

The UK BME Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET)
in partnership with
House of Rainbow and African Rainbow Family

THEME:

**TACKLING SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION MODERN
SLAVERY OF LGBTQI
INDIVIDUALS IN THE UK**

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
2nd November 2021	1:30pm - 2:30pm	VIA ZOOM

S P E A K E R S



Scan here



REV. JIDE MACAULAY
Founder and CEO - House of Rainbow



ADERONKE APATA
Founder and CEO
African Rainbow Family

Meeting ID:
819 5752 8265
Passcode:
830905



ABSTRACT

An expert conversation on the plight of BME LGBTQI Community to sexual exploitation and modern slavery

EVENT REPORT

UK BME Anti-Slavery Network(BASNET)-November 2021

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1.0. Introduction

The UK BME Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET) established by AFRUCA is the first network in the UK and in Europe dedicated to promoting equality, inclusion and diversity in the anti-trafficking and anti-slavery space. Our Network members are registered charities or community interest companies working in diaspora communities affected by modern slavery.

BASNET partnered with two of its full members([House of Rainbow](#) and [African Rainbow Family](#)) to organise a one(1) hour conversation to explore the numerous issues around sexual exploitation and modern slavery of LGBTQI individuals in UK. In recent times, there have been unreported cases of service users who are trafficked and exploited based on their sexual orientation and gender identity from foreign countries. These individuals are exploited sexually and for labour. The conversation focused on the intricacies of these sexual exploits of the BME LGBTQ community in UK. According to the [Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership](#), Adult Sexual Exploitation (ASE) is a 'form of sexual abuse that involves someone taking advantage of an adult, sexually, for their own benefit through threats, bribes, and violence'.

BASNET recognises the lack of research and data to back these growing concerns and the stigma and shame attached to victims who eventually come forward. In interviewing various survivors prior to this event, it became evident how perpetrators of trafficking and modern slavery are monetising the distrust of communities and the lack of protection and support for LGBTQ individuals to exploit their vulnerabilities. In 2018, The African Rainbow Family explored another dimension of sexual exploitation of LGBTQ asylum seekers. The report of the conference shows the various gaps within the UK system and the how the UK system fails to protect LGBTQ victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

The event therefore sought to highlight two dimensions of sexual exploitation of LGBTQI individuals from foreign countries into the UK: those trafficked into the UK for exploitation and those exploited and abused by others as refugees and asylum seekers- especially by those claiming to help

We hope that through this conversation, we will explore the realities on the ground, any up to date trends related to modern slavery and sexual exploitation, share experiences of LGBTIQ survivors and review the outcomes of ARF's 2018 report. In the end, we hope to make some recommendations and probable way forward.



1.1. Highlights

- The need for data on LGBTQI sexual abuse and exploitation
- Awareness raising in communities and training for practitioners
- The need to understand gender and sexuality to better inform service approach.
- The issue of marginalisation faced by LGBTQI trafficking victims.
- The LGBTQI community are victims of crimes reported to the police and Home Office.
- Criminalisation, detention and deportation of LGBTQI victims
- The impact of community focused organisations.

1.2. Objectives

- To shed light on the plight of BME LGBTQI communities in the UK who are vulnerable to sexual and labour exploitation.
- To highlight the gaps in the UK system as it fails to protect victims from the BME LGBTQI community.

1.3. Goals

- Explore realities and any up to date trends on modern slavery and sexual exploitation.
- Share experiences of LGBTQI survivors and review the outcome of African Rainbow Family's 2018 report .
- Share recommendations and a way forward.

1.4. Speakers

Revd Jide Macaulay



Rev. Jide Macaulay, Founder and CEO of House of Rainbow. Reverend Jide Macaulay is the Founder and CEO of House of Rainbow CIC. Openly gay British-Nigerian born in London, a Christian minister since 1998, Anglican Priest, inspirational speaker, author, poet, pastor and preacher, HIV Positive Activist, holds a degree in Law, Master's Degree in Theology and Post-graduate certificate in Pastoral Theology. Jide focuses his ministry on inclusion and reconciliation of sexuality, spirituality and human rights. Currently Board of Trustee at Kaleidoscope Trust UK, Chairperson INERELA+ Europe, Patron at ReportOut, Vice Chair One Voice Network, Nominee Top 10 outstanding Contribution to LGBT+ Life by the British LGBT+ Award 2021, OSCARS Award winner 2014, 2017, 2018, Volunteer Chaplain at Mildmay HIV Hospital and Volunteer Champion at AFRUA Safeguarding Children.

Aderonke Apata



Aderonke Apata is a Human Rights Activist, Feminist and LGBT Equality Advocate who has a BSc in Microbiology, a Master of Public Health and Primary Care, a Postgraduate Degree in Law, just completed studying the Bar Professional Training Course and studying Master of Laws. She's an LGBTI asylum campaigner for LGBTI people seeking asylum to stay in the UK; whom herself got [granted asylum after 13-year battle](#). She is [Winner, Activist of the Year, Sexual Freedom Awards 2018](#), [Winner, Ron Todd Foundation Equality Awards 2018](#), added to the [Amnesty International UK's 'Suffragette Spirit Map of Britain' 2018](#), [Winner Attitude Pride Awards 2017](#), [Winner Positive Role Model for LGBT National Diversity Award 2014](#), where she was described as “an unstoppable force in fighting for justice”, she is number 41 & 67 on the [RainbowList2014](#) & [RainbowList2015](#) respectively as one of the most influential LGBT people in the UK. Aderonke was named [LGBT Heroine of the year 2015 by DIVA Magazine](#) in recognition of her achievements in the LGBT community. Aderonke is the founder of [African Rainbow Family](#), an LGBT group that supports LGBTIQ asylum seekers and people of African heritage in UK and campaigning for the [Repeal of the toxic Nigerian Anti-LGBTIQ Law](#).



Moderator:

Naeema Ahmed



Naeema Ahmed is the Network Manager for the UK BME Anti-Slavery Network (BASNET). She holds an MBA from Coventry University. She has previously worked in the UK financial and renewable energy sector as a Business/Organisational development professional with a focus on market entry across Africa and Asia. As a Network Manager, she coordinates BASNET's work to achieve its intended outcomes.

2.0 Issues Raised

2.1. Exploring The Realities Of Sexual Exploitation Of LGBTQI Individuals In The Uk "Stigma and Financial Exploitation: A focus on BAME LGBTQI" Presented by Rev. Jide Macaulay

House of Rainbow (HOR) fosters relationships among Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ+) individuals, people of faith and allies in order to create a safer and a more inclusive community. As a support organisation, they are dedicated to reconciling marginalised identifies with the pressures of society.

The following factors lead to exploitation if LGBTQI individuals:

- Abuse and Stigma- P.E.N.S (Physical emotional neglect and sexual abuse) based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI).
- The slow process and rejection of Asylum seekers on SOGI grounds.
- Cost of coming out as LGBTQ. This mostly lead to loss of dignity, employment and families due to consequences of Identifying as LGBTQI.
- Culture of Silence which results in emotional blackmail
- Victims are afraid their sexuality will be exposed if they take up their cases.



- Others include; forced marriages, Inheritance, conversion therapy, jungle justice and prohibition laws, decriminalisation and protective laws.

Through the shared stories of service users at HoR, there has been the recognition of different patterns of trafficking and modern day slavery. Such service users are unable to report in fear of they or their families back home will be harmed. Most of these individuals go through these abuse over a long time before they are able to find the needed help. This goes to buttress the reason why there are not enough data to back the claims and reports of exploited LGBTQI individuals.

LGBTQI individuals are abused in different forms: Physical abuse, Emotional abuse, Neglected, Sexual abuse, Spiritual abuse - Conversion Therapy, Healing & deliverance. The media have reported some of the abuse of gay people.



The LGBTQI community especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds are highly stigmatised. This mostly leads to sham marriages and unhealthy relationships which later end badly. In cases of forced or arranged marriages, LGBTQI individuals mostly do not have a say due to shame and stigma attached to their identity. The issue of inheritance of LGBTQI individuals especially from an African setting becomes a problematic.

2.2. Ban on Conversion Therapy



The House of Rainbow called for the total ban on conversion therapy. As an organisation, HoR has been campaigning on banning conversion therapy and have produced a report on its consequences which will be available in their upcoming report.



3.0. Reviewing Outcomes and Recommendations from African Rainbow Family's 2018 conference *Presented by Aderonke Apata*

The organisation's report called for an end to sexual exploitation and domestic violence of asylum seekers based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. The conference recognised that The asylum and immigration process is complex. The onus of proof is therefore on LGBTIQ people seeking asylum in a hostile environment which is engrossed with deep rooted culture of disbelief.

As a result of the high standard of proof for LGBTIQ people seeking asylum to 'proof' their sexuality in order to be qualified for refugee status, many have been forced into abusive relationships that they are forced to stick with for the period of when their asylum applications are being assessed and determined. This could run into a year, two or more to resolve.

There is a high number of sexual abuse and exploitation that takes place within some LGBTIQ asylum seeking support groups by the staff/volunteers/coordinators that run these groups. These volunteers and or staff or coordinators owe the fragile survivors seeking asylum duty of care and not to take advantage of their vulnerable circumstances to sexually exploit them in the name of writing support letters for them to the Home Office to attest to their sexuality / gender identity and attending Tribunal hearing to give witness on their behalf to 'confirm' their sexuality or gender identity.



3.1. Case Study

TN was introduced to a lesbian support group for people seeking asylum based on their sexual orientation for support about her asylum claim about 2 years ago. She was happy and excited that she was around lesbians like herself and she would not feel lonely anymore. On group meeting days she had positive nostalgia. One day, she received a call from a volunteer asking to meet with her and have a look at her Home Office paperwork and see how she can help. She screamed for joy and respect for the group for being concerned about her situation. They fixed a date to meet in the city centre. She thanked God for showing her favour and mercy for sending an angel to help her from the uphill mountain of refusals from the Home Office and Courts not believing her to be a lesbian. She met with the volunteer who told her about herself and other women in the group who have been granted through the work of the group. She managed to tell her about her life but it was traumatic doing so and hoping to be as lucky as the other women some day. They started exchanging mails, talk and meetup for meals and drinks. They became friends as TN trusted her. She invited TN to her house to make meals and pamper TN with gifts.

They spoke over the phone until midnight including conversations on how she has helped many people on the group to get their papers and now they are safe and living their lives. TN noticed that she will draw near her kiss her on the lips, stroke her hair and timidly TN would move away and sometimes before she can move away, her hands will be all over her like an octopus. Touching her breasts, caressing and forcing a kiss on my mouth. TN became reluctant to meet her as frequently as before. As she was uncomfortable alone with her in a private place. She called to say how much she loved TN and she was ready to make sure that she was granted refuge. TN remembers she said "I like black African women" with a beam and grin on her face. "They are neat, beautiful, loving and obedient" She emphasized the obedience bit. In TN's heart, she thought yes, neat, beautiful, loving and obedient, you aren't far from the truth. But the obedient bit that she is referring to, isn't the kind of obedience that TN would apply to her description of her numerous relationships with Black African women. They are submissive would rather fit in better.

The reason why TN opted for submissive is that they are reluctantly doing your bids as they see you as their saviour whom they must not offend or refuse warming your bed. Hence, they are at your beck and call. They must have loved you, thinking you loved them too as you are constantly saying to me too. TN felt dirty each time she had to respond to her, giving her body



to her freely to be violated. She would cry myself to sleep afterwards. Whenever TN is alone she would ask, “Why am I doing this to myself, this is torture, enslavement and sexual abuse” Suddenly, several thoughts would race through TN’s mind telling her she might genuinely love me, another one would say, do you really have a choice? If you need a good and weighty support letter for your case and a witness that will state that you are a lesbian even though they are not to disclose the reason for their conviction publicly then roll on with this babes. But nothing feels more dirty and worthless TN felt when she heard of how many people like her she has slept with in the group while professing love to each one of them. She can’t report it or share it with anyone else. She hopes that by sharing it anonymously, she will find some relief. I am just another victim, another sexual tool, another sexual object, another sexual slave.

In summary, the following factors lead to exploitation of LGBTQ Asylum seekers;

- Victims seeking asylum are detained by the home office.
- Perpetrators use this against victims.
- The humanisation of LGBTQI members by the Home Office and Tribunal has not been credible. So it is not just about the perpetrators but the establishments meant to protect people.
- Shame is used as a weapon to exploit people and address it within the various LGBTQI groups.

3.2. Unreported: Conference Propositions

The following are some of the propositions from the 2018 conference:

- People should come forward to talk about what they have been through.
- A call for the Home Office to drop its standard of proof of sexuality policy in place.
- They asked people who support asylum seekers and those who are LGBTQI to see how they can recognise the signs of people being trafficked.
- Better training for police and immigration officers to address culture of disbelief



4.0. Discussion Q & A

4.1. Reasons why people do not report hate crimes or exploitation

- Fear of ostracisation.
- Fear of not being believed. House of Rainbow has increased their pastoral care to meet these needs. They provide funded therapy and making room for forgiveness and reconciliation.
- When they report, authorities sometimes do not believe them.

4.2. Why are victims not believed?

- There is culture of disbelief at the Home Office. Don't know the signs of exploitation and abuse
- Victims are unable to pass the message across to police.
- Fear of exposing their sexual orientation.

4.3. Do you plan to set up training programs for professionals on how to spot the signs?

- They are looking into getting funding to train social workers, GPs, support workers for asylum seekers, solicitors, police, faith groups etc.

5.0. Recommendations

Awareness Creation

There should be continuous community awareness on the vulnerabilities of BME LGBTQI community. This will help people understand the plight of individuals who are LGBTQ and limit the risks of exploitation in any form

Training Practitioners



Practitioners should be trained on understanding LGBTQ victims of modern slavery, spotting the signs and cultural implications and trends. This should include law enforcers, solicitors, judges, social workers, health practitioners, faith based organisations (churches and mosques etc)

Safe mediums to report without being criminalised

LGBTQI victims of sexual exploitation should not be penalised or criminalised when they come forward. The stories of such survivors should be investigated and not reviewed on the premise of potential lies. This will help victims to be able to come forward and report perpetrators. The Home Office and police need to reassure people that there will not be repercussions if they come forward

Accessing funding for community focused organisations

Organisations should be given the needed funding to expand their projects in supporting various service users who are able to come forward. There is very limited funding for BME organisations when it comes to community work.

Building community Partnerships

There should be more partnerships as started by the UK BME Anti Slavery Network (BASNET) to help amplify the work of other organisations who are working hard and doing amazing work within various organisations.

5.1. Way Forward

BASNET Conference

BASNET will be exploring a broader spectrum of Exploring Vulnerabilities of BME LGBTQ Community to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. This will be on the 17th November 2021. 11am to 1.00pm. Registration Link: <https://basnet-exploring-vulnerabilities.eventbrite.co.uk>

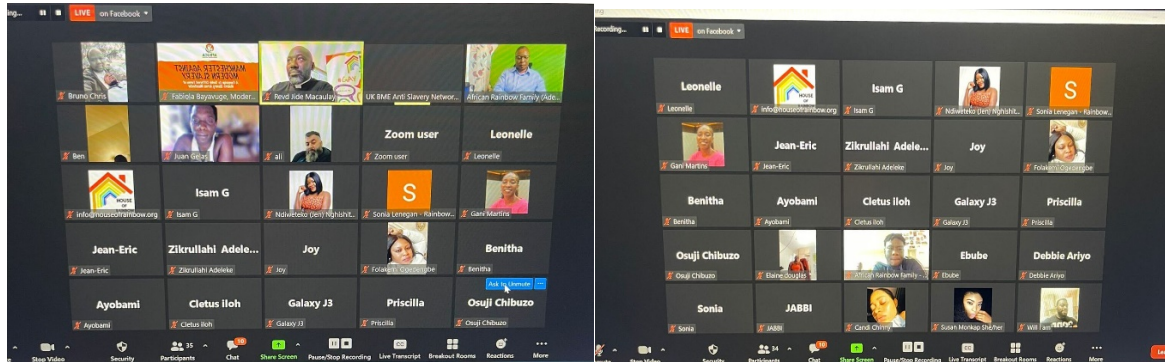
BASNET will be organising other related roundtable conversations to ensure that the subject of exploitation of BME LGBTQ community receives the needed attention.

6.0. Conclusion



The event concluded on the premise that, there should be no stigma or shame. Individuals should not be exploited. Individuals should not be exploited because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. We should dwell on love for all, hatred for none. We are all humans beings. Those in authority should not be exploiting these individuals.

6.1. Pictures and Comments



“Thanks BASNET for this very informative event”

__ Zoom User

“Unfortunately, I feel very sorry, and the Home Office dealt with me when I applied for political asylum and the application was rejected. Now I am looking for a lawyer to submit a new application. I have sent to more than 25 lawyers I really feel a kind of distinction’

-Zoom User

