

South African Lesbians Executed 8 July 2007

Sunday 5 August 2007, by [Committee of LGBT African immigrants residing in U.S.](#), [Less AIDS Lesotho](#) (Date first published: 31 July 2007).

We are very sad and outraged to hear about the death of Sizakele Sigasa and Salome Masooa, two South African lesbian activists who were executed on Sunday July 8th, 2007. This barbaric act was meant to paralyze our community with fear so as to eradicate the wonderful work that is being done to empower us. We condemn this brutal act. Our community is being robbed of brave and courageous women who dedicate their lives to improving the wellbeing of the society.

We are proud of our heroes, Sizakele Sigasa and Salome Masooa, who died doing what is right. May you rest in peace. Your work will always be cherished worldwide. We all appreciate the hard work, visibility and unconditional love you have given to empower the community with great wisdom. We salute you forever. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families, friends, and allies who are left with the great memories of our heroes.

This is not the first time that African lesbians and HIV positive women have been raped and/or murdered simply for being who they are. In June, Simangele Nhlapho, a member of a support group for women living with HIV, coordinated by the South Africa-based Positive Women's Network (PWN), and her two year old were raped and murdered. 16 year-old Madoe Mafubedu was also attacked and killed in April of this year. In all these cases the perpetrators have not been called to answer for their crimes. In a country where more women than men are living with HIV, we are seeing an escalation of violence against women. South Africa has the world's highest rate of reported rape and women are usually targeted for rape because of their actual or presumed sexual orientation. Stigma associated with both rape and homosexuality dictates that many of these attacks are not reported. We are tired of seeing women, who served as the voices of their community, raped and/or murdered simply for fighting for the rights of their communities to survive and thrive. If these role models, who dared to be out about their sexual orientation and HIV status, are killed how then can we expect others to live their lives publicly, without shame and fear? How do communities eradicate misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and HIV-based stigma when it appears that the state apparatus condones violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), and HIV positive individuals?

There are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people all over the African continent who live in hiding for fear of being physically attacked or murdered. African cultures have always had numerous expressions of sexuality and gender. European colonization brought

laws that criminalized us. Now our lives are demonized and called 'un-African'. What is un-African, however, is large-scale persecution and oppression of communities trying to do nothing other than live their lives in peace and harmony. What is un-African is using religion as a tool to pit communities against each other, and draw people's attention away from problems such as poverty and corruption. As LGBT African immigrants living in New York City we understand the connection between U.S. foreign policies that prescribe a very narrow usage of HIV/AIDS funding, and violence against LGBT and HIV positive folks in our home countries. We also understand that the current attempt by the U.S. to increase militarization in our home countries will only intensify poverty, oppression and violence against women, LGBT, and HIV positive people.

We stand in solidarity with the family and friends of the brave women who were recently murdered, the Joint Working Group, and all LGBT/HIV-positive individuals living in Africa. We demand Justice for Sizakele Sigasa, Salome Masooa, Simangele Nhlapho, Madoe Mafubedu and all others who have been persecuted because they were fighting for self-determination and liberation of ALL African peoples.

On Tuesday, August 14th there will be a candle light vigil in New York honoring all LGBT and HIV positive African heroes who have been murdered.

Check our Myspace page

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or email africanliberation@gmail.com for updates

This statement was jointly issued by Less AIDS Lesotho and the committee of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender African immigrants residing in U.S.

Note: South Africa is the only country in the world to have constitutional protection on the basis of sexual orientation - and yet this can still happen.