



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		12 February 2007
About the Board	<b>ISR102088.E</b>	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Israel: Reports of ill-treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses and response by government authorities (2005 - 2007)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References	Information on the treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses in Israel was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses Official Web Site, there were 1,223 Jehovah's Witnesses in Israel in 2005 worshipping in 17 congregations throughout the country (Watchtower 2005).	
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division	Media sources of 2005 and 2006 report allegations of harassment of Jehovah's Witnesses by members of the Yad L'Achim organization ( <i>Hindustan Times</i> 30 Oct. 2006; <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> 29 Apr. 2005). In April 2005, <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> published a feature article describing the efforts undertaken by the anti-missionary <i>Haredi</i> [ultra-Orthodox] organization Yad L'Achim against Jehovah's Witnesses and Messianic Jews (Jews for Jesus) ( <i>ibid.</i> ). According to <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> , Yad L'Achim uses a variety of tactics to discredit Jehovah's Witnesses, including distributing leaflets and demonstrating in front of their meeting rooms, using connections with <i>kashrut</i> [dietary laws] inspectors to threaten to revoke kosher licences of hotels and restaurants renting to Jehovah's Witnesses, and publicizing their identity on posters or in newspaper ads ( <i>ibid.</i> ). On one occasion, a physician who had become a Jehovah's Witness was surreptitiously tape-recorded while speaking of his faith by a patient, an undercover Yad L'Achim agent, which led to the doctor's reprimand by his health-care fund ( <i>ibid.</i> ).	
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets	In October 2005, <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> , citing an article by <i>Yediot Haifa</i> , reported on several high-ranking Jewish religious leaders who held a meeting in Haifa that was organized by Yad L'Achim to coordinate a united front against the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in the city (28 Oct. 2005). Among the measures proposed by the group was a complete boycott of Haifa Mayor Yona Yahav because he had allowed Jehovah's Witnesses to rent space in the city's convention centre, where they held prayer services, evangelized, and baptized dozens of Jewish residents ( <i>The Jerusalem Post</i> 28 Oct. 2005). The rabbis also proposed national and municipal legislation banning missionary activities in public buildings ( <i>ibid.</i> ). Information on the results of this meeting, however, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.	
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News		
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure	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.

#### References

*Hindustan Times* [New Delhi]. 30 October 2006. "Anti-defamation League Condemns Leaflet Forbidding Renting Apartments to Arabs." (US Fed News/Factiva)

*The Jerusalem Post*. 28 October 2005. "Religious Coalition Against Jehovah's Witnesses." (*Yediot Haifa*/Factiva)

\_\_\_\_\_. 29 April 2005. Larry Derfner and Jonathan Bloom. "A Matter of Faith." (Factiva)

Watchtower. 2005. "Statistics: 2005 Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide." <[http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide\\_report\\_statistics.htm](http://www.watchtower.org/statistics/worldwide_report_statistics.htm)> [Accessed 20 Nov. 2006]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral source:** Watchtower did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *Christian Science Monitor* [Boston], European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, *Haaretz* [Tel Aviv], Human Rights Watch (HRW), United States Department of State, World News Connection (WNC), *Ynetnews*.

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