

## US diplomat outraged by Zambia gay sex ruling

The US envoy to Zambia yesterday warned of 'decaying' bilateral ties between the two countries after a heavy jail sentence was slapped on two men for homosexuality. Daniel Foote recently came under fire after he expressed outrage over last week's High Court ruling and urged Lusaka to review laws that discriminate against minority groups. The court quashed an appeal against the conviction of Japhet Chataba and Steven Samba and sentenced them to 15 years in prison. [BBC News](#) reports that same-sex relationships are outlawed in Zambia, where British colonial-era laws on homosexuality still apply. President Edgar Lungu rebuked the ambassador, saying his government will complain to the Trump administration. A report on the [News24](#) site notes that Foreign Minister Joseph Malanji reacted by saying he would write a protest letter to Washington because Foote's comments were 'tantamount to questioning the Zambian constitution.' Foote yesterday told a news conference that **Zambia, which relies on overseas aid, wanted diplomats 'with open pocketbooks and closed mouths'**. 'Let us stop the facade that our governments enjoy warm and cordial relations,' he said. The career diplomat said he had cancelled scheduled appearances at World Aids Day events 'because of threats made against me' on social media. He denied accusations that his comments amounted to interference in Zambia's judiciary and constitutional affairs.

*And in neighbouring Malawi,* the EU delegation head Sandra Paesen has been expelled for protesting against police officers who allegedly raped and tortured women during demonstrations over the recent presidential election results. The [Nyasa Times](#) reports that she has been given a week to return to Brussels, one year after she took up the post. The government earlier lodged a complaint with the EU because **Paesen had taken part in a protest against the alleged assault of women in Lilongwe**. The NGO Gender Co-ordination Network documented accounts from women and children who said they had been sexually assaulted by police officers. Police have since set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the matter.