



For immediate release – 28 January 2011

PRESS RELEASE

Uganda: Authorities Must Investigate Killing of LGBT Activist

London, 28.01.11: ARTICLE 19 condemns the killing of prominent LGBT activist David Kato Kisule and calls on the Ugandan authorities to urgently bring the perpetrators to justice. ARTICLE 19 is concerned that homophobia and incitement to violence against sexual minorities are condoned by elements within the media and political leadership.

“We are saddened by the killing of David who was courageous for defending the rights of others,” says Dr Agnes Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. “We are also deeply concerned that some within the media and political leadership continue to spread anti-gay sentiments and at occasions openly incite violence against sexual minorities in a country that continues to criminalise homosexuality and where sexual minorities are frequently exposed to discrimination and harassment.”

Unknown assailants attacked David Kato Kisule, considered the father of Uganda’s LGBT-rights movement, while at home in Mukono on 26 January 2011. He died later in hospital. The motive is not yet clear, but comes after his name appeared in the list ‘100 Pictures Of Uganda’s Top Homos’ published by weekly newspaper *Rolling Stone* in October 2010. Another list of sexual minorities in the same paper had the headline ‘Hang them’, and four people on the list have been attacked since.

In response to the publication of such lists, a suit was filed on 4 January 2011 and the Ugandan High Court has prohibited the media from publishing further lists. The applicants representing sexual minorities were awarded damages of 1.5 million Ugandan shillings (US\$650).

Homosexuality is a criminal offence in Uganda and is punishable by a prison sentence of up to life imprisonment. In October 2009, a bill was introduced before parliament to increase this to include the death penalty and require people to “report” possible cases. While the bill was not passed under international and national pressure, sexual minorities remain under constant threat.

ARTICLE 19 calls on the Ugandan government to both impartially and independently investigate the killing of David and to take immediate action to stem growing homophobia in the country. We urge the Ugandan media to act responsibly and to perform their duty in accordance with the principles of social responsibility and professional ethics.

ENDS

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- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.