

# TRIPLE JEOPARDY: Protecting At-Risk Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

## CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 1 – Artur

Artur is a 31-year-old Congolese man. He defines his sexual orientation as **gay**. He arrived in Kampala six years ago, and **received a mandate determination as a refugee based on the ongoing conflict in Eastern DR Congo.**

“I used to go out with an older man in the DRC when I was in high school. He was married, foreign and white, but we loved each other. No one knew about it. I used to go to his house every day while in high school. One day, he quarreled with his guard. The next thing I heard was that the police were looking for both of us. I went into hiding while my foreign friend left the country. The police found me and I was arrested. I was taken by the police and tortured. While in detention, they filmed me, saying, **“This man is the one destroying our children by orienting them into homosexuality.”** The news was everywhere on the radio and in newspapers in my city.

**I was in prison for six months.** I was raped every three days. Police guards would come and they would beat and rape me. They kept repeating: ‘We shall keep raping you until you die...’ While in detention, the war commenced again. A group of Mai Mai rebels attacked the prison.

I managed to escape and, together with another prisoner, took a car to the border of Congo and Uganda. **Arriving in Kampala, we stayed with a Congolese woman whom my friend knew back home.** I became **sick with stomach pains due to the rape.** I could barely walk and could not control my feces. The neighbors there started suspecting that I was gay, and they started asking, ‘Why is a gay person living in our neighborhood?’ **My host said that I had to find some means of leaving her house because she was starting to feel insecure.** I never told her about my sexuality, but I told her that I was arrested in Congo.

I fainted and my friend took me to an **NGO clinic** that serves refugees. They referred me to a specialized clinic. At the hospital, they gave me some medication and my condition improved. **I did not tell them what happened to me.** I was scared they would tell me to go away. My host helped me buy medication, but still, at times, I cannot control my feces. After recovering, the woman who hosted me told me I had better leave for Nairobi, as in Uganda, people like me can get into a lot of trouble. However, I have no means to cross another border!”

### Case Study 2 – Louisa

**Louisa’s name on her refugee mandate is Samuel.** She is 21, a Ugandan transgender refugee living in Nairobi. Her parents discovered she had a boyfriend. **They told her to leave the house immediately as, for them, she was “considered dead!”** She ran away to Nairobi together with other friends who told her they could flee to Kenya and get a visa to the USA.

“**I feel like a woman.** I feel more comfortable being referred to as a lady because I feel like one. I have a Kenyan boyfriend, but because of the fear of homophobia and because of the fear from police and arrest, I don’t dress as a woman when I leave the house.”

**Louisa tried to look for employment, but each time she inquired about an opening, she received rejection and abuse.** “People can tell I am Ugandan and they don’t want to employ foreigners. Then they tell me, ‘You *shoga* (gay); go back to your home where they will hang you! We don’t want people like you here.’” There was a time when she began working on the streets at night, serving odd clients who came out of a bar area. One night **she was beaten up by a client and dumped from his car in a field. She was badly bruised and traumatized and did not return to working on the streets.**

Louisa waited two years until she got her mandate as a refugee. **She gets assistance from an NGO who pays her a stipend which will end this month.** “They told us we have to be self-sufficient and start a business. I was 17 when I ran away, I never opened a business and who would buy from a Ugandan who does not speak Swahili?”

She has relocated three times within Nairobi when neighbors harassed her and fellow Ugandan LGBTI refugee friends. No one but the UNHCR and two or three NGOs help her. **At times, she engages in sex work, looking for clients on the road leaving Nairobi.** “Even the local LGBTI sex workers don’t like us as we make a lot of noise and are competition, they say. Kenyans are very different.” Louisa doesn’t feel safe. It is only a matter of time, she says, until the neighbors find out and react. In the meantime, she is waiting for resettlement, which may take up to three years.

### **Case Study 3 – Lisa**

Lisa is a 29-year-old **lesbian asylum seeker living in South Africa.** She came to South Africa from Zimbabwe with her girlfriend. Lisa and her girlfriend rent a room in apartment owned by a South African lady.

**“Where I stay is not safe.** When I am walking, people ask me, ‘are you really a man?’ And also the guys, when they see me walking with my lady, they ask me why I am walking with their girlfriend and how do I sleep with her? **If they find out you are LGBTI, they tell you to give them your phone and money, they blackmail you.**”

In Zimbabwe, I was **attacked by policemen twice.** They came to my place, but I was playing soccer in the field. When I came back, they said they were looking for me and I asked ‘for what?’ They left but then came back that night. They kicked the door open and I fell down. They beat me up. The policemen told me that that I should be with a man. **They gang raped me and left me there. I never went to the hospital** because I thought I should leave immediately – in my country, if they are looking for somebody they will get you, even if you go to hospital. I crossed the border with my girlfriend and met a Kenyan lady who helped me reach the city where we slept at her place for five days. She took me to Home Affairs. **I was scared and didn’t tell them that I am a LGBTI.** They just interviewed me and they asked me why I had left my country, and then I told them.

**I don’t like it here. I was attacked by five boys, gang raped.** They said they will show me how to be a ‘real’ woman. A security guard saved me after they left. I did not go anywhere for help because after they attacked me, they told me that if I went to the police, they would kill me. I just got medication from a pharmacy not to get pregnant. I did not go to hospital, but I would have needed my asylum paper, which I had left at home, so it was just as well. An LGBTI NGO later gave me counseling as I was very depressed. I didn’t eat much, lost weight and could not sleep for quite a while. They helped me a lot. LGBTI need to be considered like human beings. We are human beings and I can be your daughter, your sister, a teacher or even a doctor.”

#### Case Study 4 – Marie

Marie grew up in a small village in the DRC. She always felt a bit different and children and even adults always mocked her, but she didn't know why.

**Marie was born with genitalia of both a girl and a boy.** Her parents were advised she should grow up and be cared for as a girl. Everyone knew that Marie was different and the family was, at times, shunned from community activities.

As Marie began puberty, she began to look more masculine. **She still felt a girl, though everyone laughed at her “masculine” face** and even the hair that started growing on her chin. Marie felt isolated and depressed and did not want to go out to the fields or roam around the village. Her parents protected her, but she had no friends and **other children would throw stones at her, calling her a witch.**

When the rebels came to the village, they picked all the girls and brought them to a central hut. When they captured Marie, they started laughing and took off her clothes. **They paraded her naked around the village and then raped her in front of everyone,** laughing before raping the other girls in the hut. They let her live. She was injured and bruised, but survived. Her father was killed and together with her mother, she fled to Uganda, where her mother passed away from grief and illness.

Marie was made fun of in the refugee camp in Uganda and fled to Nairobi, where she stayed in a church. She was attacked by locals one night near the church who **mocked her** and tore her clothes off, laughing and **calling her a “monster.”** An NGO moved her to a safe house, where she is staying alone waiting for resettlement. She has no friends and no one to talk to. She will not go outside the house as she is scared. A neighbor buys her food.

“I didn't know about this term ‘**intersex**’ before coming to Nairobi and meeting UNHCR. It sounds strange. I just want to have a normal life and not be alone and scared. I like women and I feel like a woman. If I could, I would like to live as a lesbian, but now I am too scared to live!”