

The Rock Of Hope Eswatini

Newsletter

JUNE 2021



4th Annual Eswatini Pride Celebration



Co-funded by the European Union



The Rock of Hope Eswatini held its 4th annual Pride at Emafini Centre on Saturday, during the commemoration of wonderful event the Director, Sanele Sibiyi mentioned that the fifth annual Pride will be held in a public platform. Sibiyi further alluded he had noted with great disappointment how they were no longer allowed to publicly celebrate Pride. However, he also assured the LGBTI community that there was no amount of politicking that could deny the LGBTI community the use of public space to celebrate this event.

ACHIEVEMENTS

"We acknowledge the fact that the state has made an understanding by the Government of Eswatini in providing access to the health for the LGBTI community. We stand awe of the relentless work of the Key Populations at Eswatini National AIDS program in advocating for inclusive, and friendly health care environment and thereby improving access to health and attainment of human rights in Eswatini." He added that listing all the collaborations in the speech would be time consuming and acknowledged all those who contributed.

DECRIMINALIZATION/ SODOMY LAW

Coming to the sodomy law, Sibiyi alleged that the existence of this law inhibits the attainment of functioning's and capabilities for the LGBTI community. He pleaded for the 1907 sodomy act to be repealed as it places the LGBTI lives under duress.

In his own words Sibiyi said "we acknowledge the fact that the state has made an undertaking that the common law offence of 1912 will not be used to prosecute the LGBTI community. We note though that the existence of the law albeit being benign places restrictions on the LGBTI communities enjoyment of a full quality of life. Furthermore, the common law offence violates rights to privacy and dignity enshrined in the SODV act. It is on the background that we call for the complete decriminalization of same sex relations in the kingdom of Eswatini."

Concluding, Sibiyi stated that they have had a few wins along the way, however the road remains long and winding.



SPEECH FROM HER EXCELLENCY MS. E SMERALDA, HERNANDEZ ARAGONES-EU AMBASSADOR

Her Excellency commended the wide spread of conservative attitude against the LGBTI+ people, she further stated that the sodomy act still continues to criminalize same sex relations among men, even though there is no clear sentence specific. Her Excellency went on to speak about the discrimination and stigma faced by the LGBTI community in Eswatini. An example of discrimination she pointed out was refusal of Eswatini registrar of companies to register Eswatini Sexual Gender Minorities, mentioning that this organization only aims to protect human rights of LGBTIQI+ people and assisting people who experience stigma, discrimination or violence as a result of their sexual orientation.

However, some remarkable progress have also been made during the past few years. In 2018, the first ever pride event was organized in the country, which was a historic milestone. This day after the march took place, newspaper headlines were positively celebrating the achievement and the international attention that the country gained through the event." Said Her Excellency when looking at the positive side of things. She gave her word that EU will continue to advocate for equal opportunities of the LGBTI people and for the protection of basic human rights for all people.



SPEECH FROM US AMBASSADOR, HER EXCELLENCY- JEANNE MALONEY

Ambassador Jeanne Maloney from the United State of America, who was also in attendance during the commemoration, said it is very important to recognize the value of diversity, inclusion and treat all with the same respect, fairness and dignity. This she said was a foundational truth-human rights and democracy were intrinsically linked with stability, broad-based-prosperity, peace and progress. Maloney said defending and advancing human rights including the human rights for LGBTQI people was simply the right thing to do. She added that the Pride month commemorated years of struggle for civil rights and the ongoing pursuit for equal rights for LGBTQI individuals as well as their accomplishments.





Considering the daily marginalization the LGBTI+ community face from the community, family members and strangers, they definitely need a breather, a place where they can for a moment freely express themselves without fear from being judged. That place is none other than Pride event, where diversity is celebrated, the LGBTI+ community is united all in celebration of self-affirmation. This year's Pride party was indeed the most colourful and thrilling experience, people from the LGBTI community clad in fashionable attires to celebrate Pride. This event was graced by the presence of LGBTI+ people, allies and family members. In spite of the prejudice LGBTI+ people receive from other people, as well as of being oppressed and being denied rights by the government of Eswatini, it is important for the LGBTI+ people to take a step back and be celebrated. The party was also graced by renowned Eswatini DJs and the performing from A2Z, Sethu and 2 3 Bars. Other performances included; Touch of Soul, Ayacity, Mawillies, Miss T and many more.



MORE PICTURES ON THE PRIDE 2021 CELEBRATION



International News

- LGBTIQ+ murders lesbian woman Sheila Lebelo slain in Tshwane
- Drag queen stabbed for liking man's shirt

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