Malawi Gay Men Sentenced to 14 Years

May 20, 2010 By Eric Sawyer

Here's a press release from UNAIDS:

UNAIDS expresses serious concern over ruling in Malawi

GENEVA, 20 May 2010 - UNAIDS is greatly concerned about the guilty verdict handed down by a magistrate court in Malawi against Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga.

The two men were arrested in December 2009 by police officials on charges of engaging in "indecent practices between males" and "unnatural offenses." Both men were subsequently detained for nearly five months, despite several applications for bail and concerns about their health. They were each sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment and hard labour.

UNAIDS considers the criminalization of individuals based on their sexual orientation as a setback for human rights that threatens public health gains in the AIDS response. Criminalizing sexual behaviour drives people who engage in same-sex relations underground and hampers HIV-related programmes aimed at addressing their needs.

More than 80 countries have legislation prohibiting same-sex behaviour. UNAIDS urges all governments to ensure full respect for the human rights of men who have sex with men, lesbians and transgendered people through repealing laws

that prohibit sexual acts between consenting adults in private; enforcing laws to protect these groups from violence and discrimination; promoting campaigns that address homophobia and transphobia; and ensuring that crucial health needs are met.

Eric Sawyer’s comment:

When are we going to start organizing a global campaign to de-criminalize same sex love? It is crazy that with so much hate and violence and in the world that two men are sentenced to 14 years of hard labor for loving each other.

These laws and the hatred and discrimination gay men, lesbians, bi-sexuals, trans-gendered people, transexuals, MSM and all related variations face must change; we must ban together with our friends and fight for our human rights! Laws, norms, religious teaching and social mores won’t change by themselves! ACT UP! FIGHT BACK! FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS!

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