

British Medical Association
bma.org.uk

BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP
T 020 7383 6447 F 020 7383 6233
E ethics@bma.org.uk



President Yoweri K Museveni
The State House of Uganda
PO Box 25497
Kampala
Uganda

Ethics

Our Ref: DPAJS/js

4 March 2014

Your Excellence

I am writing on behalf of the British Medical Association to express grave concerns about the recent passing into statute of the anti-homosexuality Bill in Uganda. I understand that the legislation can impose lifetime sentences on individuals for the private expression of same sex relations.

As a scientific and medical association, the BMA is particularly concerned about the use of alleged medical expertise to provide support for the legislation. We, and many other groups of medical experts, have considered the scientific evidence about the origins of homosexuality in individuals, and both the nature and expression of homosexuality from a health and social perspective. We are satisfied that homosexuality has complex origins. It is quite clearly not an illness and nor is it associated with dangers to societal structures. There is, in contrast, strong evidence that damage to society arises from intolerance and discrimination, which makes some members of social groups feel excluded with no stake in the betterment of society as a whole.

In the BMA's view there can never be any scientific justification for discrimination against any minority, be it sexual, religious or ethnic. Such discrimination is always based upon contestable social norms, not on biological facts. I am writing therefore both to call into question the alleged scientific basis of the recent Ugandan decision, and sincerely to request that you give every consideration to the withdrawal of this piece of legislation at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Professor Vivienne Nathanson
Director of Professional Activities