

# **Open letter from leading scientists and academics to President Museveni: “the science is clear - homosexuality is natural and normal”**

Dear President Museveni,

You recently made a call for a scientific opinion to establish if homosexuality is natural, or learned - to help you determine whether to sign the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. As scientists - from across Africa and the world - we are answering your call.

We cannot say this enough: homosexuality is a normal and natural variation of human sexuality. The science on this subject is crystal clear and we call on you in the strongest possible terms to veto the bill in the name of science.

Consider the largest ever scientific study into the genetics of same-sex sexual behaviour. It analysed a huge sample of nearly half a million people. What did it find? Genetics plays a role in homosexuality. And in fact, it does not just come from one gene, but many. As one of the lead researchers on the study said: *“I hope that the science can be used to educate people a little bit more about how natural and normal same-sex behaviour is”*.

But he and his co researchers are not alone. You can listen to your very own Uganda National Academy of Sciences. Or perhaps fellow African scientists at the Academy of Science of South Africa. In fact, we cannot think of one major scientific organisation - from the World Health Organisation to the World Health Assembly and beyond - which would argue that homosexuality is abnormal and unnatural.

Science does not only tell us that homosexuality is normal and natural, it also tells us that it is not "socially contagious". You cannot catch it, like the common cold. You cannot be indoctrinated into it - exposure to rainbow flags will not make a child gay. Nor is it a western import - despite what you and many of your citizens have heard. Sexual orientation is not limited to any specific region. It is not confined by borders drawn on a map. It needs no passport to travel. Indeed there's clear evidence for same sex relationships in Africa dating back hundreds of years.

And science also busts pernicious and hateful myths that homosexuality encourages pedophilia, and that HIV is a 'gay disease'. In fact, laws, like the one you are considering signing, actually make it more difficult to monitor and control sexually transmitted diseases.

This law is unscientific. We urge you in the strongest terms to veto the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, in light of the wide scientific consensus that homosexuality is a normal and natural variation of human sexuality.

**Signees:**

If you would like to add your name to this letter, please contact [media@avaaz.org](mailto:media@avaaz.org)

1. Professor Glenda Gray, President & CEO of the South African Medical Research Council, South Africa
2. Dean Hamer, Scientist Emeritus, National Institutes of Health USA
3. Professor James McIntyre, Anova Health Institute and University of Cape Town, South Africa
4. Professor Francois Venter, Executive Director: Ezintsha, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
5. Professor Marc Mendelson, Professor of Infectious Diseases, Head of Division of Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine, Past-President of the International Society of Infectious Diseases, Past-President of the Federation of Infectious Diseases Societies of Southern Africa
6. Professor Bavesh Kana, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.
7. Professor Linda-Gail Bekker, Chief Executive Officer, The Desmond Tutu Health Foundation, South Africa
8. Professor Volker Sommer, Chair of Evolutionary Anthropology, University College London, United Kingdom
9. Prof. Eduard Sanders, Specialist scientist on HIV prevention, Aurum Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa & Kenyan Medical Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya.
10. Dr. Simon LeVay, former Associate Professor, Harvard University and Salk Institute for Biological Studies, USA
11. Professor Charles Roselli, Professor of Chemical Physiology and Biochemistry, Oregon Health & Science University, USA
12. Professor Paul Vasey, Professor & Research Chair, Dept. of Neuroscience, University of Lethbridge, Canada
13. Kenneth J. Zucker, Ph.D., University of Toronto, Canada

14. Dr. Lisa M. Diamond, Distinguished Professor of Developmental Psychology, University of Utah, USA
15. Associate Professor Brendan Zietsch, ARC Future Fellowship & Associate Professor School of Psychology, University of Queensland, Australia
16. Anthony F. Bogaert, Professor in the Department of Health Sciences, Brock University, Canada
17. Eric Vilain, Associate Professor in the Departments of Human Genetics, Pediatrics and Urology at UCL
18. Heinz-Jürgen Voß, Professor of Sexology and Sexual Education, Merseburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany
19. Michael Bailey, Professor of Psychology, Northwestern University, Canada

**ENDS**