



Nikolai Baev, an organizer of last year's banned Gay Pride parade, is suing Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov for libel.

French Court Nixes Lesbian Adoption

France's top appeals court refused Feb. 20 to let a lesbian adopt her partner's biological child.

The court said such an adoption is possible only within a marriage. Same-sex couples are not allowed to marry in France, although they can enter civil unions.

Adoption outside a marriage requires the biological parent or parents to relinquish their parental authority, the court said.

MIDEAST/AFRICA

Iraqi Gay Activist Reports 'Sexual Cleansing'

Some officials in Iraq's government are colluding with death squads responsible for the "sexual cleansing" of queer Iraqis, activist Ali Hili told the Faith, Homophobia and Human Rights conference in London last month.

"Iraqi LGBTs are at daily risk of execution by the Shia death squads of the Badr and Sadr militias," said Hili, an Iraqi refugee and founder of the London-based group Iraqi LGBT. "Members of these militias have infiltrated the Iraqi police and are abusing their police authority to pursue a plan to eliminate all homosexuals in Iraq. This is happening with the collusion of key ministers in the Iraqi government. What is happening today in Iraq is one of the most organized and systematic sexual cleansings in the history of the world."

Last November, five members of Iraqi LGBT reportedly were abducted in Baghdad and, Hili believes, killed.

"For the previous few months these activists had been documenting the killing of lesbians and gays, and relaying details of homophobic executions to our office in London," he said. "I have no doubt that they were targeted not just because they were gay, but also to stop them exposing to the outside world the anti-gay pogrom that is happening in Iraq today."

A U.N. Assistance Mission report validated many of Hili's assertions Jan. 18.

"Armed Islamic groups and militias have been known to be particularly hostile towards homosexuals, frequently and openly engaging in violent campaigns against them," the report said. "There have been a number of assassinations of homosexuals in Iraq."

"At least five homosexual males were reported to have been kidnapped from Shaab area in the first week of December [sic] by one of the main

militias. The mutilated body of Amjad, one of the kidnapped, appeared in the same area after a few days. [We were] also alerted to the existence of religious courts, supervised by clerics, where homosexuals allegedly would be 'tried,' 'sentenced' to death and then executed," the report said.

Nigerian Assembly Advances Anti-Gay Bill

The Women Affairs and Youth Committee of Nigeria's House of Representatives held a hearing Feb. 14 on an extreme anti-gay bill that some activists had believed was not going to see any action.

The measure, which bans same-sex marriage and gay relationships, also seems to outlaw things such as belonging to a gay group, visiting a gay Internet site and socializing between gay people.

The bill states, in part: "Publicity, procession and public show of same-sex amorous relationship through the electronic or print media physically, directly, indirectly or otherwise are prohibited in Nigeria. Any person who is involved in the registration of gay clubs, societies and organizations, sustenance, procession or meetings, publicity and public show of same-sex amorous relationship directly or indirectly in public and in private is guilty of an offense and liable on conviction to a term of five years imprisonment."

The National Assembly is now expected to pass the bill, in some form, before April's general election.

AMERICAS

Buenos Aires Supports Same-Sex Marriage

More than 73 percent of residents of Buenos Aires, Argentina, "agree" with "same-sex marriage," according to a new Analogías poll released by Página 12.

At present, Buenos Aires is one of a handful of locales in Latin America that offer civil unions to same-sex couples.

Pollsters asked 400 adults, "Do you agree or disagree with same-sex marriage?" About 73 percent said they agree, 26 percent said they disagree, and 1 percent were unsure of their opinion. The poll's reported margin of error was 4.5 percent. **10**

REX WOCKNER 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.

If You Paid for Serostim

You May Have a Claim in a Proposed Class Action Settlement

Full Cash Payors, Co-payors and their Heirs are Included

You may be able to get cash from a \$24 million Proposed Settlement if you paid for the prescription drug Serostim. The Proposed Settlement is with Merck Serono International, S.A., Serono Laboratories, Inc., and EMD Serono, Inc. ("Defendants"). It is pending in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

What Is the Class Action About?

Plaintiffs claim that Defendants improperly marketed Serostim, a drug approved by FDA to treat HIV/AIDS wasting or cachexia. The lawsuits claim that Defendants encouraged doctors to prescribe Serostim based on diagnostic criteria that were not approved by FDA. The lawsuits do not allege that Serostim is dangerous to patient health, or that Serostim is not safe and effective for its approved uses.

The Defendants deny any liability and have decided to settle to avoid the expense and uncertainty of litigation.

Who Is Involved?

The Proposed Settlement Class includes all persons or entities nationwide that paid in whole or in part for the drug Serostim from July 1, 1995 to December 31, 2006, and their heirs.

What Does the Proposed Settlement Provide?

- \$10.8 million will be allocated to certain large Third-Party Payors (e.g., insurance companies) who have a separate agreement with the Defendants.
- \$13.2 million will be allocated to the remaining Third-Party Payors (82%) and consumers (18%), after attorneys' fees and the costs of administering the Proposed Settlement are deducted.

Who Represents You?

The Court has appointed attorneys to represent the Consumer and TPPs who comprise the Class. Class Counsel will request the Court award fair and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs not to exceed \$3.96 million, plus reimbursement of expenses.

You may hire your own attorney, if you wish. However, you will be responsible for that attorney's fees and expenses.

What Are Your Options?

- If you do not want to be part of the Proposed Settlement, you must exclude yourself, in writing, postmarked by **May 21, 2007**. Excluding yourself will allow you to bring your own claims against the Defendants.
- If you stay in the Settlement Class you can file a claim. Your claim must be postmarked by **July 19, 2007**. All claim documentation submitted by you will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of processing claims.
- You may object to or comment on any part of the Proposed Settlement. Your objection/comment must be written and postmarked by **May 21, 2007**. You may also request in writing to speak at the Final Approval Hearing.

The *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement* explains excluding yourself, making a claim, objecting/commenting and requesting to speak at the Hearing.

Will the Court Approve the Proposed Settlement?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing on June 19, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. and will consider whether to approve the Proposed Settlement, award attorneys' fees and allow reimbursement of expenses.

For Additional Information

For the *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement*, information on your rights and how to file a claim:

Call: 1-800-378-3615

Visit: www.SerostimSettlement.com

or Write: Serostim Litigation Administrator
c/o Complete Claim Solutions, LLC
PO Box 24676, West Palm Beach, FL 33416