



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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| Organization Chart | Israel: Reports of "honour" killings and response by government authorities (2005 - 2006) | |
| Employment | Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa | |
| Legal and Policy | | |
| References | Statistics | |
| Publications | | |
| Tribunal | | |
| Refugee Protection Division | Citing figures released by the Nazareth-based Women Against Violence (WAV) organization, <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> states that "honour" killings result in the death of about 10 Israeli Arab women every year (16 Dec. 2005). Uncorroborated figures published by <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> noted that fifteen honour killings took place in 2005, three of which took place in the city of Ramle (8 June 2005). | |
| Immigration Division | | |
| Immigration Appeal Division | According to <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> , a disproportionate number of honour killings occur in the Druze community (16 Dec. 2005). One WAV shelter, which has accommodated some 1,000 Israeli Arab women since 1993, estimates that 200 to 300 were fleeing possible honour killings (<i>The Jerusalem Post</i> 16 Dec. 2005). The head of WAV, Aida Toama-Sliman, stated that "[b]efore the 1990s the leadership could allow itself to legitimize these kinds of crimes, but today it's understood that excuses are no longer acceptable Condemning honor killings has now become politically correct" (ibid.). | |
| Decisions | | |
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| Research Program | | |
| National Documentation Packages | A study conducted by WAV found a diversity of reasons for honour killings (ibid.). Of 25 cases studied, 14 were due to suspected adultery, but other reasons included the women's dress, lifestyle, frequent absence from the home, divorce, marrying outside the religion, refusing to have sex in a forced marriage, and complaining to the police of being beaten (ibid.). | |
| Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets | | |
| Responses to Information Requests | According to Al-Fanar, an Arab feminist organization, there is little widespread support in Israel's Arab sector for honour killings (Adalah Nov. 2005, 3). However, in the winter of 2005, the WAV conducted a survey involving 1,200 Israeli Arab participants over 18 years of age living in a variety of communities across Israel (2005, 5). Asked their opinion of honour killing, 30.5 percent of respondents expressed "understanding of murders based on so-called 'family-honour'," with men (37.9 percent) more likely than women (22.1 percent) to show "understanding or great understanding" of the phenomenon (WAV 2005, 15). Similarly, 43.3 percent of respondents with only elementary education expressed understanding of honour crimes, compared to 20.5 percent of those with a university education (ibid.). Regionally, 52.7 percent of respondents from the Negev showed understanding of honour killings, against 29.4 percent living in the Galilee and 23 percent living in mixed Arab-Jewish cities (ibid., 16). | |
| Recent Research | | |
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Reports

The Jerusalem Post has published numerous media reports of honour killings in Israel (*The Jerusalem Post* 8 June 2006; *ibid.* 7 Apr. 2006; *ibid.* 2 May 2005).

In May 2005, three Palestinian sisters were attacked in East Jerusalem in what police believe was an honour killing (*ibid.* 4 May 2005). Two sisters (aged 20 and 27) died (*ibid.*), and a third was hospitalized (*ibid.* 2 May 2005) after their brother allegedly strangled them to save the family's honour (*ibid.* 4 May 2005). According to *The Jerusalem Post*, while the suspected killer initially eluded capture, his parents and wife were held by Jerusalem police because of their alleged complicity in the murders (*ibid.* 4 May 2005). However, the man later turned himself in to police and confessed his crime after having hidden in the Palestinian Authority for two months (*ibid.* 7 July 2005; *Ynetnews* 6 July 2005).

In April 2006, police reportedly arrested a pediatrician at the Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Ramla, along with his four brothers, for the murder of the doctor's 19-year old sister (*The Jerusalem Post* 7 Apr. 2006). The girl's brothers allegedly strangled her to death because she refused to marry the man they wanted her to wed (*ibid.*). The police, who had been monitoring the girl, noticed her disappearance "after she failed to arrive at a meeting they had arranged with her to make sure that she was safe" (*ibid.*). Corroborating information into this incident could not be found by the Research Directorate within time constraints.

In May 2006, media sources reported the murder of a 25-year old Druze woman in the Galilee, stabbed to death because her family felt she had dishonoured their reputation (*Ynetnews* 3 May 2006; *The Jerusalem Post* 4 May 2006). Police arrested the woman's parents, one or both of whom they suspected were responsible for her death (*ibid.*; *Ynetnews* 3 May 2006).

Also in May 2006, a month following two honour killings in the area, police requested local Arab community leaders in the cities of Ramla and Lod to take tougher measures in combating honour killings after they found a girl imprisoned in her apartment bathroom (*The Jerusalem Post* 31 May 2006). The girl had been "severely" beaten for associating with people against her family's wishes (*ibid.*).

On 8 June 2006, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that a 26-year old man stabbed his 24-year old sister to death in an attack that was caught on videotape by security cameras at a nearby bank. Passers-by apparently failed to intervene while the girl was being stabbed (*The Jerusalem Post* 8 June 2006). The man, indicted by police and a former felon, admitted killing his sister because she was raising her daughter "in an improper way" (*ibid.*).

Government response

Al-Badil, an Arab feminist organization, calls for "serious" legislative and police action against perpetrators of honour killings in the Palestinian community without any leniency due to the cultural context in which they take place (Adalah Nov. 2005, 3). Al-Badil blames the Israeli state for failing to adequately address the problem (*ibid.*, 4), a view echoed by the WAV organization (*The Jerusalem Post* 26 Jan. 2006). Al-Badil also believes that Palestinian Arab leaders must take more initiative to fight honour crimes (Adalah Nov. 2005, 4).

According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*, the trials or investigations into the honour killings which took place in 2005 were ongoing at the end of the year (US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 5).

In January 2005, the Working Group on the Status of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel published a critique of Israel's third periodic state report that it submitted in 2001 to the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination Against Women (Working Group 21 Jan. 2005). The Working Group, a women's NGO network, comprises six Arab-Israeli women's organizations, including Adalah, Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (Adalah n.d.). According to the Working Group, Israel blames the Palestinian community for the violence against Palestinian women, while the group believes "it is the state's obligation to take steps to eliminate the practice of 'honor' killings" (Working Group 21 Jan. 2005, 7). Citing research conducted on honour crimes against Palestinian-Israeli women, the Working Group indicated that of twenty-five cases investigated by researchers, victims had sought police assistance in five cases before being turned away and subsequently murdered (ibid.). The Working Group further noted that "[e]ven when a murderer confessed to a crime, the police failed to investigate further, absolving any other involved family members from responsibility" (ibid.). In addition, the Working Group cited a case in which the initial charges of murder against a man and manslaughter against two siblings over the honour killing of their sister was reduced to charges of "lesser offences" after the intervention of religious authorities (ibid.).

In its submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on 2 June 2005, the Israeli government, speaking on the topic of honour killings, noted that murder is punishable by life imprisonment in Israel (Israel 2 June 2005, para. 135). The government further stated that

[t]he Israeli police, as well as Israeli legal system, regard any murder as such, and investigate it vigorously, regardless of the motives of the murderer. Israeli law recognizes no mitigating circumstances in such cases and prosecutes, indicts and punishes the perpetrators in all severity. (ibid.)

On 15 November 2006, *The Jerusalem Post* stated that the Jerusalem District Court sentenced a woman to 15 years in prison for her role in the poisoning death of two daughters, and the attempted murder of their sister, dismissing the defence's argument that the "honour killings were a traditional part of Arab life"

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

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Internet sites: Amnesty International (AI), Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), B'Tselem, *ecoi.net*, *Haaretz* [Tel Aviv], Human Rights Watch (HRW).

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