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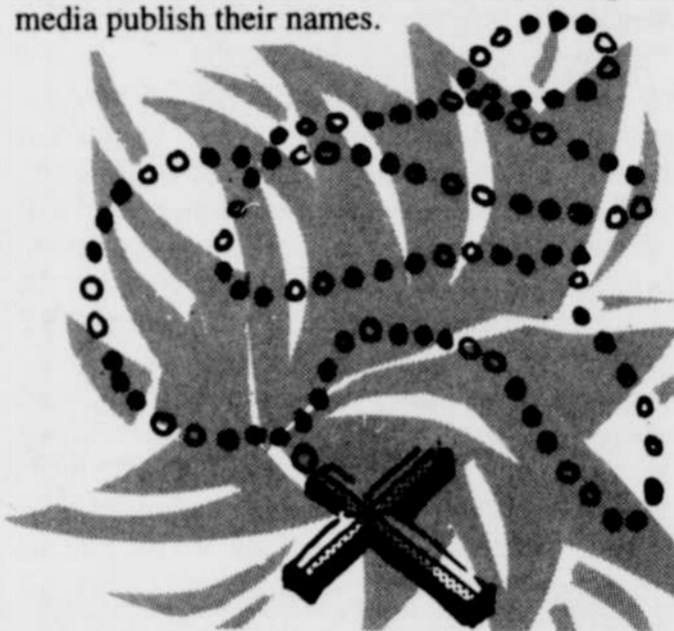


# world briefs

## AUSTRIA

The Catholic Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Hans-Hermann Groer, 75, has been accused of having sex with boys, reported the Austrian magazines *Profil* and *News*.

Among the accusers is Josef Hartmann, 37, who says Groer and he had sex repeatedly in the early 1970s at the high school seminary in Hollabrunn, where Groer was an instructor. After Hartmann went public, several other former students followed his lead—most without letting the media publish their names.



Groer denied the charges, but he also resigned as head of the Austrian Bishops' Conference.

Hartmann came forward with his story after Groer stated publicly that people who abuse children will not "inherit heaven."

## BRITAIN

The International Lesbian and Gay Youth Organization will hold its 12th annual conference July 30 to Aug. 6 at the University of Salford in Manchester, England.

Over 100 lesbians, gay men and bisexuals under age 27 are expected at the confab, which is entitled "Celebrating Diversity."

Cost to attend is 230 German marks. Write ILGYO Main Secretariat, PO Box 542, NL-1000 AM Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

## CAMBODIA

Two women here were recently married in a traditional ceremony, the Agence France-Press news service reported April 4.

Khav Sokha, 35, a former taxi driver turned medicine woman who has three children, and Pum Eth, 31, were wed in Khandal province, the agency said.

The report said Khav Sokha "is very much the husband" in the partnership which "has become the talk of the country."

## CHINA

Chinese health authorities have recorded 1,550 HIV infections, 43 AIDS cases, and 23 deaths. But at least 11,500 people are probably infected, says Qi Xiaqiu, deputy director general of the Ministry of Health's Department of Disease Control.

The low official count is due to minimal surveillance, poor reporting and misdiagnosis, Qi said.

The majority of cases are among male intravenous drug users, but there likely will be a big increase among recipients of blood transfusions, as China does not routinely test donated blood for HIV.

## FRANCE

The Catholic bishop of Marseilles recommends use of condoms to prevent AIDS, reported the newspaper *Le Provençal*.

Monsignor Robert Coffy, bucking Vatican teaching, said he cannot ask people "to kill their neighbors by transmitting AIDS."

The Catholic Church bans all forms of artificial contraception, as well as gay sex, masturbation and oral sex, insisting that every sex act must be open to the possibility of procreation.

## JAPAN

A Japanese man who said he was fired for being HIV positive was awarded back pay and punitive damages by the Tokyo District Court on March 30, reported the Kyodo news service.

The suit against a computer-software firm was Japan's first HIV-discrimination case.

The employee said he was fired right after the president of the company phoned him to inform him that he was HIV-positive and should not come to work. The company claimed it fired the man for being "defiant" and refusing to come to the office.

## NETHERLANDS

The Dutch Reformed Church last week mandated that local parishes may not refuse communion to lesbians and gay men and must fully accept same-sex relationships, reports correspondent Bert Schuur.

The decision reversed a widely criticized November 1994 ruling that allowed congregations to turn away lesbians and gay men.

"One person should not be victimized because another has a problem with who they are and what life they lead," the church synod stated.

## POLAND

The parliamentary commission writing Poland's new constitution voted April 11 to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation. The vote was 16 to 6, with 7 abstentions.

Article 22 was proposed by MP Marek Rajszyk of the Alliance of the Democratic Left party (the so-called post-Communists).

President Lech Walesa's representative opposed the article, saying it could lead to same-sex marriage or adoption by gay men or lesbians.

The commission's draft constitution will require approval by both houses of parliament and a popular referendum.

The only country that currently bans discrimination against sexual minorities in its constitution is South Africa—and that is in an interim constitution awaiting final approval.

## PUERTO RICO

Religious groups at the Cayey Campus of the University of Puerto Rico have denounced a new gay literature course saying it mocks their values.



In response, the Puerto Rican Association of University Professors approved a resolution supporting the class. The local Catholic diocese said it would be content if the university would also offer a religious literature class.

## RUSSIA

On April 3, President Boris Yeltsin signed into law the bill passed by parliament requiring foreigners who stay more than three months to be HIV negative.

The law also institutes mandatory testing for Russian prisoners and for workers in certain occupations, but does not say what happens if they test positive.

AIDS groups and the European Parliament denounced the law, saying it is unenforceable and violates human rights and the international agreements Russia has signed.

It is unclear if the HIV tests must be conducted in Russia or if a foreigner can submit laboratory results from abroad. Many foreigners fear Russian medical facilities because of poor sanitation and, in particular, the re-use of needles.

Compiled by Rex Wockner. Translators for this column are Guido Gaietta, Mario Inghiosa, Peter Rauber, John Styber and Bjorn Skolander.