

Lesbian activist Sizakele Sigasa was reportedly murdered in a hate crime in the Meadowlands township of Johannesburg, South Africa.

#### MIDEAST/AFRICA

### Lesbian Couple Killed in South Africa

According to activist groups, a Johannesburg lesbian couple were murdered "execution style" July 8 and their bodies were found in a field in Meadowlands township.

Sizakele Sigasa, 34, and Salome Masooa, 23, were shot multiple times each, and there was evidence they might have been sexually assaulted.

A South African Broadcasting Corporation report said: "They were found...raped, tortured, murdered and dumped. [Sigasa] was found with her hands tied with her underwear and ankles tied with her shoelaces."

The couple reportedly had left a gay party around midnight to drive a friend home, then failed to return to the party as expected. Activist groups said they suspect the killings were an anti-gay hate crime, but police told the South African Broadcast Corporation they've not yet found any evidence to that effect.

### IGLHRC Denounces Iran Sodomy Executions

The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission on July 18 condemned Iran for its continuing executions of teens and men accused of engaging in sodomy. In many, but not all, of the instances that have been publicized, the suspects have been accused of other crimes as well, such as rape.

IGLHRC communications director Hossein Alizadeh, a gay Iranian who won asylum in the United States based on his sexual orientation, cited recent cases of sodomy-related executions in the cities of Mashhad, Gorgan and Kermanshah.

"Despite a widely publicized outcry two years ago when Iranian authorities executed two young men in the northeastern city of Mashhad, the government continues to target, arrest, prosecute and execute individuals under its sodomy law," IGLHRC said. "The Iranian media regularly publishes stories about the execution of alleged criminals on sodomy-related crimes. Just a week ago, the spokesperson for the Iranian Judiciary announced that in the next few days some 20 criminals will be hanged in Tehran on a variety of charges, including sodomy."

The 20 announced executions also were the subject of a July 11 *New York Times* article, which said some of them were punishment for "homosexuality."

IGLHRC noted that Iran refuses to allow independent investigation of its human rights situation, which "makes it impossible for IGLHRC and other human rights organizations to verify many of the charges against alleged perpetrators and to monitor their access to fair trials."

The organization called upon human rights defenders to support the work of the Toronto-based Iranian Queer Organization, to lobby their own governments to oppose Iran's treatment of real or perceived queer people and to request that their "government's immigration service adopt policies to provide refuge to individuals who fear persecution based on sexual orientation or gender identity."

#### ASIA/PACIFIC

### Kathmandu Police Assault Trans People

Police in Kathmandu, Nepal, have admitted that they target effeminate males and transgender people (both known as metis) for the apparent crime of carrying condoms.

City police allegedly beat, stripped and sexually abused several metis who had gathered July 14 in Ratna Park.

Upon receiving complaints about the incident from Nepal's GLBT Blue Diamond Society and a visiting activist from New York-based Human Rights Watch, a Janasewa Police Station Sub-Inspector, Pardeep Chand, reportedly informed the activists: "We found metis carrying condoms, and the metis also told us that they use condoms while having anal or oral sex. So it's our regular campaign to control metis inside the Ratna Park and elsewhere."

According to Blue Diamond's account of the events in the park, officers approached the metis; threatened to shoot them if they tried to flee; slapped, kicked and clubbed them; searched their pockets; found money; and stated, "You...motherfuckers, you make this money by anal sex and prostitution."


According to Blue Diamond, the officers forced the metis to strip and pull back their foreskins to be checked for semen residue. The officers allegedly searched the metis' bags, found condoms and asked what they were for. When the metis said they use the condoms for sex, they were beaten further and accused of engaging in unnatural and illegal sexual activities.

The metis were later held in two police vans, then released.

### Hong Kong Acquits Car Sex Couple

Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal cleared a gay couple July 16 who had been arrested for having sex in a car in an isolated location in the dark.

The court said the prosecution of Zigo Yau Yuk-lung, 19, and Lee Kam-chuen, 30, was impermissible because the public sodomy ban under which they were charged unfairly targets only male couples, not female or opposite-sex couples. The court declared the law unenforceable and unconstitutional.

In 2006, a law that punished gay sex by males younger than 21 with life in prison also was struck down as unconstitutional. 

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.

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