

## **Press Release by Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)**

**For Immediate Release: Wednesday, 26 January 2011**

### **Brutal Murder of Gay Ugandan Human Rights Defender, David Kato**

Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and the entire Ugandan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Community stands together to condemn the killing of David Kato and call for the Ugandan Government, Civil Society, and Local Communities to protect sexual minorities across Uganda.

David was brutally beaten to death in his home today, 26 January 2011, around 2pm. Across the entire country, straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex Ugandans mourn the loss of David, a dear friend, colleague, teacher, family member, and human rights defender.

David has been receiving death threats since his face was put on the front page of Rolling Stone Magazine, which called for his death and the death of all homosexuals.

David's death comes directly after the Supreme Court of Uganda ruled that people must stop inciting violence against homosexuals and must respect the right to privacy and human dignity.

Sexual Minorities Uganda and the Ugandan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex Community call on the Police and the Government of Uganda to seriously investigate the circumstances surrounding David's death. We also call on religious leaders, political leaders and media houses to stop demonizing sexual minorities in Uganda since doing so creates a climate of violence against gay persons. Val Kalende, the Chair of the Board at Freedom and Roam Uganda stated that "David's death is a result of the hatred planted in Uganda by U.S Evangelicals in 2009. The Ugandan Government and the so-called U.S Evangelicals must take responsibility for David's blood!"

As United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently declared, “I understand that sexual orientation and gender identity raise sensitive cultural issues. But cultural practices cannot justify any violation of human rights. . . . When our fellow humans are persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, we must speak out. . . . States bear the primary responsibility to protect human rights advocates. I call on all States to ensure the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly that make their work possible. When the lives of human rights advocates are endangered, we are all less secure. When the voices of human rights advocates are silenced, justice itself is drowned out.”

David’s life was cut short in a brutal manner. David will be deeply missed by his family and friends, his students, and Human Rights organizations throughout Uganda and around the world. Speaking about what the death of David means in the struggle for equality, Frank Mugisha, the Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Uganda said, “No form of intimidation will stop our cause. The death of David will only be honored when the struggle for justice and equality is won. David is gone and many of us will follow, but the struggle will be won. David wanted to see a Uganda where all people will be treated equally despite their sexual orientation.”

Burial arrangements are underway for Friday 28, 2011 at 2PM at his ancestral home in Namataba, Mukono District.

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