

Gender DynamiX calls on Ugandan Government for immediate and unconditional release of activists

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Gender DynamiX, the only organisation focusing exclusively on the rights of transgendered people in Africa strongly condemns the arrest of three LGBTI activists, one of which is transgendered, on Wednesday, 4 June 2008 in Uganda and calls on the Ugandan Government for their immediate and unconditional release.

Onziema Patience, (28), Valentine Kalende (27) and Auf (26) were attending the 2008 International HIV/AIDS Implementer's Meeting in Kampala, Uganda, and were arrested while raising awareness for the plight of LGBT people living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

"It is very sad that people can be arrested for peacefully contributing to strategies towards the fight against a worldwide epidemic. LGBTI people should be included in national AIDS policies worldwide YESTERDAY. Action is the only remedy to today's problems and we should do this collectively. I think the silence should break. Every right thinking citizen of the world should stand up and condemn these arrests and detentions", says Victor Musaka, a transgender lesbian activist and board member of Gender DynamiX.

Liesl Theron, Director of Gender DynamiX, adds "The living conditions of our lesbian and gay brothers and sisters in Uganda are worse than in South Africa and tripled when transgender or gender non-confirming. These inequalities just silence trans people more and more. I question further, as to why the organisers of the Implementer's Meeting have not issued any response so far, surely a silence to this arrest can be seen as support thereof. This is contra productive to the aims of the meeting."

The Implementer's Meeting is co-sponsored by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), UNAIDS, the World Bank, the Global Fund, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+).