

marchers in the city of Moncton on June 17. Organizers said most of the city's gay men and lesbians did not participate for fear of workplace discrimination.

- France: More than 200,000 people turned out for a pride march in Paris on June 24. The parade, which ended at the Place de la Bastille, featured 60 floats and demands for laws to ban anti-gay discrimination and legalize gay adoption.

- Germany: About 400,000 people attended Berlin's Christopher Street Day parade June 24, demanding passage of a comprehensive registered-partnership law.

- Israel: Thousands of people marched in Tel Aviv's pride parade through Rabin Square on June 23.

- Mexico: Ten thousand people marched in Mexico City's 22nd parade June 17, from the Zona Rosa down Paseo de la Reforma to the presidential palace in the Zócalo plaza, Mexico's political center.

In Tijuana, about 150 people marched in the sixth pride parade June 17. The parade was followed by political speeches in a city park and parties at some of the city's eight gay bars.

NAMIBIA

The gay and lesbian community of Namibia has opened an office in Windhoek, the Panafrican News Agency reported June 1.

The National Society for Human Rights will attempt to persuade anti-gays to be more tolerant, a spokeswoman said.

"We have to start in schools," said the group's Rianne Selle.

Activist Sam Nakata added: "Top government officials who are lashing out against the gay and lesbian community should not forget their promise to uphold the constitution, because human rights do not divide gays and lesbians from other people who are regarded as straight."

In May 1999, Deputy Home Affairs Minister Jeremiah Nambinga said: "Homosexuality is evil. Homosexuality is anti-social and should not only be condemned but should also be legislated against."

In November 1998, Home Affairs Minister Jerry Ekandjo told Parliament: "Gay rights can never qualify as human rights.... They should be classified as human wrongs which must rank as sin against society and God."

President Sam Nujoma has said, "Homosexuals must be condemned and rejected in our society."

NORWAY

There have been 759 gay marriages in Norway since the nation's comprehensive registered-partnership law took effect in 1993.

The law grants more than 99 percent of the rights and obligations of heterosexual matrimony. Only adoption and church weddings are withheld from gay couples.

Seventeen percent of the gay weddings have been between a Norwegian and a foreigner, often from the U.S., Thailand or Sweden. Sixty-five percent of the partnerships are between men.

Males tied the knot at an average age of 37.3 and women at 38.5, several years later, in both cases, than the average for married heterosexuals.

PANAMA

The International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission is asking activists to write protest letters to Panama's government over its refusal to register the nation's first gay group, the New Men and Women Association of Panama.

The Ministry of Government and Justice ruled that the association contradicts "moral and good habits."

Without legal registration, the group cannot own property, pay salaries or take part in legal disputes.

To receive sample protest letters, send an e-mail to sydney@iglhrc.org.

SRI LANKA

The nation's Press Council ruled June 2 that a letter published in a daily newspaper that called for convicted rapists to be unleashed on lesbians did not breach media ethics.

Gay activist Sherman de Rose of the organization Companions on a Journey had filed a complaint against the paper for publishing the letter. The council rejected the case and ordered de Rose to pay \$28 in costs.

The council said: "Lesbianism itself is an act of sadism, and salacious publication of any opinion against such activities does not amount to a promotion of sadism or salacity. Therefore the complainant is the one who is eager to promote salacity and sadism and not *The Island* newspaper."

De Rose called the ruling "a clear indication of the strength of discrimination against gays and lesbians in this country."

UNITED KINGDOM

Scotland's year-old Parliament voted June 21 to locally repeal Section 28, a 10-year-old UK law that prohibits cities from "intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality" or teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools.

The vote was 99-17, with two abstentions.



Campaigners outside the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh say goodbye to Section 28 on June 21

Nicola Sturgeon of the Scottish National Party commented: "A discriminatory and shameful piece of legislation that was imposed on Scotland by Westminster will today be repealed by the Scottish Parliament ahead of other parts of the UK. That says something about the state of Scotland that we can all be proud of."

Legislation to scrap Section 28 in England has been stonewalled by the Conservative-dominated House of Lords.

■ Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

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