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For Immediate Release

African Queer Youth Initiative statement on the situation in Tanzania

African Queer Youth Initiative (AQYI) is deeply concerned and saddened to hear about the current conditions in the LGBTIQ community in Tanzania. On the 29th of Oct, Paul Makonda, regional commissioner for Dar es Salaam, announced a crackdown on the LGBTIQ community, saying in a statement that a team would be set up to identify and arrest members of the community.

It should be recalled that in October 2017, in Dar es Salaam, a group of human rights lawyers and activists were detained, accused by the police of promoting homosexuality after they disrupted an AIDS awareness workshop organized by a duly accredited NGO.

This practice of harassment, threats of violence and arrests targeting the LGBTIQ community in Tanzania violates the freedom of expression and the right of assembly and is a direct violation of human rights. It is unacceptable. Reckless statements by Mr. Makonda and arbitrary arrests by the government of Tanzania are inhumane and endanger peace-loving Tanzanians who are members of the LGBTIQ community. It promotes hatred and homophobia that will result in the invasion of privacy, unfair imprisonment of LGBTIQ people and a hostile Tanzania.

We urge the government of Tanzania to not only distance itself from the horrible statements, but to call Mr. Makonda to order. We urge the government to respect the rights of all its citizen, including members of the LGBTIQ community, and to uphold its commitment to the universality of human rights as a signatory to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

AQYI strongly believes that all humans are born free and equal, and that they must enjoy their human rights and reach their full potential in a loving and safe society, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and religious beliefs. AQYI stands in solidarity with the Tanzanian LGBTIQ community.

Signed:

AQYI Team