



5 August 2014 -76 countries worldwide criminalize private, consensual same-sex relationships, exposing millions of individuals to the risk of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment – and in some countries, even the death penalty.

Earlier this year, Uganda passed the Anti-Homosexuality Act to tighten its grip on the LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex) community. This law, which provoked international outcry, was annulled last week.

The Anti- Homosexuality Act called for life imprisonment for homosexual acts and same-sex marriages, and made it punishable by a 5-7 years prison sentence to not report gays and lesbians.

The act has now been annulled by the Constitutional Court of Uganda. Challenged by 10 petitioners, including civil society, parliamentarians and academics, the law was annulled by the Court over a lack of quorum when the bill was passed. The United Nations welcomes the Court's decision, hailing it as a victory for the rule of law and social justice.

Addressing the annulment, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon [paid tribute](#) to all those who contributed to this step forward, particularly the human rights defenders in Uganda who spoke out, at times incurring great personal risk. He also called for further efforts to be made to decriminalize same-sex relationships and to address the stigma and discrimination that persist in Uganda against LGBTI persons.

The Secretary-General reiterated that everyone is entitled to enjoy the same basic rights, and live a life of worth and dignity without discrimination.

Also welcoming the decision to annul the law was the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ( [UNAIDS](#) ) , which had warned that the legislation may obstruct effective responses to the virus. “This is a great day for social justice,” [declared Michel Sidibé](#) , Executive Director of UNAIDS. “The rule of law has prevailed.”

UNAIDS noted that while homosexuality remains illegal in Uganda, annulling the law could have positive public health implications. Studies show that when gay men and other men who have sex with men face discrimination - including abuse, incarceration and prosecution - they are less likely to seek HIV testing, prevention and treatment services.

UNAIDS calls on all Governments around the world to protect the human rights of LGBTI persons through repealing criminal laws against consensual same-sex sexual conduct, and implementing laws to protect people from violence and discrimination.

Join Free&Equal, UN’s Campaign for LGBTI rights, [here](#) !

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