

3 February 2011

Statement in response to the death of David Kato

As people of faith, recognizing and upholding the God-given dignity and value of every human life, we are appalled by the violent death of leading Ugandan social activist David Kato. As religious communities and organizations working to strengthen the global HIV response and to challenge stigma and discrimination that undermines that response, we mourn the loss of a courageous activist in the struggle for dignity and human rights that are essential in overcoming the HIV pandemic.

Fundamental to all religions is a respect for human life and dignity. Our faith proclaims that all human beings are made in the image of God. While we await the outcome of official investigations into David's murder, we abhor and denounce all violence such as that which took David's life - and especially if such violence is motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards people on the basis of their sexual orientation or marginalization in society.

We call for a full and thorough investigation into the circumstances of David's death, and for those responsible to be brought to justice. We urge all governmental, civil and religious authorities in Uganda and around the world to speak out against hate, stigma and discrimination, and instead, in words and deeds, recognize and promote the essential worth and dignity of every person. We call upon religious leaders to speak, act and urge their faithful to reach out in compassion towards those who are marginalized for any reason and to resist all attempts to promote intolerance and hatred.

We pray that David's death will galvanize a swift and uncompromising global reaction against hatred and violence and help to create a world of peace with justice which is safe for everyone to call home.

Individual Signatures

Rev Christo Greyling (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Rev Gunilla Hallonsten (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Karen Plater (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Rev Mike Schuenemeyer (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Dr Erlinda Senturias (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Dr Carl Stecker (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Monsignor Robert Vitillo (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Dr Sonja Weinreich (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Riitta Laakio (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Patricia Zerega (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Rev Veikko Munyika (EAA HIV Strategy Group member)
Rev Dr Richard Fee (Chair of the Board of Directors, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance)
Peter Prove (EAA Executive Director)
Ruth Foley (EAA HIV and AIDS Campaign Officer)
Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda (General Secretary, World YWCA)

Prof Farid Esack (Head, Department of Religion Studies, University of Johannesburg)
Prudence Mabele (Executive Director, Positive Women's Network)
René Grotenhuis (Executive Director, Cordaid)
Rev Dr Calvin O. Butts, III (Chairman of the Board, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc., Pastor, The Abyssinian Baptist Church, New York, NY)
C. Virginia Fields (President and CEO, National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS, Inc.)
Dr Gunnar Stålsett (Bishop em, Moderator European council of Religious Leaders)
Canon Gideon Byamugisha (Goodwill Ambassador on HIV and AIDS for Christian Aid, UK)
Rev Dr Seppo Rissanen (Executive Director, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission)
Ms Ruth Schuurman (HEKS-Swiss Interchurch Aid)
Omega Bula (Executive Minister, Partners in Mission Unit, The United Church of Canada)
Aneleh Fourie-Le Roux (Training and Mentor Coordinator, CABSA)
Claudia Florentin (Periodista, Editora español ALC Noticias)
Rvdo. Dan González Ortega (Rector de la Comunidad Teologica de México)
Luis Segreda (Pastor Luterano)
Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh (Chairman, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha)
Rev Mads Christoffersen (The National Council of Churches, Denmark)
Pastor Gerardo Oberman (Presidente de las Iglesias Reformadas en Argentina)
Rev Susan C. Johnson (National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada)
Theodor Jørgensen
Cathal Gallagher (Presidente, Sí da Vida Peru)
Malena Manzato (Iglesia Bautista, Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Dr Asavari Herwadkar MD
Rev Martin Junge (General Secretary, The Lutheran World Federation)
Berit Hagen Agøy (General Secretary, Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations)
Steinar Eraker (Pastor/advisor, The Church City Mission of Oslo)
Right Rev John Christie (Moderator, Church of Scotland)
Carina Wøhlk (Lutheran Pastor, Diocese of Copenhagen, Denmark)
Elise Sandnes
Solveig Fiske (Bishop of Hamar Diocese, Norway)
Pastor Lisandro Orlov (Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida en Argentina y Uruguay y Vicepresidente 2 de la Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangelicas)
Karen Anderson (Fundación EPES, Chile)
Nathalie Lasslop (Cordaid, The Netherlands)
Tomás Peris
Rev David J. Kalke
Jørgen Christensen (Dean, ELCD, Denmark)
Vr. Rev Anders Gadegaard (Dean, Copenhagen Cathedral)

Pastor Roberto González (Presidente, Centro Cristiano de la Comunidad GLTTB A.C.)
Laura E. Asturias
Dr Guy Liagre (President, United Protestant Church in Belgium)
Lyn Van Rooyen (Programme Manager of CARIS, CABSA)
Anne Sender (Leader, Jewish Community of Oslo, Norway)
Rev. Carlos Tamez Luna (Secretario Ejecutivo, Iglesia Evangélica Presbiteriana Costarricense, INERELA+ Américas)
Carmen Molina (Presidenta, Pastoral Ecumenica de Acompañamiento a Personas Viviendo con VIH y SIDA, Chile)
Lina Tudela (Secretaria, Pastoral Ecumenica de Acompañamiento a Personas Viviendo con VIH y SIDA, Chile)
Rev. Alan Eldrid (President, Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Unida en Argentiny y Uruguay)
Rvda. Cecilia Castillo Nanjarí, Coordinadora Continental da Pastoral de Mulheres e Justiça de Gênero, Conselho Latino-americano de Igrejas
13 additional signatures received from DanChurchAid

Organizational Signatures

Acción EcuMénica- Venezuela
Agrupación Menonita Latinoamerica de Comunicaciones (AMLAC)
All-Ukrainian Network of PLWHA
Asociacion civil espacios sociales de inclusión de Buenos Aires, Argentina
CABSA (Chistian AIDS Bureau of South Africa)
Christian Council of Norway
Church of Sweden
Cordaid
DanChurchAid
DIFAEM (German Institute for Medical Mission)
Fundación Nimehuatzin, Nicaragua,
ICCO, The Netherlands
Iglesia Anabautista Menonita de Buenos Aires, Argentina
Iglesia Evangélica del Río de la Plata, Argentina - Uruguay y Paraguay
International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Kerk in Actie, The Netherlands
La Federación Argentina de Iglesias Evangélicas
Norwegian Church Aid
Ourvoice, Indonesia
Positive Women's Network
Prisma, The Netherlands
Proyecto Vida, organización Basada en la Fe
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Church of Christ Wider Church Ministries
World YWCA