



The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20521

Dear Mr. Secretary,

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights organization with more than 1.5 million members and supporters across the country, thank you for your continued support of LGBT persons in the United States and around the world.

I know that you share my concerns about the troubling situation in Nigeria. According to media reports, LGBT Nigerians are being harassed, threatened, arrested, and possibly tortured less than one day after President Goodluck Jonathan signed the anti-LGBT bill into law. Your recent comments denouncing this law are very welcome. Given the seriousness of the events in Nigeria and the potential for the situation to escalate both in Nigeria and the region, I strongly urge the State Department to consider a variety of options to encourage a course correction by Nigeria, including:

- Directing the U.S. Embassy in Abuja to perform in-country refugee processing for LGBT Nigerians who are being targeted for arrest under the newly passed law.
- Recommending that President Obama evaluate removing Nigeria from the list of countries currently eligible for assistance under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. The law requires the President to determine on an annual basis which countries are eligible based “on progress in meeting certain criteria, including progress toward the establishment of a market-based economy, *rule of law*, economic policies to reduce poverty, protection of internationally recognized worker rights, and *efforts to combat corruption*.”
- Suspending bilateral engagements between the United States and Nigeria that are of particular importance to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, such as suspending Nigeria's participation in the Young African Leaders Initiative.
- Using any regulatory, administrative, or statutory means in your arsenal to combat implementation of this law.

In his 2011 speech to the U.N. General Assembly, President Obama said: “No country should deny people their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but also no country should deny people their rights because of who they love, which is why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere.” Now more than ever, we cannot allow those words to ring hollow. We implore the State Department under your direction, and the Administration, by direction of the President, to take a strong and resounding stance against hate.

Sincerely,

Chad Griffin
President