

## Scotland Yard Reggae Lyrics

Written by Westside ID439

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International Development Minister Gareth Thomas fears that discrimination against homosexuals is deterring people from being tested for HIV.

Mr Thomas will tell a conference in St Kitts there must be free speech but people should not incite violence against minorities.

He will single out artistes such as Sizzla Kalonji and Buju Banton.

Scotland Yard is continuing to examine the lyrics by eight artists, including Beenie Man, Elephant Man and Bountie Killer after complaints from gay rights group Outrage!.

Only sub-Saharan Africa has higher HIV infection rates than the Caribbean.

Caribbean leaders asked Tony Blair for help against the problem at a conference last year.

### **Free speech?**

Mr Thomas is speaking at a conference about reducing HIV/AIDS related stigma and discrimination.

He will say heterosexual sex is the main way of transmitting the virus but in Caribbean society Aids is still associated with gay men.

And he will say the music industry has a special role to play.

"A number of artistes are effectively contributing to the spread of HIV by producing reggae and rap songs actually encouraging discrimination against those who have Aids and encouraging violence against minority groups such as men who have sex with men," he will say.

"These artistes include Buju Banton, Sizzla Kalonji, and others.

The use of phrases like "Batty Boys" and "Queers" is a cheap effort to gain notoriety and sell records, he says.

"Yes, we believe in free speech, but nobody in a democracy should be able to incite violence against minorities."

Mr Thomas will welcome the St Kitts conference for recognising there is a problem.

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He will also acknowledge Britain has problems to confront, pointing to a 20% increase in violent crime against gay people during the last year.

### UK impact

There are concerns that discrimination seen in the Caribbean is mirrored in Caribbean communities in the UK.

Simon Nelson, a sector development officer at the Terence Higgins Trust, said the issue also affected some British African communities.

Some Caribbean nations, including Jamaica, outlaw male homosexuality. Mr Nelson said such laws pushed not only behaviour but the effects of sexually transmitted diseases underground.

"Whilst it is not a criminal offence here, within communities it is still viewed as a criminal offence," he said.

He called for more robust analysis of those people not coming forward for HIV tests; according to the [BBC](#) .

Last week, Human Rights Watch said widespread violence and discrimination against gay men and people living with HIV/AIDS in Jamaica was undermining measures to tackle the health problem.