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Fear of torture or ill-treatment/medical concern/prisoners of conscience

UGANDA

Oundo George] Transgender LGBT human rights defenders

Kiiza]

On 10 September lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) human rights defenders, Oundo George and Kiiza were arrested in the village of Nabweru, Wakiso district, outside the capital city Kampala. They are currently detained without charge at Nabweru Police Post and have not been brought before a court within the constitutional limit of 48 hours.

According to a spiritual advisor who had access to Oundo George in police custody, both are to be charged with attempt to recruiting people into homosexuality, in spite of this not being a crime under Ugandan law. Amnesty International considers both Oundo George and Kiiza to be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely for their gender identity.

The LGBT human rights defenders were arrested at Oundo George's home and then taken to Nalukolokolo Police Post before being transferred to Nabweru Police Post the next day. Other LGBT human rights defenders are afraid to visit them at the police station, as they have received reports they may also be detained if they do so. Oundo George has diabetes and requires urgent medical care. He also has swollen feet and feels unwell.

Consensual same-sex sexual acts are illegal in Uganda and laws do not recognise the expression of gender identity. Amnesty International is concerned that Oundo George and Kiiza are likely to be mistreated while in detention, as such mistreatment is common due to the homophobic attitudes of the Ugandan police. On 20 May 2008, as Oundo George and another transgender individual were dancing at the Capital Pub in Kampala, they were detained by club bouncers, harassed and beaten on the basis of the bouncers' suspicions of their gender identity. They were detained for four days before being released on a bond. During their detention, they were repeatedly beaten by police officers, and one of them was sexually assaulted by both police and other detainees. At the time Oundo George was denied medical treatment for diabetes, and only allowed one meal a day.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- calling for Oundo George and Kiiza to be immediately released as they are prisoners of conscience, who have been arrested solely for their gender identity;
- expressing concern for the health of Oundo George who is a diabetic and requires urgent medical attention for his condition;
- seeking assurances that Oundo George and Kiiza will not be tortured or ill-treated, and that they will be given prompt access to their families and lawyers;
- calling on the Ugandan government to end police harassment and wrongful detention of LGBT human rights defenders.

APPEALS TO:

President
Yoweri Museveni
Parliament Building
PO Box 7168
Kampala
Uganda
Fax: + 256 414 346 102
Email: info@gouexecutive.net
Salutation: Your Excellency

Inspector General of Police
Major Kale Kayihura
Police Headquarters
PO Box 7055
Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 414 255 630
Salutation: Dear Major

Minister of Justice
Makubuya Kiddu
Parliament Building
PO Box 7183
Kampala
Uganda
Fax: + 256 414 234 453
Email: info@justice.go.ug
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Chairperson of the Uganda Human Rights Commission
Margret Sekagya
P.O .Box 4929, Kampala,
Uganda
Fax: +256 414 255 261
E-mail: uhrc@uhrc.ug

Salutation: Dear Chairperson

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Uganda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 October 2008.

(See attached file: 15900708.rtf)

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