

PRESS STATEMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kampala-Uganda, CEHURD is a not for profit, research and advocacy organization pioneering the justiciability of the right to health in Uganda. For long Uganda has maintained on its statute books obsolete laws which are not acceptable in a free and democratic society. One of such laws is the Venereal Diseases Act cap 284 which allows for forced, coerced and involuntary treatment of a person suffering or suspected to be suffering from a venereal disease all in the name of public health.

CEHURD has filed a Constitutional Petition in the Constitutional Court of Uganda challenging the Venereal Diseases Act Cap 284 as being inconsistent with and in contravention of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 which protects the rights to health, privacy, security of person and liberty of a person under Articles 21(1), 23(1), 24, 27(1) (a), 28(1), 42 and 44(a) and (c).

The Petition comes at a time when Uganda has an obligation under International, Regional and National laws to protect, fulfil and respect the Human Rights of its citizens which requires the government to adopt appropriate legislative and other measures towards the full realization of Human Rights.

The Venereal Diseases Act infringes on the right to bodily autonomy by ignoring a patients' consent to medical treatment and allows involuntary treatment and detention of persons suffering from a venereal diseases. This is a barbaric act that is unacceptable in a free and democratic society. It also goes against the best practices for managing sexually transmitted diseases.

The petition seeks for Court to order the Uganda Law Reform Commission (ULRC) to undertake a study on the relevance of the Act in question and to hold it accountable along with the Government of Uganda for failure to enact a law or to amend this archaic law which cannot be conformed to in a free and democratic society. We also seek for Court to repeal sections of the act which are inconsistent with the rights to health, privacy, security of persons and liberty.

We will also pray for court to make an order for parliament to make a law to cater for health care of Ugandan citizens instead of relying on outdated archaic colonial laws.

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