Bangladesh: Treatment of Muslims who converted to Christianity; protection available to Christians who are threatened by religious extremists (2000-2003)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa


Other than the attached testimony of one Muslim man's conversion to Christianity, specific information on the treatment of Muslims who converted to Christianity was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. The attached story of a man known as Abdul, who converted from Islam to Christianity, describes how he was ostracized from friends and family and beaten four times due to his change of faith (Religion Today 6 Feb. 2001). According to Abdul, his bank accounts were also frozen on several occasions and his house was searched four times (ibid.).

In addition to Abdul's story, the following general information on Muslims who convert to Christianity was found. Despite the fact that proselytizing is legal in Bangladesh, there is "strong social resistance to conversion from Islam" (ICC 6 June 2003; International Religious Freedom Report 2002, Sec. III 7 Oct. 2002). Muslims who convert to Christianity typically suffer at a local level, according to International Christian Concern (6 June 2003), and may be ostracized from their village, physically abused, or denied well water (ibid.; International Coalition for Religious Freedom 7 Oct. 2002).

No information on protection available to Christians who are threatened by religious extremists could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the police in Bangladesh are reportedly "slow to assist members of religious minorities who have been victims of crimes" (International Religious Freedom Report 2002 7 Oct. 2002).

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


Additional Sources Consulted

Dialog

IRB Databases

Internet sites, including:

Center for Religious Freedom

Christian Monitor

Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities

Human Rights Watch

International Association for Religious Freedom

International Society for Human Rights

Mayer Dak

Minorities at Risk

Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance

Overseas Council International

World News Connection

Attachment


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