

Group decries HIV arrests in Egypt

by UPI

CAIRO - Human Rights Watch condemned the Egyptian government for jailing a group of alleged homosexual men after one revealed he was HIV positive. The rights group sharply criticized Egyptian authorities for the convictions of four men on charges of "habitual practice of debauchery" and the arrests of four others awaiting trial. "These shocking arrests and trials embody both ignorance and injustice," said Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Program at Human Rights Watch. "Egypt threatens not just its international reputation but its own population if it responds to the HIV/AIDS epidemic with prison terms instead of prevention and care." The arrests were sparked in October when police broke up an altercation between two men on a Cairo street. One of the men revealed to police that he has tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS. Both men were arrested and two further arrests ensued after photographs or telephone numbers were found in the possession of the arrested men. Four others were later arrested at an apartment leased by one of the men.

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