

MY BACKGROUND AND LIFE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AS A GAY UGANDAN

I was running for my life after the murder of my friend, James . A group of homophobic armed men had taken his life and now they were pursuing me.

James was shot dead and I was very lucky that they didn't check the pit latrine located behind the house where I was hiding. I had begged James not to mention my name to them. It didn't save his life but it may have saved mine. When they left, my only thought was "how can I get out of the country before they find me?" So I had to walk through the jungle until I got to my former boyfriend's house on the Uganda/Kenya border.

When I got to Peter's house, I told him all my problems. He welcomed me, but he said I could not stay or else he would be in trouble. So the only option he had was to put me in touch with a friend in Nairobi in neighbouring Kenya. But staying with him was no long term option. The Kenyan government was deporting all Ugandans who were fleeing and, moreover, being gay was illegal in Kenya, so I had no chance of claiming asylum.

I managed to get to the UK but I had to hide my sexuality in order to get friends and contacts from the African, European, and Asian communities. When I was released from detention by the UK Border Agency in 2011, I was put in touch with some LGBT groups and I began looking for support.

When I met members of the LGBT CATHOLICS WESTMINSTER PASTORAL COUNCIL, I was welcomed in a brotherly way and was made to feel at home.

The LGBT Catholic community in Westminster means a lot to me because it supports me by all means necessary and makes me feel strong and supported in order to combat homophobia in Uganda. I am accommodated in Derby, but I try my best to come and attend the meetings and church services. It is a key part of my life to feel part of this Eucharistic community at the Jesuit Church at Farm Street. I am now a member of the LGBT Catholics Westminster Pastoral Council and am determined to serve with love and determination.