

**For immediate release**

**UGANDA: END VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY**

(Kampala, May 17<sup>th</sup> 2016)- In commemoration of the 2016 International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (May 17), Chapter Four Uganda calls upon the Ugandan authorities to implement the resolution of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights passed at its 55<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Luanda, Angola, from 28<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

The Resolution (Res. 275) 'strongly urges States to end all acts of violence and abuse, whether committed by State or non-state actors, including by enacting and effectively applying appropriate laws prohibiting and punishing all forms of violence including those targeting persons on the basis of their imputed or real sexual orientation or gender identities, ensuring proper investigation and diligent prosecution of perpetrators, and establishing judicial procedures responsive to the needs of victims.'

'LGBTI individuals are citizens deserving of equal rights and protection of and under the law like all other individuals' said Nicholas Opiyo, the Executive Director of Chapter Four Uganda. 'They should be free from all forms discrimination and inequality. Their freedom to association and expression must be guaranteed and protected.'

International human rights standards reflected in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda all recognize the freedom from discrimination and equal protection of and under the law.

'These standards must be applied to all regardless of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. There is no justification for discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals anywhere in the world and we must work towards ensuring its immediate end' said Clare Byarugaba, the Equality and Non-discrimination coordinator at Chapter Four Uganda.

The International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) was created in 2004 to draw the attention of opinion leaders, social movements, policymakers, the public and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTI people internationally.

The date of May 17<sup>th</sup> was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. Uganda is a member state of the World Health Organisation and is compelled to abide by international medical standards set by the WHO.

Many countries in the world have achieved full protection and equality for their LGBTI citizens; however according to a survey by ILGA, 75 countries including Uganda still have criminal laws against LGBTI individuals. Advocates in Uganda continue to fight for the human rights of all Ugandans, free from discrimination.

On this day, Chapter Four Uganda joins the rest of the world to celebrate this day and reiterate her commitment to the pursuit of human rights for all Ugandans, free from discrimination, and calls upon the Government of Uganda to guarantee the protection of the rights of LGBTI people in Uganda.

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