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Ugandan Parliament Passes Extreme Anti-LGBT Bill

President Should Reject Bill, Stop Systemic Oppression



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Ugandan activists attend a conference to promote homosexuals' rights, in Kampala, Uganda, February 14, 2010. © 2010 Benedicte Desrus/Sipa Press via AP Images

Yesterday, Ugandan lawmakers approved [new legislation](#) that entrenches the criminalization of same-sex conduct. It also creates new offenses that will curtail any activism on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues and eradicate LGBT people from any form of social engagement in Uganda.

The 2023 Anti-Homosexuality Bill confirms an already existing punishment of life imprisonment for same-sex conduct, while also increasing to 10 years the prison sentence for an attempt at same-sex conduct. But one of the most egregious provisions – the bill calls it “aggravated homosexuality” – calls for the death penalty in certain circumstances, including for “serial offenders,” or for anyone having same-sex relations with a person with a disability, thereby automatically denying persons with disabilities the capacity to consent to sex.

The bill also outlaws the “promotion of homosexuality,” effectively instituting a system of complete censorship on LGBT issues. Anyone advocating for the rights of LGBT people, or providing financial support to organizations that do so, could face up to 20 years’ imprisonment. LGBT rights groups could also be deemed unable to legally operate. In addition, anyone who “advertises, publishes, prints, broadcasts, distributes” material, including digitally, is regarded as “promoting or encouraging homosexuality” and would face criminal sanction.

The bill also criminalizes any person who fails to report someone they suspect of participating in same-sex acts to the police, calling for a fine or imprisonment for six months. Effectively, supportive family members or friends of LGBT people could be imprisoned if they failed to report their loved ones to authorities. If anyone conducts a same-sex marriage ceremony, they could be imprisoned for up to 10 years. A provision in the bill also outlaws providing accommodation that

facilitates the “offence of homosexuality.” If anyone were to rent a room to a gay couple, for example, they could go to jail for 10 years.

Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni has 30 days to assent or reject the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. If the law comes into force, it will [violate the rights](#) to freedom of expression and association, liberty, privacy, equality, freedom from discrimination, inhuman and degrading treatment, and a fair hearing – all guaranteed under Ugandan and international law – for all Ugandans.

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Museveni should reject the bill and parliament should introduce comprehensive nondiscrimination legislation that would protect sexual and other minorities in line with Uganda’s international obligations.