

Russia's AIDS law drastic but unclear

MOSCOW — Travelers going to Russia for more than 90 days will have to prove they don't have AIDS, under a law signed Monday by President Boris Yeltsin. Foreign residents who test positive would be deported.

The measure, which takes effect Aug. 1, also requires mandatory AIDS tests for prison inmates and some Russian workers.

Although the new law appears drastic, it makes no provision for carrying out AIDS tests, prompting fear and frustration among the thousands of foreigners who live in the Russian capital.

"It's going to be a bureaucratic nightmare," said Kevin Gardner, an adviser on AIDS to the World Health Organization.

Officially, 890 people have tested positive for HIV in Russia, but experts believe the actual number is much higher.

The bill was approved by parliament in February with little opposition. Yeltsin vetoed an earlier version that would have required even short-term visitors to prove they didn't have HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The new law expands the numbers of foreigners who would be covered by Soviet-era legislation that required mandatory testing for some foreign residents, notably African students. About 400 foreigners infected with HIV have been deported since the old law took effect in 1990.

Valery Kulikov, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry — which issues visas to foreign correspondents — said responsibility for testing foreign residents falls under UPDK, the state agency responsible for dealing with foreigners.

UPDK officials were unfamiliar with the law. An agency spokesman

"There is just no way to implement such a law."

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Russian AIDS Relief official

said implementing it would be "overwhelming."

Russian medical clinics are notoriously unsanitary and most lack disposable syringes. Many foreigners are afraid of catching the HIV virus, or hepatitis, or other diseases if they had to be tested in Russian clinics.

"There is just no way to implement such a law," said Gennady Roshchupkin, a spokesman for Russian AIDS Relief. "They know they can't possibly check every single foreigner. They couldn't afford to."

However, Carol Metzger, director of medical operations at the American Medical Center in Moscow, said the government would probably accept test results from about a dozen foreign-run clinics, including the AMC, in Russia.

Still, the measure was equally baffling for Russians because it did not say which Russian enterprises will require AIDS tests of their employees, or what would happen to those employees, or to prison inmates, if they tested positive.

Roshchupkin thought the law would be applied selectively, to deter refugees and "other visitors whom the Russian government already doesn't like."

Former United Way leader guilty of fraud, conspiracy

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Former United Way of America president William Aramony was convicted Monday of stealing nearly \$600,000 from the nation's biggest charity and lavishing it on young women, some only in their teens.

A federal jury deliberated over seven days before finding Aramony guilty of 25 counts of fraud, conspiracy and money laundering.

Aramony was charged along with Thomas J. Merlo and Stephen J. Paulachak with siphoning off money that had been donated to the charity by businesses and individuals. Merlo was convicted of 17 counts; Paulachak, of eight.

After the scandal broke in 1991, donations to United Way fell off sharply. They recovered slowly but never reached the pre-scandal level of \$3.1 billion in 1990.

"This verdict sends the message that society won't tolerate individuals who are charged with protecting the precious assets of charity diverting those assets for their own personal use," Assistant U.S. Attorney Randy Bellows said.

Aramony and Merlo could get about five years in prison. Paulachak could get about two years. Sentencing was set for June 14.

During the three-week trial, the government depicted the 67-year-old Aramony as a dictatorial executive who treated girlfriends and cronies to all-expenses-paid vacations and tried to intimidate or buy off those who

might expose him.

Prosecutors said he repeatedly propositioned younger women and romanced them with United Way money. Aramony billed the charity for getaways to London, Paris, Egypt, Las Vegas and other spots.

One prosecution witness testified Aramony propositioned her at a business meeting with a Roman Catholic priest.

The defense contended that Aramony, who led the charity for 22 years until he resigned in disgrace in 1992, suffered from brain atrophy that made him more impulsive and less able to reason.

They also argued that any abuses resulted from lax oversight by United Way's board of directors and bumbling by his staff. The defense rested without calling any witnesses.

Aramony's lawyer, William Moffitt, noted that U.S. District Judge Claude M. Hilton threw out about half the charges against each defendant last month.

"They won half the case, and we won half the case," Moffitt said. "We have a tremendous appeal ready. No one won a clear-cut victory in this case."

Jurors acquitted Aramony of two money-laundering counts; Merlo was acquitted of one count of tax fraud and Paulachak was acquitted of four fraud counts.

The jury reviewed more than 1,000 documents ranging from income tax forms and accounting led-

gers to a letter detailing Aramony's affair with Lori Villazor, who was 17 when their four-year romance began in 1986.

Juror Alan Hannen, a driver for United Parcel Service, said the most convincing evidence related to Ms. Villazor. "For me, it was all the money that went to Lori for doing very little work," Hannen said.

Ms. Villazor testified she was paid a salary for more than two years, but performed only "an hour or so" of work. In closing arguments last week, Bellows drew laughs when he pointed out that Ms. Villazor put in more hours testifying in the case than she did earning the approximately \$80,000 she was paid.

United Way money bought a luxury apartment in New York City that Aramony had told United Way officers was a business office. But only he and Ms. Villazor had keys to the apartment, according to testimony.

Witnesses said the pair often met in New York, where Aramony had standing orders for a limousine driver to greet Ms. Villazor at the airport with 18 yellow roses.

Merlo, 64, was a consultant and then chief financial officer from 1990 to 1992.

Paulachak, 49, was a United Way executive from 1971 to 1988 and president of a spinoff company, Partnership Umbrella Inc.

The government claimed the three men used the company as their "personal piggy bank."

News...

in a Minute

House wants to rescue D.C.

WASHINGTON — In an effort to save the District of Columbia from its financial miseries, the House approved a plan Monday to create a special oversight board.

The rescue plan, passed by voice vote, would limit the home rule authority the predominantly black and Democratic city have enjoyed since 1973. The financial oversight board would have veto power over District spending.

"There are no viable alternatives," said Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who heads the Government Reform and Oversight Committee's panel on the District of Columbia. "We are, in effect, pulling the district's credit card with the U.S. Treasury and setting conditions for borrowing that can lead to economic recovery."

The proposal, which now goes to the Senate, authorizes the president to establish a five-member board that could reject District spending and borrowing plans and withhold funds if budgetary goals aren't met.

The District's 600,000 residents still would elect a mayor and City Council, but the mayor would be required to submit budgets to the board for approval.

The bill requires that the District make substantial progress toward a balanced budget over the next three years, and begin achieving a balanced budget in fiscal year 1999.

Wife let husband rot to death

MOORE HAVEN, Fla. — A woman was sentenced to 15 years in prison Monday for allowing her quadriplegic husband to die from decay. A judge recounted testimony from medical workers who described Scott Mickler's condition at his wife's trial: an overpowering stench as he lay in a bed covered with flesh and body wastes, gangrene so severe that his toes and heels were falling off.

Cheryl Mickler was convicted Feb. 6 of abuse or neglect of a disabled adult. A quadriplegic since a 1978 auto accident, her husband had won a \$3.5 million settlement and she ended up with \$1.5 million after he died.

"The defendant's conduct was both extraordinary and egregious," Circuit Judge Thomas Reese said when he imposed the maximum sentence allowed.

The judge cited abuse, neglect and psychological trauma suffered by Mickler before he died in 1990. Reese also ordered Mrs. Mickler to pay \$68,120.

Burundi's death toll still rising

BUJUMBURA, Burundi — Hundreds of Hutus, mostly women and children, were massacred in northeastern Burundi by attackers who shot or bludgeoned them to death, the U.S. ambassador said Monday.

At least 150 people were killed between Wednesday and Friday in the village of Gasorwe, and the death toll for the entire region could be as high as 450 over the past two weeks, said Ambassador Robert Krueger.

Krueger said he learned about the massacres Friday and visited the area Saturday, touring hospitals and talking with parents of children who had been beaten to death.

"I have no explanation for why people would beat children's heads with clubs," the ambassador said Monday. "How can you explain something like that? But that is what I saw, children who had their heads beaten in."

"One child had been shot in the face and had lost an eye," Krueger said, adding that he saw another child beaten so badly that his brain had been exposed.

Survivors in Gasorwe, about 70 miles northeast of the capital of Bujumbura, indicated the attackers wore army uniforms, according to Krueger.

"It began Wednesday morning and was still going on Friday," he said. Ten people were killed Friday morning.

"The village is virtually empty of people," the ambassador said.

"Virtually every house was vacant. For several kilometers down the road I didn't see a single person."

In another massacre March 25 in the nearby village of Karosi, more than 100 people were killed, he said, and up to 200 other people had been killed in the area in the past two weeks.

Krueger declined to give further details, saying he had to talk with Burundian officials.

Killers act with impunity in Burundi, where ethnic violence between the majority Hutus and the minority Tutsis promotes the ambitions of extremist political parties and leaders.

Ahmadou Ould Abdallah, the U.N. special representative in Burundi, said in a recent interview that people are never prosecuted for political crimes in Burundi.

Since independence in 1962, the Hutus and Tutsis have periodically slaughtered each other in their struggle for control of Burundi, a small Central African nation that neighbors Rwanda.

More than 100,000 people were killed in ethnic clashes that followed a failed October 1993 coup attempt by elements of the Tutsi-dominated army. Melchior Ndadaye, the nation's first Hutu president, was assassinated during the coup attempt.

After the assassination, Hutus began slaughtering Tutsis in the countryside. The overwhelmingly

Refugees flee camps

Rwandan refugees fled camps surrounding Ngozi following ethnic violence.



Tutsi military retaliated, killing tens of thousands of Hutus.

Aide workers and diplomats say Burundi has been suffering through what they call "a slow-burning civil war" since the failed 1993 coup.

With Burundi's coalition government weakened by infighting, the army, which ruled the country for 35 years after independence, has been gaining strength.

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