

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Lively Challenges President Obama on Uganda Criticism

The Associated Press published a story today about President Obama's criticism of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill which featured my picture and included comments about my case. The story was picked up by MassLive, the online version of the Springfield Republican, my home-town newspaper, and likely by other Massachusetts newspapers.

Obama: Anti-gay bill step backward for Ugandans

http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2014/02/obama_anti-gay_bill_step_backw.html

This is my response:

I was not interviewed for this story, even though my name and picture are being used in it.

Although I am portrayed here as a pastor, I am also a lawyer. I majored in International Human Rights in law school and have practiced as a human rights consultant in numerous countries. I also hold a Certificate in human rights (1997) from the U.N. administered Institute of International Human Rights in Strasbourg.

I agree that the Ugandan law is overly harsh on its face, but this is typical of African criminal law across the continent. Poor countries with limited criminal justice systems tend to rely on the harshness of the letter of the law to be a deterrent to criminals. In practice, the sentencing is usually pretty lenient. Kenya, for example, has the death penalty for burglary, but burglars are definitely not being executed there. I've explained this phenomenon to over two dozen journalists at top media outlets that have interviewed me over the past couple of years, but none have included this perspective in their stories. I guess it would undermine their efforts to bolster the "gay" cause.

As for Obama's veiled threat to Uganda, I'd like to remind him of the actual international law (as opposed to the imagined law I've supposedly violated):

"(1) U.N. General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, (A/RES/25/2625) containing the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provides as follows:

The principle concerning the duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter

No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Consequently, armed intervention and all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are in violation of international law.

No State may use or encourage the use of economic political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind....

Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State."