



The Diocese of Rupert's Land

The Right Reverend Geoffrey Woodcroft
Bishop of Rupert's Land

We acknowledge that Treaties 1, 2 and 3 territories, on which we stand, is the ancestral traditional land of the Indigenous peoples, and is common home to everyone in virtue of God, our Creator's, gracious gift.

July 5, 2023

An Open Statement - *shared with the Most Rev'd Stephen Kaziimba, Primate of Uganda, The Rt Rev'd Michael Lubowa, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Central Buganda, The Most Rev'd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev'd Linda Nicholls, Primate of Canada, and the disciples of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, Canada*

A recent decision by Primate Kaziimba of the Anglican Church of Uganda to champion the government's new law criminalizing homosexuality prompted the Archbishop of Canterbury to issue a public statement condemning the actions of the Ugandan Church. Below is Archbishop Welby's open statement regarding the words and actions of the Ugandan Archbishop. I am thankful for Canterbury's leadership; now we, the Diocese of Rupert's Land rise to condemn Archbishop Kaziimba's words and actions. We are outraged that a member Church of the Anglican Communion could recklessly betray Christ's teaching to love, and blatantly violate *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <https://unric.org/pt/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2019/07/Declara%C3%A7%C3%A3o-Universal-dos-Direitos-Humanos.pdf>. We are deeply saddened and disturbed to know that Ugandan LGBTQIA2S+ people, their families and allies must live in prisons of isolation formed by fear.

The disciples of the Diocese of Rupert's Land hear God's call to care for God's children in every time and place. Rupert's Land raises concern for LGBTQIA2S+ people of Uganda, their families and allies who are profiled and imprisoned, tortured and killed (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/uganda-un-experts-condemn-egregious-anti-lgbt-legislation>), in ignorance and hatred. We have had a healthy covenant relationship with the Diocese of Central Buganda since 1995 (<https://www.rupertsland.ca/mission-and-ministry/companion-diocese>). Our companion diocese relationship including several visits between countries, shared ministry/mission opportunities and lasting friendships, we support The Orphan Program, water projects, and individual link-parish resourcing; now that ministry is in jeopardy as we fear your people may reap repercussions.

*Diocesan Office: 935 Nesbitt Bay, Winnipeg, MB Canada R3T 1W6
Bishop's Office: (204)992-4212 General Office: (204) 992-4200 Fax: (204) 992-4219
E-mail: bishop@rupertsland.ca*

This past January our two dioceses signed a renewed covenant, calling us both to engage reconciliation whenever needed; perhaps now that time has come.

I am sharing this statement with the Ugandan Primate Stephen Kaziimba and Bishop Michael Lubowa of the Diocese of Central Buganda with a sincere hope that our relationship in Christ Jesus our Lord will be righted. I convey to the Primate of Uganda and the Ordinary of Central Buganda our concern and outrage, but also our commitment to do all in our means to support LGBTQIA2S+ persons, their families and allies in Uganda, so grievously and unjustly treated by their national leaders and national Church. May God guide the Body to do justice NOW, love kindness NOW, and walk humbly with God NOW.



Archbishop Welby's statement in full:

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 1.10 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 1.10.

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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.