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STATEMENT ON THE BRUTAL MURDER OF DAVID KATO, UGANDAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER.

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GALZ is sad to learn of the brutal murder of David in his home on 26 January 2011. David was receiving death threats since his face was published by Rolling Stone magazine that called for his death as well as other homosexuals in Uganda. We extend our condolences to the Sexual Minorities of Uganda (SMUG) and the entire Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community in Uganda on the loss of a partner, colleague, teacher and courageous human rights defender.

The early death of anyone is tragic; it is deeply horrifying when it comes at the hands of senseless, brutal murderers; and when that someone was deeply respected as a person who stood up for the rights and fought for the dignity of those who are marginalized and persecuted in Africa.

David dedicated himself to the cause of normalizing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in society through direct action and he was an example of the problems faced by human rights defenders in the hostile climates in which we exist. As members of GALZ, we are stunned and horrified by the news of his death: not only was his demise terrible and untimely, he was a leading light and strength within the whole Ugandan LGBTI movement and we have lost a great source of inspiration. Let his death encourage us to redouble our efforts to make Africa a safe place for all, including LGBTI people.

We support SMUG's call to the Police and Government of Uganda to investigate David's murder as well as to the media, religious and Political leaders to stop their homophobic tirade against sexual minorities as it only helps to promote violence and hate against sexual minorities.

Our hearts and minds are with those in SMUG who have lost such a great leader and whose lives are also at risk. ENDS//