

Cameroon Archbishop Calls Same-Sex Marriage Crime Against Humanity

One of Cameroon's most senior Christian leaders on Tuesday called **same-sex marriages** a "crime against humanity."

As in most African nations, homosexuality is illegal in Cameroon. But a number of incidents have highlighted the clash between a largely conservative culture and youth for some of whom it is less of an issue.

"Marriage of persons of the same sex is a serious crime against humanity," Victor Tonye Bakot, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Yaounde, told followers at Christmas Day mass.

"We need to stand up to combat it with all our energy. I am particularly thankful to our local media that has been spreading this message of it as a criminality against mankind."

The comments follow a three-year jail sentence handed earlier this month to 32-year-old Jean-Claude Roger Mbede, who was found guilty of homosexual conduct because he sent a text message to another man telling him he loved him.

At least 12 people were convicted this year of being gay in Cameroon, where jail terms range from six months to five years.

Other African countries have seen fierce debate over anti-gay measures, which are often popular in societies where homosexuality is largely taboo but have drawn criticism from rights groups and threats of aid cuts from donors.

Ugandan politicians are seeking to pass an anti-gay law that initially sought the death penalty for homosexuals before it

was watered down in the face of opposition.

Meanwhile, earlier on Tuesday the Roman Catholic Church's leader in England and Wales, Archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nichols, said the government's plans to allow gay marriage were a "shambles" and had no mandate.

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