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Global Fund Protests Malawi Prison Sentence for Two Gay Men

The Global Fund today (21 May 2010) issued an unusual press release protesting the conviction and sentencing of two men in Malawi based on their sexual orientation.

“The criminalization of individuals based on their sexual orientation is not just a human rights issue – it also undermines investment in HIV and AIDS as it drives sexual behaviour underground and creates an environment where HIV can more easily spread. This ultimately affects the broader population,” said Prof. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund. In southern Africa, more than 50% of men who have sex with men also have sex with women, the Fund said.

The Fund added that in addition to providing HIV treatment, care and prevention services, money from Global Fund grants can be used to create strong communities of men who have sex with men and other risk groups “so that they can be active in their own HIV prevention campaigns.” The press release added that for optimal impact from money spent on tackling HIV, countries need to review laws that criminalise groups most at risk.

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