RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

LBY42988.E

Libya: Information on honour killings (1980-September 2004)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information on the honour killings in Libya is scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. A 28 May 2001 *Ottawa Citizen* article mentioned that Libya is among countries where "women are murdered in so so-called honour killings."

Article 375 of the Libyan Penal Code stipulates that:

Whosoever surprises his wife, daughter, sister or mother in the act of adultery (*in flagrante delicto*) or in illegitimate sexual intercourse and immediately kills her or her partner or both in response to the assault that has affected his honour (*sharaf*) or the honour of his family, shall be punished by a prison sentence. If the act leads to grave or serious injury of the said persons in these circumstances, the penalty shall be prison for not more than two years. Mere beating or light injury in such circumstances shall not be penalised (U.L 16 Sept. 2004)

Defining the concept of honour killings practice, Fatima Chowdhury explained in a 20 August 2004 *Telegraph* article that

*[t]he term, "honour killing" denotes an age-old custom in which a woman, supposed to have brought shame and dishonour on her relatives, is killed by member(s) of her family. Generally, the women are killed for suspected sexual activity outside marriage, even if they have been victims of rape. However, the violation of "honour" can encompass anything from a woman seeking divorce to challenging "acceptable" behaviour.*

Describing the reasons for which honour killings are carried out, Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated that a "woman can be targeted by her family for a variety of reasons including, refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce - even from an abusive husband - or committing adultery" (6 Apr. 2001).

The FreeDictionary.com explained that in general such killings "the murder is considered to be a private matter within the affected family [and] rarely do non-family members or the courts become involved" (2004).

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

Hatred as Criticisms of Israel." (Dialog)


Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: Africa Confidential, Resource Centre country file.

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