



World

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Activists Sue U.S. Evangelical Pastor Over Gay Rights Grievances

A new development today on a story “Nightline” [first covered back in 2010](#), when we traveled to Uganda to investigate a pending law in a far-away land that had ignited a firestorm of criticism here in the United States.

Dubbed the “Kill the Gays” bill by opponents here, the legislation would have imposed severe punishment — up to and including the death by hanging — for Ugandans found guilty “aggravated homosexuality”. The bill also called for seven years in prison for “attempt to commit homosexuality,” five years for landlords who knowingly house gays, three years for anyone, including parents, who fail to hand gay children over to the police within 24 hours and the extradition of gay Ugandans living abroad.

International outrage led to the demise of the bill until last month, when David Bahati, the Ugandan legislator who first wrote the law, reintroduced it. So with the bill back on the table, a civil liberties group is making an interesting play to stop it. The Center for Constitutional Rights [filed suit today](#) against Scott Lively, a pastor from Springfield, Mass., who went to Uganda and visited with policymakers there in the months before the bill was first introduced.

Lively, who spoke at a conference called the “Seminar on Exposing the Homosexual Agenda,” believes that countries like Uganda can still protect themselves from what he sees as the scourge of the gay agenda.

“These are good Christians; better Christians than there are here in the states,” Lively said when he spoke to “Nightline” back in 2010. “They care about each other. And I think the reason they’re pushing so hard on this law is that they don’t want to see what happened to our country happen over there.”

The lawsuit filed today employs a novel legal strategy, invoking the Alien Tort Statute, which allows for foreign victims of human rights abuses to seek civil remedies in U.S. courts. According to the Center for Constitutional Rights, Lively’s involvement in Uganda is tantamount to persecution of gays and lesbians there.

Lively did not immediately respond to ABC News’ request for comment, but he told [The New York Times](#) today, “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."

But in 2010, he told us he had no idea the bill was coming, and denied any responsibility for it, despite the fact that he compared his visit to Uganda to a nuclear bomb exploding.

"I'm proud of that, and I hope that the nuclear bomb spreads across the whole world, against the gay movement " he said. "Against this attempt to overthrow the family-based society and replace it with sexual anarchy. That's harmful to everyone. That doesn't mean I hate homosexuals. That doesn't mean I want everyone to be thrown in jail."

And he repudiated the notion that he empowered the Ugandan parliament to introduce the legislation. "Do you think that these people did not already have an opinion, a strong opinion, on homosexuality?" he asked. "It's a very racist perspective. It's the colonial mind-set all over again."

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