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Ugandan Gay Rights Group Sues American Evangelist

By **LAURIE GOODSTEIN**

A Ugandan gay rights group filed suit against an American evangelist, Scott Lively, in federal court in Massachusetts on Wednesday, accusing him of violating international law by inciting the persecution of homosexuals in [Uganda](#).

The lawsuit alleges that beginning in 2002, Mr. Lively conspired with religious and political leaders in Uganda to whip up anti-gay hysteria with warnings that homosexuals would sodomize African children and corrupt their culture.

The Ugandan legislature considered a bill in 2009, proposed by one of Mr. Lively's Ugandan contacts, that would have imposed the death sentence for homosexual behavior. That bill was at first withdrawn after an outcry from the United States and European nations that are among major aid donors to Uganda, but a revised bill was [reintroduced last month](#).

Mr. Lively is being sued by the organization Sexual Minorities Uganda under the alien tort statute, which allows foreigners to sue in American courts in situations alleging the violation of international law. The suit claims that Mr. Lively's actions resulted in the persecution, arrest, torture and murder of homosexuals in Uganda.

Reached by telephone in Springfield, Mass., where he now runs "Holy Grounds Coffee House," a storefront mission and coffee shop, Mr. Lively said he had not been served and did not know about the lawsuit. However, he said: "That's about as ridiculous as it gets. I've never done anything in Uganda except preach the Gospel and speak my opinion about the homosexual issue. There's actually no grounds for litigation on this."

Mr. Lively is the founder and president of "Abiding Truth Ministries." He is also the author of "The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in the Nazi Party," which claims that Nazism was a movement inspired by homosexuals, and "Seven Steps to Recruit-Proof Your Child," a guide to prevent what he calls indoctrination by homosexuals.

He has traveled to Uganda, Latvia and Moldova to warn Christian clergy there to defend their countries against what he says is an onslaught by gay rights advocates based in the West.

Pamela C. Spees, a lawyer for the Ugandan group, works with the Center for Constitutional Rights, a liberal legal advocacy group based in New York City. Ms. Spees said that since homosexuals in Uganda have little support, the lawsuit “brings the fight” to those in the United States who she says fomented the anti-gay legislation in Uganda. She says that the lawsuit is targeted at Mr. Lively’s actions, not his religious speech or beliefs.

“This is not just based on his speech. It’s based on his conduct” she said. “Belief is one thing, but actively trying to harm and deprive other people of their rights is the definition of persecution.”