

Qatar

Response to Information Request Number:	QAT01001.ZAR
Date:	May 08, 2001
Subject:	Qatar: Information on Homosexuals
From:	INS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	Qatar / Corporal punishment / Detention / Sentencing / Sexual orientation

Query:

Reports indicate that the death penalty is the sentence for any Qatari citizen caught engaging in homosexual activity. Is this punishment carried out? What about cases where the individual is said to be gay but is not caught in any homosexual act?

Response:

According to The Third Pink Book (1993, p. 318):

Homosexual behavior is illegal [in Qatar]. Islamic laws against homosexuality are applied. [In Qatari society], homosexuality is taboo. There is no visible social support for gay and lesbian rights.

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) web-site quotes *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Societies* (Schmitt and Sofer, eds., 1991) as stating: "Article 201 of the 1971 Penal Code punishes sodomy between consenting adults (irrespective of sex) with up to five years imprisonment" (ILGA No date).

In 1996, the U.S. Department of State reported that an American citizen in Qatar was sentenced to six months imprisonment and 90 lashes for homosexual activity. The individual and his family rejected a pretrial offer of expulsion in lieu of the imprisonment and lashes because the individual hoped to be able to return to Qatar.

The sentence was carried out on June 6 [1995]. A physician was present and the prisoner completed the ordeal bruised but in good health. He was released from Central Prison on July 22 [1995] and departed Qatar (March 1996).

In 1998, Qatar deported over 20 Filipino workers suspected of being gay. The workers were arrested on October 1, pursuant to surveillance by Qatari police of barbershops and clothing stores frequented by Filipino men living in Qatar as contract workers (Washington Blade 19 March 1999).

Sources available to the RIC did not contain information on specific incidents of punishment of Qatari citizens under the sodomy statute, and a representative of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) was not aware of situations in which Qatari citizens had been prosecuted under the statute. The ILGA representative stated that, based on contact with individuals in "similarly oppressive states in the Gulf," it would be "most unlikely" that a Qatari national would seek publicity upon such prosecution because of concerns for the safety of the individual, his/her family, and his/her "future existence" in Qatar (5 May 2001).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC 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.

References:

International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). 5 May 2001. Email to the Resource Information Center from representative.

International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). No date. WORLD LEGAL SURVEY. [Internet] URL: <http://www.ilga.org/information/legalsurvey/middle%20east/qatar.htm> [Accessed on 3 April 2001].

THE THIRD PINK BOOK. 1993. Edited by Aart Hendriks, Rob Tielman, and Evert van der Veen. Prometheus Books: Buffalo, New York.

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THE WASHINGTON BLADE. 19 March 1999. Kai Wright. "Mapping persecution: U.S. report excludes many Gay cases." [Internet] URL: <http://nzcom.co.nz/NZ/Queer/OUT/news/199903/379.html> [Accessed on 3 April 2001].

Attachments:

THE THIRD PINK BOOK. 1993. Edited by Aart Hendriks, Rob Tielman, and Evert van der Veen. Prometheus Books: Buffalo, New York, p. 318.

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