



Excerpt:

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Museveni warns against homosexuality

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President Museveni has joined the anti-gay crusade, saying he had received reports suggesting that “European homosexuals” had launched a recruitment drive in Africa.

He urged the youth to reject the advances. Expressing his homophobia, Mr Museveni said the youth must stand firm and abhor the divergent sexual orientation.

“I hear European homosexuals are recruiting in Africa,” said Mr Museveni on Saturday, to an audience of mainly youth at the Kampala Serena Hotel that homosexuality is un-natural.

“We used to have very few homosexuals traditionally. They were not persecuted but were not encouraged either because it was clear that is not how God arranged things to be.”

The NRM leader was speaking at the inaugural Young Achievers Awards ceremony, an event organised by Tetea Uganda, a private firm, to honour the country’s youth who have excelled in various disciplines.

The President’s comments follow efforts by lawmaker David Bahati (NRM, Ndurwa West) who moved a private members Bill last month—The Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009, to outlaw homosexuality in the country.

Included in the draft text are not only condemnations of same-sex relations, but a new crime that carries the death penalty, and a criminal sentence for having sex while HIV positive.

Taboo subject

Homosexuality remains a taboo subject in many African societies and if passed in its current state, the Anti Homosexuality Bill, condemned by rights groups, would make Uganda one of the most dangerous places for gay people.

“You should discourage your colleagues [involved in homosexuality] because God was not foolish to do the way he arranged,” said Mr Museveni, adding, “Mr and Mrs, but now you have to say Mr and Mr? What is that now?”

The President's comments will enrage Uganda's gay community which has strongly protested the new Bill, and will put Mr Museveni's regime on a collision path with several of Uganda's critical donors who are strong proponents of homosexuality and the ideals of civil liberties.

Rights advocates have said the government's stance on homosexuality is illegal, not to mention an outrage.

Mr Museveni also cautioned the youth against drug abuse, and said, "If you know, tell your friend who is being tempted to smoke those drugs; counsel them. Aids and drugs are here."

Tennis ace Duncan Mugabe, 19, scooped the overall Young Achiever of the Year award for his exploits on court, while the late Yvonne Namaganda was awarded, posthumously, a hero's award for her heroic endeavours in saving the lives of fellow pupils at the tragic Budo Junior School inferno.

Mr Museveni was himself a beneficiary of an award, scooping the Life Time Achievement Award for what Tetea Uganda Managing Director Awel Uwihanganye said was the President's contribution in providing an "enabling environment" for Uganda's youth to exploit their talents.

"The future of Uganda is in the hands of you young people," Mr Museveni said. "I implore you young people to have love for your nation and embrace patriotism, discard sectarianism, tribalism and religious bigotry."