

# NEW LAW CRIMINALISING TOUCHING ONE'S SEXUAL ORGANS DROPPED BY MPS

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The 11th Parliament has removed a Bill proposing a death sentence for aggravated rape and criminalising touching one's sexual organs from its legislative agenda.

The Sexual Offences Bill, 2024 was re-introduced in the House on October 14, 2024, after it had been passed by the 10th Parliament but was returned by President Yoweri Museveni in 2021.

However, the 10th

## MUSEVENI RETURNS BILL

Following the passing of the Bill in 2021, President Museveni returned it to Parliament noting the offences were already provided for in the Penal Code Act. He stated that the Uganda Law Reform Commission had carried out a broad review of all criminal related laws like the Penal Code Act, Magistrates Court Act, Trial on Indictment Act and the Evidence Act, which made provisions of the Sexual Offences Bill, redundant.

Parliament could not process it following its lapse upon the dissolution of that Parliament.

In her ruling on Thursday (March 12), Speaker of Parliament Anita Among

said the Bill had been withdrawn and would be reintroduced in the 12th Parliament.

Tabled by Soroti City Woman MP Anna Adeke Ebaju, the Bill sought to

introduce new offences and new penalties such as transfer of information of a sexual nature to a person without his/her consent.

A person guilty of such an offense would face five years of imprisonment, just like individuals who will be guilty of drawing images, taking pictures and videos of people in a state of nudity.

The Bill criminalises indecent gestures such as touching one's sexual organs with a three year's sentence and proposes similar punishment for a person



Speaker Among chairs a plenary sitting of Parliament recently

who exposes his sexual organs to anyone while in public.

If re-introduced and passed into law, a person who administers a substance with intent to commit a sexual act will be liable to conviction on imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years.

While tabling the Bill, Adeke argued that it was premised on the scattered nature of legislation on sexual offences.

"Whereas sexual offences

are mainly prescribed under the Penal Code Act, various laws such as the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and the Children Act, make provision for a number of sexual offences," she said.

Adeke also argued that there was a need to ensure the legislation responds to the evolving and current trends in sexual offences, curbs sexual violence and adopts international best practices in the prevention of sexual violence.