

Action Alert – 15 February 2012

UGANDA'S ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY BILL: RE-TABLED

If passed in any form, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill would effectively silence all productive discussion of issues facing the LGBTI community in Uganda, cut off LGBTI people from society including from their basic rights to legal representation and access to health care, and threaten the rights of all Ugandans.

A Threat to the Human Rights of All Ugandans

While the LGBTI community is the main target of this hateful legislation, the Bill's scope reaches far beyond the criminalization of consensual sexual conduct. Apart from the death penalty, the Bill's provision criminalizing the "promotion of homosexuality" and the mandatory reporting requirement **jeopardize the rights of all Ugandans:**

- to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion,
- to freedom of expression,
- to freedom of assembly and association, and
- to privacy.

The Bill would set a terrifying precedent for the persecution of any minority group in Uganda. It would force parents, counselors, and clergy to report their children, patients, and members of their congregations to the authorities for arrest. Multiple experts have concluded it could also contribute to a rise in HIV prevalence in Uganda where rates are precariously stagnant, endangering even more innocent lives. With such vague language and evidentiary standards, the Bill is easily subject to widespread abuse and would also serve as an easy pretext to accuse political opposition leaders of being gay and ordering their arrest.

Procedure for Passage Unclear, Death Penalty Remains for Now

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill was first introduced in Uganda in 2009 and garnered international outcry over its provision to impose the death penalty on LGBTI people. Once thought defeated, the Bill has recently been retabled in parliament. Though its supporters have expressed a willingness to remove the death penalty and other provisions to make its passage more palatable, even a modified version of the Bill would present grave rights violations.

While the exact procedure for the Bill's passage is still unclear and not transparent, it currently sits with the committee charged with producing a report to the whole of parliament, after which the Bill can be read on floor, debated, and voted upon. Despite claims by the Bill's supporters of what will happen in the future, both **the death penalty and reporting requirement remain in the Bill for now, and the Bill could pass any moment.**

TAKE ACTION NOW:

- 1: Spread the message that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill endangers the rights and freedoms of all Ugandans, and sets a terrifying precedent for the persecution of any minority.
- 2: Engage your faith community to join a diverse array of voices and take a public stance against the Bill in any form.
- 3: Stay current with updates on the Bill at www.rfkcenter.org and follow @rfkcenter on Twitter as we communicate the needs and asks of human rights defenders in Uganda.

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