



LESBIANS, GAYS AND BISEXUALS OF BOTSWANA

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**TO:** ALL MEDIA HOUSES

**FROM:** Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana - LEGABIBO

**Date:** 17 October 2019

### RE: MEDIA RELEASE: POLITICIANS SHOULD STOP USING LGBTIQ COMMUNITY AS SCAPEGOATS TO DE-CAMPAIGN

Members of the lesbians, gays, bisexual, trans\*diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community will like to express grave disappointment in the disrespectful comments made by some of the political figures as published in The Midweek Sun, dated 16 October 2019 Page 3. The article titled "Homophobic Leaders! - Opposition politicians don't want gays, lesbians" is proof that violence and discrimination towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*diverse and queer community is fuelled by some community leaders.

It is noted that, Independent Parliamentary candidate in Gaborone Central, Jafta Radibe said that 'homosexuality is not a Setswana culture and that the President of the Republic of Botswana owes the nation an explanation how he came to legalize same sex relations'. Sexual diversity has been with us since the beginning of time and one identifying as LGBTIQ is natural; what is not a part of our Setswana culture is hate, disrespect and exclusion of Batswana. Secondly, the decision made by the High Court of Botswana to decriminalise consensual same sex-sexual activities is a ruling which was made independent of the Botswana Government - the judiciary system of Botswana is independent and just. Mr Radibe claiming that "the law didn't go through parliament and went through a backdoor" undermines the legitimacy and independence of the Courts. The judiciary plays a vital role in ensuring that laws are followed and constitutional rights of all Batswana are protected.

*PROTECT. PROMOTE. DEFEND.*

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Community leaders need to acknowledge the diversity of our society and that all Batswana are entitled to enjoy their fundamental rights to Freedoms of Expression and Identity and the Rights to Liberty and Sexual Autonomy. Furthermore, by claiming that people “become gay because of the [their] love for money” and “that gays initiate others” is misleading and only contributes to the misconceptions about LGBTQ persons. There is no such thing as recruiting and initiating people into homosexuality. Lastly, religion is not to be used as a weapon of hate towards LGBTIQ individuals, but needs to be used to promote inclusion, love and Botho!

LEGABIBO wishes to caution political members to refrain from using the LGBTIQ community to decampaign other politicians, but rather one should be able to stand on their own merit, quality and worth. Politicians need to bear in mind the fundamental principles of democracy, human rights and the respect for rule of law and refrain from making utterances that will compromise the safety and security of others.. A true democratic and progressive leader should promote non-discrimination, diversity, dignity and respect for other all Batswana.

LEGABIBO encourages all Batswana to practice their democratic right to vote this coming elections.

Re A Leboga Betsho! Pula!

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