

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said today:

"I have recently written to my brother in Christ, the Primate of Uganda, Archbishop Stephen Kaziimba, to express my grief and dismay at the Church of Uganda's support for the Anti-Homosexuality Act. I make this public statement with sorrow, and with continuing prayers for reconciliation between our churches and across the Anglican Communion. I am deeply aware of the history of colonial rule in Uganda, so heroically resisted by its people. But this is not about imposing Western values on our Ugandan Anglican sisters and brothers. It is about reminding them of the commitments we have made as Anglicans to treat every person with the care and respect they deserve as children of God.

"Within the Anglican Communion we continue to disagree over matters of sexuality, but in our commitment to God-given human dignity we must be united. I have reminded Archbishop Kaziimba that Anglicans around the world have long been united in our opposition to the criminalisation of homosexuality and LGBTQ people. Supporting such legislation is a fundamental departure from our commitment to uphold the freedom and dignity of all people. There is no justification for any province of the Anglican Communion to support such laws: not in our resolutions, not in our teachings, and not in the Gospel we share.

"The Church of Uganda, like many Anglican provinces, holds to the traditional Christian teaching on sexuality and marriage set out in Resolution i.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. That resolution also expressed a commitment to minister pastorally and sensitively to all – regardless of sexual orientation – and to condemn homophobia. I have said to Archbishop Kaziimba that I am unable to see how the Church of Uganda's support for the Anti-Homosexuality Act is consistent with its many statements in support of Resolution i.10.

"More recently, at the 2016 Primates Meeting in Canterbury, the Primates of the Anglican Communion "condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation." We affirmed that this conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. We also "reaffirmed our rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people" – and stated that "God's love for every human being is the same, regardless of their sexuality, and that the church should never by its actions give any other impression."

"These statements and commitments are the common mind of the Anglican Communion on the essential dignity and value of every person. I therefore urge Archbishop Kaziimba and the Church of Uganda – a country and church I love dearly, and to which I owe so much – to reconsider their support for this legislation and reject the criminalisation of LGBTQ people. I also call on my brothers in Christ, the leadership of GAFCON and the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), to make explicitly and publicly clear that the criminalisation of LGBTQ people is something that no Anglican province can support: that must be stated unequivocally.

"As disciples of Jesus Christ we are called to honour the image of God in every person, and I pray for Anglicans to be uncompromising and united

in this calling.”

3 min read

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