

## **ICASO Urges Uganda’s President Museveni to Veto Brutal Anti-homosexuality Bill**

**Toronto, 27 April 2023** – The International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) is deeply alarmed by the Ugandan Parliament’s passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2023. This bill poses grave threats to the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals and the human rights of all Ugandans.

We urgently call upon President Yoweri Museveni to veto this harmful and discriminatory legislation.

Provisions in the bill affirm the existing legal penalty of life imprisonment for same-sex conduct, call for the death penalty in certain cases of same-sex conduct, including when an offender is alleged to have transmitted HIV to another person, and prohibit “the promotion of homosexuality.” People advocating for LGBTQI rights could be punished with prison sentences of up to 20 years. Furthermore, the cruel and outrageous bill requires anyone who suspects another person of same-sex activity to report this to the police, with failure to report punishable with fines and prison sentences.

“The criminalization of activities associated with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities not only contradicts Uganda’s human rights obligations but also has very negative health consequences,” said Mary Ann Torres, Executive Director of ICASO. “The evidence is clear – laws of this nature prevent people who are at high risk of HIV from accessing prevention and treatment services.”

“Criminalization also creates barriers to accessing other health services and puts people at increased risk of homophobic and transphobic violence,” Torres added. “This new bill imposes harsh criminal penalties for providing health and other essential social services.”

“ICASO joins the worldwide condemnation of this shameful bill,” said Board Member Meena Seshu. “Beyond the direct health implications, the bill represents a dire threat to global civil society, coming at a time when civil society voices are being stifled in many countries worldwide.”

**ICASO calls upon governments and all sectors and communities to oppose state-sponsored discrimination and repression and to protect the rights of LGBTQI people and civil society in Uganda and globally. We must all stand together with Uganda’s LGBTQI community in demanding that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2023 not be enacted into law.**