

December 17, 2014

President Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. President:

We are not citizens of your country. We write to you, with respect, because we appreciate your unprecedented public support for the fundamental human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals globally, and because we know that your country's actions carry great consequence in today's world.

You have promised that the United States will stand with LGBT people in seeking fairness and equality in all of our countries. Many of us can speak to the positive efforts of U.S. embassies in our countries that have given local impact to that promise.

But if the promise of equal and fair treatment is to be realized, United States policy must be consistent and clear. We ask that it be made so.

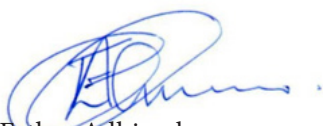
When Uganda passed a new law threatening the safety, rights and well-being of its LGBT citizens, the U.S. responded clearly. We believe the steps that you took – to deny visas to those responsible for that law, examine how the law might impact U.S. programs, and ensure that no area of your country's bilateral relationship was immune to a suitable response – have had a positive impact on Uganda's actions.

But no such actions have been taken toward Nigeria, where a similar law was also recently adopted and is now in effect. No action has been taken toward Brunei, or The Gambia, or Kyrgyzstan, or India, which have all recently increased or re-introduced harsh criminal penalties against LGBT citizens. Not that the response to those countries needs to be identical to the steps taken in Uganda, but surely some clear response is needed. How can we trust otherwise that the United States will, indeed, stand with us as we fight for our rights?

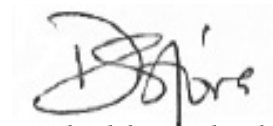
Mr. President, we ask that the United States make clear, even now, that steps will be taken to respond, without fail, in any country where governments attack us and deny our rights. We believe that such a policy, clearly enunciated and triggered when dangerous new laws or discriminatory national programs are enacted and purposefully deployed against us, would deter the leaders of our countries from pursuing shameful national agendas that seek to deny the rights of our LGBT brothers and sisters.

We ask that you stand with us in this struggle, not only for our sake, but also for yours. The better world we seek, and that we believe in, will benefit all of us through increased democracy, security and prosperity, and that vision cannot be achieved without a consistent partnership with the United States. Your leadership now will be viewed by history as an enduring legacy of your Administration.

Sincerely,



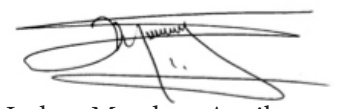
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