



## **AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - "No to laws that discriminate homosexuals": editorial of the Catholic Southern Cross**

Johannesburg (Agenzia Fides) - The Church should sound the alarm at the advance throughout Africa of "draconian legislation" aimed at criminalising homosexuals" approved by some African Countries says an editorial of the Southern Cross, a weekly promoted by the SACBC (Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, which gathers the Bishops of South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland).

"Recently the Ugandan and Nigerian parliaments both passed severe anti-gay legislation. Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has vetoed it; Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan signed it into law. Other countries, such as Cameroon and Tanzania, are proposing to pass similar legislation", recalls the editorial.

"These laws are not intended to render same-sex acts illegal — they already are, and punishable, in most African countries — but to persecute people on the basis of their sexual orientation", says the columnist and highlights that "Such laws are not only unjust, but they also have the potential to tear at the fabric of society if they are misused to facilitate false denunciations for gain, advancement or vengeance, much as what Christians are exposed to in Pakistan under that country's intolerable blasphemy law".

In the light of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which prescribes to "avoid every sign of unjust discrimination" against homosexuals and even recommends to accept them "with respect, compassion and sensitivity", the editorial asks the Church in Africa to raise its voice "against discriminatory laws and violence against homosexuals, many of whom are Catholics". (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 29/01/2014)