

SCRIPT GAY COUPLE MALAWI

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LEAD

The pardoning of a gay couple in Malawi by its president led to positive reactions by governments and organizations world wide.
The couple was sentenced to 14 years of prison after they publicly engaged in December 2009, and announced to get married.
The president decided to pardon the two after heavy international pressure, and heavily depending on foreign aid Malawi cannot take too big risks.
But it doesn't mean the situation for gays in the country suddenly improved.
They still fear prosecution since the laws which led to the conviction are still in place.
Human rights organizations in Malawi now vow to have the penal codes amended.
Meanwhile gay couples continue to live in fear, like Evenson and Amanda in the city Blantyre.
For privacy reason their names have been altered, and their faces concealed.

BETA LENGTH 2'29"

SOUNDBITE KISSING MEN

20-years old Amanda and 29-years old Evans met 2 years ago at work in Blantyre.
They're still shocked of the now lifted conviction.

QUOTE EVANS

***It's just sad for me because.
It just feels like they're doing the same thing to me.***

QUOTE AMANDA

***It's a shock to everyone.
I mean a gay family.***

Also it affected Evans and Amanda personally,
since they were just about to get engaged.

QUOTE EVENSON

***Our plans are still there.
We're still planning the engagement, the same one.***

***But we'll change the style.
Maybe it will be indoors, but not in public.***

Being in public feels scary for Evans and Amanda.
Let alone living as a family in one house.
Even small things in life are difficult, like going out.

QUOTE AMANDA

***Because definitely when you're drunk he'll be caressing me or I caress him.
Then people will realize this is a family.
If that happens it means we will be in prison as well.***

Eventhough the pardoning of the other gay couple gives some breathing space.
Human Rights organizations in Malawi vow for lifting the ban on gay marriages.
But a national debate would be necessary to get gays accepted.

QUOTE UNDULE MWAKASUNGULA, Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation

***The bigger challenge here is denial.
We have to focus more on these minority groups.
That they are part and parcel of us human beings.***

But that will take time, since homosexuality in Malawi is a taboo.
Amanda and Evans meanwhile enjoy their happiness where they can.

QUOTE AMANDA

***My only hope for the government is to accept us as we are.
We're humans as they are.***

QUOTE EVANS

***We love eachother.
We go together.
That's not going to change because of this thing.***

QUOTE AMANDA

We're family, we're one, we're all Malawians.

FREEZE FRAME

