

# STATEMENT ON THE BAN OF 'I AM SAMUEL'

**The NBO Film Festival is very disappointed to once again** be unable to screen one of the most important films made in Kenya due to a Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) ban on distribution and ownership of this film. I Am Samuel was banned from Kenyan screens on 23rd September 2021, following a statement by the KFCB acting chair, Christopher Wambua.

While the KFCB statement states that the film is being banned for depicting and valorising illegal activity and for being blasphemous to the Christian religion, neither of these are grounds for the restriction of screenings in Kenya according to their own guidelines, nor has this criteria been applied to numerous other films screened in Kenya that in fact portray the above.

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Therefore, we must conclude that KFCB's sole purpose is to suppress any discourse on issues connected to the LGBTQI community, which is a clear and outright human rights violation and contravenes the Bill of Rights protecting freedom of expression.

As an organisation that supports and encourages freedom of creative expression, the NBO Film Festival demands that the KFCB make the procedures and details of their deliberations, leading to the decision to ban the film available to the public.

We strongly believe that suppression of freedom of expression of a specific group not only hurts us all as filmmakers but as a society - regardless of our individual sexual orientation - and urge all those who value human rights to take a public stand against this heavy-handed policing of ideas, thoughts, and creative expression.

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'E. Hirst', with a horizontal line underneath.

**Ellesheba Hirst, Co-founder and Festival Director,  
NBO Film Festival**

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