

MEDIA RELEASE
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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, JOHN BAIRD, HAS BEEN MISINFORMED

Mr. Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has caricatured the Russian law on homosexuality as “anti-gay” and characterized it as “hateful, intolerant and mean-spirited”. Mr. Baird has been misinformed. He could not have actually read the law. The law was not born out of hostility towards persons with same-sex attraction. Rather, it was drafted with the intent of protecting the innocence and total well-being of children.

This legislation is an amendment to the law previously passed by the State Duma in 2010 dealing with the “protection of children from information harmful to their health and/or development”. The 2013 amendment aims at protecting children from information “promoting non-traditional sexual relationships”, in addition to the 2010 comprehensive law which also forbids the targeting of children regarding pornography, narcotics, alcohol and tobacco products, amongst other harmful influences.

Russia decriminalized homosexuality in 1993. Nothing has changed since then. The recent legislation is in line with international law and does not violate human rights in any form. There is no punishment for acts of homosexuality conducted, in private, between adults. Russian officials have affirmed that the law does not penalize homosexual activity. In Russia, no one is arresting or putting gays in prison for being gay.

Another instance of Mr. Baird’s misinformation is in regard to the death of gay activist, David Kato, in Uganda, which Mr. Baird attributes to persecution of homosexuals. According to the world press and the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga, this was not the case. Mr. Kato’s death resulted from a disagreement with another gay man who beat him to death. The assailant is now serving a 30 year sentence for his crime.

In future, REAL Women hopes that, when Mr. Baird sets government policy on foreign affairs, he will do so, based on accurate information.

REAL Women will continue to speak out for life, family and traditional values.