

Poland's Walesa Provokes Outrage With Anti-gay Comments

Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Lech Walesa** has provoked outrage among liberal Poles by suggesting homosexuals in parliament should sit behind a wall.

Walesa, the deeply religious former president of post-Communist Poland, was speaking during an interview on Saturday broadcast by news channel TVN 24 in which he was asked about **homosexual** rights.

Asked where homosexuals should sit in the parliamentary chamber, he said: "No minority should climb all over the majority. Homosexuals should even sit behind a wall, and not somewhere at the front.

"They must know they are a minority and adapt themselves to smaller things."

Ryszard Nowak, a former conservative member of parliament, reported Walesa to the prosecutor's office late on Saturday, accusing him of promoting hatred of sexual minorities.

"The report was filed on Saturday, when the office is closed," prosecutors' office spokeswoman Barbara Sworobowicz told Reuters. "We will examine it, starting on Monday, if it meets the legal definition of a crime."

Robert Biedron, Poland's first openly **gay** deputy, appealed to Walesa to discuss homosexual rights with him.

"Walesa was a hero. I dream of meeting Walesa and talking to him about it," Biedron said in remarks broadcast separately by TVN 24.

"I think Walesa doesn't realize the kind of society we are

now. Walesa went astray somewhere.”

“Lech Walesa up until now was known for tearing down walls, not building them,” said Janusz Palikot, leader of the anti-clerical pro-gay rights Palikot Movement, to which Biedron also belongs.

“Walesa’s words contradict democracy because that form of government is based on protecting minorities.”

Walesa, who became a world-famous dissident when he campaigned for human rights and freedom in Poland’s communist era, expressed his views weeks after parliament defeated draft laws that would have given limited legal rights to homosexual couples.

Poland has been struggling with issues such as **gay rights**, abortion, legalization of soft drugs and the role of the church in public life as younger Poles seeking a more secular society clash with a deeply religious older generation.

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