

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Malawi: President announces intention to repeal laws criminalizing homosexuality**

Amnesty International welcomes President Joyce Banda's announcement in Parliament on Friday to repeal laws criminalizing homosexuality in Malawi, but urges the government to introduce the bill to repeal the laws without delay.

In her maiden State of the Nation Address since assuming office, President Banda announced that her government will repeal the "provisions regarding indecent practices and unnatural acts contained in sections 137A and 153-156 of the Penal Code."

Amnesty International welcomes this development and hopes that this landmark decision will lead to an end to discrimination and persecution based on real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity in Malawi.

The government should immediately introduce the bill to repeal the provisions in Sections 137A, 153 and 156 in the Penal Code.

Section 137A of the Penal Code criminalizes "indecent practices between females," provides that any female person who, whether in public or private, commits "any act of gross indecency with another female" shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a prison term of five years. Sections 153 and 156 criminalize same sex sexual conduct between men and those convicted face up to 14 years imprisonment.

In 2010, two persons were sentenced to 14 years imprisonment on charges related to same sex sexual conduct. They were later pardoned following international condemnation.