



Sexual Minorities Uganda
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UGANDA MUST NOT CONDONE VIOLENCE TOWARDS THE LGBTI COMMUNITY

(Kampala, Uganda) 9th October, 2019

Press statement

Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and the entire Ugandan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Community stands together to strongly condemn the brutal murder of Brian Wasswa – a young paralegal professional, respected community member, Brian was the focal person Children of the Sun Foundation (COSF) and a resident in Jinja - Uganda.

On Friday 4th October 2019, around 4:00p.m Brian was found suffering, and struggling for his life as a result of being brutally hacked in the head with a gardening tool (hoe) in his own home in Jinja. His attacker(s) left him with ten deep cuts to bleed to death. Neighbors called out for help, he was then rushed to Jinja Regional Referral Hospital where the injuries were too extensive for doctors to manage. He was transferred to the National Referral hospital, Mulago in Kampala.

On Saturday 5th October Brian succumbed to a brain hemorrhage caused by the attack and was pronounced dead. Sadly, Brian's family disowned him when they heard rumors of him being gay. He was laid to rest by friends and some family members at his ancestral home at Katuungulu, Lugazi in Buikwe District on Sunday 06 October 2019.

This deplorable act of violence fueled by fear, stigma and discrimination is the fourth in the last three months; one to a transwoman in Gomba (Ugandan District) in August, another to a gay man in Kayunga (Ugandan District) and Kampala respectively and now another gay man in Jinja. Disappointingly, it comes in the wake of legislators in Ugandan parliament calling for the re-introduction of an Anti-Homosexuality Law, and the recent remarks on National Television by the Ugandan Minister for Security General Elly Tumwine claimed that; the LGBTI community and a known political pressure group are so-called “terrorists” with the “Red Movement” on national media.

VIDEO: Minister for Security General Elly Tumwine

The Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Uganda, Dr. Frank Mugisha said, “When politicians, & members of parliament call for criminalization, like the recent calls to the reintroduction of the “anti-gay” law, they are responsible for the increase in the vulnerability of the LGBT community.”



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Speaking to Henry the Team Leader of COSF he said, “We are fearful for our members in Jinja right now. While at the burial we had to leave in a manner that no one could notice because the locals were told the homosexuals are at the burial. We really need police to find Brian’s killer.”

“These are really sad occurrences happening in the community. There is insecurity overall that the country is deteriorating, and as a result, more LGBTI persons are falling victim to hate crimes. We have to speak out loud and clear,” said Mr. Ganafa, the Chairperson of SMUG.

“Although there’s no indication that the Ugandan government is directly involved in these homophobic and transphobic killings, it plays a dangerous role by allowing and encouraging anti-LGBTI culture to prevail.” said Pepe Julian Onziema- SMUG Director of Programs. “Government has the mandate and the responsibility to protect everyone within Uganda’s borders.”

Therefore WE urge the government of Uganda:

- To vehemently and publically condemn the killing of Brian Wasswa, and the other LGBT persons, who have fallen victim to violence, persecution and discrimination.
- To condemn all forms of violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons, community, and their families.
- To conduct a thorough and expedited investigation into these killings and bring the perpetrator(s) to justice.
- To diligently investigate and prosecute all persons involved in public incitement of violence towards LGBTI persons and community.
- To reject any discriminatory legislation that explicitly allows discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

We also call on political leaders, religious leaders, and media – both conventional and non-conventional to stop demonizing the LGBTI community in Uganda since doing so only creates and amplifies a climate of violence.

In conclusion Dr. Mugisha added that; “Despite the nullification of the anti-homosexuality act in 2014 we have continued to register increased incidents of



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violence, harassment and social exclusion of the LGBTI community. This is all unfolding when we have less support from our international partners, development partners and national human rights organizations.”

END

For more information:

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