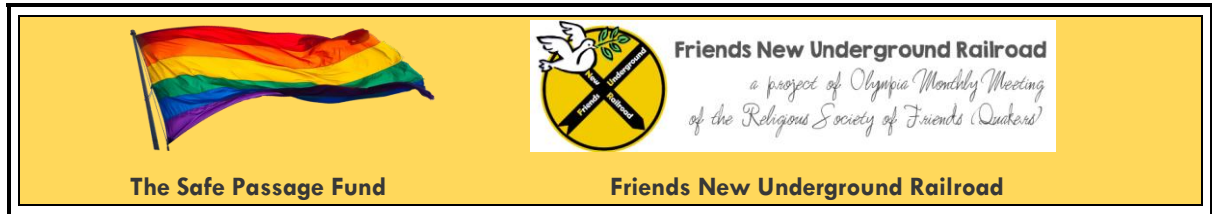


Supporting LGBT people in Uganda to gain safe passage out of immediate danger.

Action Alert!

The Safe Passage Fund



PRESS RELEASE: August 16, 2014.

Six LGBT Murders by Stoning Reported in Rural Uganda

Others flee vigilante backlash to repeal of antigay law.

Uganda -- Over the past week, Ugandan activists have reported the horrific murders of six LGBT individuals in a rural zone of the country: three gay men, two lesbians and a transperson. "They were killed by stoning. One who survived (still breathing after stoning) was burnt alive using kerosene/paraffin and a match box," stated a witness and source to the Friends New Underground Railroad (FNUR), a Quaker solidarity initiative helping LGBT people in Uganda.

A seventh gay man was reported to have been attacked by a mob and died a day later from head injuries. According to the source, a rural vigilant mob attacked the 28-year-old gay man in a different zone on August 5th. "I went to the scene," wrote the eyewitness in an email. "I saved [] when I lied to the mob that let me take him to the police." The witness stated that he was able to convince the mob he would deliver the victim to the police, but instead put him on a *boda boda*, (motorcycle) and rescued him. The victim was later denied medical care, he alleged, because he lacked funds to pay. Documentary evidence of the attack was provided, including pictures of the young gay man who died of his injuries on Monday, August 11th and buried two days later. Pictures provided from the scene show a young man sitting on the ground in a public street, his face and neck covered in blood. The sources have other details supporting the claim.

The reports come from several Ugandan activists, including those who helped rescue the head trauma victim. The reports were shared with Olympia, Washington-based FNUR (referred to as the 'Railroad') and then the Safe Passage Fund, a fund set up to help LGBT victims of persecution. At press time, the names, identities, and location of the victims and the witnesses were not being publicly disclosed by the FNUR for security reasons. Several Ugandan rights groups in Kampala and researchers are launching independent investigations of the allegations. Local sources for the stonings say local radio stations in the zone have been broadcasting information about onantigay incidents. Further investigation is underway.

The new reports of antigay killings follow the recent repeal of Uganda's draconian Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) by a Ugandan 5-judge court that deemed it unconstitutional on technical grounds, because Parliament had failed to collect a requisite minimal quorum vote (a third of MPs) last December. Christian evangelical leaders have in turn stepped up antigay messages on local radio stations that carry religious programming. Uganda's Attorney General, who publicly supports the antigay law, has since filed a motion to appeal the constitutional court decision.

The climate worsened after 200 Ugandan LGBT activists and allies celebrated the repeal of AHA at the 3rd annual Uganda Pride at an Entebbe beach party last week, contend local sources.

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Several PRIDE participants contacted them after the Entebbe beach party to say they had received threats and gone back into hiding. Some requested help to leave Uganda.

Already, 215 MPs of the 375-member body have signed a petition to reintroduce and fast-track a revised law that could seek harsher penalties – or be watered down.ⁱ “I am confident we shall have the bill retabled and passed into law overwhelmingly,” MP Latif Ssebaggala told IRIN News. The repealed AHA calls for up a 14 years sentence for anyone found guilty of “homosexual acts” and a life sentence for those convicted of “aggravated” offenses – such as those committed by HIV-positive individuals, or involving the disabled, minors or serial offenders. The promotion of homosexuality is outlawed, and citizens have been urged in the media to denounce and ferret out presumed LGBT people. A wave of evictions have also followed, as families and landlords kicked out LGBT individuals, fearing arrest themselves under the AHA.

In May, the first trials of individuals arrested under the AHA were defeated by lawyers defending LGBT clients,ⁱⁱ but others were arrested. Meanwhile, Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni, under pressure from US and international leaders to scrap the law, has signaled his interest in signing off on a softer version. Outside governments threaten more aid boycotts. According to the FNUR source, several local radio stations have broadcast news of recent incidents. “The hate radio has upped its negative campaign against LGBTs,” stated one source. “For example last Sunday it was promoting violence against LGBTs - on IMPACT FM which has dedicated [religious] programmes.”

58 Evacuated Out of Uganda This Week

The backlash has spurred other LGBT in deeper hiding and exile, stated FNUR. Over the past 24 hours, **65** LGBT individuals – including a railroad ‘conductor’, his wife and three children -- were evacuated to safety across the border, according to FNUR’s Gabi Clayton, co-manager of the Railroad project. Since the Railroad’s debut in April, a total of **448** Ugandan LGBT individuals who sought help to leave Uganda were successfully helped with funding from Quaker groups, The Safe Passage Fund, churches, nonprofits and individual donors. Ally advocates have freely provided critical safe housing, food, medical and legal aid to these asylee. A growing number are now resettled in third party countries, notably South Africa, Rwanda, Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, France, Ireland, Denmark, and Germany. None are in refugee camps.

“While the repeal of the law is wonderful, it has made it more dangerous for many LGBT people,” stated Clayton of the backlash. “It has also confused some potential donors who may think that things are better and the work of the Railroad is not needed --and that is far from true.” While LGBT rights groups are concentrated in the capital, Kampala, the underground railroad has operated in rural areas where there is less media attention and fewer resources for LGBT people. Most LGBT individuals are in the closet, say FNUR sources. They are too afraid to speak out and they avoid LGBT groups in Kampala who could provide support. They contact the Railroad via word of mouth.

In recent weeks, the identities of two “conductors” of the Railroad were uncovered and they were brutally assaulted by mobs in separate incident, stated Clayton. The FNUR supported their medical evacuation for treatment in a third country and a portion of their medical bills.

Clayton says her organization will not yet release names and details of sources and victims to the media in order to protect the security of field teams in the affected zones. While her team

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acknowledges such details can help others independently verify alleged incidents – and pressure authorities to respond, the decision comes at the behest of Railroad field agents. “Friends New Underground Railroad totally supports this decision,” stated Clayton. “We don’t believe that this will have a big impact on our donors because those who are giving to support this work are doing so with the understanding that this is an extremely dangerous situation for LGBT people in Uganda – and that is the whole point of our involvement.” Still, she agreed, “Yes, it’s important that these attacks be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice. We want that to happen -- but not at the price of anyone’s safety.”

New Cases, Growing Crisis

A dangerous moment: An earlier May 2014 reportⁱⁱⁱ released by the Uganda’s national LGBT advocacy group Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) found a 750 percent increase in attacks, including documented incidents of kidnapping and torture of the country’s LGBT community, since January. Two years ago, SMUG’s pioneering lawyer David Kato Kisule was brutally murdered in his house in Bukasa Village, Mukono District. SMUG leaders have vowed to stay and fight for the right of Ugandan LGBT people to live free of violence in their own country and share credit for the recent court victory, and the decision to hold a PRIDE event in such a climate.

SMUG is also leading a watershed international legal battle in a US court against US evangelist and pastor Scott Lively of Abiding Truth Ministries, with help from the US Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR). Lively is accused of “Crimes Against Humanity” for his direct role in traveling to Uganda to rally church groups against gay people and help conservative MPs there draft the draconian AHA, known initially as Uganda’s “Kill the Gays” bill. Lively also advised Russian Orthodox religious leaders and lawmakers to draft tough anti-gay bills now made law.

Religious Groups Target Catholic Students

In recent months, students attending Ugandan Catholic and Christian universities, colleges and other schools have also been major targets of the national antigay witch hunt being coordinated by Ugandan evangelical bishops and clergy. They have demanded that Catholic educational institutions identify and expel any students suspected of being LGBT. Dozens of students have recently been “outed” and expelled at three universities, some then evicted by their families, their names and details of their private lives, including names of friends, have been broadcast on community radio stations. Attacks and threats have followed.

From May thru July, 22 gay male seminary students, over two dozen self-identified lesbians, and several trans students at three different Catholic universities were outed, went into hiding, and were provided successful safe passage out of Uganda. The 22 seminarians have been granted asylum and are now resettled in European countries. Several of the lesbian and trans students are also in the process of being permanently resettled. Currently, 13 lesbian university students at another university are in hiding and hope to leave after being outed, according to FNUR sources.

On the positive side, all who sought asylum have gotten help to date. Once those leaving are outside Uganda, other ally groups provide transitional safe housing, food, health care and legal support for those seeking asylum. One of the first individuals helped by the railroad is a 26-year-old lesbian activist who was outed when the police raided the LGBT organization where she worked as a volunteer. She is now resettled with protected status in Canada.

Impact on HIV and health access for LGBT persons

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The recent passage of a law criminalizing HIV transmission in Uganda has reportedly had a chilling effect on the access to health care of LGBT persons and those living with HIV. Several AIDS clinics were closed earlier this spring. Ugandans living with HIV in and outside Uganda report that some doctors and clinics have declined to care for LGBT persons, afraid of being targeted or shut down by the antigay law. On the positive side, local and foreign health professionals and donors have quietly stepped forward to fill the service gap, but not publicly.

Looking ahead, international and national AIDS groups and health agencies have strongly condemned the HIV law and worry about a negative impact on the national epidemic. Others worry that some LGBT people who might be HIV-positive and left Uganda are now in refugee communities without adequate support or access to daily HIV medicines and medical care.

Earlier tragedies: Reported LGBT suicides and desecrations

More Suicides: In mid-April one of the conductors reported that a 25 year old gay man “lost hope” and committed suicide after his group of 13 LGBT individuals ran out of food and water after 10 days of hiding in the bush. The 12 others were transported safely outside Uganda two days later.

The Railroad also reported two suicides in rural Uganda involving a lesbian and a transperson. They allegedly killed themselves after their latest hiding place was discovered and a mob sought them out. Compounding these tragedies, the families of the two suicides allegedly refused to accept their bodies for burial. The bodies were dumped in the street, burned and desecrated by a mob, claimed a source who told the FNUR he went to retrieve the bodies after learning of the suicides. Four other suicides had been reported since the antigay bill in SMUG’s May report.

Arson and Evictions

Activists have also reported arson attempts, including an attack on three LGBT people inside a rural home that was set on fire by unidentified assailants in their community. The victims were treated for burn injuries by an outside religious charity. SMUG also reported on arson attacks against LGBT households in their May 2014 report. The arson attacks, coupled with a wave of ongoing evictions by landlords of LGBT persons, has fueled homelessness in rural areas.

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Further details about allegations, attacks and incidents discussed in this alert will be made public at the FNUR Facebook website after security issues are addressed.

To contact Friends New Underground Railroad, email Gabi Clayton, co-clerk of the Olympia Friends Meeting’s Peace and Social Justice Committee and co-manager of the Railroad project at gabiclayton@friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org or call US (360) 888-5291; or email Talcott Broadhead, FNUR co-manager at talcottbroadhead@friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org.

On the web: <http://olympiafriends.org> or <http://friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org>. Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/FriendsNewUndergroundRailroad>. Twitter: <http://twitter.com/FrNewUndergrRR>

See details below about the Safe Passage Fund below and how you can help.

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**The Safe Passage Fund
4th FLASH APPEAL**

August 15, 2014

Asylum - A Last Resort.

As many Ugandan LGBT activists note, the decision to leave one's country often without notice and without one's resources, *is a last, desperate resort when the option to stay has ended and the threat of arrest, violence, or death is acute.* The Safe Passage Fund **does not advocate asylum**, but has a priority mission of **responding to emergency requests by individuals or local groups in countries seeking to move out of immediate danger.** *The fund solely provides emergency transit funds.*

DONATE NOW: To donate to the Safe Passage Fund, please click here:

<http://friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org/donate>

NOTE: Please mark 'For Railroad/Safe Passage Fund' in subject line if donating by check.

The Urgent Need: \$5500

Friends New Underground Railroad seeks **\$5500 today** to cover the cost of safe transit for the 58 individuals who were in such a dangerous position that they were moved out of Uganda this week on borrowed money and credit that must be repaid immediately to generous individuals.

HELPING THE HERO(es): The Safe Passage Fund joins the FNUR in an additional fundraising appeal to support a heroic "conductor" – a straight ally married man with three children. "He has been a true hero" stated Clayton of her colleague, who personally helped to rescue, shelter, and transit over 100 rural LGBT people to safety since April 2014. His identity was discovered in recent days by anti-gay forces and he faced immediate death threats, while his wife and 5-year-old were threatened with gang rape. On Thursday, a Railroad team successfully moved this family out of Uganda. They now seek third country asylum. \$1920 is sought urgently to cover the evacuation and transitional resettlement expenses. For details, see:

<http://friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org/please-help-us-save-one-of-our-conductors-an-appeal/>.

Beyond these known individuals, more LGBT individuals remain in Uganda who are seeking assistance from the conductors to relocate inside and outside the country.

We are seeking small or large donations – \$10. \$20. \$50, \$100 or more -- many hands to help.

If you have given to the Quaker Railroad or this Fund before, you can take pride in our collective success in helping so many rural LGBT in Uganda – and straight allies – escape danger. Every request, along with reported threats and incidents are vetted and documented by local field teams working in strict confidentiality within a hostile environment. The Railroad tries to respond within a week to evacuation requests and has a remarkable track record to date, despite the

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very underground nature of this emergency work. All members are volunteers, while field “conductors” are Ugandan individuals and teams who have stepped forward but work independently for security reasons.

Please give again if you are able, and please ask others to donate as well. There are other groups helping LGBT activists in Uganda to fight the antigay groups that also deserve help, including SMUG. This 4th Appeal is seeking donations specifically for recent and current requests to the Railroad.

All donations are tax exempt. The fund and Quaker-supported Railroad effort is all-volunteer global solidarity initiative. All monies raised go only toward emergency transit costs – no admin or overhead. The Fund is collecting funds under the fiscal umbrella of the Olympia Friends Meeting’s Peace and Social Justice Committee, a US 501C3 nonprofit.

Other allies in the global solidarity movement independently provide transitional safe housing, food, healthcare, legal aid and other services for asylum seekers transited by the Railroad who generally have sought resettlement in third party countries.

For information about the Safe Passage Fund, or to inquire about emergency grant requests, contact: talktothefuture@gmail.com. Attn: Administrator.

On behalf of The Safe Passage Fund and our allies in and outside East Africa working to assist LGBT and allies under threat in Uganda , Thank You.

For the Safe Passage Fund,

Anne-christine d’Adesky

Founder

ⁱ “Briefing: What’s next for Uganda’s anti-gay law?” IRIN news. Posted on Relief Web blog, August 14, 2014. <http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/briefing-what-next-uganda-s-anti-gay-law>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/07/uganda-men-first-trial-anti-gay-laws>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.sexualminoritiesuganda.com/Torment%20to%20Tyranny%2009-05-2014%20FINAL.pdf>