Anti-Homosexuality Act remains in force, the Ministry of Health cannot make credible assurances that health care will be provided to LGBTI people without discrimination," said Michelle Kagari, [Eastern Africa](#) deputy regional director at Amnesty International. "For many LGBTI people, the risks of seeking service will outweigh the benefits: one 'bad apple' within the health care system could send a gay or bisexual client to prison for life."

The victims and lawyers interviewed said that most of those arrested since the bill passed have been released without charge. In seven cases that Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International documented, interviewees reported that police demanded bribes of between 30,000 (about US\$12) and 1.5 million Ugandan shillings (about \$634). Other victims were released with the assistance of lawyers. Three transgender people said that police sexually assaulted them in custody, touching their breasts and genitals. One HIV-positive transgender woman said she was denied access to her antiretroviral treatment (ART). In at least one case, police subjected men arrested on homosexuality charges to forced anal exams – a discredited method of seeking "proof" of homosexual conduct that constitutes a form of torture.

In a February 4 meeting with the inspector general of police, General Kale Kayihura, Human Rights Watch raised its concern about police surgeons' use of forced anal exams. Kayihura agreed to look into the matter and circulate guidance to his staff. Despite inquiries, as far as Human Rights Watch has been able to determine, such guidance has not been communicated to police.

The threat of arrest means that LGBTI people can be attacked with impunity, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said. The week after Museveni signed the bill into law, a transgender sex worker in Kampala, known as "Queen," was brutally attacked and killed by a man she met in a bar. Three friends of the victim interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they were afraid to report the killing to police, out of fear that as transgender women, they could be arrested. In March, three LGBTI people were lured to a house by men they met on social media, who abused them while subjecting them to homophobic insults. Two of the victims fled and filed complaints with the police, but the police responded with homophobic comments and the victims were afraid to pursue the complaints further.

The Anti-Homosexuality Act also has direct consequences on the livelihoods of LGBTI people. Six people told Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International they had been fired from their jobs since the bill was passed, on the basis of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Others who ran small businesses or sold goods in the informal sector said that clients and other business people told them they would not be doing business with them anymore out of fear of being associated with them.

"Within just five months of the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill through parliament, we are seeing its dramatic effects on the health and well-being of LGBTI people," Ghoshal said.

For recommendations to the Ugandan government and Parliament and personal accounts of human rights violations against LGBTI Ugandans, please see below.

Recommendations to the Ugandan Government and Parliament

- Parliament should repeal the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014;
- President Museveni should publicly denounce violence and discrimination, including by police, health providers, landlords, and employers, on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity;
- The Inspector General of Police should issue immediate guidance to all police officers and police medical staff not to carry out forced anal examinations on anyone arrested for any reason;
- The Uganda Police should cease all arrests based on consensual same-sex conduct. The police Professional Standards Unit should investigate claims of ill-treatment (including sexual assault and forced anal exams), arbitrary arrest, violation of privacy, and extortion of alleged LGBTI people, and take legal or disciplinary actions against the officers responsible. The unit should make a public statement encouraging reporting of such claims and ensuring confidentiality;
- The Attorney General should refrain from opposing a motion filed by activists in the High Court that the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014 will not be enforced pending the outcome of a petition challenging its constitutionality; and
- The Health Ministry should adopt clear guidelines requiring patient confidentiality in all healthcare settings and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act

The [Anti-Homosexuality Bill](#) was first proposed in 2009 by David Bahati, a member of parliament. After Parliament passed the bill on December 20, 2013, Museveni initially pledged to reject the bill, calling it "fascist." He later backtracked, tasking a Health Ministry team of scientists to prepare a [report](#) on the "scientific evidence on homosexuality," and stating that his decision would be based on the team's findings. Although the report found that homosexuality is neither a "disease" nor an "abnormality" and that it exists in all societies, Museveni claimed the report gave him reason to sign the bill.

Ugandan activists [filed a constitutional petition on March 11](#), arguing that the law violates fundamental rights protected by Uganda's constitution, including rights to privacy, dignity, civic participation, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of expression and association. They also filed a motion for an injunction preventing the Act's enforcement pending the constitutional challenge. On April 23, Uganda's [Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law](#) (CSCHRCL) filed a case before the [East African Court of Justice](#), arguing that the Act violates provisions of the East African Community Treaty on good governance, the rule of law, and social justice.

The Anti-Homosexuality Act was signed in a context of mounting restrictions on human rights in Uganda. The Ugandan government, over Museveni's 28 years in office, has [increasingly suppressed](#) freedom of assembly, [expression](#), and association, and threatened civil society groups and human rights defenders working on a range of issues, including corruption, land, oil, and good governance. In the last year, Museveni has signed several other pieces of legislation that curtail rights, including the Public Order Management Act and the Anti-Pornography Act. Activists have filed constitutional challenges against both laws.

Abuses against LGBTI Ugandans since the Passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act

Evictions, Violation of the Right to Adequate Housing, and Flight

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International interviewed 10 Ugandans whose landlords evicted them due to

their sexual orientation or gender identity. Some were evicted after being arrested, others after being outed in the media or merely because their landlords suspected them of being LGBTI.

Rose L. was told she was being evicted on March 6, after being outed as a lesbian in the tabloid *Hello Uganda*. Her landlord called and told her to leave by the following day. Rose challenged the landlord, stating that she had been a good tenant and that it was wrong to evict her:

He told me, "I'm sick and tired of your un-ancestral behaviors that you do in my house. I do not need anything to do with you anymore, I want you out of the house." So I got cold, just kept quiet. He asked "Have you heard me? Go ahead and take me to court and we'll see who will be the loser."

Rose requested a formal eviction letter. The landlord complied, giving her two days' notice to leave, and writing that she was being evicted because, "you were practicing homosexuality... and to reveal it, I read your name in the newspaper which is even against the government rules." Rose moved out two days later.

Jay M., a transgender activist, was evicted and threatened with arrest by his landlady in mid-March after he appeared on television at a press conference held by an LGBTI rights organization:

My landlady called me and told me, "Jay, now we have proof that you people are gay...and now that the bill is signed, we're not allowed to house gay people or get close to them. So I'm giving you one week to get out of the house." I said that I pay my rent and this is not fair: "You have to give me a period of time to get out." She said "I can't give you a period of time, unless you want me to involve the police."

Jay found a new house, but now has nine LGBTI friends staying with him, who themselves have been evicted or fled their homes. He told Human Rights Watch, "The people staying with me are traumatized – they are like slaves in their own country."

Nim H., who lives in Western Uganda, was evicted in late December after an acquaintance, who guessed his sexual orientation from personal Facebook postings, told Nim's landlord that Nim was gay. Nim told Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International that his landlord allowed him a month to leave, although some neighbors, evoking the law, called for his immediate eviction:

The law has empowered [homophobic people]. My neighbor was shouting "These people are animals. Even Museveni knows that these people are inhuman. How can he be in the house? How can you even give him one whole month? We have this law, the police should throw him out."

Responding to a similar situation where LGBTI individuals faced discrimination and evictions in the private housing sector in Indonesia, the [UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing](#) reminded States of their obligations to protect against human rights abuses by third parties, including discrimination and evictions. The Special Rapporteur also called on the government to review and repeal national and regional laws, policies, and practices which perpetuate discrimination by state and non-state actors in access to adequate housing of vulnerable groups including [women](#), LGBTI people, internal [migrants](#), and religious minorities.

In addition to those who have been evicted, other LGBTI Ugandans have fled their homes, some uprooted multiple times due to fear of being attacked. Ahmed R., a gay man in Western Uganda, told Human Rights Watch:

We keep on changing places, go to a friend's place, go to a village, go to a relative. We are afraid – someone may see you entering into the house and report that, and you could be attacked in the house...At the moment I think no one is staying in one place. The longer you stay in one place the more likely you are to be attacked.

Those who have been outed in the media are the most at risk. Henry I., a transgender woman in Kampala, faced threats from neighbors after her pictures were shown on Al Jazeera. She fled her home and slept in bars for a week until she found a friend to stay with.

Other LGBTI people have chosen to leave Uganda – at least 100 since the start of 2014. As of late April, at least 87 had claimed asylum in neighboring Kenya, according to the [UN Refugee Agency](#), while interviewees reported to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International that at least three of their friends had fled to [Rwanda](#). An asylum organization in the US reported that it is handling ten new cases by LGBTI Ugandans, but there may be dozens more: a US government source said that the overall number of Ugandan asylum seekers so far this year is almost double the number during the same period last year, which may in part be attributable to the Anti-Homosexuality Act.

Health Care

For health care providers in Uganda, the Anti-Homosexuality Act has complicated communication with patients and the provision of health information. The Act has also been used to justify the denial of services. A doctor at the Most At-Risk Populations Initiative (MARPI), a government program intended to address high HIV rates

among key populations including men who have sex with men (MSM), told Human Rights Watch that MSM in Uganda “are hard to reach because of stigma and the existing legal environment.” The doctor said, “Once [the Anti-Homosexuality Act] was passed, the population we serve went into fear. They don’t know what will happen to them if they come to access services. They fear the health care providers may report them.”

Health care providers are also uncertain as to how the new law affects them. “Health care providers need to be assured that they are not going to be accused of recruitment or promotion,” the doctor said.

A representative of a large NGO that conducts HIV prevention and treatment concurred: “There is fear on our teams now, especially after the incident at Walter Reed. There is also fear among our clients...When they come for services, they’re afraid someone could be hanging around and documenting them, especially those who’ve been exposed [in the media].”

Billy E., an activist at a community organization focused on MSM sexual health, said that in 2013, his organization had trained health providers at several clinics in Kampala, encouraging them to provide “LGBTI-friendly” services. But such providers are now reluctant to serve MSM. “They say they don’t want to get in trouble with the Ministry of Health because they could be closed down,” Billy said. His own organization is also struggling to provide services:

Our existing clients contact us by phone, but we can no longer do outreach to get new clients. If someone calls you asking for condoms and lubricant, you ask yourself “Who is this? It could even be the police.”...We now have an overstock of condoms and lubricant, and no one is coming to pick them. People are going back into the closet, which is affecting our people – they’re going to die; the prevalence is going to rise.

An NGO representative in a smaller town outside Kampala – the only organization to serve MSM in that town – told Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International: “Our HIV work is on hold. If people call us, we tell them to go to a hospital. We used to go out and do mobile VCTs [voluntary counseling and testing], give out condoms, listen to peoples’ stories, do outreach – now we can no longer do this.”

Arrests

Ugandan lawyers and activists said that at least 17 people were arrested since the bill was passed by parliament. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International interviewed 10 of them. Although LGBTI people have long been at risk of arrest by police due to the criminalization of homosexual activity in Uganda’s penal code, this figure suggests a sharp increase in arrests since passage of the bill. The Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum, a Ugandan group that tracks such cases, recorded only 23 such cases in the four years from 2007 to 2011.

On December 20, 2013, just hours after the bill was passed – although it had not yet become law – a police officer arrested Beyonce K., a transgender woman, as she was walking down the street:

The police grabbed me and asked “Are you a man or a woman?” He arrested me and took me to Owino police station...The police were insulting me. The head of the police there was saying “These are the homosexuals, we should burn you, these are the people who are selling themselves. This is why the bill has passed.” The police pushed me into a male cell, where the other prisoners beat me and pulled my hair.

She was released after six hours without charge.

Billy E., the activist who helps provide HIV services to MSM, was arrested in Kampala on December 31 in a ruse orchestrated by a police officer who pretended to be a sick client. Such ploys by police are directly detrimental to the provision of HIV services:

Someone called me and lied to me, “I’m sick, I need to see a doctor,” pretending to be a client. I told them to meet me at Nateete on the roadside. It was a police officer without uniform. He said, “You’re under arrest because you’re doing homosexual things.” He was claiming homosexuals come to my house – which is true, some come to pick condoms and lubricants, some come for a few days if they’ve been kicked out.

Billy was jailed for four days, then released on bond. The charge on his bond papers stated simply “homosexual,” although being homosexual in itself is not a crime in Uganda. Billy became homeless as a result of his arrest, since police had searched his house and asked neighbors about him, exposing him. He said, “When I got out of jail, the village leader told me to leave this area because maybe people will beat me up and set a mob on me. So I became homeless and I had nowhere to go.” Billy had already been disowned by his parents. He is now staying with a friend.

In late January and early February 2014, a series of arrests took place throughout Kampala. On January 27, a Kenyan and a Belgian citizen were arrested in their home in Ntinda at midnight, apparently on the basis of a complaint. Police took them to the police station in their underwear and threatened to subject them to anal

exams. After lawyers intervened, they were released without charge and subsequently left Uganda.

Also on January 27, police arrested Brenda, a transgender woman, as she boarded a public taxi. They accused her of "impersonating a woman" under section 381 of the Penal Code, which states that "any person who, with intent to defraud any person, falsely represents himself or herself to be other person, living or dead, commits a misdemeanor." This charge has frequently been used to arrest transgender people, despite absence of any evidence that they intend to "defraud." Brenda said:

[The police] opened my pants and tried to check if I'm a man or a woman. They beat me with batons, they slapped me, they kicked me. They beat me all over the body...

Then I was taken to CPS [Central Police Station]. There, [the police] were checking if I had boobs or not – they were touching me in the chest area and asking "Is this a man or a woman?" They also touched me in the genital area.

After they checked me, they took me to the cell. I became like a cartoon for these guys, they would call the press, every five minutes I was in and out of the cell. They would call the press and make me sit there and ask me, "Where do you come from, what are your names?"

Brenda spent four days at Central Police Station, in violation of Article 23(4) of the Constitution, which requires that police bring suspects before a magistrate within 48 hours of an arrest. She is HIV-positive, and asked police for her medication: "I told them, and they told me, 'That's not our concern.'" A lawyer was able to visit her after two days, but on Brenda's court date, two days later, police gave the lawyer inaccurate information regarding the court her case was to be heard in. As a result, Brenda appeared before a magistrate on January 31 without legal representation. She was charged with being "rogue and vagabond," under section 168 of the Penal Code and transferred to Luzira prison, where she underwent further ill-treatment from wardens. She recalled: "At Luzira, [the wardens] started beating me saying, 'Why do they send such people here? Why don't they build a prison for such people?'" She was released on bail after two weeks.

On January 27, according to lawyers with Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum, police arrested Jackson M. and Kim M. after they escaped from a mob that wanted to beat them up. Their trial, on charges of "unnatural offenses," under section 145 of the Penal Code, is scheduled to begin June 12.

Police arrested Faruk L. in Kampala on February 2, lawyers said. Faruk had met and exchanged phone numbers with a man in what Faruk thought was a flirtatious exchange. The man reported him to the police as a homosexual. Although there was no allegation that sexual intercourse had taken place, police detained Faruk for several hours, then released him without charge.

On February 10, a transgender man was arrested and charged with theft. Arthur M., a transgender activist and paralegal, went to Kiira police station in Kyaliwajala to find out why his friend was being held. When Arthur arrived at the station, police arrested him as well, accusing him of "impersonation." Police sexually and physically assaulted Arthur and paraded him before the media:

The police tried to undress me to show my chest. I tried to resist, but the more I resisted, the more they beat me, with their fists, their batons, kicking me...I was in trousers but some policewoman started grabbing my genitals. I fought to keep my clothes on though they wanted to undress me totally. They were also touching me in the chest area – both males and females.

While they brought us out, the police started spraying pepper spray in my eyes because I was hiding my face. One of them was pulling me from side to side to get me to face the media.

A lawyer learned of Arthur's arrest and went to the police station, where he was able to secure Arthur's release without formal charges being filed. However, the arrest had a lasting impact, Arthur said:

I was evicted after being arrested. The landlady said, "I can't house people of that nature. All along I didn't even know you were a homosexual." All along she respected me and loved me, but this news in the media changed everything.

Another transgender paralegal, Shawn M., also went to assist the transgender man who was charged with theft, and was arrested in turn:

A police woman shoved me into a cell and started touching me all over and asking "Are you a man or a woman?" I said, "What you're doing isn't right, you don't even know who I am." I showed my work ID. They threatened to parade me before the media. I asked how much money I should give her. She said "Do you have 1 million?" I said that wasn't possible.

The police released Shawn the same day after he called friends and managed to collect 150,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$60) for a bribe.

Police also carried out arrests outside of Kampala. In one town in Western Uganda, Marco E., a gay man who had been outed in a local newspaper, went to the police in mid-February to report a theft. Instead of addressing his complaint, police arrested Marco, detaining him in a police cell. He was released after two nights, with no explanation for his arrest.

In a nearby village, police visited Mohamed S.' home on February 12 after neighbors reported him as a suspected homosexual. Mohamed was not home, and his mother told police they must be mistaken. Mohamed told Human Rights Watch: "When I came home my mother told me, 'The police came looking for you, and our family doesn't like that, so you should go away.'" Mohamed, who had previously made a living working on his family farm, is now living in another village and is jobless.

Police conducted another wave of arrests after the Anti-Homosexuality Act was officially published in the law gazette on March 10. On March 13, police arrested Maria W., a transgender asylum seeker, after neighbors reported her to police as a "homosexual." Police searched Maria's home without a warrant and beat her, demanding that she enter the password on her laptop to allow them to search it:

They kept beating me. They were beating me with pieces of wood, fists, and kicks...They took me to the police post and interrogated me. They said I left my country to come destroy Ugandan culture.

Police asked for large bribes in exchange for Maria's release. According to Maria, "They said, 'He's part of a gay organization, they have lots of money and sleep with whites.'" Maria was released after a friend bribed the police with 500,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$200).

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International interviewed four men who were arrested in various towns in Western Uganda in mid-March, all of whom were apparently reported as "homosexuals" by neighbors or acquaintances. All four have since been released, one after paying a bribe of 500,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$200). Two of the men still have cases pending against them.

Violence

Since Museveni signed the Anti-Homosexuality Act on February 24, several LGBTI people have been violently assaulted. On February 28, "Queen," a transgender sex worker, went out in the evening as usual, despite friends' warnings that the signing of the bill could make her work more dangerous. Queen's friend Kayemba, interviewed by Human Rights Watch, said: "At about 2 a.m., [Queen] called, saying 'Where are you? Where are you? Come and help me, I'm in problems.' She was saying, 'The guy's beaten me, the guy is killing me' in a far off voice."

Kayemba and her flatmate were afraid it was a trap and that if they tried to come to Queen's rescue, they would be arrested. They went to her apartment at 8 a.m. and found her there, close to death, covered with cuts on the body and in the anus, apparently from a broken bottle. Queen was hospitalized, but died several days later. Her friends explained, "We were afraid if we told the police, they'd arrest us, because we're gay and the bill had just been passed." They suspected the incident was a hate crime.

On March 11, two gay males and a transgender woman were lured to a house by people they had met on social media. The 17-year-old, Jerome N., told Human Rights Watch that after being chased from his home in Western Uganda, he had traveled to Kampala and sought friends on Facebook who could help him out. One man contacted him, offering help with school fees. Jerome took a public taxi to a neighborhood to meet his new friend. When he arrived, however, the man took him into a bedroom where Jerome found two other men beating a transgender woman, who was stripped naked. The men took away Jerome's phone and forced him to strip:

They started beating me up and said "Who told you to be gay? When did you start being gay?" They said they were undercover police...Then they said I should get erect and have sex with the other guy. I said "I can't get erect in these circumstances." They poured hot water on me.

They were taking videos on their phones. They tied my hands behind, tied my legs, put me on the floor, beating and kicking me while one guy was taking video. I was begging "Please forgive me, please forgive me, let me go home."

The men then brought in a third person and forced him to kiss Jerome, beating and taunting him. Jerome pleaded to be allowed to leave, promising he would send the men 50,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$20) in addition to the 70,000 Ugandan shillings (about \$28) they had taken from his wallet.

They said "Are you sure you won't tell the police? Even if you tell the police, we are part of them, and we will hunt you down." I said "I won't tell them." The guys told me to put on my clothes. I dressed and went out. I walked all the way home.

A friend took Jerome N. to the police, where he filed a complaint, as did the transgender woman, who was also released. Police have since arrested one of the alleged perpetrators. However, both victims told Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International that they are hesitant to follow up on the police complaint out of fear that they

themselves could be arrested. A lawyer who followed up on Jerome's case underlined that she believed the risk of arrest was real: "When I went to police they were making homophobic statements – 'Oh these guys who are having sex for money.' I was afraid they could charge our clients [with homosexuality]." A paralegal, who also discussed the case with the police, said: "The police attitude was terrible, 'You human rights organizations are helping gays.'"

Loss of Employment

LGBTI people also told Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International that their employers had fired them since the signing of the bill. Agie B., a lesbian in Kampala, told Human Rights Watch that her employer at a restaurant fired her on March 12:

The boss told me to go because he found out my sexual orientation. He told me "I don't need you anymore." He said that because of the bill, I'm putting his business at risk: "What if the police come here, they'll say I'm the one who's encouraging you to be that."

Nim H. was fired in March from his job at a restaurant in a town outside Kampala. His father, who had learned of his sexual orientation and had rejected him, reported him to his employer:

The boss is a good man. He called me and said "Your father doesn't want me to employ you and he's going to let everyone know the cashier is gay. So for the sake of my business, I think you should go... Even the law is strongly against it, they could even close my place for employing people like you." He gave me the salary for the rest of the month.

The many LGBTI Ugandans who work in the informal sector are also affected. Hamisi O. said that he used to sell clothes in a market. After one of his friends was outed in the newspaper in February, Hamisi O. was also suspected: "My workmates were saying 'You are gay, you should go away from here, let's call the police.'...I haven't gone back to the market since."

Left jobless and hungry, Hamisi described his life to Human Rights Watch: "If you have breakfast, you don't take lunch. You take lunch, you don't take dinner. Life in prison? It's already like that in my house."