

Obama Warns Uganda That Anti-Gay Law Would Complicate US Relations

President Barack Obama warned Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on Sunday that enacting an anti-gay law would complicate U.S. relations with Uganda and would be a “step backward for all Ugandans.”

Obama, on a weekend golf holiday in Southern California, issued a statement denouncing Museveni’s plans to sign a law that would impose harsh sentences for those convicted of homosexual acts.

His national security adviser, Susan Rice, said via Twitter that she had spoken by phone to Museveni on Saturday night to protest after he told members of his party that he would sign the law.

“As we have conveyed to President Museveni, enacting this legislation will complicate our valued relationship with Uganda,” Obama said.

A senior **Obama administration** official said if the legislation is enacted, the United States would review U.S. relations with Uganda. The United States is one of the largest donors of foreign aid to Uganda, sending more than \$400 million a year in recent years.

The bill was first introduced in 2009 and initially proposed a death sentence for homosexual acts, but was amended to prescribe jail terms including life in jail for what it called aggravated homosexuality.

Homosexuality is taboo in many African countries. It is illegal in 37 nations on the continent, and activists say that

few Africans are openly gay, fearing imprisonment, violence and loss of their jobs.

Obama, a Democrat who has lobbied to expand rights for gay Americans and supports **same-sex marriage**, said he was deeply disappointed by Uganda's plans.

Museveni last month had indicated he was planning to shelve the bill, which has drawn fierce criticism from Western donors and human rights groups.

"The Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda, once law, will be more than an affront and a danger to the gay community in Uganda. It will be a step backward for all Ugandans and reflect poorly on Uganda's commitment to protecting the human rights of its people," Obama said.

People should be treated equally and "should have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential, no matter who they are or whom they love," said Obama.

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