



Attendance at the opening ceremony of the 2006 Outgames contradicts co-chairwoman Marielle Dupéré blame on a lack of public support for the reported \$5.3 million deficit.

Montreal was supposed to host the Gay Games, but a nasty fight between local organizers and the Federation of Gay Games led to the founding of the Outgames and relocation of the Gay Games to Chicago.

The Gay Games also lost money. Organizers in Chicago have been selling off assets and marketing Gay Games DVDs to recoup the loss.

"We owe about \$190,000 in vendor bills and expect all to be paid off by end of first quarter 2007," said Chicago Games co-vice chairwoman Tracy Baim.

The next Outgames is scheduled for 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, and the next Gay Games is slated for 2010 in Cologne, Germany.

Argentine Cross-Dressers Decriminalized

Cross-dressers in Argentina's Mendoza province can now go out in public without fear of being arrested.

Legislators repealed Article 80 of the Code of Misdemeanors, which punished with 15 days in jail people who "in daily life wear clothes or attempt to pass as someone of the opposite sex."

Thirty-three people have been arrested under the law this year, and 19 were arrested last year.

MIDEAST/AFRICA Reports Claim Iranian Gay Was Hanged

A Web site called Iran Focus reported Nov. 14 that "a gay Iranian man was hanged in public on Tuesday in the western city of Kermanshah on the charge of sodomy."

The report said, "Shahab Darvishi was charged with organizing a 'corruption ring,' deliberate assault and 'lavat,' which means homosexual relationship between two men or sodomy."

The report credited "the official news agency IRNA" as a source for the story.

According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, the Kermanshah Province Justice Department Communications Department said Darvishi was "found guilty of forming a coterie of corruption rings, physical assaults and the despicable act of sodomy."

IRNA said the death sentence was issued by the Second Court of the town of Sahneh and was

upheld by the Second Appeal Court of Kermanshah and the 27th Branch of the Supreme Court.

"Hundreds of Kermanshah's residents were present at the scene of the execution," IRNA said. "They were supportive of the judicial system's decision and called for adopting a tough stance against criminals and disturbing elements."

Iran's version of Islamic law does punish gay sex with execution, and many human rights activists say, with varying degrees of certainty, that the nation has executed numerous men for the crime since the 1979 religious revolution. But it is notoriously difficult to fact-check news that emanates from the nation, and skepticism of any one report is always warranted, as Iran does not have a free press.

Human Rights Watch's Jessica Stern sent an e-mail Nov. 15 to this publication that said, in part: "We are concerned with the charges in the case and by the case's lack of information. One or two sources should be considered inconclusive, especially in reporting on a case of this kind.... We strongly urge caution until more information is known."

In the same vein, the secretary general of the Iranian Queer Organization, formerly called the Persian Gay and Lesbian Organization, commented: "Similar to the Mashad incident last year, it may be extremely difficult to firmly establish why this man was hanged or whether the charges were fabricated. Whatever the truth is, the Iranian government must be stopped from killing people for sex-related crimes."

On July 19, 2005, two teenage boys, Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni, were publicly hanged in Mashad, and graphic photos of the executions circulated on the Web. Some Iranian and foreign media said the teens' crime was being gay lovers. Other Iranian and foreign media said they had raped a boy. International human rights groups say they have been unable to determine which version of the story is true.

Nonetheless, "The death penalty is on the books for gay sex, [and] it's at least sporadically enforced," said Scott Long, head of Human Rights Watch's queer program, in a Nov. 16 interview. **JO**

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