

«Yves Yomb, passed away, age 45.
Joel Nana, passed away, age 33.
Cyriaque Ako, passed away, age 54.
David Kato, passed away, age 47.
Eric Lebembe, passed away, age 33.
Jeremie, passed away, age 26.
Desmond, passed away, age 28.
Pascal, passed away, age 26.
Lambert, passed away, age 44.
Michel, passed away, age 32.
Dimitri, passed away, age 27.
Yannick, passed away, age 24.

Our souls are burning. So many companions went. Our colleagues, our friends, our siblings, our lovers. In the heat of the action, thousands of them have given, given everything. Without reserve, without profit. They have sacrificed their bodies, they gave their souls. Today, I can hear them shouting. No, they are not shouting. They are screaming. They are warming us. What is the purpose of their sacrifice ? Do we cherish their legacy ? I'm racked with pain. They are still calling from the pink paradise where they are supposed to rest. Their starburst heads bowed in despair. What meaning do we give to their legacy ? Are we listening to their words ? Are we feeling their anger ? Is there anything sadder than the tears of the dead ?

Today, we are still persecuted, hated, spat on by the system. After 40 years of fighting HIV, AIDS is still killing us. What is the outcome for us, sexual and gender minorities, people living with HIV ? We live but we are already dead. Our days are numbered. Our mental health is not considered as a priority. Our struggle to exist is seen as propaganda for a LGBTI agenda that would destroy the world. It makes no sense. The blows, the insults, the injuries we endure every day on the 4 corners of the world torment those who have already paid the price with their lives. Still, despite their sorrow, from the pink paradise, these beautiful souls send me a Sun. Can you see it ? It is here in my hand. A sun called courage. I place it at the altar of this inhospitable Montreal. It rises at Concordia and it will set in our open hearts, from Dakar to Yaoundé, from Quito to Abidjan, from Lomé to Phnom Penh.

Activists ! Let us rise up ! Let us fight for our rights, let us fight for what we must preserve above all : our psychological and physical well-being, according to each of our contexts and values. To our friends and partners in the struggle, may the fire that drives us warm you. There is still so much to do.

We want solutions that are adapted to our realities, to our experiences, to our origins. We want resources to implement programs that prioritize our mental health and physical safety. We want funded programs to turn political commitments into transformative actions.

AGCS PLUS will organize a pre-conference at the next francophone HIV conference in 2024. It will focus exclusively on the mental health of sexual and gender minorities in Africa. It will be a safe space for dialogue between communities and mental health experts to address our present and our future.

We want to live. We just want to live !»