Prominent AIDS Activist Arrested in Senegal

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Nine men in Senegal, including the head of an AIDS service organization, were sentenced to eight years in prison on January 7 for criminal conspiracy and engaging in homosexual acts, The Associated Press (AP) reports.

Through his organization, AIDES Senegal, Diadji Diouf provided condoms and HIV treatment out of his apartment, where Diouf and the eight others were arrested in a December 19 police raid.

“This is the first case that we’ve heard of in Senegal where people actually got sentenced,” said Joel Nana, Africa research and policy coordinator with the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission in Cape Town. “It is a strong message of hatred, a strong message of division when we know it is critical at this point to address HIV in these communities.”

Just weeks before the arrests, Senegal hosted an international AIDS conference that included gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender participants. The West African country is one of 38 in the continent that criminalize homosexual acts, Nana said.

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