



Ugandan Anti-Gay Law Threatens Human Rights and Progress in the HIV Response

This legislation will only reinforce stigma and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community and hamper progress on ensuring safe access to health services.

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IAS – the [International AIDS Society](#) – is deeply concerned that the Ugandan Parliament has passed [anti-gay legislation](#) that is an extreme violation of human rights and threatens to reverse the country’s progress in the HIV response. The legislation was passed on Tuesday, 21 March, and the next step is for President Yoweri Museveni to sign it into law.

More than 30 African countries ban same-sex relations. The Ugandan law goes further, making it a crime to even identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer (LGBTQ+), and obligating families and friends to report people in same-sex relationships to authorities. It imposes lengthy jail sentences, including life in prison for gay sex, and the death penalty for “aggravated” homosexuality, which includes sex when the “offender” is a person living with HIV.

This legislation will only reinforce stigma and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community and hamper progress on ensuring safe access to health services.

Criminalizing LGBTQ+ people is wholly incompatible with an effective HIV response. While Uganda has made considerable gains in reducing the impact of HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, trans people and sex workers continue to be less likely than the general population to access HIV treatment, prevention and care services and will be further threatened by this legislation.

In 2021, key populations (gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, trans people, and sex workers) and their sexual partners accounted for [51% of new HIV acquisitions](#) in central, eastern, southern and western Africa. This underscores the urgent need for governments in the region to work with, not against, communities most vulnerable to HIV.

The legislation is also completely in opposition to President Museveni’s stated support for the HIV response. UNAIDS and others lauded the President when he launched [The Presidential Fast-track Initiative on ending HIV & AIDS in Uganda by 2030](#), the first such initiative globally.

The IAS calls on President Museveni to scrap the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2023 and ground Uganda's laws and policies in science rather than prejudice. We urge the Government of Uganda to provide a legal environment that protects – rather than prosecutes – gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, trans people and sex workers to safely access HIV and other health services.

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