Between 1897 and 1902 administrators applied the Indian Penal Code in Britain’s African colonies. While this law has since been declared unconstitutional in India, more than eighty other countries around the world still criminalize consensual homosexual conduct between consenting adults. More than half of these countries have these laws because they once were British colonies. In Africa, this list includes 17 countries: Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The British brought in the legislation because they thought ‘native’ cultures did not punish ‘perverse’ sex harshly enough. In other words, the colonized needed compulsory re-education in sexual practices.

Curiously after 40 years of liberation struggle, African judges, public figures, and political leaders have begun defending these imperial legacy laws as citadels of nationhood and cultural authenticity. Flipping history, they now claim that homosexuality was imported from the colonizing West, forgetting that the West brought in the first laws enabling governments to forbid and repress it.