

His Majesty The King
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA

9 March 2026

Your Majesty,

I write to you as Director of the UK human rights organisation, the Peter Tatchell Foundation.

I am deeply concerned about the continued criminalisation of LGBT+ people in 29 Commonwealth countries.

They still retain laws that criminalise same-sex intimacy. In almost every case, these statutes can be traced directly to provisions introduced during British colonial rule, including variations of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and earlier legislation derived from England's Buggery Act of 1533.

These homophobic laws were imposed across Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific as part of the imperial legal system. They were imposed in the name of your predecessor monarchs.

It is a matter of historical record that criminalisation was exported through empire. In numerous societies, more fluid or culturally distinct understandings of sexuality were replaced by harsh Victorian legal codes, with maximum sentences of life imprisonment, which continue to prevail in six Commonwealth countries. While today's governments are sovereign and responsible for their own legislation, the origin of these laws is undeniably British.

Your Majesty serves as Head of the Commonwealth — a voluntary association of countries committed to democracy, equality and human dignity.

An acknowledgement by you that Britain imposed these laws, coupled with an expression of regret for the harm caused, would demonstrate moral leadership consistent with the Commonwealth Charter's commitment to human rights.

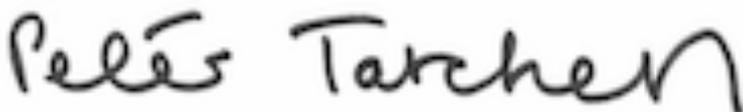
Such a statement would not dictate policy to sovereign states, but it could help create an atmosphere conducive for decriminalisation. In several nations where courts and legislators are already considering reform, symbolic leadership from the Head of the Commonwealth would carry considerable weight.

A suitable date for such a statement by you could be 17 May 2026 – International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia.

History cannot be undone, but it can be acknowledged. An apology would signal that criminalisation was not an indigenous moral inheritance but a colonial imposition — and that equality for LGBTs is consistent with the Commonwealth Charter's professed human rights values.

I respectfully urge Your Majesty to consider such a step.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Tatchell
Director, Peter Tatchell Foundation