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2 March 2006

GUY101130.E

Guyana: Treatment of Caucasian women in Guyana who are victims of domestic violence; availability of state protection if the partner is Afro-Guyanese; treatment of mixed-race children (Caucasian-Afro-Guyanese) (2005 - 2006)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of Caucasian women in Guyana who are victims of domestic violence and the availability of state protection for them if their partner is Afro-Guyanese was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

A representative of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security of Guyana provided the following information in a 27 February 2006 telephone interview. A Caucasian woman who was a victim of domestic violence would be treated in the same way as an Afro-Guyanese or Indo-Guyanese woman in the same situation and all women have access to the same resources for assistance. The representative also stated that the same would apply if the husband or partner was Afro-Guyanese (Guyana 27 Feb. 2006b).

Regarding children of mixed Caucasian and Afro-Guyanese descent, the representative indicated that they would be treated the same as other children and would have access to the same services because mixed marriages are widely accepted in Guyana (ibid.). The representative stated that her organization had never received any complaints indicating that Caucasian women victims of domestic violence had been discriminated against (ibid.).

During a telephone interview on 27 February 2006, a Dispute Resolution Officer from the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) of Guyana, a government institution which promotes the elimination of racial discrimination and addresses complaints of racial discrimination (Guyana n.d.), stated that they had never received any complaints of racial discrimination from Caucasian women who had been victims of domestic violence. Independent sources corroborating the treatment of Caucasian women victims of domestic abuse could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In general, sources reported that domestic violence against women was prevalent in Guyana (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5; Canada 5 Dec. 2005; Freedom House July 2005). In addition, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, referring to Guyana's legislation on domestic violence, stated that it was concerned about the effectiveness of the legislation and about the "lack of an effective monitoring mechanism, and

insufficient support measures for victims of domestic violence" (22 July 2005).

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

Canada. 12 December 2005. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). "Addressing Gender-based Violence in Guyana." <<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/webcountry.nsf/VLUDocEn/5FE8E8824E92B9DE852570C30067AC21>> [Accessed 1 Mar. 2006]

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004. 28 February 2005. United States Department of State. "Guyana." <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41763.htm>> [Accessed 1 Mar. 2006]

Freedom House. July 2005. "Guyana." *Freedom in the World 2005*. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?country=6749&pf> [Accessed 1 Mar. 2006]

Guyana. 27 February 2006a. Ethnic Relations Commission. Telephone interview with a Dispute Resolution Officer.

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_____. N.d. Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC). "About the ERC: Functions of the ERC." <<http://www.ethnicrelations.org.gy/about3.html>> [Accessed 2 Mar. 2006]

United Nations (UN). 22 July 2005. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *Concluding Comments: Guyana*. (CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/3-6). <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw33/conclude/guyana/0545024E.pdf>> [Accessed 1 Mar. 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact Guyanese Women in Development (GUYWID), the University of Guyana and the University of Toronto were unsuccessful.

The National Resource and Documentation Centre for Gender and Development, Red Thread Women's Development Programme and Women Across Differences (WAD) did not provide information within the time constraints of this response.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Caribbean Association for Feminist Research and

Action (CAFRA), Factiva, Freedom House, Guyana Government Information Agency (GINA), Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI), Help and Shelter Guyana, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW), Stabroek News, United States Department of State, Women's Affairs Bureau (WAB) of Guyana.

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