



## Press Statement

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### **UGANDA POLICE DISRUPT AND SHUT DOWN EVENT ORGANISED TO CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA (IDAHOT)**

(Kampala, Uganda) Chapter Four Uganda, an organization working for the promotion of civil and political rights for marginalized populations and Sexual Minorities Uganda, an umbrella organization advocating for the rights of LGBTI Ugandans, had today organized an event to commemorate the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT).

IDAHOT is a United Nations awareness day designated to coordinate international events that raise awareness of LGBTI rights violations and shed light on LGBTI rights work worldwide.

At around 01:00 pm, an hour before the event was scheduled to start, ten police officers from Jinja Road Police Station, one of the police stations in Kampala came to Chapter Four office premises and ordered for the event to be cancelled.

The police officers informed the organizers that they were acting on the orders of the Minister of Ethics and Integrity, Simon Lokodo, who had got intelligence that there was an illegal gathering planned. The officers, who had no official documentation stating the reasons for stopping the event insisted on turning away the invited guests despite the organizers' pleas for them to follow the law that guarantees the freedom of association and assembly.

*“The actions taken by police on a day dedicated to fighting homophobia and transphobia goes to show why this day is important and why we must continue the fight. It also goes to show how institutionalized homophobia is. We are sad but take solace in the fact that the bigger statement about the state of the rights of LGBT people in Uganda has been made. We call upon national allies and development partners to continue to support efforts to ensure that all Ugandans enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed rights,”* said Nicholas Opiyo, the Executive Director of Chapter Four Uganda.

This is not the first event that police have disrupted and stopped on instructions of Minister Lokodo. Since 2012, a total of six events have been illegally and violently stopped.



Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda guarantees the protection of the freedom of conscience, expression, movement, religion, assembly and association of all Ugandans.

These actions by police are a clearly a grave violation of the rights of LGBTI individuals who are routinely and unfairly targeted instead of being protected.

*“I am deeply disappointed in the Police’s actions especially because the Ugandan LGBT community’s theme for this year’s celebration was Protection of Freedom of Assembly and Association. We shall however continue to advocate for our rights until we can enjoy the same freedoms as other Ugandans,”* said Frank Mugisha the Executive Director of Sexual Minorities Uganda.

We condemn in the strongest terms possible the actions of the ethics minister and police officers, especially on this day that is meant to recognize all efforts to end all forms of homophobia and transphobia.

We call upon Law enforcers to protect rather than violate the rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender individuals in Uganda.

**ENDS**