

STATEMENT OF INTENT

***Promoting Inclusive and Survivor-Centered Responses to Gender-Based Violence and
Femicide
Among LGBTQ+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Kenya***

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**Submitted to:
GBV and Femicide Technical Working Group**

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**On Behalf of:
LGBTQ+ Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Kenya**

1. Introduction

This document is hereby submitted by Queer Refugees in partnership with EEA-H, advocating for inclusive, survivor-centered approaches to address gender-based violence and femicide among LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in Kenya. The aim is to ensure national and local responses account for the heightened vulnerabilities and lived realities of these communities both in camp settings like Kakuma and in urban centers where gender-based violence is often intensified by displacement, xenophobia, and legal precarity.

LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers face systemic forms of GBV, including intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and targeted killings, which amount to femicide and identity-based violence. Despite the seriousness of these crimes, they remain underreported and under-addressed within mainstream policy and service delivery structures.

2. Rationale

Refugees and asylum seekers with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions face disproportionate exposure to Gender Based Violence and femicide, including acts of physical and sexual violence that are weaponized to punish, silence, or erase their identities. Their status as displaced individuals, compounded by homophobic and transphobic attitudes, makes them frequent targets of both intimate and public forms of violence.

In Kakuma Refugee Camp, *the 2021 arson attack on Block 13* is a chilling example of identity-motivated violence resulting in death and injury, emblematic of femicide and hate crimes against gender-diverse persons. Survivors of this and other attacks reported systemic neglect, delayed medical care, and fear of retaliation for speaking out.

In urban areas such as Nairobi and Central Kenya, LGBTQ+ asylum seekers report being subjected to intimate partner violence, extortion, and blackmail often by perpetrators who exploit their legal vulnerability. For many, seeking help is hindered by fear of exposure, arrest, or deportation.

These experiences reflect broader patterns of Gender Based Violence and femicide that are rooted in patriarchy, inequality, and stigma. Yet, despite these challenges, affected communities possess the very strategies and leadership needed to confront and dismantle these cycles of violence. They are not merely victims but agents of change.

3. Recommendations to the Technical Working Group

A. Recognition of Femicide and SOGIESC-Related Violence

- Advocate for the classification of femicide and identity-based killings including those targeting LGBTQ+ individuals as distinct, prosecutable offenses under Kenyan law.
- Ensure accountability measures and legal frameworks recognize gender identity, sexual orientation, and refugee status as aggravating factors in GBV-related crimes.
- Promote data collection and research that disaggregate violence statistics to reflect the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers.

B. Inclusive Support Services

- Establish safety in both camp and urban areas that are fully inclusive of GBV survivors, particularly those at risk of femicide or IPV.
- Ensure comprehensive support, including trauma-informed mental health services, emergency medical care, legal aid, and security referrals.
- Prioritize underserved regions such as Kakuma, Kalobeyei, Kajiado North, and low-income neighborhoods in Nairobi where risks are elevated.

C. Meaningful Representation in Policy and Coordination Spaces

- Institutionalize the participation of LGBTQ+ and refugee voices in GBV/femicide prevention and response mechanisms at national and county levels.
- Support structured feedback systems with grassroots RLOs to co-create policy and response strategies that reflect lived experiences.
- Recognize the leadership of refugee-led and community-based organizations as central actors in protecting marginalized survivors.

D. Enhanced Justice and Reporting Mechanisms

- Facilitate access to justice by building confidential, survivor-centered reporting systems that accommodate legal and linguistic needs.
- Provide interpretation, paralegal assistance, and continuous case management tailored to the specific risks faced by LGBTQ+ survivors.
- Train police, health workers, and legal professionals on gender, sexuality, refugee rights, and trauma-informed approaches.

E. Addressing Intimate Partner Violence

- Acknowledge IPV in non-heteronormative and undocumented relationships as a serious form of GBV and a risk factor for femicide.

- Create tools and survivor services including shelters, legal protections, and psychosocial support that address the unique dynamics of IPV within LGBTQ+ and refugee communities.
- Strengthen linkages between emergency response and long-term care in both humanitarian and urban development contexts.

4. Commitment to Collaboration

The Entrepreneur Empowerment and Advocacy-Health and Refugee-Led Organizations re-affirm their commitment to:

- Sharing survivor narratives, data, and community-generated knowledge to inform GBV and femicide policies.
- Collaborating in advocacy, program implementation, and monitoring of inclusive protection frameworks.
- Co-developing solutions with the very individuals affected by GBV and femicide, recognizing their insight and agency.
- Scaling up capacity-building programs for state and non-state actors working with at-risk populations.

5. Conclusion

This is a call for transformative action that centers dignity, safety, and justice for all survivors of Gender Based Violence and femicide, including those who have long been excluded from protection systems. LGBTQ+ refugees and asylum seekers face some of the most extreme forms of gender-based harm, yet they are also key to the solution. Their leadership, resilience, and expertise must guide national responses that seek to end femicide and all forms of Gender Based Violence in Kenya.

Presented by:

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"Nothing For Us, Without Us"