David Kato -- Murder in Uganda!

February 1, 2011 By Aundaray Guess

Recently in Uganda a man was killed simply because he was gay. His name was David Kato. According to the New York Times, " As the most outspoken gay rights advocate in Uganda, a country where homophobia is so severe that Parliament is considering a bill to execute gay people, Mr. Kato had received a stream of death threats, his friends said. A few months ago, a Ugandan newspaper ran an antigay diatribe with Mr. Kato's picture on the front page under a banner urging, "Hang Them."

On Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Kato was beaten to death with a hammer in his rough-and-tumble neighborhood. Police officials were quick to chalk up the motive to robbery, but members of the small and increasingly besieged gay community in Uganda suspect otherwise.

The reaction around the world has been immediate with planned declarations against the murder, planned vigils and marches denouncing the homophobia and articles giving the public a view on who David Kato was.

Until last week I never knew Mr. Kato and it's sad that it takes a murder for someone to be visible. It's also sad that it takes a murder for us to be reminded about the open season on gays that live in other countries like Africa and places like the Caribbean. I realize that gays are murdered all over the world but in the places just mentioned, the difference from the United States is that the killing of gays are almost if not entirely endorsed by the government.

Just imagine the reaction we would have if our government gave the impression that it's okay to kill gays. Imagine if there was a hit list on cover of the New York Times or the Chicago Tribune that provided names of people who are gay and should be killed. We wouldn't sit back in silence. we would be making some noise. So why haven't we been making no noise until now. Is it because it's another country and not in our backyard? Is it because we see them as the others and therefore people who look like them should take action?

Situations like this unfortunately makes us look at our own progress in gay rights. Still talking about America, although we have not reached the promised land of equality, we still have made some milestones. We have gay establishments, gay marches in cities that once frowned down on them, characters on television and the movies and in some places the freedom to express our sexuality in public. Just last week in Harlem I saw two men walk arm in arm and no dirty looks were given. That's called progress.

I hope Mr. Kato’s death is not in vain. I hope that after the gathering and marches we not only don’t forget about David but while we are in that space of organizing that we start helping our brothers and sisters in countries where it’s legal to kill LGBT, no matter what color they are.

I don’t want to say that the gay marriage issue are not important but to me a human life is more important than being able to say “I do.”

But the truth is that in several months David Kato will be forgotten and the urgency that is now in place will dissipate. And agencies that are addressing the issue such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission will not have the support from leaders and community as it has now become yesterday’s news.

We have to stop the reaction and start taking action. We have to make sure there are no more David Kato’s stories to mourn.We have to stop looking for leaders and instead become leaders of what’s going on in places like Africa. We have to understand that the stigma doesn’t just stop at the shores of Africa but also makes it way here to America with our growing immigrant communities.

Most importantly we have to remember that David’s murder is a continuation of our murder and that our silence is the ammunition for it to continue. Let’s make some noise that will be heard next year and the year after until governments in other countries recognize that we don’t want anything more than the right to be treated as human.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/david-kato-murder-in