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### **Ethiopian evangelists 'pushing for death penalty for homosexuals'**

The Huffington Post (03.05.2013) - An anti-gay organisation says it is hopeful a death penalty for homosexuals will soon be introduced in Ethiopia.

United For Life Ethiopia, a Western Evangelical Christian organisation which receives funding from the UK and the US, last week held a workshop to discuss the social "evils" and "disastrous" effects of homosexuality in the country, Egypt-based Bikya News reported.

It adds government officials, religious leaders, health professionals, charities and members of the public attended the event at the Bethel Teaching Hospital in Addis Ababa.

Gay Star News reports the presence of a member of the Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council Against Homosexuality (EICAH), who apparently told participants homosexuality "is a result of inappropriate upbringing, identity crisis and moral decay."

It adds: "At the conclusion of the workshop, the EICAH representative stated that the council is 'making progress' in convincing the government to be stricter on homosexuality and introduce the death penalty to punish 'such acts'."

The conference also heard from a man who claimed he had been gang raped as a child, in an experience which made him become both gay and a sex worker.

Sultan Muhe, chair of the Bright Children Voluntary Association (BCVA), told the conference he had been "cured" and called for others to be similarly "healed".

Homosexuality is illegal in Ethiopia, with typical imprisonment penalties ranging from 10 days to three years, the UN Refugee Agency says.

A maximum sentence of 10 years can be imposed when an offender "uses violence, intimidation or coercion, trickery or fraud, or takes unfair advantage of the victim's inability to offer resistance."

In June last year Ethiopian daily newspaper Yenga described homosexuality as a rapidly growing "infestation", whose carriers are now "estimated" to have reached 16,000.

The paper also alleged gays have an average of 75 sexual partners a year and that their typically "promiscuous" nature can see them have between seven to nine sexual partners a day, Pink News reported.

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