

Freedom To Love For ALL: Homosexuality is not Un-African

Yemisi Ilesanmi



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Sexuality rights remain a controversial issue in many parts of Africa; it is not just a controversial issue but also a taboo subject. Many countries in Africa still criminalize homosexuality. Sodomy laws remain part of the criminal laws thereby making it legally possible to persecute sexual minorities. For example Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania and Ghana all have laws under which homosexuality can be prosecuted. In South Africa, where the constitution recognizes same-sex relationships, gays and lesbians are often attacked, molested and persecuted for their sexual orientation. Many African societies do not provide enabling environments to discuss sexual orientation issues. Homosexuality has been condemned by many African leaders as Immoral, Un-African and a 'White man's disease'. In Nigeria, lawmakers are resurrecting a version of a widely condemned anti-homosexuality bill. Nigerian Lawmakers in a bid to rally popular support needed a scapegoat and the LGBT community provides an easy target. Poverty, corruption, unemployment, lack of security and the growing menace of Boko Haram are some of the many problems bedeviling Nigeria as a nation. Rather than focus on these urgent problems, Nigerian lawmakers decided once again to come in a 'straight' mass orgy of corruption to bully the gay minority; a cause always guaranteed to provide the otherwise unpopular lawmakers with cheap, majority support. When will they stop discussing who is sleeping with whom and start making laws to move this underdeveloped, oil rich nation forward? In the book FREEDOM TO LOVE FOR ALL: Homosexuality is not Un-African, Yemisi Ilesanmi takes a critical look at Nigeria's 'Jail the Gays' bill. In this interesting collection of her articles on Nigeria's Same Sex Marriage Prohibition bill, she makes a brilliant case for LGBT Rights as Human Rights and effectively debunks the myths surrounding homosexuality in Africa. Yemisi Ilesanmi also raises concern on what she termed 'The deafening silence of Nigerian Human rights activists on the homophobic bill'. She sheds light on homophobia in Nigeria and the forces driving the 'Jail the Gays' bill in Africa. She wrote: "I wonder why it is not considered politically incorrect to ask if Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals or Transsexuals have equal rights as heterosexuals. If we are agreed that no one should be discriminated against, why are we still debating if Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals are entitled to Human Rights? Last time I checked LGBTs are people too! Well, debate is good because in some countries like Nigeria, many are yet to be convinced that Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals are actually human beings."

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