

Uganda's Anglican church proposes amending existing antigay laws over new bill: Closing loopholes

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The Anglican Church of Uganda says it now prefers to see some changes to existing antihomosexuality laws rather than passage of a totally new bill that many international church and secular leaders have condemned.

Still, the church has said there is a need for a law that would clearly address gay issues in the east African country, and that Ugandan Anglicans remain strongly opposed to the acceptance and promotion of homosexuality.

“The Church of Uganda associates itself with the concerns expressed in the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009,” Arch bishop Henry Orombi said in a February 9 statement.

“However, instead of a completely new bill, the church recommends a bill that amends the Penal Code Act addressing loopholes, in particular: protecting the vulnerabilities of the boy child; proportionality in sentencing; and ensuring that sexual orientation is excluded as a protected human right,” said the archbishop. “The ideal situation would be one where necessary amendment is made on existing legislation to also enumerate other sexual offenses.”

In his first official comment on the subject since the tabling of the bill in October, Orombi said he agrees with the bill’s concerns because of what he sees as loopholes in the existing legislation.

“The church appreciates the bill’s objective of protecting the family in the light of a growing propaganda to influence younger people to accept homosexuality . . . to provide for marriage as contracted only between man and woman,” said the archbishop.

The Anglican Church of Uganda wants the country’s parliament to streamline existing legislation to protect the confidentiality of medical, pastoral and counseling relationships, including those that disclose homosexual practices.

Other proposals by the church include the prohibition of lesbianism, bestiality and “other sexual perversion,” and a ban on the procurement of homosexual material and the promotion of homosexuality as a normal lifestyle.

“Homosexual practice has no place in God’s design of creation, the continuation of the human race through procreation, or his plan for redemption,” said Orombi.