



Activist Peter Tatchell marched in London at EuroPride, carrying a poster depicting the pope in drag.

Congress Blasts Russian Gay-Bashing

Fifty members of the U.S. House of Representatives wrote June 30 to Russian President Vladimir Putin "to express our dismay over the riots and violence against gay and lesbian marchers in Moscow during a Gay Pride parade in late May."

"We believe that the mayor's public statements and his banning of the parade itself—as well as the fact that provocative and violently anti-gay statements by religious leaders and others went unrepudiated by elected officials—helped create a situation in which violence against gay and lesbian people was in fact more likely to happen, if not inevitable," the lawmakers said. "Given reports that some police stood by while gay and lesbian marchers were attacked, it is difficult for us to believe that the police

were unable to protect the marchers, but instead were simply unwilling to do so."

The letter was organized by gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., and signed by several House leaders on international affairs and human rights issues.

The small May 27 march—an attempt to lay flowers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, then walk a few blocks for a rally across from Moscow City Hall—resulted in violence, injuries and arrests. The marchers were attacked repeatedly by neofascists, skinheads, militant Christians and riot police. About 120 people from both sides were detained.

Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said he banned the march because Russia's "morals are cleaner" than those of "the West." He called the attempt to lay flowers a "desecration...a provocation [and] a contamination."

"People burst through, and of course they beat them up," he said.

A quarter of Moscow's police force—1,000 officers—was assigned to prevent the march from taking place. 10

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brutal floggings imposed by courts as punishment, and torture and ill treatment, including sexual abuse, in police custody."

For more details, visit Ireland's blog at direland.typepad.com/direland/2006/06/global_protests.html.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Korea OKs Gender Change in Official Records

South Korea's Supreme Court ruled June 22 that postoperative transsexuals can change their gender in the government's all-important family registry.

"Gender should be decided by not only physical appearance but also the person's mentality and psychology, and society's attitude to that person," the court said, according to a translation by *The Korea Times*. "This means that gender is decided by diverse factors, and that a person's mental and social gender, which he or she did not recognize at birth, can be found during his or her social life."

The court said bureaucrats should look at five criteria before changing a record. The person needs to have felt that he or she belonged to the opposite sex throughout adulthood, must have undergone counseling and surgery, needs to be living biologically and socially as a member of the new gender and must be recognized as such by family and friends.

When those conditions are met, the registry will be modified, and the individual will obtain all rights and obligations of the new gender, including, in the case of female-to-male transsexuals, vulnerability to the draft.

However, any legal obligations acquired prior to the change in status will persist. A married man with children who becomes a woman will still legally be a husband and father to her wife and children.



Activists have organized International Day of Action Against Homophobic Persecution in Iran to mark the first anniversary of the hanging of teenage boys Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni.

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