

WCC warns Uganda leaders on dangers of antigay bill: Law condemned by church and political leaders

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The World Council of Churches has raised concerns about a proposed law in Uganda calling for the jailing and possible execution of homosexuals.

Current law in Uganda allows for people to be jailed for 14 years for engaging in homosexual acts and the new legislation being considered would raise that to life imprisonment. No one has ever been convicted of homosexual acts in the country, however.

The proposed Ugandan law has drawn condemnation from church and political leaders in the West.

“We are saddened and distressed to receive the news from Uganda regarding a proposed law against homosexual individuals . . . which also proposes the death penalty to be meted out to homo sexual individuals who are HIV positive,” said Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the WCC.

Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya, wrote a letter to Uganda President Yoweri Museveni on the issue December 22.

“It is my hope and my prayer that you will join the African church leaders and fellow people of faith, to abstain from supporting any law which can lead to a death penalty; promotes prejudice and hatred; and which can be easily manipulated to oppress people,” said the WCC general secretary, whose term is ending soon.

Kobia also warned that “all the discussions, time, efforts and sometimes money used on the issue of homosexuality distract us from nonjudgmental and constructive discussions about the majority’s problems.”

The Ugandan president has support, however, from legislators and some clergy.

A group of pastors in Uganda upbraided evangelical pastor Rick Warren after he asked them to speak out against the country's antihomosexuality bill. The 20 heads of denominations belonging to the Uganda National Pastors' Task Force Against Homosexuality demanded that Warren "biblically issue an apology for having wronged us," it was reported.

The pastors e-mailed a demand that Warren issue "a formal apology for insulting the people of Africa by your very inappropriate bullying use of your church and purpose-driven pulpits to coerce us into the 'evil' of Sodomy and Gaymorrah (sic)." -

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