

STORIES BY RISHAB REVANKAR
GRAPHIC BY ALICIA HANCHOCK

Ankara, Turkey Widely scrutinized by corruption probes in recent years, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government declared a victory after the March 30 local elections. In a speech to supporters at his Justice and Development Party's headquarters, Erdogan referred to the favorable results as "a victory for democracy in Turkey," according to CNN Turk. Much of the Turkish population, however, questions how Erdogan will treat millions of Turks who voted against his party. They have also voiced concerns about Erdogan's freedom of speech oppressions, including a recent Twitter crackdown.

Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

For the first time since January 2007, the U.S. military saw a zero-fatality month in Afghanistan — not a single U.S. military death, according to ABC News. The Pentagon told Associated Press reporters that "there are about 33,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, down from a 2011 peak of about 100,000." The Pentagon also attributes the decline in number of casualties to a shift in the focus of U.S. troops to "training" and "advising Afghan forces."

Conakry, Guinea

It's not just another Ebola outbreak. According to CNN, Doctors Without Borders called the geographic spread of recent cases "unprecedented." A disease that renders the immune system ineffective, Ebola has victimized 122 people in its latest outbreak. The World Health Organization reports that 78 of the 122 have died and that additional diagnoses have been made in neighboring countries, namely Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Baekryeong Island, South Korea

After the North Korean government announced the possibility of carrying out a "new kind of nuclear test" on March 30, artillery fired 500 rounds of shells on March 31, over 100 of which landed in South Korea's territorial waters, The Guardian reports. Having warned the North about territorial violations, South Korea responded by firing 300 shells into North Korean waters. While no shells were targeted at land or at specific military personnel, South Korean islanders were forced to flee to shelters due to the crossfire.



Ugandan health and human rights: Q&A with experts

BY VALERIA SOSA
STAFF WRITER

In view of the recent passage of the Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Act, The Guilfordian reached out to three experts in LGBT issues.

Paul Semugoma is a physician from Uganda, currently practicing in South Africa. He also advocates for HIV prevention, LGBT health and other human rights issues.

Thomas Rogers is the program assistant and case manager at Freedom House in Detroit, Mich. Freedom House is a temporary home for refugees from around the world seeking legal shelter from persecution in the U.S.

Rev. Canon Albert Ogle is president of the Saint Paul Foundation for International Reconciliation and an Episcopal priest who has served in parishes and non-profits throughout California.

Q: How deeply ingrained is violence against the LGBT community in Ugandan culture?

TR: Perhaps what is most alarming is that LGBT Ugandans often say they fear the public more than the government. Due to the Anti-Homosexuality Act and the heightened discussion of whether or not LGBT persons have human rights, citizens have enforced vigilante justice. Seldom does law enforcement step in to protect the current victims from violence and abuse.

PS: Funny enough, it was not always so. I lived for 10 years in the same village with a partner. People knew that we were gay, but there was little disturbance. Now, people are arrested for living as "man and wife," and there are reports of lynching and public shaming. So, it is worse now than it was before.

CAO: Within the context of a culture that is very violent and prejudiced, the LGBT community is victimized and is a big target for mob violence. There is this culture of spying, fear and intimidation created by the act.

Q: How are LGBT people portrayed in the media?

TR: LGBT persons are portrayed as abnormal and criminal. They are seen as deviants who consciously choose to be LGBT and "recruit" children

into homosexuality. They are also said to sexually exploit minors and persons with a disability.

CAO: The media in Uganda is mixed; you have on one side the Red Pepper, which is an incredibly anti-gay newspaper ... and then the other side of the media is saying that this act creates a second-class citizenry and is not sustainable.

Q: What are the health implications of the anti-gay act?

PS: From a strict reading of the

Act, all health and human rights programs are illegal because they "promote homosexuality." Imagine handing out condoms and condom compatible lubes for gay sex.

TR: It severely threatens all progress made in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda, a country that has been praised for being among the first to recognize and actively take part to combat, treat and reduce the number of new HIV/AIDS infections. We all know that

HIV/AIDS doesn't have a gender preference; it's a disease that is a real threat to men and women of any sexuality. To put it simply, the act institutionalizes hatred and discrimination against an entire group of people.

CAO: We know from research in Southern Africa that, of the aid money sent from the U.S., a very small amount goes to the LGBT community. Instead, most of the money goes to religious organizations that support the act — not AIDS prevention.



In August 2013, about 100 members of the LGBT community participated in Uganda's second Gay Pride March. The community is persecuted by the government.

COURTESY OF GAINSMENETWORK.COM