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21 April 2004

TZA42605.E

Tanzania: The treatment of Christian pastors or other Christians; whether they are targeted because of their religion; whether state protection is available for Christians (2000-April 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Between September 2003 and March 2004, news sources reported on various incidents connected to mistreatment of Christians, including a religious disturbance in Mwanza, north-western Tanzania (*The Guardian* 10 Sept. 2003), the bombing of a Catholic-owned bus (BBC 22 Mar. 2004) and the burning of a church in Zanzibar (*News 24* 11 Mar. 2004). According to *The Guardian*, along with five of his followers, Sheikh Habibu Mazinge, leader of the Al-Mallid Islamic International Propagation Centre, was arrested and charged with "using abusive language against Christians" (10 Sept. 2003). The six members of the Al-Mallid group were also charged with illegal gathering, disregarding police orders, damaging police cars, and injuring a police officer (*The Guardian* 10 Sept. 2003).

According to an 11 March 2004 *News 24* article, unidentified persons illegally entered a Catholic Church in central Zanzibar and started a fire that burned some of the building's furnishings. While the police did not have any suspects in this case as of 11 March 2004, an official reportedly said that the fire was an act of religious intolerance aimed at inciting conflict in Zanzibar (*News 24* 11 Mar. 2004). The BBC also reported that in Zanzibar five persons were arrested for the apparent bombing of a bus that belonged to the Catholic Church (BBC 22 Mar. 2004).

The *International Religious Freedom Report 2003* stated that while relations between Muslims and Christians were for the most part harmonious, tensions had increased due to claims by Muslim groups that the Tanzanian government was dominated by Christians favouring their own (18 Dec. 2003, Sec. 3). Moreover,

[d]uring the period covered by this report, Muslim fundamentalist organizations engaged in increasingly confrontational proselytizing in Zanzibar, Morogoro, and Dar es Salaam. Anti-Christian slogans became more prevalent in newspapers and pamphlets, and on clothing. Muslims threatened tourist establishments in Zanzibar, warning proprietors who catered to Western customers that they risked retribution for serving alcohol or engaging in other perceived vices. In Zanzibar there were gasoline bomb attacks against bars and hotels in January 2002 and in 2001 (*International Religious Freedom Report 2003* 18 Dec. 2003, Sec. 3).

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

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Additional Sources Consulted

Publication: *Europa World Year Book*, 2003

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