

## On Homosexuality, the Vatican sides with Sudan and Saudi Arabia

by Michael A. Jones  
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We posted about this last week, but it's all the more relevant today given that it's Human Rights Day. The Vatican has continued to oppose a UN resolution that calls for the decriminalization of homosexuality around the globe.

What is the Vatican opposing here?

They are opposing an effort put forward by 27 European countries (led by France), that calls on countries to stop supporting state-sanctioned violence and human rights abuses toward LGBT people. That's it, cut and dry.

Today, a group of faith leaders from some of the leading LGBT organizations in the U.S. put out a statement condemning the Vatican for siding with countries like Sudan and Saudi Arabia, where LGBT people are punished with prison or death. The faith leaders had this to say:

As faith leaders we were shocked by Vatican opposition to this proposed initiative. By refusing to sign a basic statement opposing inhumane treatment of LGBT people, the Vatican is sending a message that violence and human rights abuses against LGBT people are acceptable.

Ouch. But the truth hurts.

The whole statement from the faith leaders appears after the jump, and is signed by representatives from the Human Rights Campaign, the **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**, the National Black Justice Coalition, and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

For far too long people around the world have been ostracized, imprisoned, tortured and denied basic rights to housing, health care and employment simply because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). In more than 70 countries people can be imprisoned for homosexuality and in several countries same gender love is a crime punishable by death.

This is why the French government, backed by 27 European Union nations, put forward a proposal, on Human Rights Day to recognize that LGBT rights are human rights and to decriminalize homosexuality. Such a statement simply affirms the most basic of rights for LGBT people: that they be allowed to live in dignity and safety. As faith leaders who work every day with LGBT people who feel the stigma of discrimination, this UN initiative speaks to our core belief that we show our love for God when we care for our neighbors, particularly those who are shunned and marginalized.

As faith leaders we were shocked by Vatican opposition to this proposed initiative. By refusing to sign a basic statement opposing inhumane treatment of LGBT people, the Vatican is sending a message that violence and human rights abuses against LGBT people are acceptable. Most Catholics, and indeed most Catholic teachings, tell us that all people are entitled to live with basic

human dignity without the threat of violence. The Catholics we know believe that Scripture asks us to be our brother and our sister's keeper. Many are speaking out against this immoral stance in the name of religion.

Compounding the Vatican's opposition is the inaction to date of the government of the United States. As faith leaders and citizens of the United States, we call on the U.S. government to join the 50 countries throughout the world that have officially supported this U.N. proposal. We urge U.S. leaders to stand against discrimination. It is time to let the teachings of the world's great religions guide us toward justice rather than encouraging prejudice, fear and violence. It is time for the U.S. to stand as a moral leader for LGBT people and to help create a more just world for all of us.

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