

WORLD news

MEXICO

City and state police raided several gay bars in downtown Aguascalientes the first weekend in April and arrested 38 people on prostitution charges. According to the International



Ricardo Magdaleno Rodríguez

Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission, officers beat gay activists Cesar Froilan Gonzalez and Ernesto Martínez during a raid of El Morbo.

Mayor Ricardo Magdaleno Rodríguez reportedly has announced he is ready to "fight all the faggots in Aguascalientes," "push the gay bars out of town" and "arrest anyone with homosexual appearance" caught walking down Lopez Mateos Avenue, a main thoroughfare. The state of Aguascalientes is one of only a few locales in Mexico where discrimination based on sexual orientation is banned by law.

INDIA

Indian gay activist Nishat Saran, 26, was killed in a car accident April 24 in New Delhi.

He was best known for three films he made—*Fifty-Fifty*, *Summer in My Veins* and *Perfect Day*. Four other people in the same car also died, including Channel V VJ Pooja Mukerji, 20.

UNITED KINGDOM

A street preacher in Bournemouth, England, was fined about \$1,011 April 24 for harassing gays in his sermons. A gay man had filed a complaint against the Rev. Harry Hammond, 69, saying his preaching incited anti-gay violence.

CHINA

An AIDS awareness magazine for gay men has begun production in China.

Friend Exchange publishes six times a year with funds from the U.S. Ford Foundation. Editor Zhang Beichuan says the most important thing the magazine can do is keep repeating "the ABCs" of HIV prevention.

BRAZIL

The São Paulo Official Press has refused to print a magazine edited by students at the Casper Libero School of Journalism because a cover photo showed two men kissing. Activists responded by filing suit under a state law banning discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The press was created in 1931 to publish the state government's official newspaper. Its current function is to print any material needed for public administration, including material for universities.

The president of the gay group Habeas Corpus Potiguar in Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, received a death threat issued in the name of the well-known White Hand death squad April 27.

The International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission said the note referenced Jose Dantas' advocacy on behalf of the city's transvestite sex workers, who suffer high rates of discrimination and murder. IGLHRC is seeking support from activists abroad to secure his protection.

A total of 132 Brazilian gay men, lesbians and trans people were murdered in anti-gay hate crimes last year, Grupo Gay da Bahia reported April 24. "When compared with the homophobic crimes documented in 25 other

countries, Brazil gets put in first place, followed by Mexico, with a yearly average of 35 homicides of homosexuals, and the United States, with a yearly average of 25," said President Luiz Mott, author of the study and an anthropology professor at Federal University of Bahia.

A total of 88 of the victims were gay men, 41 were trans people, and three were lesbians. "Brazil is the world champion in murders of homosexuals, having registered between the years 1980 and 2001 a total of 2,092 such murders—an average of 104 deaths per year," Mott said.

In 2001, the most murders occurred in São Paulo state (24) followed by Pernambuco (16), Bahia (14) and the Federal District (11). Less than 20 percent of the murderers have been caught, the report said.

PERU

Gay activists in Peru are pushing for protections against discrimination in a revamp of the nation's constitution that is under way. The Right to Be Different Front is seeking support from other nations.

TAIWAN

Taiwan's defense minister lifted a ban on gay military police officers May 2, just days after the Military Police Command acknowledged its existence.

The official change of heart followed a rare street protest by dozens of gay activists. The policy stated that people with "sexual orientation impairment" cause inconvenience in "managing and meeting the needs" of the job.

"We don't remember when the rule was formulated," a police spokesman said, "but we are certain that sexual orientation impairment was considered a mental illness at the time. Now



Zhang Beichuan receives an award for his contributions to AIDS education and prevention in China

times have changed. The rule is not quite appropriate by current standards."

Taiwan has about 10,000 military cops who protect installations, government offices and the president. The nation's army, navy and air force do not ban gays.

INTERNATIONAL

The International Lesbian & Gay Association was denied reinstatement of its consultative status April 30 at the U.N. Economic and Social Council when the full council upheld a Jan. 23 decision by its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. The vote was 17-29 with seven abstentions.

Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States strongly fought for ILGA's inclusion, while Egypt lobbied Arab, Muslim and Catholic nations to reject the group. Spain was the only European Union country to vote against the association.

ILGA was stripped of U.N. status in 1994 after a scandal in which a small number of its member organizations were accused of not taking a strong enough stance against pedophilia.

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