

Mandela at 100: Kenyan rights group honored as one of 100 Sparks of Hope

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As the world celebrated Nelson Mandela’s 100th birthday, a Kenyan organization working to secure rights for gay and lesbian people was [recognized as one of 100 Sparks of Hope](#) carrying on Madiba’s legacy of freedom. The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) was named a Spark of Hope by The Elders, an organization founded by Mandela and comprised of global leaders including Desmond Tutu and Kofi Annan as part of Mandela’s 100th birthday celebrations.

In [a statement](#) on its website, the 100 Sparks of Hope represent the promise of justice, inclusion and peace and are described as “grassroots organisations from all corners of the globe.. comprised of peacemakers, human rights defenders, justice advocates, feminist campaigners, LGBT rights fighters, and community health workers,” who “carry forward the message Madiba left us: to work together for the freedoms that we should all enjoy as one human family—the freedoms of peace, justice, health and equality.”

Njeri Gateru, Executive Director of NGLHRC stated, “We feel incredibly honored to see our work associated with Mandela’s legacy. Particularly as public figures in Kenya continue to incite division and hate towards the LGBT community, the message this sends is strong. We feel encouraged to be placed in the footsteps of one of Africa’s greatest heroes.”

Founded in 2012, the NGLHRC has successfully used a mix of free legal aid, strategic litigation and advocacy to increase the recognition and protection of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) in Kenya. LGBTI people in Kenya continue to face virulent homophobia in their daily lives resulting in harassment, discrimination and too often, acts of violence against them.

NGLHRC documents these violations and has [challenged the Kenyan state in the High Courts](#) on at least three occasions where citizen’s rights have been violated on the basis of their sexual identity. It has won two of those cases, with a ruling pending on the third. In its profile of NGLHRC, the Spark of Hope campaign recognized the organization for its “incredible progress to repeal the laws that criminalise LGBTIQ people in Kenya.”



**National Gay and Lesbian
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NGLHRC's case challenging sections of the Penal Code that make same sex intimacy punishable with up to 14 years imprisonment- a major barrier to equality- was heard in February and March of this year. A ruling from the three judge bench is expected in the near future.

Notes to Editors:

1. For more information or to request an interview with an NGLHRC representative, please contact – admin@nglhrc.com and info@nglhrc.com
2. The National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) was founded by a group of Kenyan lawyers to use the law to protect the basic rights of LGBT people to live with dignity, free from discrimination and abuse. www.nglhrc.com
3. LGBT stands for 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender'. The category generally includes anyone who sits outside conventional stereotypes on gender and heterosexuality. LGBT people are often targeted for being masculine or feminine in a way that doesn't fit with what is expected of them, but are just as likely to be completely indiscernible from everyone else: LGBT people are all of us. They are doctors, politicians, boda-boda riders, street sweepers and everything in between. They are our neighbours. They are our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, parents and grandparents. They are ordinary Kenyans, who are a part of every subsection of our society.