



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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05 December 2003

MNG42200.E

Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information further to that provided in MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Citing from a 30 June 1999 *Ulan Bator Post* article, the International Lesbian and Gay Association's (ILGA) World Legal Survey on Mongolia states that in April 1999, Tavilan or Destiny, became Mongolia's first lesbian and gay rights group (17 Sept. 1999). Tavilan's mandate was to protect and promote gay and lesbian rights, to establish international networks with other gay rights groups and to foster understanding among the general public in Mongolia (ILGA 17 Sept. 1999).

One member of the group stated to the *Ulan Bator Post* that the group formed because of "police harassment and improper sentencing procedures that violated civilian rights" (ibid.). Another article, authored by a former member of the US Peace Corps who served in Mongolia and published in the International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter (IIAS), stated that Tavilan was created after the murder of a gay man and the subsequent police interrogation of known gay men (IIAS Nov. 2002). The IIAS article adds the following details about the group:

In the summer of 2000, Destiny had its second general meeting, but only had five people in attendance. Perhaps queer Mongolians were afraid to meet in the Children's Palace, a public building in the centre of Ulaanbaatar. At that meeting, a lesbian joined the group as a member of the board of directors. As an employee with a woman's NGO, she held workshops at various universities on gender and was able to come out during some of her presentations.

Although membership waned, the group was able to get a grant from the Mongolian AIDS Foundation to fund a 24-hour hotline for gay, lesbian, and bisexual Mongolians who had questions about HIV/AIDS/STD prevention. Unfortunately, as international donor interest in Mongolia declined, the funding for this grant dried up (ibid.).

In 2002, after failing to generate new members and organize community activities via an online discussion group, the founder of Tavilan reportedly posted the following Internet message:

"We just killing [*sic*] and sad. There is no gay community in Mongolia. And also there is still no gay life in [Ulan Bator]. Why do we have no connections, no trust, and no information? We need do something [*sic*] for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, community" (ibid.).

Regarding the socio-political climate for homosexuals in Mongolia, the author maintains that

Mongolia has no sodomy laws per se, but it lacks any specific human rights protections on the basis of sexual orientation and does not recognize same-sex relationships [through] a domestic partnership or civil union policy. Although Mongolia's queers fear rejection from family and friends and some have reported getting into fistfights with family, there are no organized hate groups (ibid.).

Moreover, in the author's opinion, homosexuals who leave Mongolia "are not so much escaping persecution by the state or hate groups as they are seeking a place where they can experience their sexuality, free from the expectation that they will have a heterosexual family and kids" (ibid.). Please refer to the attached document for the complete IIAS article.

No further information on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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 to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter (IIAS). November 2002. No. 29. Richard Smith. "Queer Mongolians: Is Isolation Their Destiny?" <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/29/IIASNL29_14.pdf> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2003]

International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). 17 September 1999. World Legal Survey: Mongolia. <http://www.ilga.org/Information/legal_survey/asia_pacific/mongolia.htm> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2003]

Additional Sources Consulted

Dialog

IRB Databases

Unsuccessful attempts to obtain information from the Mongolian gay rights group, Tavian.

Internet sites, including:

Amnesty International

GayLawNet.com

GlobalGayz.com

GoQueer.com

Human Rights Watch

International Lesbian and Gay Association

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

World News Connection

Attachment

International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter (IIAS). November 2002. No. 29. Richard Smith. "Queer Mongolians: Is Isolation Their Destiny?" <http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/29/IIASNL29_14.pdf> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2003]

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