

## Statement

### **UNAIDS expresses concern over the safety of three Ugandans arrested during an international AIDS conference**

**Geneva, 31 July 2008** – The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) expresses deep concern over the safety of three individuals who were arrested at the HIV/AIDS Implementers Meeting held in Kampala, Uganda, 3-8 June 2008, and who are currently involved in ongoing court proceedings on charges of trespass.

The three individuals were arrested on 4 June after a peaceful protest to express their concern regarding insufficient attention to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for men who have sex with men in Uganda. They were charged with criminal trespass and released on bail pending trial. At the time of the meeting, UNAIDS, as one of the meeting co-sponsors, made known that the three individuals were welcome at the conference and they were subsequently accredited.

In light of recent allegations that one of the three was abducted and subjected to abuse, UNAIDS calls on the Government of Uganda to ensure the safety and well-being of the three individuals, both before and after a verdict is reached. As UNAIDS has stated in the past, all people are entitled to a fair trial with full respect for due process, regardless of their sexual orientation. Any allegations of cruel, degrading or inhumane treatment must be fully investigated, and in the event of substantiated allegations, appropriately prosecuted and the victim provided restitution and compensation.

Experience in the global response to AIDS has shown that it is of the greatest importance to ensure that all people, including members of civil society, who work to promote HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for all those affected by the epidemic are supported to do so. UNAIDS reiterates its support to the Government of Uganda for a comprehensive response to prevent the transmission of HIV; to provide for treatment, care and support for those living with HIV; and to protect the human rights of all those affected by HIV.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)