

# CHURCHES REJECT SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) has rejected the inclusion of sexuality education in church-founded schools, saying they have no knowledge about the subject.

In a statement issued by the Gulu Archbishop, John Baptist Odama, the Church said it was not availed with copies of the recently launched national framework on the matter.

"The assembly of churches reiterates that they take a firm stand on the issue of sexuality education by making it public clear that it does not support, including this, as part of the curriculum in the Church schools," Odama said.

The prelate revealed this during the UJCC annual general assembly held at Pope Paul Memorial Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala on Friday.

He added that UJCC would constructively engage the Government to ensure the position of the Church is taken into consideration.

"We recommend that bishops be provided with copies of the sexuality education framework to review and develop a report on the issue," he said.

Sexuality education has been a controversial issue in Uganda over the past years. In 2016, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development banned comprehensive sexuality education in schools.

The ministry's ban came after the discovery of sexual reproductive health books in more than 100 schools that included 'sexual orientation and a non-negative portrayal of masturbation.'

The ban was buttressed by Parliament with legislators unanimously passing a resolution to ban comprehensive sexuality education. Legislators called on the President to come out and speak against sexuality education.

Last month, the Government released a policy to guide all stakeholders teaching sexuality education in institutions of learning.

The education minister, Janet Museveni, said they rejected the comprehensive sexuality education concept which targeted schools as recruitment grounds for homosexuality and claimed that it undermined the country's values.

Instead, the Government has formulated the National Sexuality Education framework, which will now guide the teaching of sexuality education in institutions of learning.

The Church said until they are availed with a copy of the document, the sexuality education will not be allowed in church-founded schools.

The Church also emphasised the enforcement of the ban on holiday coaching and extra time for teaching. The ministry states that classes start from 8:00am and end at 5:00pm.

Bishop Thomas Irigei of Kumi Diocese asked the Government for funding so that the Church can extend social services to the people in the rural areas.

Regarding land grabbing, UJCC said it would take keen interest in the recommendations by the commission of inquiry into land issues in Uganda to ensure that the interests of the Church are taken into consideration.