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Thank you for your email of 18 August about the situation concerning LGBT refugees being held in Block 13 of the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya.

We are aware of reports of abuse of LGBT refugees in Kakuma Camp. Officials from our High Commission in Nairobi have been in close contact with UNHCR, who manage the camp, about what steps are being taken to help those individuals.

To ensure security for all refugees in Kakuma, UNHCR Kakuma has asked the Refugee Affairs Secretariat Camp Manager to increase the general security in Kakuma 3 Block 13, particularly through patrols in the area.

We also understand that the police dealing with the camps have increased their focus on prevention and response to crimes committed against LGBT refugees, leading to a number of arrests and successful prosecutions. For example, in June 2020, 11 members of a youth gang in the camp were arrested as they prepared to attack LGBTI refugees. They were brought to trial, sentenced and are now serving two-year prison sentences. Another trial is ongoing for six more individuals arrested on the same charges in July.

Other models are being tested to provide the LGBT community better access to law enforcement and report crimes. One project, the Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Plan (KISED), has created 'gender' desks in each police station, including posts within Kakuma Camp, to offer specialised services to victims of gender-based violence, including LGBT persons.

Specific training programmes have also been developed for law enforcement. In 2019-2020, 180 G4S private security guards providing security at Kakuma camp and other UNHCR locations received dedicated training on 'Working with LGBT persons in forced displacement'. Similar training for the Police and community volunteers has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and will be reinstated as soon as conditions allow.

Provision of protection services to LGBTI persons continues during the pandemic, and is specifically provided for in the 2020 Partnership Agreement with the Danish Refugee Council, the UNHCR's main partner in providing case management for victims of sexually based gender violence. An email address and a toll-free phone line remain in place to receive urgent referrals and provide immediate support to all victims.

Similarly, the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) provides legal counselling and assistance to any person of concern who needs legal support for reporting any incidents, or for ongoing police or judicial matters. RCK works through legal aid clinics which are open to all individuals living within the camps, without discrimination. Health, including mental health, services are provided by hospitals and clinics operated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) and Africa Inland Church (AIC).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNHCR complaint and feedback mechanisms have remained open through complaint boxes at each field post and a toll-free helpline number.

The UNHCR and its partners are working in a challenging environment, where resettlement options for LGBT refugees are very limited. Homosexuality is still illegal in Kenya, though prosecutions are rare. At CHOGM 2018, former Prime Minister May expressed regret that outdated discriminatory legislation like this continues to affect the lives of people across the Commonwealth. The UK has since allocated £7.2m of funding to projects that advocate for LGBT rights in Commonwealth countries.

I would like to assure you that the UK is opposed to all forms of discrimination, and works to uphold the rights and freedoms of LGBT people in all circumstances. The UK will continue to provide protection for people who need it, for as long as it is needed, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights.



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