

WORLD news

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INTERNATIONAL

The United Nations will continue to offer spousal benefits to employees whose home countries have recognized their same-sex unions.

The directive took effect last February, but the General Assembly—pressured by the Vatican and numerous Islamic and African nations—insisted that Secretary-General Kofi Annan reconsider it. A new, revised policy no longer mentions the apparently problematic phrase “domestic partnership” but reaffirms, “The practice of the organization when determining the personal status of staff members for the purpose of entitlements...has been done, and will continue to be done, by reference to the law of nationality of the staff member concerned.”

The United Nations previously recognized only marriages between one man and up to four women. Several U.N. member nations accept polygamy.

A commission of the worldwide Anglican Communion, of which the U.S. Episcopal Church is the American branch, called on the Episcopal hierarchy to apologize Oct. 17 for approving the election of openly gay and non-celibate Gene Robinson as bishop of the New Hampshire diocese.

Until the apology is offered, the commission said, the 51 Episcopalian bishops who participated in Robinson’s consecration—including U.S. Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold—should consider withdrawing from functions of the Anglican Communion.

Britain’s Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association denounced the development. “The Anglican Church is creating a fantasy world in which gay people are either evil or unworthy of participation as full citizens,” the group said.

“Platitudes about ‘hating the sin but loving the sinner’ are no longer acceptable,” said George Broadhead, the group’s secretary. “They can no longer expect gay men and women to live lives of loneliness and isolation.”

Members of the London gay direct-action group OutRage zapped the commission’s chairman, Archbishop Robin Eames, Oct. 18 as he exited a press conference on the matter at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

“We are disappointed that you failed to unambiguously defend gay human rights,” OutRage’s Peter Tatchell shouted. “You had an opportunity to challenge Anglican homophobia and you failed.”

Tatchell said Eames was startled by the “ambush.”

The New Hampshire diocese responded Oct. 19: “We acknowledge and regret the pain and confusion caused by the election and consecration of our bishop. We now realize more fully that our action, in response to a sincere understanding of God’s calling, has caused deep distress for many in our communion.”

But, the diocese added, “We affirm the ministry of our bishop and applaud his efforts at reaching out in ways that are sensitive and caring, especially to those who are deeply distressed by his election and consecration.”

AUSTRALIA

Delegates to the General Synod of Australia’s Anglican Church resolved Oct. 7 to reject church blessings of same-sex couples and the ordination of sexually active gays. The delegates also praised the nation’s recently enacted ban on same-sex marriage.

The moves put the Australian church at odds with Canada’s Anglican church and the U.S. Episcopal Church, the American branch of Anglicanism. Some U.S. and Canadian dioceses bless same-sex unions, and the U.S. church

allowed the election of an open gay bishop in the New Hampshire diocese.

Australian activists say they fear renewed attacks on queer human rights following the Oct. 10 re-election of conservative Prime Minister John Howard. His coalition increased its majority in the House of Representatives and looks set to take control of the Senate, with help from the fundamentalist Christian party Family First.

“The recent same-sex marriage ban was a walk in the park compared to what’s in store,” said leading national activist Rodney Croome of the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group. “Gay parenting, gay characters on television, gay partnership registries and gay anti-bias laws will all now be in the government’s sights.”

Croome also lamented the election of anti-gay campaigner Michael Ferguson to the House.

“The practical, down-to-earth people of Ferguson’s Tasmanian electorate will be shocked by the fundamentalism of their new representative,” he said. “Already Ferguson has thanked Jesus for his election.”

Croome said “politicians wearing religion on their sleeve like this is something Australian electors are not used to, but will sadly be seeing a lot more of.”

SIERRA LEONE

FannyAnn Eddy, founder of the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association, was murdered Sept. 28 in the organization’s offices. Reports said that she was raped repeatedly and stabbed and that her neck was broken.



FannyAnn Eddy

“To all of us who knew her and shared the great privilege of her wit, sense of the absurd, steely determination, intelligence and unwillingness to let bureaucracy and lies stand in the way of justice, our loss is incomprehensibly great,” said Paula Eitelbrick, executive director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

Eddy, 30, was part of the delegation that the commission and Human Rights Watch took to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva last spring to advocate for the failed Resolution on Sexual Orientation and Human Rights. She leaves behind a 9-year-old son.

“FannyAnn Eddy was a person of extraordinary bravery and integrity who literally put her life on the line for human rights,” said Scott Long, director of Human Rights Watch’s LGBT project. “Again and again, within her country’s borders and beyond, she drew attention to the harassment, discrimination and violence lesbian and gay people face in Sierra Leone.”

UNITED KINGDOM

The 17-year-old London gay magazine *The Pink Paper*, which was shut down Oct. 1 because of money problems, has been rescued.

The title was bought up by Millivres Prowler Group, which publishes *Gay Times* and *Diva*. While those glossy monthlies are sold at bookstores and newsstands, *The Pink Paper* will continue to be distributed free around Great Britain in bars, bookstores and elsewhere.



A change of ownership has saved *The Pink Paper*

Some 40,000 copies will be published biweekly. The publication previously had appeared weekly.

“Everyone was shocked and disappointed by *The Pink Paper’s* closure,” returning editor Tris Reid-Smith said. “It is as popular as ever—all the copies we printed were picked up, and people often complained there weren’t enough available.... This buy-up is the best possible outcome for *The Pink Paper*.”

General manager David Bridle said the magazine faced serious competition for advertising dollars from Web sites such as *Gay.com* and *Gaydar.co.uk*. His company will continue to publish its other gay magazine, the entertainment and listings weekly *Boyz*.

A gay novel, *The Line of Beauty* by Alan Hollinghurst, won Britain’s most prestigious literary award, the Man Booker Prize, Oct. 19.

The book chronicles the sexual and drug-filled adventures of gay Nick Guest, an Oxford graduate living with the family of a Conservative parliamentarian in London during the Thatcher era. Hollinghurst, 50, pocketed \$90,000 for his win.



Alan Hollinghurst was honored for his gay novel, *The Line of Beauty*

BELGIUM

Two men from New Hampshire who work in Brussels became the first U.S. same-sex couple to be married there Oct. 9, in the city of Enghien.

Phillip Sorensen, 46, and Christopher Staker, 49, tied the knot in the City Hall civil weddings room before local friends and 37 other friends and family members from around the world, including 25 who came from the United States for the event.

An Oct. 1 law change made it possible for any foreign same-sex couple to marry in Belgium if one of the spouses has lived there for at least three months. Previously, foreign same-sex couples could marry in Belgium only if their home country or countries also allowed same-sex marriage.

BRAZIL

The same-sex partner of the outgoing mayor of Viséu, Pará, cannot succeed her because the constitution prohibits executive posts in local government from passing between family members, the nation’s top electoral court ruled unanimously Oct. 1.

Eulina Rabelo had to drop out of the race when the court ruled that she and Mayor Astrid Maria Cunha e Silva are a family, Reuters reported.