

physically attacked because of their sexual orientation, according to the biggest ever survey of the nation's queers.

The Lavender Islands poll, conducted by Massey University, found that three-quarters of gays and two-thirds of lesbians have been verbally assaulted by homophobes. About 59 percent also said they had been outed at some point.

DENMARK

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen won the National Association for Gays and Lesbians' "Salmon of the Year" award, *The Copenhagen Post* reported Aug. 19.

He accepted the award personally at a ceremony held in Copenhagen's Town Hall Square. He was honored for "swimming against the current" with his outspoken support for allowing same-sex couples to marry in the state Lutheran Church.



Anders Fogh Rasmussen

The ban on church weddings is the only difference between registered partnership and marriage.

"Many thanks for the salmon. It's certainly a big one," Rasmussen said. "I express my wish for a Denmark that is spacious, liberal-minded and tolerant—my wish for a society that does not discriminate against people on the basis of sexual orientation."

CANADA

The Labor and Employment Board of New Brunswick ruled July 28 that the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Family and Community Services discriminated against a lesbian couple based on their sexuality and marital status.

The women gave birth to a child via artificial insemination. The health department refused to register the baby with the nonbiological mother's surname and refused to recognize her as a parent. The family department refused to let the nonbiological mother adopt the child.

The board ordered the agencies to stop discriminating in such matters and made them pay \$7,500 to the non-biological parent and \$5,000 to the birth mother for the affronts to their dignity.

Gay Canadian Member of Parliament Svend Robinson, who served for 25 years but resigned after stealing a \$50,000 ring from a jewelry sale in April, pleaded guilty Aug. 6. He was sentenced to 100 hours of community service.

British Columbia Provincial Court Judge Ronald Fratkin granted Robinson a conditional discharge. He will have no criminal record.

"What he has gone through is enough," Fratkin said. "He's fallen a long way and embarrassed himself."

AUSTRALIA

Prime Minister John Howard's proposed ban on same-sex marriage passed the Senate by a 38-7 vote Aug. 12.

The bill previously cleared the House of Representatives. Activists called it possibly unconstitutional.

"We are seriously considering the possibility of a High Court challenge," said Rodney Croome of the Equal Rights Network. "This is a very dark day in Australian history."

Upset about Australia's new ban on same-sex marriage, a group of gays in Brisbane has staked claim to an uninhabited island in Australia's Coral Sea Island Territory and declared it independent.

Cato Island, located six hours by boat from Gladstone, Queensland, has been renamed the Gay & Lesbian Kingdom of the Coral Sea Islands. Its flag is the rainbow flag, and its coat of arms is an upside-down pink triangle.

Emperor Dale Anderson sent the island's declaration of independence to the prime minister and the governor general in June. A spokesman for the government's territories minister said the declaration would not be recognized.

But the gays are prepared to fight and have outlined their legal strategies on a detailed Web site, GayKingdom.org.

"We're very serious about it," Anderson told *The Sydney Star Observer*. "If we can force them to do something about it, then they can't ignore it."

The kingdom plans to begin producing "camp postage stamps" and "pink dollars."

Visitors to the new gay homeland may be hampered by the absence of a harbor. "You have to park the boat off the reef and wait for a wave," Anderson said.

NEPAL

A total of 39 members of Nepal's queer Blue Diamond Society were arrested Aug. 8 at locations around Kathmandu and taken to the Hanuman Dhoka police station, where they were "brutally" beaten, the group reported Aug. 10.

Police said they were acting on complaints of sexual assaults against pedestrians, but Blue Diamond denied its members engaged in any inappropriate behavior. "They have been detained till now without food and have been treated inhumanely without having any faults, and we...are very concerned," the group said.

Blue Diamond director Sunil Pant urged the government to "release our captured members without any conditions." "Blue Diamond Society is involved in purely promoting human rights and HIV awareness among sexual minorities in Nepal without causing harm to anyone," he said.



Sunil Pant (left) accused police in Nepal of wrongfully detaining members of the queer Blue Diamond Society

TURKEY

The Kaos GL Cultural Center in Ankara was attacked by anti-gay vandals in late July.

Two pieces of cement were thrown through the facility's office windows and landed on the conference room table. No other tenants of the building were vandalized.

"This is clearly an intrusion and threat to the visibility and rights of the Turkish LGBT community," the organization said in a press statement. "As we [have] experienced all over the world, the more visible the freedom of homosexuals, the [more] intensified [is the] homophobia and hatred towards us."

ZIMBABWE

A screaming mob of homophobes chased Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe away from their booth Aug. 2 at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, *NewZimbabwe.com* reported. Three members of the group said they were attacked physically. **JM**

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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