

## **ASEAN SOGIE Caucus Solidarity Statement with LGBTQIA+ Siblings in Uganda**

It has been a month since the Parliament of Uganda adopted the Anti-Homosexuality Bill on March 21, 2023. The said legislation intensifies anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments in a country by introducing the death penalty, life imprisonment for the “offense of homosexuality”, up to 14 years for attempted homosexuality, and up to 20 years in jail for promoting homosexuality. It now awaits the President’s final approval to become law. This legislation marks the latest in a string setback for the human rights of LGBTQIA+ in Africa, which homosexuality act is illegal in most countries.

As part of the LGBTQIA+ movement in Southeast Asia, a region where criminal laws against LGBTQIA+ persons exist, we are alarmed and concerned about the safety and security of our LGBTQIA+ siblings in Uganda.

We deplore the said legislation as it violates the fundamental rights, and clearly goes against the principles of equality and non-discrimination that are enshrined in international law. This oppressive law will institutionalize prejudice, hatred, and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ people, including those who are perceived to be LGBTQIA+, and obstruct the legitimate work of community leaders, health professionals, and members of civil society.

We call on the President Yoweri Museveni to not enact this oppressive legislation into a law. We also urge governments around the world to speak out against this, and to take action to support the LGBTQIA+ community in Uganda who will be directly hit, including granting safe and secure spaces for those fleeing the country. We call on faith-based organizations to deplore this prejudicial act against marginalized groups, as it contravenes principles of love and compassion which many belief systems cherish.

We believe that it is our collective responsibility to stand up for the rights of all individuals, across borders, and to work towards a world where everyone is free to live their lives without fear of persecution or discrimination. We must work towards a world where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and equality, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

To our Ugandan LGBTIQ+ siblings, you are not alone in this struggle, we are standing in solidarity with you all.

*“We stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ community in Uganda and believe that all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, should have the right to live their lives freely and without fear of persecution or discrimination.”*

**Lini Zurliia, Advocacy Officer, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus**

*“Uganda may be miles away from our region, but the situation resonates with the realities of LGBTQIA+ persons in Southeast Asia. Deep seated and institutional hate that is fuelled by colonial influence, not to mention state-sponsored extremist religious actions, are part*

*of queer folks' lived realities. Our movement must act collectively to ensure safety and security of LGBTQIA+ persons wherever they are."*

**Ryan Silverio, Executive Director, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus**