

#URGENT

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## CALL TO ACTION BY UGANDA'S LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

OCTOBER 17, 2019, KAMPALA, UGANDA: The constitutional court nullified the Anti-homosexuality Act in August of 2014 but there has been numerous press over the past weeks about a plan by a section of Ugandan legislature to re-introduce the law. In order to provide clarity on the facts relating to this reporting and offer strategic guidance to partners, the leadership of the LGBTQI+ community and Civil society activists met in Kampala on October 17, 2019.

### THE FACTS

Here briefly are the facts so far as we know them;

In August 2019, Hon. Simon Lokodo, the Minister of State for Ethics and Integrity revealed in a television interview that his predecessor, Hon Nsaba Buturo, would seek the leave of parliament in the following week to reintroduce the law.

On October 3, 2019 Hon Gen. Elly Tumwine, the Minister for Security linked the LGBTQI+ community to a group he called the Red Movement and People Power political pressure group and announced that the government will investigate their links to terrorists groups.

On October 10, Mr. Ofowno Opondo, the government spokesperson and Executive Director of the Media Centre denied any plan by government to re-introduce the anti-gay law. He argued that there are already enough laws to deal with same sex conduct. This was reinforced by the statements of Mr. Don Wanyama, the Senior Press Secretary to the President of Uganda.

It is our understanding that Hon Buturo has not sought the leave of parliament to introduce the law. It is also our understanding that there is so far no text of the proposed draft law but that another MP Hon Paul Akamba, Busiki County MP has been approaching parliamentary staffers from the First Parliamentary Council to assist him in the draft of a law. As far as we can gather, no such assistance has been rendered.

We have learnt from past events not to overlook public statements about this matter as they are indicative of what is being planned but are also cognizant of the fact that the statements cited above were made in the context of a five-year anniversary since the annulment of the Anti-homosexuality Act. They were also made in the context of a political contestation and electioneering in preparation for the next general elections that are under 18 months away.

Additionally, the attempts to link the LGBTQI+ community with a terrorists group call the 'Red Movement' was also made in the context of an attempt by the government of Uganda to deal with the emergence of the People Power political pressure group.

### INCREASED VIOLENCE AGAINST THE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITY

There has been an increase in reported cases of attack against members of the community. Over the last three months, there has been four incidents of fatality. These are;

Ssemugoma Fahad in Gomba on 2nd August, Brian Wasswa in Jinja on 5th October, Ssebunya Julius in Kawempe on 19th August and a gay man (names withheld on family's request)

Investigations by the community into these killings are ongoing to establish if these were part of the general insecurity and killing in the country or whether they are homophobic/Transphobic attacks. These investigations will establish if there is a causality or correlation with the sexual orientation of gender identities of the victims. It is also noted that these killings happened in various places around the country.

## CLARION CALL

In order to guide strategic intervention, support of partners and establish a coherent message, the leadership of the LGBTIQ+ community together with our civil society partners in Uganda, make the following clarion call;

To all Ugandans to reject all forms of discrimination and urge the legislature to use public office and resources to address urgent and pertinent issues affecting the country such as the rampant killings, poverty, youth unemployment, abductions and killings of women among others.

To the Diplomatic corps to raise concerns about discrimination with the government of Uganda and to ensure that their multilateral partnerships protect the rights of all Ugandans regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

To international allies to engage all their capitals to diplomatically engage the government of Uganda to stop any efforts to legislate against sexual and gender minorities.

To the Ugandan duty bearers to ensure security, protection and safety of all Ugandans regardless of gender identity, expression and sexual orientation.

To the Ugandan LGBTIQ+ community, we urge you to be vigilant and report any threats and security incidents to the police, security agencies, local councils and relevant community organizations.

We call upon the media fraternity, both local and international, to refrain from publishing subjective and sensational stories about LGBTIQ+ issues.

We emphasize the urgency of your support to Uganda LGBTIQ+ community in this struggle.

For more details, please contact

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