

Cecilia Strand, *Uppsala University, Sweden*

The Demonization of Homosexuals in Ugandan Print Media – a tale on Modern Witch Hunt

cecilia.strand@im.uu.se

In 31 sub-Saharan Africa countries same sex relations between men are illegal and in four it can potentially carry the death penalty. Despite recent renewed international recognition of the importance of inclusion of individuals engaged in same sex relations in HIV/AIDS work, Uganda tabled a new bill the 14th of October 2009 against the "promotion of homosexuality". With the adoption of the bill, publishing information or providing funds for organizations working with this group's rights or failure to report within 24 hours the identities of individuals known to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender will become illegal. Parts of the Ugandan media have actively campaigned for the bill. The following paper is based on a content analysis of two leading daily Ugandan newspapers, from October to December 2009. While there are significant differences between the government and main independent newspaper, both papers take an active role in demonizing same sex relations through their dominant narratives. Individuals engaged in same sex relations are dehumanized and stripped of other identities besides that of their sexuality. Moreover, the newspapers fail to acknowledge the severe implications of the bill on human rights, as well as effective HIV prevention in a time where HIV prevalence rates are again increasing.

Cecilia Strand M.Sc. is a Ph.D. Candidate in Media and Communication at Uppsala University, Sweden.