

Australian state mulls anti-biker gang law

by UPI

SYDNEY -- New South Wales officials in Australia said they are considering tougher laws to criminalize motorcycle gang membership after a fatal fight at Sydney Airport.

A man was bludgeoned to death Sunday with a metal pole during what police said was a confrontation between members of the Hell's Angels and Comancheros motorcycle gangs, the Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported. Four men have been charged in the incident and more charges likely would be filed, police said.

In September, the South Australian government enacted laws that granted police more power to outlaw motorcycle gangs. The laws are based on federal anti-terrorism legislation and are part of a multiyear campaign of applying more pressure on the gangs, ABC reported.

Australia's opposition leader in Parliament, Malcolm Turnbull, says South Australia's laws should be adopted nationally.

"The reality is that we do have a very significant issue with these criminal outlaw motorcycle gangs," he said.

Critics said the South Australia law infringes civil liberties.

"You have the secret evidence tendered against you in a court of law, which cannot be cross-examined," said Free Australia political party spokesman Paul Kuhn.

"Now this goes against all principles of natural justice, of common decency -- if nothing else, morals and ethics," Kuhn said. "But this government with the stroke of a pen has written off that right."

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