



Anti-Homosexuality Battle in Tanzania

Tanzanian as well as international media outlets have reported on the issue of campaign of anti-gayism (anti-homosexuality) in the city of Dar es Salaam founded by the Dar es Salaam Regional Commissioner that briefly thrived, then died a sudden death after the central government declared that it would not partake in such movements.

This issue was initiated by Regional Commissioner (RC) of Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania where homosexuality is prevalent. Regional Commissioner of Dar es Salaam created a special committee to facilitate and help him in curbing activities of homosexuality, providing specific hotline numbers for anyone with helpful information on those engaging with such activities.

However, many have interpreted Regional Commissioner's initiative as a means of turning people away from the important incidents that occur within his region, including the issue of abducted magnate billionaire Mohammed Dewji which has left many questions than answers, failure of rapid bus services to provide proper services in the city and so many large national issues. Dealing with homosexuality regarded as an attempt to deviate opinions away from important issues and direct them against homosexuality, since the majority did not agree entirely with the practice.

The campaign received widespread international criticism, activists, internal and external defenders of human rights and there arose great international protest and a reminder that, Tanzania formally signed and ratified an international treaty that guarantee and safeguards political and civil rights within society.

Such pressure led the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Tanzania to disown Regional Commissioner and vividly announced that the campaign is his personal issue, and asserted that Tanzania will continue to honor and abide by all international convention which it ratified and is signatory to. Along that, the Interior Ministry through its Minister also assured safety of people who are considered to be gay, that they will not be harmed. That was the end of the battle against homosexuality. A Campaign which died a sudden death. An ending which broke the spirit of many who felt that curbing against homosexuality was justified and was an adjuvant step towards punishing the perpetrators of such evil acts within the community.

The position of local activists and defenders of human rights on this campaign against homosexuality was divided, for some in spite of their defence of human rights, they are not advocating acts of homosexuality, there are some who agree with it, and were not happy with the campaign, but lacked courage to criticize it, and so they kept silent, fearing the power of the masses attitude, but there are those who dared to be brave and spurred on in advocating it, who came out strongly to publicly defend it, declared even ready to defend homosexuals before the court of law.

The fact of the matter is that Tanzanian stature criminalizes acts of homosexuality with severe punishment, and that's what the Regional Commissioner had been frequently stating, but in reality it seemed these laws have lost required sharpness because Tanzania has signed and ratified an International Convention for protection of civil rights. And that is why the Minister of Foreign Affairs being under a great deal of pressure artfully deterred the Regional Commissioner's move.

Furthermore, it will be remembered that Tanzania has had formal contacts with the gay community since 2009, when the then former Deputy Minister of Development, Youth and

Gender of Tanzania Dr. Incy Nkya officially met with the gay community in order to plan strategies to combat AIDS, and said:

"We cannot wholly fight AIDS without having to talk to prostitutes and homosexuals, we will win this fight only if we are united, and not more than that "(The African Weekend, Sept. 29-30, 2009)

This issue suggests the following factors:

The public opinion of Tanzania, Africa, with most of the world community in total does not agree with homosexual acts, whether due to religious reasons, humanitarian, customs, traditions and/or their cultures. And they want these acts wiped out, because they are a threat to social values and risk to the general formation and development of the future generation.

A developing country that is not ultimately convinced with issue of homosexuality and halfheartedly accepts it because of being overpowered by big nations, several international agreements, aid and international pressure in their country, despite the fact that the acts are also not acceptable in their countries.

Governments of developing countries after being forced by developed countries to support the wave of homosexuality, despite being unacceptable to the majority of their citizens, try to convince them covertly because they lacked the courage to directly inform citizens that they permit it; and instead played with clever minds of citizens until there is pressure to show clearly there is no alternative but to have their obeisance to it. That's the indication that they are neither pleased with nor happy by the issue of homosexuality. This meekness recently shown in Tanzania is quite a classic example.

There are several other examples like in Malawi in late December 2009, a trans woman, Tiwonge Chimbalanga, and a man, Steven Monjeza, were arrested after holding a traditional "engagement" party. On 18 May 2010, found guilty of having committed "unnatural offenses" and "indecent practices between males" but after international pressure on 29 May 2010, the then President Bingu wa Mutharika pardoned both individuals. Two years later the then President Joyce Banda suspended all laws that criminalized homosexuality. At last in July 2014, officially announced that Malawi would no longer arrest people for same-sex sexual activity.

Another example is when Uganda enacted 'The Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014 with a punishment of life in prison for "aggravated homosexuality". The law brought Uganda into international spotlight, and caused international outrage, with many governments refusing to provide aid to Uganda anymore. In August 2014, the Uganda Constitutional Court annulled the law.

For those who reject the evil of homosexuality which we believe are the majority, and have the right to reject, there are two points to remember:

Firstly, they should vividly see the poor state of how developing countries are, lacking real authority of self-determination despite having 'freedom of flag'. All decisions whether political, economic, and even social as in this case are in accordance with the wishes of the powers of the capitalist colonizers states that ignore humanity or morality.

Secondly, a democratic system which serves as the horse through which the notions of 'personal freedom' that preaches and advocates homosexuality and all sorts of evil, becomes dangerous and a threat to the welfare of humanity, and is essentially a kind of new religion that is being forced on us to give up all religious power, to bring a new form of moral decay. That is an indication of the ineffectiveness of the democratic system in serving humanity.

As for believers of democracy, activists and human rights defenders, rather than receive and preach everything blindly, it is important to understand the three major basic fundamentals:

First, the democratic system of secular thought which preaches 'personal freedom' that is used to defend homosexuality did not emerge on the basis of the argument, but has emerged on the basis of manipulation. Because after severe struggle between reformists against the clergy on the role of religion, what resulted was to come up with a compromised solution, whereby each side simply to get something, that religious people (priests) will have retained their religion in places of worship, while the reformists would enjoy decisions outside of places of worship in accordance with the requirements of democracy. The debate between the two sides was supposed to be on whether religion (God) exists or not. But the basic point of the debate was defeated, and simply each side sought a solution where each side could get something, not based on rational. As a result, the notion of secular thought emerged, fragile thoughts that cannot be defended with religious or rational arguments and which are the core belief of the democratic system. With that mediocre set of secular thought, man, who is a creature of God, suddenly become a distributor of authority to God, recognized existence of His power in places of worship and elsewhere he wishes, as in the case of concept of 'act of God' which is a defence in a law of negligence.

Secondly, the promotion of homosexuality is due to the reliability of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To say that the Human Rights provisions are universal is an outright lie. The only one who has a right to declare thing is universally is the Creator of the universe and humans, and none of whom that prepared the declaration has ever claimed that quality, rather those who wrote the declaration are long gone (died). That is a clear sign that it is not the universal, because it was made by a few among the creation and not the One who created the world.

Thirdly, campaigns in support of homosexual humiliate and harmful to human being and his body, because he is used as a matter of experiment. Earlier before homosexual acts were unacceptable even within the capitalist countries of Europe, but after a massive campaign now it is acceptable norm. Human nature does not exist for testing. The practice of conducting experiments in human nature is clearly indicative of the disqualifications for human rights, for the natural human nature is immutable. This has serious consequences for humanity.

Islam looks at a human as being exalted and superior to all other creation, where his basic nature is immutable, and never an experimental matter. This man as a creature has weaknesses, including the limits of his knowledge, advocating his personal interests and is affected by the environment. These weaknesses disqualify human being able to legislate, the sole Creator due to his Mercy carries the responsibility of enacting laws to guide man in every aspect of his life.

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا﴾

“And Allah wants to lighten the misery, and man was created weak” [TMQ 4:28]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Masoud Msellem

Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir in Tanzania