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## Gays are "recruiting" claims Ugandan paper

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The gay community in Uganda is recruiting new members, according to a leading newspaper in the East African nation.

"Recruitment is reportedly highest in secondary schools and in prisons," reports The Independent.

The paper claims: "The signs are there that homosexuality is growing in the Ugandan society.

"Between September 22 and 27, workshops were held at the Grand Imperial Hotel and at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel. Both workshops were organised by the gay community in Uganda.

"At least once a month, a workshop of this nature is held in a different town somewhere in the country. These workshops are well attended and well funded from within and internationally.

"Local funding comes from the homosexuals who, according to some reports, include rich businessmen and politicians.

"Normally, the agenda of these conferences is to encourage the gay community not to feel alone, to network, introduce new members, offer sex education and to raise money to support gays who are being persecuted because of their openness about their sexual orientation and also to recruit new members."

Gay and lesbian people in Uganda have been under repeated attack from politicians and religious leaders.



In August Dr Kihumuro Apuuli, the Ugandan AIDS Commission Chief, warned the education ministry that homosexuality is "rife" in schools.

At a recent press conference a government minister said there would be more police operations against the gay community.

"The state of moral health in our nation is challenging and we are concerned about the mushrooming of lesbianism and homosexuality," Ethics and Integrity Minister James Nsaba Buturo said.

"Ten years ago, this phenomena was not there, but the disease has penetrated everywhere.

"Who's going to occupy Uganda 20 years from now if we all become homosexuals? We know that homosexuals don't reproduce.

"There is now a globalisation of homosexuality and people in Uganda are attempting to take advantage of the globalisation.

"It is an attempt to end civilisation."

Last month two human rights advocates in Uganda were held for a week without charges after police accused them of "recruiting homosexuals."

New York-based Human Rights Watch said the illegal detention of George "Georgina" Oundo and "Brenda" Kiiza was part of "a pattern of police harassment of LGBT people in Uganda."

They were held seven days without being brought before a judge or having charges laid against them.

"According to their lawyer, the police accused the two defenders of "recruiting homosexuals" – not a crime defined in the Ugandan Penal Code – and took them into custody," HRW reports.

In 2005 Uganda became the first country in the world to introduce laws banning same-sex marriage.

Section 140 of Uganda's penal code carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment for homosexual conduct, while Section 141 punishes 'attempts' at carnal knowledge with a maximum of seven years of imprisonment.

Section 143 punishes acts of "gross indecency" with up to five years in prison, while a sodomy conviction carries a penalty of 14 years to life imprisonment.

President of Uganda Kaguta Yoweri Museveni and other officials have spoken out against homosexuals on numerous occasions.

In June this year, Ugandan Bishop Luzinda said:

"I have been hearing that gays are demanding that the government should legalise their activities.

"This is absurd because God created a man and woman so that they can produce and fill this world.

"The government should not be tempted to legalise this backward culture which is bound to destroy this country.

"Not all that comes from Europe is superior and must be taken up by us," Bishop Luzinda said.

Mr Museveni spoke of his country's "rejection" of homosexuality during a speech he gave at the wedding of a former MP's daughter earlier this year.

He said the purpose of life was to create children and that homosexuality was a "negative foreign culture."

During his time in office LGBT Ugandans have been repeatedly threatened, harassed or attacked. Many have fled the country.

Last week Prossy Kakooza, a lesbian from Uganda, was granted asylum in the UK.

"To say that it is OK for two men or two women to have sexual relationship with each other is not civilisation but savagery," Mr Buturo told The Independent.

"To also imply that Uganda must embrace ideologies of this nature is not only unfair, but insane.

"This government will not be put at ransom to allow these practices to continue.

"I have heard that in some countries, same-sex organisations are asking their governments not to give aid to Uganda until it allows what they call human rights practices to be restored.

"We say strongly, we don't need that kind of aid."