

An Open Letter to Daniel Kenosi

Dear Daniel Kenosi,

LEGABIBO and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community have noted with great concern your Facebook posts on LGBTI individuals dating as far back as 2013. We note about 11 Facebook posts that either out, blame, defame or bash LGBTI persons. The language in all these posts is harsh, abusive, derogatory, demeaning and mocking.

You have labelled the LGBTI persons as '*digole*'; deserving of rape and deserving of being bashed. You have also unashamedly and repeatedly outed transgender persons; calling them fake women and men.

You have also invaded the privacy of individuals by making public their most private and intimate pictures for all to see, and making it seem like LGBTI private lives and intimate moments are something to be disgusted about and frowned upon.

You have made yourself a messenger who exposes LGBTI people, a messenger who teaches the public that LGBTI are a disgrace, have no morals and should be shunned and rejected by the society. As the self-appointed educator of the general public on LGBTI issues, you have spread the wrong message that being gay is a life style, a fashion trend and a nasty habit.

You have also appointed yourself an expert of the legal context on LGBTI issues in Botswana, where you claim that; 1. homosexuality is illegal, 2. homosexuals are imprisoned, 3. homosexuals are deported, thereby depicting Botswana's legal environment as harsh, unfriendly and intolerant.

You have taken advantage of our silence all these years and probably saw this as an acceptance of your malicious and sensationalized propaganda. This letter is intended to communicate to you that we are not amused by your unethical news reporting.

Firstly, you should know that these individuals that you are outing have families, so you may be having your little fun by outing them and entertaining your followers. But you should know Daniel Kenosi, you are hurting families, you are breaking homes. The impact on these individuals is rejection and being kicked out their homes - and it is all on you!

Secondly, putting people's pictures in compromising intimate positions has lasting negative impact on their professional and social lives. Gay people too have jobs and professional lives to maintain, and publicizing their images on Facebook in their private moments is drawing attention away from their capabilities in the workplace. That Daniel Kenosi is outright malicious and crude.

Thirdly, the Constitution of Botswana protects ALL persons against discrimination, torture and inhuman treatment. So you saying that homosexuals are imprisoned is a fallacy. What this means is that you are feeding the public false information and twisting the information to serve your own wicked cause. If you really want to contribute to the right to information for the general public, the correct information to tell your followers is that homosexuality in Botswana is not illegal. That Daniel Kenosi is being patriotic!

Fourthly, a public educator gets their facts right first before imparting information, we suggest that you get your facts right about transgender persons, get your facts right about the legal environment in relation to LGBTI, get your facts right about the number of men who have with men (MSM) in Botswana.

In conclusion, we realize that you do not abide by the journalists' code of ethics, you do not respect the institution of marriage, you are feeding on the vulnerability of the general community, you do not care about the impact that your homophobic statements have on LGBTI individuals and you are determined to fuel homophobia.

For this reason, we call on MISA to take action against your unethical reporting; we call on the LGBTI community to report these homophobic posts to Facebook; we call on all LGBTI who have been victimized to take action against you Daniel Kenosi. We call on ALL allies, friends and families of LGBTI persons to speak out against homophobia perpetuated by the likes of you Daniel Kenosi.

Report Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia to LEGABIBO at +267 316 74 25, and let your voice be heard by using the hashtags **#StopHomophobia #NoHateBW**