



NETWORK OF KEY POPULATION SERVICE ORGANISATIONS LTD

PRESS RELEASE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

MADE BY UGANDA NETWORK OF SEX WORKER-LED ORGANISATIONS (UNESO)

17th December every year, the Sex Workers' community commemorates -the international day to End violence against sex workers. This Day is dedicated to raising awareness of violence and discrimination against sex workers in their diversity and to remember victims of violence around the world.

This year we commemorate the day under a theme "Your Protection Does Not Protect Me". In Uganda, the laws and policies put in place by the government to protect and promote human rights for its citizens are actually the same laws and policies which lead to humiliation and violation of the rights of marginalized groups including sex workers and the people around them.

The criminalization of sex work in Ugandan's criminal justice system as "prostitution" is the root cause to all forms of violence committed against sex workers by the various perpetrators who always hide under the ambit of enforcing the law. In most cases sex workers face challenges in accessing justice when their rights are violated because the laws and policies that are in place don't protect sex workers.

COVID-19 has further exacerbated the violations and sex workers around the nation have reported greater levels of violence in their regions as they struggle to make a living during the pandemic.

As UNESO, the coordinating body of the sex worker movement in Uganda through our mission shall continue to advocate and work with likeminded partners for the realization of sex workers Rights and advocate to end all forms of violations committed against sex workers.

We therefore call upon

- The general community, all government agencies and human rights organizations to work towards ending all forms of violence against sex workers without discrimination.
- The law enforcers to maintain social order and combat crime, and grant justice to victims of violence.
- Sex worker- led organizations to report and document violation incidents to amplify the voices of sex workers in advocating for policy change.

Sex workers don't need rescue or sympathy, they need solidarity in their advocacy for human rights.

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