

WORLD news

The organization quoted a Jamaican man who witnessed an anti-gay attack.

"The crowd stood around watching, chanting 'Battyman, battyman, battyman,'" he said. "They beat, punched and kicked him, and then they dragged him down the road for half a kilometer. They shouted, 'Battyman fi dead.' As I stood across the street, I realized there was nothing I could do to help him. Some mothers were actually in tears at what they were witnessing, but there was nothing that they could do either. The crowd was saying: 'Give him to us! Let us kill him! He's a battyman!'"



Amnesty International is urging Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson to protect gays from violence and to legalize gay sex

Lesbians are also at risk, said Amnesty, which has "received reports of acts of violence against lesbians, including rape and other forms of sexual violence. There are reports of lesbians being singled out for attack on the grounds of 'mannish' physical appearance or other visible manifestations of sexuality."

Amnesty also is concerned that Jamaican musicians actively promote anti-gay hatred.

"In January 2004," the group said, "around 30,000 people attended a huge stage show and Rastafarian celebration, Rebel Salute, in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Throughout the night, Capleton, Sizzla and other groups sang almost exclusively about gay men, urging the audience to 'Kill dem, battyboys haffi dead, gun shots pon dem—who want to see dem dead put up his hand' ('Kill them, gay men have got to die, gun shots in their head—whoever wants to see them dead, put up your hand')."

Elephant Man, Bounty Killer, Beenie Man, TOK and Capleton are among the stars who have written lyrics variously urging the shooting, burning, rape, stoning and drowning of gay men.

Gay sex ("the abominable crime of buggery") is punishable by up to 10 years in prison at hard labor under Article 76 of the Jamaican Offenses against the Person Act. Article 79 of the same act punishes any act of physical intimacy between men in public or private with up to two years in prison.

THE BAHAMAS

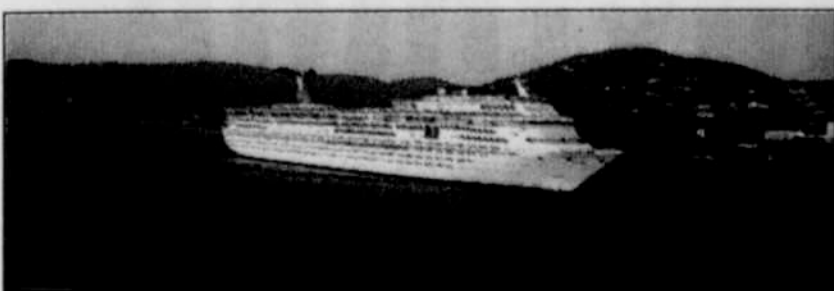
Problems that were expected when Carnival's "Gay Days Cruise" ship arrived in the Bahamas June 1 did not materialize, according to *The Nassau Guardian*.

"In fact, the only activists anywhere near the Festival Place welcome center were members of the Rainbow Alliance, who, along with allies, set up a welcoming committee," the newspaper reported. Earlier reports suggested the ship's arrival would be protested by members of the Bahamas Christian Council and other church organizations, as was the case when three gay and lesbian cruises visited in 1998.

BELGIUM

Is Gay Pride still needed once you win the final battle—same-sex marriage?

Apparently so. About 15,000 people turned out for Brussels' ninth Gay Pride parade May 23.



Protests of Carnival's "Gay Days Cruise" failed to materialize

In 2002, Belgium became the second of four countries that let same-sex couples marry, yet inequalities persist, Radio Vlaanderen Internationaal reported.

"Gay partners do not have the right to adopt children," the broadcaster said. "Co-mothers in a lesbian marriage have no rights or duties to the children of the biological mother, which can lead to problems in the event of a separation or divorce. The child also has no immediate right to an inheritance from the nonbiological mother."

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines' Movie and Television Review and Classification Board sent a warning to the GMA Network talk show *S-Files* and the ABS-CBN network talk show *The Buzz* for broadcasting a lesbian wedding, the Inquirer News Service reported May 24.

Board chairwoman Marissa Laguardia said gay and lesbian relationships are "an abnormality of human nature" and "to show such kind of abnormality/aberration on prime-time TV programs gives the impression that the network is encouraging lesbian and homosexual relationships and [is] tantamount to saying lesbianism and homosexuality are all right."

Her memo continued: "If we are not mistaken, even churches of different denominations consider lesbianism and homosexuality an aberration, not only of the normal state of man (woman), but also from the point of view of morality.... We respectfully ask the network to kindly be aware of the Filipino's clamor for wholesome programming, devoid of aberrant utterances and actions."

Anna Leah Sarabia, a Filipina who directs the women's secretariat of the International Lesbian and Gay Association, said Laguardia's warning to the network showed "a glaring lack of knowledge on basic scientific matters. We hope that the next time the board makes any decision regarding matters of gender and sexuality, your office will take care to find out the veracity and morality of your assumptions."

A few days later, Laguardia expressed remorse concerning her words, claiming she did not intend "to hurt the sensibilities of lesbians/gays/bisexuals/transgenders or demean their sexual preferences. In fact, I have friends, and I also know professionals, who are lesbians and gays. I have always accepted and respected them as they are. I may have acted quite rashly or impulsively in approving a draft memorandum, which has now become the subject of controversy."

Continued on Page 29

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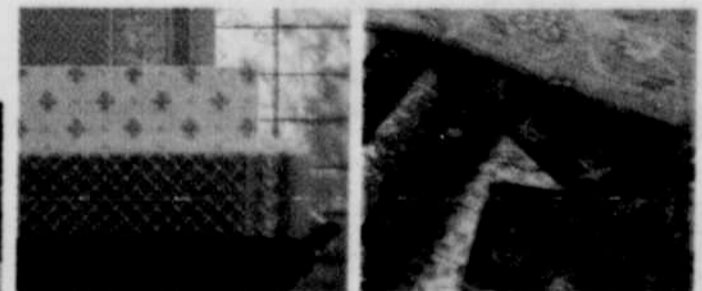
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