

Joint Statement by GFAN Africa and Pamoja4SRHR Platform on Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023

The goal of current global HIV targets is to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. The world is off track to reach the 2030 goal. To get there, more people from marginalised communities need to be able to access HIV services, and HIV prevention and testing services must increase.

Communities and civil society organized under GFAN Africa and the Pamoja4SRHR platform, are deeply concerned about the harmful impact of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 on the health of its citizens and its impact on the AIDS response that has been so successful up to now.

Countries will only be able to overcome this public health threat when they ensure that 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of them are on treatment, and 95% of those on treatment have achieved viral suppression. Uganda can reach that. By 2021, 89% of people living with HIV in Uganda knew their status, more than 92% of people who knew their HIV status were receiving antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of those on treatment were virally suppressed. Uganda is well on track to achieve HIV treatment targets if progress can be maintained.

The Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 is one of the world's toughest anti-LGBTQ laws, including the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality". While same-sex relations were already illegal in Uganda, as in more than 30 African countries, the new law goes much further. It imposes capital punishment for some behaviour, including transmitting a terminal illness like HIV/AIDS through gay sex, and stipulates a 20-year sentence for "promoting" homosexuality.

Such unjust provisions push people underground, discouraging the most vulnerable populations from seeking testing, treatment and prevention, and they will setback the fight against HIV and well-being.

The Act will further distance key and vulnerable populations who are heavily burdened by the HIV pandemic from actively engaging in efforts to raise resources to support differentiated interventions that target to reverse HIV infection and close the bridge to new infections among the general population.

Uganda has repeatedly demonstrated leadership and commitment to ending AIDS – and has achieved great success – by leaving no one behind. However, with the extremism in the new legislation, Uganda's progress to ensure equitable access to health services and end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 is unattainable.

We stand in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community, not only in Uganda but also other countries in Africa, that are dealing with the fundamental reality of stigma, discrimination and criminalization. We also call upon African Leaders (Including HoS and MPs), Health Resources /Financers Block, Global Health Partners, Regional Blocks and Religious Leaders

to talk against human rights violations as Homosexuality Act is a huge human right violation. Your silence is deafening and cripples access to health and saving lives.

Pamoja4SRHR is a regional platform in east and southern Africa bringing together civil society and community networks to advance access to SRHR amongst other health services for marginalized and vulnerable communities across Western, Eastern and southern Africa.

The Global Fund Advocates Network in Africa (GFAN Africa), hosted by WACI Health in Nairobi, Kenya, unites communities and civil society voices and action in support of resource mobilization for the Global Fund. GFAN Africa has built a continent – wide social movement that demands health for all by recruiting, connecting and mobilizing advocates to communicate the urgent need not only for a fully resourced Global Fund but also for impact of Global Fund investments on communities.