

For immediate release



Protecting Women and Children from Domestic Violence

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE BILL BLOCKED AGAIN

KAMPALA, WEDNESDAY MAY 11, 2011.

The eighth parliament dissolved before passing the Marriage and Divorce Bill. The failure of parliament to pass the bill sent shock waves around the country especially to the women who had looked up to it as their only hope from oppression and unrealistic cultural norms. The bill was meant to act as a form of remedy to their unquenched desire for belonging.

What a shame. Women have been badly treated by this Parliament, said Atuki Turner, Executive Director of MIFUMI. This bill will do so much to improve the lives of women and children. You see it all around us every day. Violence, defilement, abductions, sacrifice. These are all problems the family bill could address. We are tired of lip service. Give us a fair deal, said a visibly upset Atuki.

Had the bill been passed in its current form, widow inheritance, forced and under-age marriages, compulsory bride price and same sex marriage would have been history in Uganda

The bill which was first tabled as the Domestic Relations Bill met a lot resistance from the people especially of the Islamic faith who rejected it claiming that it would not preserve their religious values and norms there by demanding for a separate law to cater for them, before it was split into two.

The Marriage and Divorce Bill would have replaced The Marriage Act, The Marriage of Africans Act, The Hindu marriage and Divorce Act, The Divorce Act and The Customary Marriage Act. Many of the current laws were drawn up by the colonialists. Some are as old as 1906 and most were influenced by Victorian England!

This family bill will bring Uganda's laws into consolidation with Human Rights conventions and protocols such as CEDAW, of which Uganda is a signatory. Our country will continue to be internationally embarrassed having such outdated laws.

These family issues have been over debated since the 1960s. Is the Ninth parliament going to work any faster to enact family legislation?

END

MIFUMI Brief Organizational Profile

MIFUMI is a developmental NGO and women's rights organization. The organization has worked for over ten years to reduce the burden of poverty; addressing issues that hinder development by initiating developmental projects. MIFUMI particularly protects women and children experiencing domestic violence and bride price related violations.

We intervene through the provision of legal aid services, empowerment through micro-credits and start-up packs; health through MIFUMI health centre and education through MIFUMI primary school. MIFUMI also believes in equal opportunities, thus empowers the much marginalized, including PWDs (people with disability) and PLWHAs (people living with HIV/AIDS as a focal point of our main-streaming activities.

MIFUMI is a not-for-profit organization registered in 1996 under the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration Statute.

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Notes for Journalists / Editors

MIFUMI would welcome the opportunity to proof read any article written to avoid factual errors. Opinion will remain with the publication.

The organization MIFUMI should be spelt with CAPITALS