

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
State House Nakasero
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Prime Minister Apollo Nsibambi
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October 26, 2009

Your Excellencies,

We the undersigned call for the immediate withdrawal of the “Anti Homosexuality Bill, 2009”.

This proposed legislation is a huge step backwards for HIV prevention, treatment and care initiatives in Uganda. By significantly expanding criminal sanctions against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people – with penalties going as far as the death sentence in some cases - this bill drives sexual minorities underground and away from vital information and services, further fuelling HIV transmission in the Uganda.

Uganda’s own HIV/AIDS prevention experts have recognized that laws targeting sexual minorities are obstacles to effectively addressing AIDS. A 2009 joint report by the Uganda AIDS Commission and UNAIDS specifically called for a review of legal impediments to the inclusion of most-at-risk-populations - including MSM - in the national AIDS response.ⁱ The 2008 law reauthorizing the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) - the source of 61% of all of Uganda’s HIV prevention funding in 2006/2007ⁱⁱ - includes a directive for HIV prevention education specifically targeting MSM. Additionally, both UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria have each recently adopted new action frameworks for addressing HIV among sexual minorities, in reaction to growing evidence of the impact of HIV on sexual minorities globally.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recognizing that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and in rights, and in pursuit of our mutual endeavor for an effective HIV/AIDS response worldwide, we call for the immediate withdrawal of this and any bill that threatens the health and human rights of your citizens.

For further information, please contact Krista Lauer, MSc., Policy Associate at The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF), c/o Secretariat: AIDS Project Los Angeles, The David Geffen Center, 611 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles CA 90005, email: klauer@msmgf.org or + 1 (213) 201-1317.

Sincerely,

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Organizations:

ActALIVE – Barrington, Rhode Island, USA

Africa Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) – Nairobi, Kenya

African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfriCASO) – Dakar, Senegal

African Men for Sexual Health and Rights – Pretoria, South Africa

AIDS Fonds – Amsterdam, The Netherlands

association WARNING – Paris, France

Bronx AIDS Services – Bronx, New York, USA

Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network/Réseau juridique canadien VIH/sida – Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Committee for the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia – Paris, France

Federation of Dutch associations for the integration of homosexuality, COC Netherlands – Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Gays Lesbians of African Descent – Toronto, Ontario, Canada

International Women's Health Coalition - New York, New York, USA

Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) International – Barrington, Rhode Island, USA

Naz Foundation International – Lucknow, India

New Voices Pittsburgh: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

STOP AIDS NOW! – Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Sylvia Rivera Law Project - New York, New York, USA
The AIDS Institute – Washington, District of Columbia, USA
The Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE) – Toronto, Ontario, Canada
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN) - U.S.A. – Oakland, California, USA
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ⁱ Republic of Uganda. 2009. *UGANDA: HIV Prevention Response and Modes of Transmission Analysis*. Final Report, March 2009. Uganda AIDS Commission and UNAIDS.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ See: UNAIDS Action Framework: Universal Access for Men who have Sex with Men and Transgender People and The Global Fund Strategy on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity