

## Gender DynamiX call on Ugandan Government for immediate and unconditional release of trans activists

Gender DynamiX, the only organisation focusing exclusively on the rights of transgendered people in South Africa strongly condemns the arrest on Wednesday 10 September 2008 in Uganda of the two transgender activists on the basis of their gender identity, and calls on the Ugandan Government for their immediate and unconditional release.

According to the Yogyakarta Principles, a document spelling out the Principles on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. All human rights are universal, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated. Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to every person's dignity and humanity and must not be the basis for discrimination or abuse. These principles were drafted, developed, discussed and refined and accepted by a forum comprising a group of distinguished human rights experts.

These two activists are prisoners of conscience and have been arrested solely because of their gender identity which according to Ugandan law is not a crime and we therefore demand that they be unconditionally released and all charges be dropped. They have also been held for 48 hours without being brought before a court according to the principles laid out in Ugandan constitution. Principle 2 of the Yogyakarta Principles clearly states that persons have the right to not be discriminated against on the basis their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We have concerns for the health of one of the activists as he is a diabetic and requires urgent medical attention for his condition. According to principle 17 of the Yogyakarta Principles, access to health is a basic human right and it is unfair to deny a diabetic proper medication as diabetics need appropriate insulin and related medication, as it can become a life threatening situation.

We also insist that the Ugandan government provide us with assurances that these activists will not be tortured or ill-treated, and that they will be given prompt access to their families and lawyers. Both of these activists have previously been detained, sexually and physically assaulted and then released without any charges being brought against them. This is unacceptable and violates all human rights agreements that the Government of Uganda are signatories to. In addition to this, Principle 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Yogyakarta Principles protects individuals from unfair arrest, detention, cruelty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment during detention whether legitimate or not.

Gender DynamiX calls on the Ugandan government to end the ongoing harassment and wrongful detention of LGBT human rights defenders by the police and other government institutions and to adhere to the principles as laid out in the Yogyakarta Principles.