



PROFILE

Frank Mugisha is a Ugandan LGBTI advocate and Executive Director of SMUG & SMUG Intl. A recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize, Mugisha has been recognized internationally for his activism and courage. He was a 2014 nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize and one of Fortune's 2017 World's Greatest Leaders.

HONORS & AWARDS

- 2024 TIME100 Most Influential People
- 2024 Martin Delaney Lecturer at the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI)
- 2024 Rubaii Memorial Prize - Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (I-GMAP) at Binghamton University
- 2022 Civil Rights Defenders Award
- 2021 Top 7 Activists to improve LGBT Rights in Africa | Vogue Magazine.
- 2023 STONEWALL INN BRICK AWARD
- 2023 International Freedom Award - Rainbow Railroad.
- 2015 Honorary Doctorate | University of Glasgow
- 2014 Nominee | Nobel Peace Prize
- 2013 Honorary Doctorate | Ghent University
- 2013 International Human Rights Film Award | Cinema for Peace
- 2017 World's Greatest Leaders List | Fortune
- 2020 African Feather Award
- 2020 Best African Activist
- 2011 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award
- 2011 Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize
- 2010 United Nations Human Rights Defender Founder | Icebreakers Uganda
- 2012. James Earl Hardy Legend's Award
- 2013 A Matter of Act - Movies that Matter and Amnesty International
- 2011 Citation - City of New York and City of Philadelphia.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2024 Inaugural Carnegie Distinguished Fellow - Institute of Global Politics (IGP) at Columbia University
- 2017 – present Senior Advisor, Uganda | Goldin Institute
- 2017 International Advisor | Dignity Initiative
- 2017 – present CEO | SMUG International
- 2016 – 2020 The Commonwealth Equality Network African Regional Representative
- 2015 – present Global Advisor Project
- 2011 – present Chairman | David Kato Vision & Voice Award
- 2011 – present Steering Committee Member | Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights & Constitutional Law
- 2007 - present** Leader | Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG)
- 2004 – present** Founder | Icebreakers Uganda

NOTABLE PRESS

- August 2017** "Pride Uganda has been crushed. Please don't look away" | The Guardian
- Oct 2016** "Susan Rice Reviews LGBT Progress at Home and Abroad under Obama" | Newsweek
- Aug 2014** "Frank Mugisha: Uganda's most outspoken gay rights activist on..." | The Independent
- March 2014** "I am a gay Ugandan about to go home. This law will tyrannize my life" | The Guardian
- Dec 2012** "Out in Africa" | The New Yorker
- Dec 2011** "Gay and Vilified in Uganda" | The New York Times

SPEAKING TOPICS

LGBTI Rights on the Continent of Africa

Human Rights and Diversity

Activism Advocacy, Human Rights

International Leadership

BIOGRAPHY

Ugandan gay rights activist Frank Mugisha was born in a suburb of Kampala. Raised in a strict Catholic family, he came out to his brother at age 14. Although his coming out estranged him from some family members, other friends and family have continued to support him. To come out in Uganda is to subject your life to great risk. In a 2011 NYT op-ed story, Mugisha said "From the time I was old enough to have romantic feelings, I knew I was gay, but we weren't supposed to speak of such things." In Uganda, you not only risk the possibility of bullying and beatings, but you also risk imprisonment and put your life at risk as well.

During his undergraduate studies at Kyambogo University, Frank founded Icebreakers Uganda in 2004, an organization created as a support network for LGBT who are out or in the process of coming out to family and friends. Icebreakers Uganda offers counseling and suicide-prevention services to those who are brave enough to be openly gay in a place where both law and public opinion deem such an identity to be criminal. Since then, he has scaled his efforts by launching Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), an umbrella organization that consists of four groups, including the first and only LGBT health center in Uganda. Frank serves as SMUG's Executive Director.

In addition to promoting equality for the LGBT community in Uganda, Mugisha and his team at SMUG have been fighting legal and ideological battles with Ugandan Parliament and Springfield, MA resident Scott Lively for years. He has done so by leading the petition of the 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill. He has also championed legal efforts against Scott Lively in U.S. District Court to curb discriminatory, anti-gay rhetoric from pervading Ugandan society. Dr. Mugisha has led the grassroots movement to save thousands of LGBTI Ugandans, like himself, from persecution, incarceration, and death - just for being who they are.

And Frank knows what is at stake. Last year, he along with members of his executive team at SMUG were brutally arrested at Uganda's annual pride march and tortured in prison.

For his courageous work, Mugisha has been honored by dozens of institutions including but not limited to: the United Nations, Black Entertainment Television - BET, Rafto Foundation, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights, and Amnesty International. He speaks to audiences of all ages and importance frequently sharing his story and inspiring others to fight for basic freedoms.

TESTIMONIALS

Frank Mugisha exemplifies Robert Kennedy's vision of moral courage...There is a Ugandan proverb that says: 'Old men sit in the shade because they planted a tree many years before.' Because of his courage and with the support of his companions, Frank Mugisha will enjoy the shade of the tree he has planted, as will the thousands of Ugandans for whom he has advocated.

- Kerry Kennedy, President, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

Frank Mugisha and his colleagues in SMUG have, through their strong personal engagement and at great personal risk, fronted the fight for LGBTI people's rights in Uganda.

- Rafto Foundation Press Release, 2011

I have said before it is critical for all Ugandans - the government and citizens alike-to speak out against discrimination, harassment, and intimidation of anyone. That is true no matter where they come from, what they believe or who they love...No one has been a stronger champion than [you]. You have been organized, disciplined, and savvy. You have marshaled the evidence and made the arguments using the rights enshrined in Uganda's constitution and in international law. And by doing so, you are a model for others and an inspiration to the world.

- Hillary Clinton, former U.S. Secretary of State presenting 2011 Human Rights Defenders Award to Frank Mugisha

With extraordinary eloquence, Mr. Mugisha has appealed to the United Nations for help. He has asked us to rally support for the decriminalization of homosexuality everywhere in the world. And that is what we will do. We have been called upon, and we will answer.

- Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary General of the United Nations, December 2010 Intl Human Rights Day

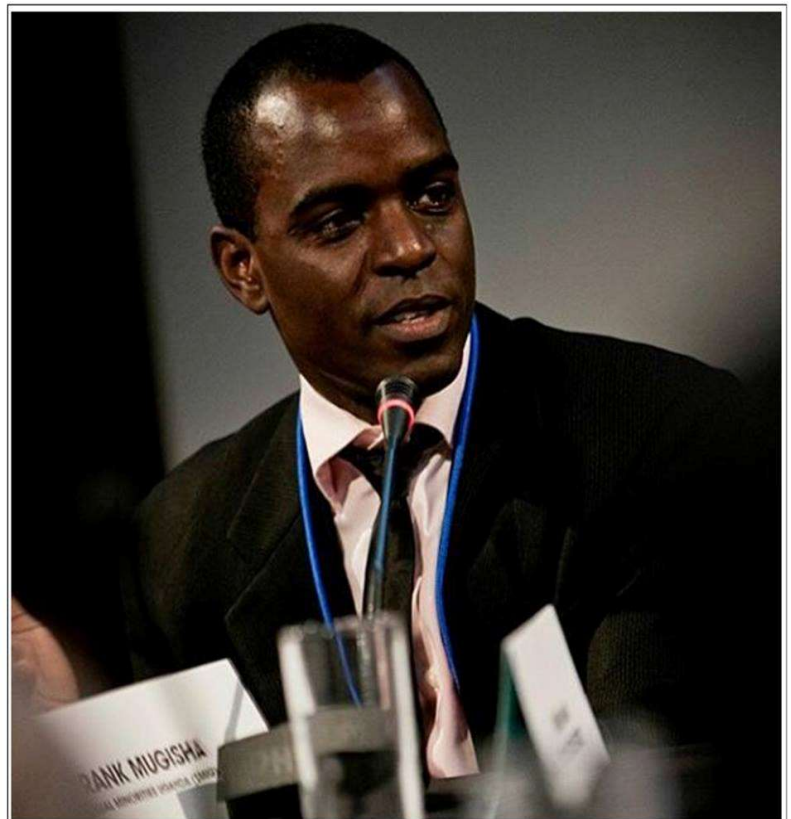
VIDEOCLIPS

- **Acceptance speech at RFK Ceremony 2011** - <https://vimeo.com/227469358>
- **Debalie Freedom Lecture 2013** - <https://vimeo.com/62752030> (begin at 16:50)
- **Sermon at Provincetown's UU Meeting House, August 27, 2017** - <https://vimeo.com/231688620>

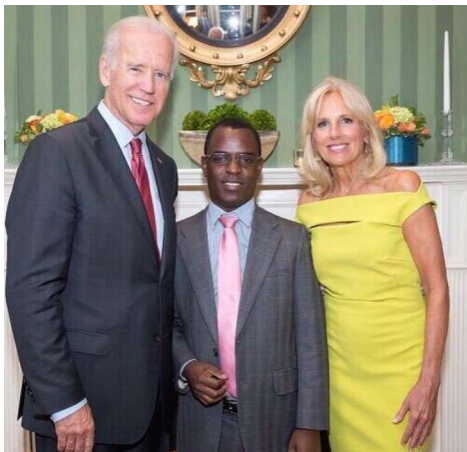
CONTACT

SMUG International
867 Boylston Street
5th Floor # 1354
Boston, MA 02116-2601

(617) 448-0120
djcurley@smuginternational.org
<https://www.smuginternational.org>



NOTABLE SUPPORTERS



Former U.S. VP Joe Biden and Second Lady Jill Biden



Former U.S. Amb. to the UN, Samantha Power

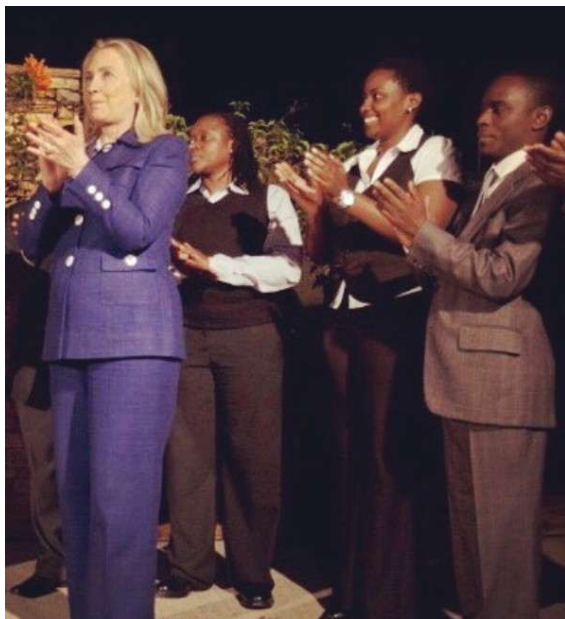


Figure 1Former U.S. Sec. of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton



Figure 2Musician and Actress, Queen Latifah



Figure 4Human rights activist, Malala Yousafzai



Figure 3Religious & Spiritual Leader,
The 14th Dalai Lama

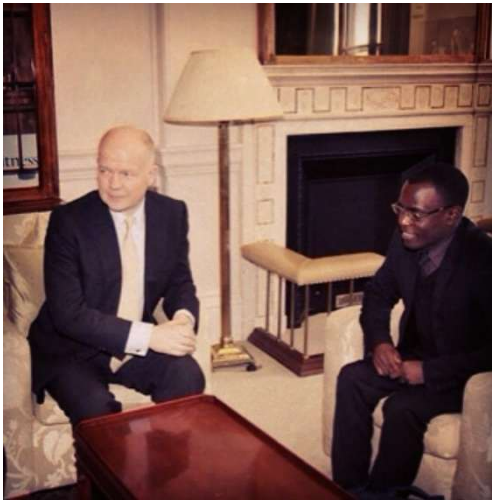


Figure 5 Former UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague



(L-R): DNC Chairperson, Donna Brazile, RFK Center President, Kerry Kennedy, Ethel Kennedy, and Former U.S. Sec. of State, John Kerry

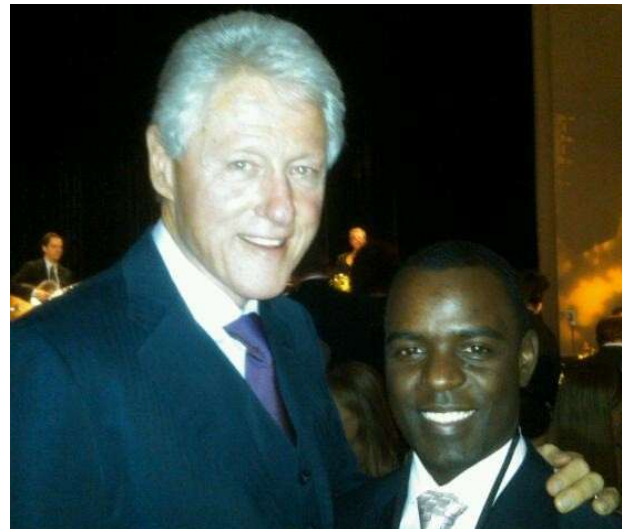


Figure 6 Olympic Gold Medalist, Tom Daley





Figure 7 Former U.S. National Security Advisor,
Susan Rice

