



November 15, 2018

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, MP, PC
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Freeland,

We are writing to express our grave concern regarding the systematic persecution of LGBTQ+ people in Tanzania, which is a significant recipient of Canadian aid. We encourage the Government of Canada to continue applying – and increasing – diplomatic pressure against the Government of Tanzania to end this heinous campaign.

It is deeply disturbing to read reports of Tanzanian officials ordering police and agents of the Communications Authority to scour social media and conduct “patrols” in search of alleged homosexual behaviour. It is deplorable that any government would seek to hunt down LGBTQ+ citizens and urge other citizens to publicly out and report their LGBTQ+ neighbours. So too is the fact that LGBTQ+ Tanzanians are targeted for invasive body exams to identify “evidence” of homosexual activity, for which one can receive life imprisonment in Tanzania.

We acknowledge Canada’s objections to these gross violations of human rights, including via Canada’s role as co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition. We also recognize that securing the result we all seek – an end to the persecution of LGBTQ+ Tanzanians – requires a strategic approach to diplomacy. However, it is vital to send a message that the world does not accept Tanzania’s efforts to shirk responsibility for a vicious campaign authorized by government officials, which clearly violates human rights and Tanzania’s constitution.

We are proud that Canada continues to be a leader in championing LGBTQ+ rights at home and globally, in the knowledge that LGBTQ+ rights are human rights. Given the acute situation in Tanzania, we urge the government to take further actions that will demonstrate that the world is watching – and that the Government of Tanzania will be held accountable.

We thank you for all that you do to advance human rights and represent Canada’s democratic ideals around the world. We look forward to your response.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Evan Pilz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Evan Pilz
Chair, LGBTQ+ Advisory Council of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David J. Cape". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David J. Cape
Chair, The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

CC:

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, MP, PC
Minister of International Development

Randy Boissonnault, MP
Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on LGBTQ2 Issues