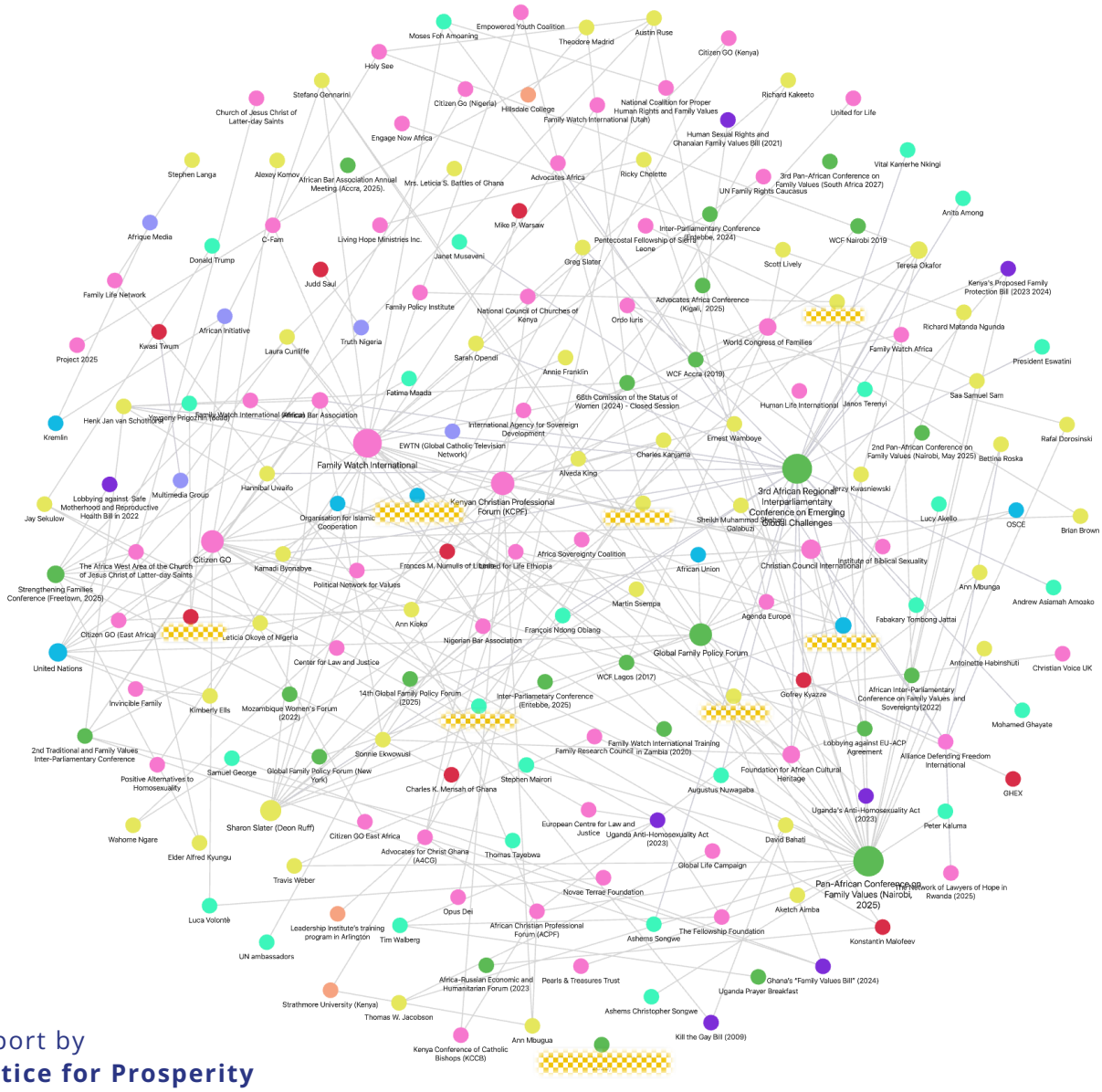
Global Anti-LGBTIQ+ Networks in Africa

Mapping Multilateral Infiltration, Disinformation Campaigns, and Legislative Surge

Executive Summary



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Introduction

As LGBTIQ+ rights make global strides, a well-funded, **coordinated backlash is gaining ground** - nowhere more aggressively than in Sub-Saharan Africa. Backed by transnational conservative networks, political and religious leaders are weaponising notions like "cultural sovereignty" to entrench anti-LGBTIQ+ laws and roll back hard-won human rights.

This urgent investigation- commissioned by IPPF and produced by the Justice for Prosperity Foundation, uncovers the coordinated machinery behind the global anti-rights movement targeting LGBTIQ+ in Africa, instrumentalising this together with other topics to further their own goals...mostly **power and money.**

Drawing on over 250 sources, breached data sets, and confidential human intelligence, the report reveals a deeply interconnected syndicate of hate that funnels money, disinformation, and political power across borders. It consists of:

- **Extremists and influencers** and online propagandists, including disinformation agents and botnets who incite polarisation and target vulnerable groups.
- **Populist politicians**, who capitalise on anti-rights narratives to undermine democratic institutions and scapegoat vulnerable communities allowing for power grabs.
- **Ultra-conservative** religious and ideological networks, often transnational, mobilising moral panic to erode SRHR, LGBTIQ+ rights, and civil liberties.
- **Oligarchs** and large industries, including actors in tech, fossil fuels, and extractives who fund and push anti-democratic agendas for market domination and deregulation.

The actors in this eco-system are the main strategists aiming to polarise societies, manipulate multi-lateral platforms, and erode hard-won rights. This network is shaping Africa's laws, media, and multilateral spaces. They are quickly gaining ground.

While this report focuses on LGBTIQ+ rights in Africa being targeted by (transnational) networks, the strategies uncovered by JfP have global relevance and impact a broad range of marginalised groups, including women, migrants, and SRHR advocates. This Executive Summary outlines key findings; the full report provides deeper analysis.

Ultimately, JfP's analysis demonstrates that the same forces fuelling anti-LGBTIQ+ rights are eroding free speech, silencing dissent, and dismantling democratic institutions designed to protect everyone. This pattern reflects a transnational playbook increasingly deployed to destabilise democracies, seize power, monetise disruption, and promote Christian nationalism, leveraging coordinated media ecosystems, lawfare, and targeted intimidation to shift norms and policy.

The Global Networks Behind Africa's Anti-LGBTIQ+ Surge

This report exposes the global machinery behind Africa's (transnational) anti-LGBTIQ+ surge, mapping the actors, strategies, and narratives fuelling it. Guided by three research questions, it reveals how legislation is shifting, international networks driving, and disinformation manipulating the public opinion:

1. How has the landscape of anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation shifted in Africa?
2. How do international networks advocating for anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation operate, and what causes linkages to emerge among state, non-state, and transnational actors?
3. How is anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment spreading across Africa, and who are the leading actors driving disinformation and anti-rights legislative initiatives?

Follow the Money, Trace the Power: U.S., Russian, and European (religious) right-wing actors are bankrolling sophisticated campaigns that blend disinformation, legal advocacy, and media manipulation to spread anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment across Africa.

Multilateral Capture: Venues for advancing human rights, such as the inter-parliamentary fora, are being hijacked to promote exclusionary agendas and build anti-rights blocs.

Strategic, Not Sporadic: This isn't scattered backlash. It is a transnational infrastructure leveraging culture, religion, and diplomacy to reshape Africa's legal landscape and public opinion.

Anatomy of a Backlash: The New Wave of Anti-LGBTIQ+ Laws Across Africa

Legislation as a Tool for Power

In countries like Uganda, Nigeria, and Mali, new anti-LGBTIQ+ laws carry extreme penalties, including life imprisonment and the death penalty. But the scope of **repression goes far beyond punishment**. Advocacy, access to health services, LGBTIQ+ organising, and even publishing content are all under attack. These laws are often introduced by opportunistic politicians seeking to capitalise on nationalist, religious, and moral panic for electoral and monetary gain. **Fear as a business model**. Many of them rely on templates, talking points, and resources provided by a network of international anti-rights actors from the US, Russia, and the EU.

The result:

- A surge in mob violence, arbitrary arrests & a normalisation of censorship and surveillance
- Shrinking civil society space & targeted online/offline attacks on human rights defenders
- Barriers to HIV/AIDS and public health services

Why Africa?

Africa has become fertile ground for this movement due to three intersecting forces:

1. **Anti-Colonial Rhetoric**: LGBTIQ+ rights are falsely framed as "Western imports" and used to galvanise anti-imperialist sentiment. Leaders present themselves as protectors of "African values", deflecting attention from corruption, insecurity, and poverty.
2. **Religious Power Networks**: Influential religious leaders and institutions shape public discourse and electoral politics. In Kenya, Catholic universities like Strathmore play a key role in training 'anti-rights lawyers. Networks such as the Kenya Christian Professionals Forum and the African Christian Professionals Forum operate across +/- 30 countries.
3. **Political Opportunism**: Anti-LGBTIQ+ bills offer political mileage with minimal risk. In e.g. Ghana, opposition figures use such bills to gain relevance. Politicians are supported by international conventions that provide ready-made legal strategies and rhetorical tools.

These forces have forged a self-reinforcing cycle: religious ideology influences law, law empowers political ambition, and politics fuels deeper cultural entrenchment.

The Bigger Picture: Regional Coordination & Global Threats

This isn't merely a local phenomenon. It's a transnational campaign. Major convenings have brought together **MPs, judges, NGOs, and religious leaders with the explicit aim of building pan-African "pro-family" coalitions**. These events, often supported politically, logistically and/or financially by US, Russian, and EU actors, are where the real strategy is forged, including the drafting of an "African Sovereignty Charter" to reject LGBTIQ+ and SRHR-rights regionally.

These gatherings serve as incubators for legislation, launching pads for political careers, and recruitment hubs for anti-rights leaders, lawyers and judges, and financial support mechanisms.

Some recent & upcoming anti-LGBTIQ+ convenings include:

- Entebbe Inter-Parliamentary Conferences (May 2023, May 2024 & May 2025, Uganda)
- 2nd Pan-African Conference on Family Values (May 2025, Kenya)
- 7th Strengthening Families Conference (June 2025, Sierra Leone) and foreseen in 2027
- Advocates Africa Conference (August 2025, Rwanda) and foreseen in 2026
- African Bar Association Annual Meeting (October 2025, Accra, Ghana)
- 8th Strengthening Families Conference (June 2026, Liberia)
- 3rd Pan-African Conference on Family Values (2027, South Africa)

2025 Elections: Entrenched Hostility, Minimal Hope

With elections set in over a dozen countries this year on the African continent, the prospects for meaningful progress on LGBTIQ+ rights are bleak. In nations like Egypt, Cameroon, Togo, Tanzania, and Burundi, **dominant parties maintain criminalisation as the norm**, while opposition groups avoid the issue entirely. Even in countries with more progressive legal frameworks, like Seychelles or Gabon, electoral platforms remain silent. The topic seems to be considered too 'woke' and risky.

Elections alone won't reverse this trend. The urgency lies in supporting resilient civil society actors, resisting the entrenchment of hate-based legal systems, and disrupting the regional and international coordination of anti-rights agendas.

New trend: African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values

JfP is deeply concerned about the push for an **"African Charter on Family, Sovereignty and Values"** Its promoters seek at least fifteen ratifications by African Union member states. Under AU treaty practice, that threshold would allow the instrument to enter into force. This matters because once in force it can be used to legitimise restrictive policies at national level, harmonise anti-rights agendas across participating states, and create pressure on neighbours through coordinated advocacy and lawfare. We are especially concerned about likely impacts on SRHR, LGBTIQ+ rights, freedom of expression and association, and the operating space for civil society. The campaign reflects significant American and European influence, including US and EU-based groups and networks that have convened or supported "family values" conferences in Africa and promoted the charter as part of a wider (diplomatic) strategy. Their involvement export tactics and narratives that destabilise democratic norms in the region.

The Transnational Unholy Alliance

A Coordinated Effort by the Trump Administration

There is growing evidence of senior U.S. figures conducting offence outreach across Africa (see also the JfP deep dive report: Geneva Consensus as Geopolitical Leverage in Africa [1]). In November 2025, televangelist Paula White-Cain, who leads the White House Faith Office and serves as senior adviser to the U.S. President, visited several countries in the region for meetings with heads of state and appeared at an evangelical conference in Uganda attended by President Museveni.

Over the same period, U.S. delegations toured multiple capitals to discuss bilateral arrangements offering continued, limited health assistance in exchange for access to national health datasets, including pathogen and genomic data. Participants reportedly included prominent conservative activists opposed to abortion and vaccines. Framing post-USAID support as conditional leverage appears central to this strategy.

United by Christian Ideology, Backed by Powerful Funding Streams

Over $54 million has flowed from U.S. Christian Right groups into Africa since 2007, and the pace is still accelerating. A core group of well-resourced U.S., European, and Russian actors orchestrate a global anti-LGBTIQ+ strategy. The organisations are either overtly faith-based or religious in their founding. Together, they function as an expansive, highly effective network, all united in the common goal of stripping marginalised communities of their fundamental human rights. Some of the many actors below:

U.S.example

Justice for Prosperity found dozens American, European, and Russian actors pushing the agenda. At the centre of this nexus stands **Family Watch International (FWI)**, a U.S.-based group notorious enough to be labelled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center. Led by Sharon Slater, whose nefarious history includes alliances with Ugandan anti-gay pastor Martin Ssempa, FWI spins a narrative that equates sexual education with paedophilia and paints queer identities as threats to children. Though on paper FWI seems like a small nonprofit from the American Southwest, its influence is vast and global.

FWI and partners host the annual **Global Family Policy Forum**, drawing hundreds of the most influential delegates from Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, where it offers model legislation, mock negotiations, and legal templates that lawmakers eagerly adopt. Slater and her team, including high-profile figures like Laura Cunliffe (former **Chief of Staff at the U.S. Mission to the UN**), have toured Africa extensively - from Malawi to Kenya - spreading their agenda under the guise of "protecting families." During the last edition, it was made explicit to start targeting Africa.

FWI's tentacles reach far through allied groups like the **UN Family Rights Caucus**, which mobilises conservative coalitions to infiltrate the UN and block SRHR initiatives. Their youth wing, the **Empowered Youth Coalition**, recruits African youths to champion anti-LGBTIQ+ policies, masking political repression as "empowerment."

Alliance Defending Freedom International

Meanwhile, **Alliance Defending Freedom International (ADFI)**, a global legal warfare group based in the US and Europe, drafts laws criminalising same-sex relationships and transgender identities in African nations, coordinating with parliamentarians and legal activists to embed

[1] https://justiceforprosperity.org/geneva-consensus-geopolitical-leverage-africa/

conservative Christian values into national constitutions. For example, during the 16th Advocates Africa Conference in Kigali, 12–17 August 2025. ADF International–linked staff were prominently involved in the event. ADFI held its second Sub-Saharan Africa Lawyers Network meeting in Kigali later that month with Antoinette Habinshuti, ADF Director of Foundation Partnerships, featured in the liaison/fundraising push.

Meanwhile, in November 2025, the US-based ADF leveraged a recent claim by President Donald Trump of a **genocide of Christians in Nigeria** to boost its own visibility and influence. On November 17, 2025, they were invited to speak on the topic at a session held by the US mission to the United Nations, alongside Ambassador Mike Waltz. They are becoming even more influential over time.

C-Fam

At the United Nations, the **Center for Family and Human Rights (C-Fam)**, with Vatican ties and a history of spreading disinformation, plays a key role in conservative diplomacy. Its director, Austin Ruse, proudly proclaims Africa as a "primary target" for rolling back LGBTIQ+ rights, noting the continent's relative receptiveness to conservative values compared to Europe. C-Fam is intertwined with influential networks like Agenda Europe/Vision Network, spreading false claims that queer activism promotes criminal acts like necrophilia and incest, sowing fear to justify repression.

European example

Joining FWI in this international crusade is the **Christian Council International (CCI)**, a Netherlands-based ultra-conservative lobbying powerhouse with offices in Nairobi, as well as subsidiary headquarters in the USA and Canada. CCI aggressively targets African Union (AU) and UN fora, pushing conservative "family values" while strategically influencing key African parliamentarians. Executive director Henk Jan van Schothorst travels across the continent, building ties with governments and religious figures to stall progress on gender equality, abortion rights, and sexual education. Together, **CCI and FWI present a united front at major conferences**, amplifying their shared message and "protecting the African people from neo-colonialism".

Citizen Go

The digital battlefield belongs to **CitizenGO**, a Spain-based international group, orchestrating petitions and campaigns to stir fears of "gender indoctrination" and "homosexual propaganda" in countries like Nigeria and Kenya. Under the regional leadership of Ann Kioko, a figure deeply connected within African conservative networks, CitizenGO **exploits legal loopholes and conservative sentiments** to fuel hostility against LGBTIQ+ people and reproductive health providers.

This sprawling movement is financed and bolstered by **shady ties**. Former CitizenGO board members include political heavyweights implicated in corruption scandals, such as Italian politician **Luca Volontè**, who was jailed for funnelling dirty money into ultra-conservative groups.

Russian example

Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev, well known for advancing traditional family values and anti-Western financial agendas across the globe in the Asia-Pacific, Europe, and on the African continent, also emerged, following investigations by JfP, as a key figure behind the fundraising and logistical operations supporting the deportation of Ukrainian children. His influence casts a growing shadow over Africa, including via his International Agency for Sovereign Development.

A Global Playbook for Local Suppression

What emerges from these transnational alliances is a highly coordinated global playbook to restrict LGBTIQ+ rights and sexual health freedoms in Africa, using:

- **Legal tactics:** Drafting model anti-LGBTIQ+ laws and training lawyers and MPs.
- **Diplomatic infiltration:** Gaining consultative status at UN bodies, influencing AU summits, and mobilising conservative delegations (pushed by FWI, CCI, Ordo Iuris, etc).
- **Digital manipulation:** Running online petitions, misinformation campaigns, and social media blitzes targeting African populations.
- **Faith-based mobilisation:** Partnering with churches and religious groups to frame these issues as moral and spiritual battles.
- **Youth recruitment:** Engaging young Africans through coalitions like the Empowered Youth Coalition, as a front for non-African organisations, such as FWI.

Funding from questionable sources and dito political actors flows into this ecosystem, empowering a network that thrives on fear, disinformation, and strategic alliances. **The withdrawal of traditional U.S. and EU pro-rights donors creates a vacuum filled by anti-rights actors** like Malofeev's agency, and the push from the U.S., blending financial aid with ideological influence.

This shadow infrastructure is reshaping Africa's social and legal landscape, posing a significant challenge to human rights defenders and progressive movements. By understanding the players, their tactics, and their ambitions, advocates can better counter this global assault on LGBTIQ+ before the next law criminalising identity or education becomes another brutal reality.

Exporting Hate: How US Conservatives Empower Africa's Culture Crusaders

Behind the scenes of Africa's rising anti-LGBTIQ+ crusade lies a powerful U.S.-led machinery of training and indoctrination. For over a decade, conservative American organisations have invested heavily in **grooming African activists, lawyers, and lawmakers** - arming them with strategic campaign skills, messaging tactics, and grassroots mobilisation techniques **straight from the religious right's playbook**.

These organisations include:

- FWI's annual **Global Family Policy Forum** and Arlington's notorious **Leadership Institute** have become elite finishing schools for this cadre of culture warriors. This pipeline of indoctrinated leaders ensures a steady supply of savvy operators who can lobby, litigate, and mobilise local communities with precision.
- Evangelical seminaries like the **Acton Institute** reinforce these networks, guaranteeing that American conservative ideologies and strategies take deep root in African soil.

But the impact doesn't stop at training. Through ongoing exchange programs, conferences, and networking opportunities, such as sponsorships to attend the **World Congress of Families** or visits to American megachurches, U.S. groups have **"outsourced" the culture wars to Africa**.

These transnational alliances synchronise messaging with destructive efficiency:

- African activists recycle American-tested slogans like "sexual rights are Western neo-colonialism" and "protect our children from the LGBT agenda," infusing them with local flavour to resonate powerfully within their communities.
- This echo chamber of ideology and propaganda creates a self-reinforcing loop - American trainers empower African leaders who then shape grassroots movements in their image.

Add to this the shadow influence of the **Heritage Foundation's Project 2025**, which reshapes the human rights (funding) landscape, and you have a sprawling ultra-conservative network leveraging money, faith, and mentorship to rewrite the continent's social fabric with exclusion and repression at its core.

Social Media Supercharge

Social media didn't just change the game, it *rewrote the rules* of Africa's anti-LGBTIQ+ movement. Fueled by Facebook, WhatsApp threads, Telegram channels, VK, and TikTok rants, disinformation spreads like wildfire, tailor-made to stir outrage, especially among youth.

In **Nigeria**, for example, **Kremlin-connected content creators** stoke flames by casting Russia as the heroic defender of African tradition, standing firm against Western "moral decay". It's the same script, repeated across platforms: Russia = virtue; West = vice. Politics and piety are fused to argue that LGBTIQ+ rights are incompatible with African culture.

Traditional media aren't off the hook either. Channels like Afrique Media and the African Initiative double as echo chambers for anti-LGBTIQ+ messaging, complete with pseudo-journalism, deepfakes, and Telegram blasts in four languages to rebrand Russian influence as moral salvation.

The media war is only half the story, **education tech is the next frontier**. Ultra-conservative media conglomerates like **Genesis** aren't just pushing clickbait headlines; they're quietly investing in educational apps and platforms for African children. With over $20 million pumped into startups, Genesis markets itself as a pioneer of "modern learning". But this isn't education - it's indoctrination by stealth, subtly reinforcing anti-LGBTIQ+ disinformation.

The **disinformation fuelled on social media has disastrous consequences**, such as calls from influencers on TikTok leading to attacks on and even deaths of trans people in Côte d'Ivoire. **In countries which have shunned French influences, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali, Russia has rapidly taken over the vacuum,** and influence has spread quickly in pushing a narrative of LGBTIQ+ rights being deemed to be an imposition of Western values designed to superimpose upon African values. This can be seen through the decision in 2024 to criminalise homosexuality in Mali.

Within JfP's investigations, links were uncovered between influencers promoting attacks on trans people and Ivorian pan-African civil society organizations (CSOs), some of which have close ties to Russia, which have subsequently formed a coalition aimed at promoting Pan-Africanism among Ivorians, where a negative rhetoric is disseminated surrounding LGBTIQ+ rights, that also involves the framing of 'Western', non-African institutions promoting LGBTIQ+ ideals in contrary to what is labelled as 'African values'.

In **Ghana**, the **Multimedia Group Limited**, a religiously conservative media powerhouse, partners with anti-LGBTIQ+ events like the **World Congress of Families** and broadcasts "news" that moralises, sensationalises, and stigmatises queer life. These media networks set the stage, frame the debate, and hand the mic to the most extreme voices - all while claiming objectivity.

At the heart of this media machine is a toxic cocktail of **Russian soft power, U.S. evangelical cash, European partnerships, and algorithmic outrage.**

Conclusion: Rippling Implications for Democracy

The anti-LGBTIQ+ crackdown in Africa isn't random. It is a choreographed campaign disguised as an organic culture war that is shaping public opinion, pressuring lawmakers, and infiltrating schools, backed by money, robust alliances, and religiously fuelled moral panic. But it's not just about LGBTIQ+ rights. It's about the weaponisation of identity politics to entrench authoritarianism, rollback democratic gains, and undermine regional human rights mechanisms.

Our response, therefore, must expose how a **manufactured moral unrest** feeds into a broader authoritarian agenda:

Stay One Step Ahead: Build an intelligence-driven early warning system to track anti-rights actors, events, and narratives before they become laws. Monitor everything from Entebbe summits to TikTok trends. Use that data to get upstream.

Expose the Foreign Playbook: Unmask the money, messaging, and mentorship behind the movement. Show how the U.S. evangelical push, Russian influence, and European ultra-conservatives are exporting hate - and calling it "African values". Flip the script by revealing their hypocrisy. But publish only when effective, not by default.

Equip Local Champions: Invest in the activists, lawyers, educators, and faith leaders who can push back or better said...push forward...with facts, heart, and strategy. Provide tools for media counter-narratives, legal resistance, digital safety, and rapid response. JfP works together with local trusted partners, to share insights and latest intelligence, to be one step ahead of the actions of anti-rights actors. Always aim to prebunk rather than debunk.

Build Bigger, Bolder Coalitions: Link LGBTIQ+ rights to democracy, public health, women's rights and youth power. The opposition is highly adept at building and coordinating alliances and the other side must be too. Push together in courts, classrooms, parliaments, and global forums. Get united. And not in name only.