

Headline **Tough gay laws scaring away HIV positive group**
Date **17 Mar 2010**
MediaTitle **New Straits Times**
Section **World**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **139,763 / 330,000**

Language **English**
Page No **26**
Article Size **77 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **1,066**
PRValue **3,198**



Tough gay laws scaring away HIV-positive group

NEW YORK: New HIV infections are increasing among homosexuals, drug users and prostitutes who don't seek help because of laws that criminalise these practices, the head of the United Nations AIDS agency said on Monday.

Michel Sidibe, the head of UNAIDS, said "it is unacceptable" that 85 countries still have laws criminalising same-sex relations among adults, including seven that impose the death penalty for homosexual practices.

He called a proposed Ugandan law that would impose the death penalty for some gays "very unfortunate" and expressed hope it won't be approved.

At a time when UNAIDS is scal-

ing up its programme and seeking universal access to HIV treatment, Sidibe said he was "very scared" because bad laws are being introduced by countries making it impossible for these groups at risk to have access to services.

"You have also a growing conservatism which is making me very scared.

"We must insist that the rights of the minorities are upheld. If we don't do that... I think the epidemic will grow again."

Sidibe said at a luncheon hosted by the United Nations Foundation that in countries from China to Kenya and Malawi, about 33 per cent of new HIV infections were in men having sex with men, a significant increase. — AP