



### *A Case Study on Prohibiting U.S. Extremists from Traveling Abroad*

In the United States, courts and government officials generally lack the legal authority to prevent U.S. citizens from traveling abroad, even when they are traveling abroad to incite discrimination or violence. But other countries have taken independent action to prohibit anti-LGBTQI+ extremists from the United States from entering their country.

In 2009, the UK Home Secretary [banned](#) notorious anti-LGBTQI+ extremist **Fred Phelps** and his daughter from entering the UK, where they planned to picket a showing of the Laramie Project, a play about the tragic murder of Matthew Shepard. At the time, a UK Border Agency spokesperson said: “The home secretary has excluded both Fred Phelps and his daughter from the UK. Both these individuals have engaged in unacceptable behaviour by inciting hatred against a number of communities.”<sup>1</sup> The statement emphasized “The government has made it clear it opposes extremism in all its forms. We will continue to stop those who want to spread extremism, hatred and violent messages in our communities from coming to our country ... regardless of their opinions and beliefs.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2016, South Africa [banned](#) **Steven Anderson**, another well-known anti-LGBTQI+ extremist from the United States. He was also [deported](#) from neighboring Botswana after local activists started a [petition](#) calling for him to be banned from their country as well.

LEGABIBO, a prominent national LGBTQI+ advocacy group in Botswana, took the lead in developing the online petition and then advocating with the government of Botswana to deport Anderson. A leader in the organization at the time of the actions described LEGABIBO’s activism:

“ In 2016 we learned that Pastor Anderson intended to open a church in Botswana. One of the reasons we led this petition against Anderson was because his visit came just a couple of months after the horrible mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in the United States. What Pastor Anderson said about that mass shooting was horrible. We didn’t want him to say things like that or put down roots in Botswana. We were also very aware of what our comrades experienced in Uganda, when Scott Lively and other U.S. extremists set up a base there to spread hate within Uganda. We didn’t want that to happen in Botswana, so we decided to set up a petition to try to ban him. We ended up collecting over 2,000 signatures and personally handed the petition to the Minister of Home Affairs, Minister Edwin Batshu, who managed immigration and border

<sup>1</sup> See [Anti-gay American cleric banned from UK for inciting hatred | LGBTQ+ rights | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/feb/19/britain-bans-us-cleric), available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/feb/19/britain-bans-us-cleric>.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

control at the time. We were accompanied by a local reverend who also opposed the hateful teachings of Pastor Anderson. The Minister promised to keep an eye on Anderson. After entering the country, Anderson went on a local radio show and started spreading hateful messages, including a call to kill the gays. We alerted the authorities, and security intelligence and immigration authorities picked him up at the radio station with an order from the President labeling him *persona non grata*. He was deported, along with a colleague who was supposed to remain in Botswana to lead Anderson's ministry. They were both ejected from the country. Since then, however, because they are not allowed into the country, they have been training pastors from Botswana in the United States, and that is what we need to pay attention to. I think probably the worst is yet to come."