

Ahmed's execution from his bedroom window, four uniformed police officers arrived at Ahmed's house in a four-wheel-drive police pickup truck," said OutRage's Middle East affairs spokesman, Ali Hili. "The neighbor saw the police drag Ahmed out of the house and shoot him at point-blank range, pumping two bullets into his head and several more bullets into the rest of his body."

"Several other neighbors confirm this account, although they did not see the actual shooting. They say they heard gunshots and saw the police leaving the scene. They then found Ahmed's body lying on the ground outside his house."

Hili also coordinates a gay Iraqi organization in the United Kingdom and says he has reliable contact with an underground network of gay people in Baghdad and other cities.

"According to our contacts...the Iraqi police have been heavily infiltrated by the Shia paramilitary Badr Corps," Hili said. "They are seeking to impose a fundamentalist morality on the people of Iraq. The murder of Ahmed follows a pattern of Badr executions of suspected gays and lesbians."

On April 17, the British Broadcasting Corp. said Iraq has seen an increase in homophobic killings since the U.S. invasion. Frightened gay people told the network the murders are connected to the growing influence of anti-gay religious figures and the increasing lawlessness of militias.

"Saddam was a tyrant, but at least we had more freedom then," one Iraqi gay man told the network. "Nowadays, gay men are just killed for no reason."

Barney Frank Complains to Nigeria

Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., has written to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo objecting to pending legislation that would, Frank said, "criminalize same-sex relationships and weddings; punish those who witness, aid or abet a same-sex marriage; and outlaw any clubs, organizations or meetings—as well as any form of protest—that support or advocate for the rights of lesbian and gay people."

"I find this effort to persecute innocent people based on their sexual orientation not only morally indefensible but also profoundly undemocratic," Frank said.

He also threatened to withdraw his support for U.S. aid to Nigeria.

"If this proposed legislation that so blatantly violates individual freedom and basic democratic rights to freedom of expression and association prevails, Nigeria would no longer in my view have any claim to genuine democratic rule," Frank said.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Turkey Halts Trans Reality Show

Turkey's Radio and Television Supreme Council has banned a TV reality show in which men would compete to best dress and act like a woman, the Anadolu news agency reported.

He's a Lady Now was axed before the first episode aired following an alleged outcry from members of the public.

China Blocks Adoption by Gays

China has blocked adoption by gays and lesbians, *The Boston Globe* reported May 1.

The nation is the top source for international adoptions, followed by Russia, Guatemala, South



Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank blasted Nigeria's president for undemocratic treatment of gays.

Korea and Ukraine, according to the U.S. Department of State.

The communist country also has limited the number of babies who can be adopted by single people—8 percent of the total per year.

Adoption officials in Massachusetts told the *Globe* that Chinese officials were "troubled by publicity in the late 1990s over gay parents in the United States raising Chinese babies."

Australian Capital Territory Passes Partnership Bill

The Legislative Assembly of Australia's Capital Territory passed a civil unions bill May 10.

The bill was revised after the federal government, which bans same-sex marriage, objected to a section that would have let federally licensed marriage celebrants perform the unions.

"I sincerely hope that the legislation will stand," said ACT Attorney General Simon Corbell.

The federal government has veto power over the ACT Assembly.

The measure reportedly grants civil union couples the same rights as married couples.

AMERICAS

Costa Rican Court to Rule on Gay Marriage Case

Costa Rica's Constitutional Court held a public meeting May 4 to gauge opinion on legalization of same-sex marriage.

The seven justices are expected to rule within weeks on a 2003 case brought by gay lawyer Yasin Castrillo, who claims the Family Code is unconstitutional because it permits only opposite-sex marriage.

The attorney general's office has urged the court to rule against Castrillo.

Canadian Gays Troubled Over Census

Canadian gay activists are upset with Statistics Canada's 2006 national census form.

The document instructs married same-sex couples to use the "other" category to record their relationship rather than ticking the "husband or wife" box.

Stats Can said it hasn't had time to change the form since same-sex marriage was legalized nationwide July 20, 2005, but said there is a blank space where married same-sex couples can note that they are married.

Although same-sex marriage was not available in every province and territory until 10 months ago, it has been legal in Ontario since June 2003, in British Columbia since July 2003 and in Quebec since April 2004.

The president of the national gay lobby group Egale, Gemma Hickey, said the census treats gays and lesbians as "second-class citizens."

The group's executive director, Gilles Marchildon, added, "Everyone who completes the 2006 census will see that our relationships are segregated."

Canada conducts a census every five years. 10

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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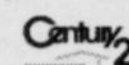
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