The Kaleidoscope Youth Network finds it to be our unhappy duty to deliver the news of the death of Ugandan SMUG (Sexual Minorities in Uganda) activist, David Kato. Equality Project’s Phumi Mtetwa has described this as partly being the fault of “MP David Bahati and Pastor Martin Ssempa and their callous fostering of prejudice and homophobia … By mobilising for a law to ban homosexuality in Uganda, these two individuals have led a hateful crusade against rights and freedoms.”

David Kato need not have been a martyr. He should have had decades left to share his insight, love and commitment. Our anger towards the attitudes that motivate hate crimes such as the murder of Mr Kato is something we feel needs to be shared. Fear of the unknown, which only amounts to ignorance, and indeed, political indoctrination, can never be seen as an excuse for any kind of behaviour.

As young activists, we must convey that our contributions to the sector are very much inspired by the influence and mentoring of those who have worked with and before us. A loss of an activist, to any cause, is not only felt by those who have worked with him/her, but also by those who sought a future in which work with that person. We strongly regret not being able to meet with Kato and gain insight and inspiration from his views and work.

Kaleidoscope Youth Network fully intends to continue to demand Ugandan officials answer for the products of their ridiculously archaic campaign, reminiscent of Holocaust attitudes towards LGBT individuals. We strongly condemn the attitude of all nations which have criminalised homosexuality, particularly in light of the recent progressive United Nations position on LGBT discrimination. We feel it is our duty to remind you that gay rights are, by all means, human rights.

We urge you to attend the memorial and wreath-laying at the Ugandan Embassy in Pretoria at 5pm today (28 January 2011,) if you are able to. Kato deserves the recognition and remembrance of the LGBTIA community at the very least for his sterling work to protect our freedom and wellbeing.

In Solidarity

Tish White

Secretary, Public Relations Officer and Webmistress, Kaleidoscope Youth Network South Africa