



Ma Ying-jeou, former Taiwan mayor and current presidential candidate, vowed to support gay rights at the city's Pride celebration.

tional clause that says "the state shall take the necessary measures and establish the necessary organization to ensure the peace and welfare of the family" and a law that authorizes suspension of organizations that contravene "public morality."

The office also says the name "Lambda Istanbul" is illegal because "lambda" is not a Turkish word.

A hearing on the matter was held Oct. 18 in the Beyoglu Sütlüce Court of First Instance No. 5, and the case was continued until Jan. 31. The judge appointed a legal expert from Istanbul University to determine if Lambda's claim that it is not violating any laws is valid.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Thousands March in Taiwan

Some 10,000 queer people hit the streets of Taipei for the city's fifth Gay Pride parade Oct. 13.

The procession ended at City Hall with a rally and a performance by pop diva A-Mei. The march's demands included passage of anti-discrimination and same-sex partnership legislation.

The parade, which also included parents and children of gays, is believed to be the largest such event in Asia. Former mayor and current presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou attended the pre-parade kickoff and promised that, if elected, he would push to enact the marchers' demands.

Singaporeans Call for Legalization of Gay Sex

Thousands of Singaporeans have signed an online open letter to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong urging legalization of gay sex.

Parliament reportedly is planning to decriminalize oral and anal sex between heterosexuals but leave in force Penal Code Section 377A, which



Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will receive a letter from residents asking him to legalize gay sex.

bans "gross indecency" between men under penalty of two years in prison.

Gays have found a friend in the nation's founding prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, who said in April: "If in fact it is true—and I have asked doctors this—that you are genetically born a homosexual, because that's the nature of the genetic random transmission of genes, you can't help it—so why should we criminalize it? Let's not go around like this moral police...barging into people's rooms. That's not our business."

The elder Lee is the current prime minister's father.

MIDEAST/AFRICA

Iranian President Was Not Mistranslated

A spokesman for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Oct. 10 that Ahmadinejad was misquoted when he said Sept. 24 at Columbia University in New York that there are no homosexuals in Iran.

"What Ahmadinejad said was...that, compared to American society, we don't have many homosexuals," presidential media adviser Mohammad Kalhor told Reuters.

But the Persian-speaking communications director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, Hossein Alizadeh, a gay Iranian who won asylum in the United States based on his sexual orientation, disagreed.

Asked for comment Oct. 10, Alizadeh played an audio file on his computer over the telephone and said: "Here is exactly what Ahmadinejad said at Columbia University: 'Absolutely not. We in Iran—we in Iran, firstly, we don't have *hamjensbaz* [a derogatory term for homosexuals meaning people with loose morals who chase people of the same gender for sexual pleasure] like you have in your country. In our country, there is no such thing. In Iran, such a thing does not—in Iran, in Iran, absolutely such a thing does not exist as a phenomenon. I don't know who told you otherwise.'"

Alizadeh said Ahmadinejad again denied the existence of Iranian gays a day later at a U.N. press conference.

According to Alizadeh, a reporter for the Voice of America's Persian service asked him: "You mentioned that there is no such phenomena in Iran as homosexuality. Could you please elaborate on that?"

Alizadeh said Ahmadinejad replied: "Seriously, I don't know of any. As for homosexuality, I don't know where it is. Give me an address, so that we are also aware of what happens in Iran."

5,000 March in Johannesburg

Some 5,000 people took part in the 18th Joburg Pride Parade on Oct. 6 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"The fact that thousands braved the rain and cold to assert the importance of Pride shows that the event remains entirely relevant," said Pride organizer Tracey Sandilands.

Police led the 90-minute, four-mile procession of 30 floats and vehicles through the Rosebank neighborhood to a post-parade party back at the parade's starting point on the muddy fields of the Zoo Lake Sports Club. 

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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