

Brazil's Gay Parade Draws 2.5 Million and Urges Gay Marriage Bill Approval

Contributed by Marli Moreira
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The 9th Gay Pride Parade, which happened this Sunday, May 29, in São Paulo, was beyond organizers' expectations, gathering 2.5 million people, according to the event promoters. The Police, however, estimated that 1.9 million people were present at the celebration.

Children, young and elder people took over the 3.5 km of streets and sidewalks between Avenida Paulista (Paulista Avenue) and Praça da República (Republic Square), where the first of the 23 "trios elétricos" (trucks with soundspeakers where musicians atop play very loud music) only arrived at 8:30 pm.

Colorful costumes, balloons, high volume music created the party atmosphere, even though the main issue defended by the crowd this year involved a polemic subject: the bill, currently being analyzed at the Chamber of Deputies (House of Representatives), which deals with the legalization of homosexual unions.

This Sunday's São Paulo parade was for the second consecutive year the largest of its kind in the world, larger even than San Francisco's, in the United States, and Toronto's, in Canada. Brazilian actors and politicians participated on the event, which started at 11 am and lasted through the night.

According to the President of the Association of the Parade of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, and Transgenders (GLBT), Reinaldo Damiano, the first version of the project about homosexual unions was an initiative of the former Mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy from the Workers' Party (the same party as President Lula) when she was a Federal Deputy.

In order to expedite the project's voting, gays intend to collect 1.2 million signatures until next November and send them to the National Congress.

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