Uganda: Stop homophobic campaign launched by Rolling Stone tabloid

Brussels-Rome-Kampala, 14 October 2010

The Ugandan Rolling Stone tabloid has published an article entitled “100 Picture of Uganda’s Top Homos Leak” calling for “the hanging of homos” in Uganda in its issue of 2 to 9 October, Vol.1, No. 5 of 2010. This article shows pictures of some of the 100 alleged homosexuals and other Human Rights Activists, alongside their names and a description of their professional jobs and private life, including where they live or work. The article also calls on the Government of Uganda to take strong action against them.

The publication of the list of names in this context is bluntly incompatible with the principle of the rule of law. The principles relating to freedom of the press cannot be translated as meaning any lack of restraint in editorial choices.

The article calling for the hanging of members of a sexual minority in Uganda and inciting violence against a particular group of citizens, stigmatised by a Bill that makes a certain sexual behaviour an offence under Ugandan law, is an attempt to intimidate not only sexual minorities but also the authorities in charge of upholding the principle of the rule of law. The Rolling Stone tabloid should make immediately public apologizes and stop the publication of such articles.

No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ), Certi Diritti, the Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty (NRPTT) and Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) call on national and international civil society organisations and human rights activists to oppose this campaign orchestrated by The Rolling Stone tabloid immediately, strongly and unequivocally and express their clear support for the respect of fundamental human rights of LGBTI persons in Uganda, before any physical harm is inflicted on them.

NPWJ, Certi Diritti, the NRPTT and SMUG call on the Government of Uganda to intervene immediately and take all appropriate measures to put a stop to this blatant incitement to public violence against a particular group of citizens. The Ugandan Government should recognise and seize the opportunity to ensure the protection of human rights, which is entrusted to its authority, and uphold the Ugandan Constitution as well as the major Human Rights International and Regional Instruments to which Uganda is a signatory.

For further information, please contact Elio Polizzotto (NPWJ), email: epolizzotto@npwj.org, phone: +32 2 548 39 21 and Advocacy Litigation Officer (SMUG) phone: + 256 773104971. Check also the website: http://www.npwj.org