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Nigerian President must reject harsh bill on same-sex unions

Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan must not sign a same-sex marriage bill into law, Amnesty International said after the final version of the bill was adopted by Nigeria's Senate.

The Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill imposes a prison sentence of 14 years for anyone found guilty of engaging in same-sex relationships, and states that anyone who "administers, witnesses, screens, abets and aids" a same-sex union can be imprisoned for 10 years.

A harmonised version of the bill was approved by Nigeria's Senate on 17 December, after it had been passed separately by the Nigerian Senate and House of Representatives.

"This discriminatory bill, which not only criminalizes same-sex marriage but also makes public displays of affection and even socialising in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex community illegal, must be rejected by the President," said Aster van Kregten, Amnesty International's Africa Deputy Director.

"If the President signs the bill into law it would make Nigeria one of the least tolerant societies in the world and have catastrophic consequences for the country's LGBTI community and human rights organisations."