

FRANK MUGISHA

b. June 17, 1979

UGANDAN ACTIVIST

“I am a gay man. I am also Ugandan. There is nothing un-African about me.”

He is one of the most famous advocates for LGBT rights in Uganda, where being gay is a criminal offense.

Dr. Frank Mugisha is one of the most famous and outspoken advocates for LGBT rights in Uganda, a country where being gay is a criminal offense. He is the executive director of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) and advocates on behalf of LGBT Ugandans who face prison or even death for being openly gay. He has received both the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and the Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize for his work.

When Mugisha was 14, he came out to his strict Catholic family. Many family members and friends disowned him. The rejection later inspired him to create Icebreakers Uganda, a group to help other young people with the coming-out process.

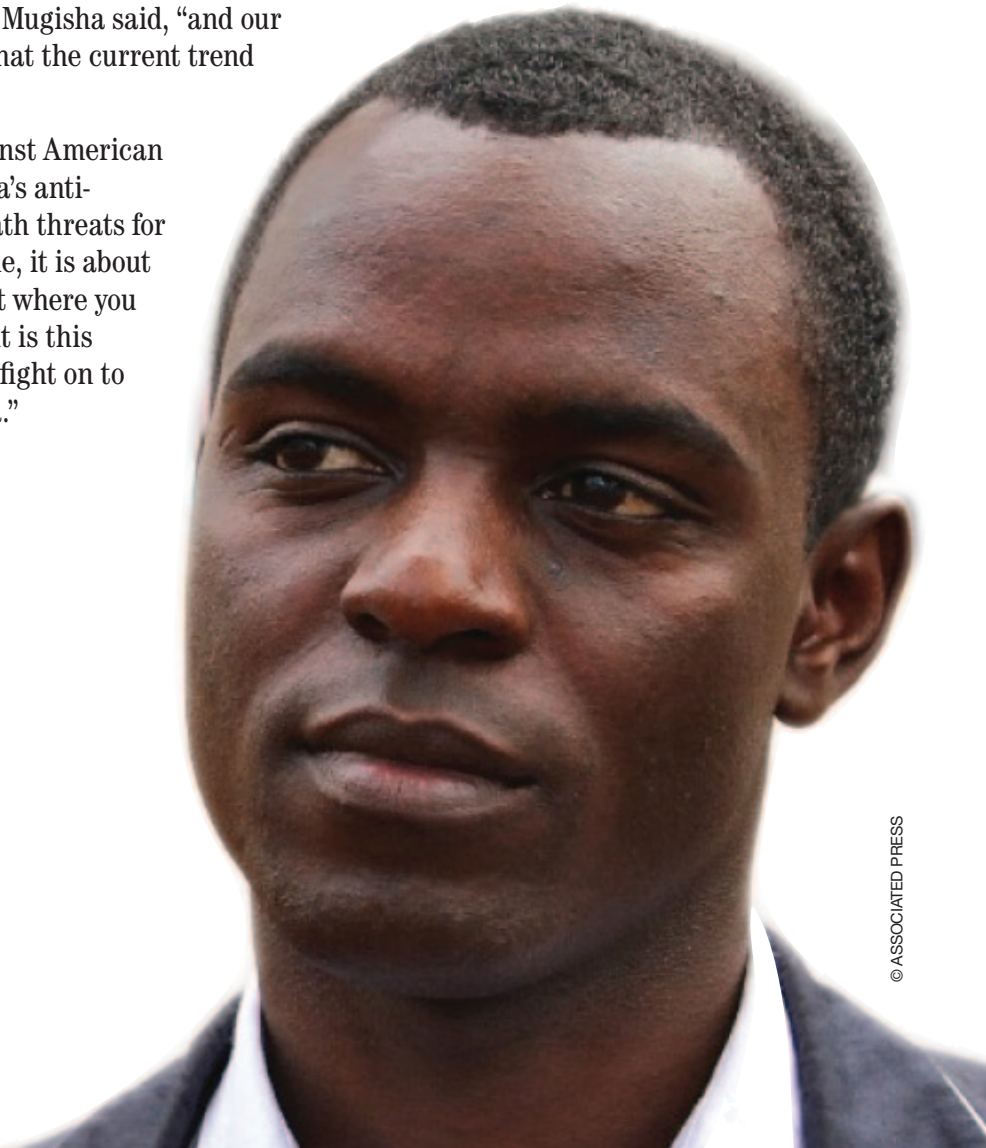
In 2014 he came out publicly about Uganda’s anti-homosexuality law, which not only outlawed homosexual acts and compelled citizens to report suspected homosexual activity, but also mandated life imprisonment for LGBT citizens. “I want my fellow Ugandans to understand that homosexuality is not a Western import,” Mugisha said, “and our friends in the developed world to recognize that the current trend of homophobia is.”

Mugisha was also a plaintiff in a lawsuit against American evangelist Scott Lively for his work on Uganda’s anti-homosexuality bill. Mugisha has received death threats for his ongoing advocacy, but he has said, “For me, it is about standing out and speaking in an environment where you are not sure if you will survive the next day; it is this fear that makes me strong, to work hard and fight on to see a better life for LGBTI persons in Uganda.”



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