**Malawi Gay Couple Guilty of 'Indecency'**

A Judge in Malawi Found Couple Guilty of 'Unnatural Acts And Gross Indecency'

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May 18, 2010

ABC News

*http://abcnews.go.com/International/malawi-gay-couple-guilty-indecency/story?id=10674300*

A judge in Malawi has found a gay couple guilty of unnatural acts and gross indecency. Steven Monjeza, 26, and Tiwonge Chimbalanga, 20, were arrested last December after holding a traditional engagement ceremony. The two have remained in prison since the arrest, and could be sentenced to up to 14 years in prison.

The case has drawn international condemnation of anti-homosexuality laws in Malawi. Sixty-five members of the British Parliament have signed a motion condemning the prosecution and the international human rights group Amnesty International adopted the couple as prisoners of conscience.

"This is an outrageous verdict. There was no evidence to justify it. Steven and Tiwonge freely confirmed their love for each other, but the prosecution has entered no credible evidence that they had committed any sexual acts," Peter Tatchell, spokesperson for the London-based gay human rights group OutRage!, told ABC News.

Tatchell, who has been working with human rights groups supporting and advocating for the men, says he expects both men will appeal the decision.

Malawi is one of at least 37 Sub-Saharan African countries explicitly criminalizing homosexuality. Some of the countries, like Sudan and parts of Nigeria, have laws making homosexuality a crime punishable by death.

Uganda is in a heated debate over a proposed law, often referred to as the "kill the gays" law, which would give the death penalty to certain homosexual acts and life imprisonment for simply being gay.

In South Africa, the only country in Africa that has laws protecting gays from discrimination, lesbians have been subjected to "corrective rapes" by gangs, with human rights groups accusing law enforcement officials there of looking the other way.

Western donor countries like the United States and Britain have expressed unhappiness with the current trend of anti-gay laws in Africa. In the United States, members of Congress signed a bi-partisan resolution condemning the Uganda law and all others on the continent which criminalize homosexuality.

U.S. Preachers in Africa

Other European countries have threatened to cut off aid to countries who continue to champion what they call discriminatory laws.

African countries counter with the argument that homosexuality is both anti-African and anti-Christian, that it's an "unnatural" way of life being thrust upon them by the liberal West. But Tatchell says that many of these laws don't stem from African societies, but were introduced during colonialism.

"Nearly all the anti-gay laws in Africa were imposed by Western colonial powers like Britain during the 19th century. They are not African laws at all," says Tatchell. He says there's also a new wave of "cultural colonialism" being imposed by the Christian right in the United States.

"In some African countries, the anti-gay campaign is being stirred up by right wing evangelical churches from the United States," says Tatchell. "They are sending preachers to Africa who are inciting local Christians to crack down on homosexuality."