



## PSI solidarity statement – 25 November 2012

### PSI condemns the hate bill targeting LGBT people in Uganda

Public Services International decries a draft bill being put forward in Uganda that would introduce a death sentence for anyone caught engaging in a homosexual act for a second time, or having gay sex when one partner is a minor or has HIV. The act would also criminalize the public promotion of homosexuality with a sentence of up to seven years in prison for anyone convicted. Homosexuality is already against the law in Uganda; this new legislation would further violate the rights of lesbian, bi-sexual, gay and transgendered people.

Among other issues, the bill states that: any person alleged to be homosexual will be at risk of life imprisonment or in some circumstances the death penalty; any parent who does not denounce their lesbian daughter or gay son to the authorities will face fines of \$2,650 or three years in prison; any teacher who does not report a lesbian or gay pupil to the authorities within 24 hours will face the same penalties; and any landlord or landlady who happens to give housing to a suspected homosexual risks seven years of imprisonment.

Similarly, the bill threatens to punish or ruin the reputation of anyone who works with the gay or lesbian population, such as medical doctors working on HIV/AIDS, Civil Society leaders active in the fields of sexual and reproductive health; or even religious leaders providing guidance and counselling to people who are unsure of their sexuality or any other consultations.

This is not the first time such a bill is being debated in Uganda – an earlier bill was withdrawn following international condemnation in 2009. A speaker of the Ugandan parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, has urged the Parliament to adopt this new legislation before the end of the year as a “Christmas gift” for the Ugandan people.

Civil society and relevant stakeholders have not been involved in the preparation of this bill and it is in clear violation of Uganda’s democratic principles. Attacking any minority group establishes a dangerous precedent.

PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff says: “We call upon the Parliament of Uganda to reject this bill. People have the right to choose their sexual partner and should not be condemned for those choices.

“Continued political attacks on gay and lesbian people in many countries are not only unacceptable – but also used as a way to divert the public’s attention from urgent social and economic issues.”

PSI upholds the right of all people to equal opportunities irrespective of sex, marital status, ethnic origin, national identity, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion, at the workplace, in the trade unions and in the broader political, social, economic and cultural context. PSI is committed to defending the rights of LGBT workers everywhere.