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## **Uganda: Anti-homosexuality bill ‘a grave assault on human rights’**

Uganda’s Parliament today re-introduced a proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill which Amnesty International considers a “grave assault on human rights” that must be rejected.

Under the bill, gay and lesbian people in Uganda could face the death penalty for so-called “aggravated homosexuality” – a definition which includes consensual sexual conduct.

“It’s alarming and disappointing that Uganda’s Parliament will once again consider the Anti-Homosexuality Bill,” said Michelle Kagari, Deputy Africa Programme Director at Amnesty International.

“If passed, it would represent a grave assault on the human rights of all Ugandans, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.”

The bill introduces draconian provisions on top of Uganda’s existing prohibition on consensual same-sex relations, which already violates international norms.

It aims to criminalize the “promotion” of homosexuality, compels HIV testing in some circumstances, and imposes life sentences for entering into a same-sex marriage. It would also be an offence for a person who is aware of any violations of the bill’s wide-ranging provisions not to report them to the authorities within 24 hours.

The bill would significantly hamper the work of human rights defenders and others who find themselves in conflict with the law merely by carrying out their legitimate activities.

“The knock-on effect of passing this bill would reach far beyond gay and lesbian people in Uganda, impeding the legitimate work of civil society, public health professionals, and community leaders,” said Michelle Kagari.

At the bill’s reintroduction, the Speaker informed the House that the bill would not need to be considered again by the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, raising fears that it could be passed into law imminently.

“This deplorable bill would not only violate the rights of Ugandans to life, to non-discrimination, to equality before the law, and to privacy, but would sanction hatred, violence and the persecution of a group of people based on whom they love alone,” said Michelle Kagari.

Ugandan and international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have repeatedly called for the bill to be scrapped since it was first introduced in October 2009.

“We strongly urge the Ugandan Parliament to reject this bill in its entirety. It must not legislate hate,” said

Michelle Kagari.