



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIR's](#) | [Help](#)

19 October 2004

GIN43078.FE

Guinea: Situation of unmarried mothers, namely those from Muslim families; protection available against paternal violence (2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

The information concerning the extent of the phenomenon of unmarried mothers in Guinea is contradictory among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. During a 13 October 2004 telephone interview, the president of the Guinean Organization for Human Rights (Organisation guinéenne de défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, OGDHC), a non-governmental organization in Conakry, said that unmarried mothers are a common phenomenon in the cities in Guinea, which is 85% Muslim (*Countries of the World Yearbook 2005* 2004, 713). The president of the Guinean National Coalition for Women's Rights and Citizenship (Coalition nationale de Guinée pour les droits et la citoyenneté des femmes, CONAG-DCF), another non-governmental organization in Guinea, indicated in correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 15 October 2004 that there are many cases of unmarried mothers in Guinea, especially adolescents.

However, the first secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Guinea in Ottawa pointed out during a 12 October 2004 telephone interview that unmarried mothers are not a common phenomenon and that Muslim women usually are married when they have children.

Regarding the perception of unmarried women in Guinea, the president of CONAG-DCF indicated that unmarried mothers are given a negative image and are rejected by society (15 Oct. 2004). The president of OGDHC explained that unmarried mothers are generally frowned upon by the Guinean people and that many of those mothers are victims of family violence, including paternal violence (13 Oct. 2004). According to the president of OGDHC, radical Muslim families drive unmarried mothers out of the family home (13 Oct. 2004). Sometimes, the mother of the pregnant girl is also driven out, by her husband, because she holds the ultimate responsibility of educating her daughter, who brought shame to the family (CONAG-DCF 15 Oct. 2004; OGDHC 13 Oct. 2004.). However, some Muslim families will tolerate unmarried mothers (ibid.).

The first secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Guinea said that Muslim families do not reject unmarried mothers (12 Oct. 2004). The first secretary was unable to confirm whether paternal violence against unmarried mothers occurs regularly in Guinea.

No information on state protection available to unmarried mothers who have experienced paternal violence could be found among the sources consulted. However, according to customary law, family violence in general is resolved within the family (OGDHC 13 Oct. 2004). The first secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Guinea pointed out that, usually, domestic violence is resolved first between the two families (12 Oct. 2004). Although Guinean law allows women to inform the police in the case of family violence, complaints against the father or the husband are generally frowned upon (OGDHC 13 Oct. 2004). In addition, the United States Department of State indicates that domestic violence is common in Guinea but that police rarely intervene (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sect. 5).

No organization exists in Guinean society to assist unmarried mothers (OGDHC 13 Oct. 2004). The president of CONAG-DCF indicated that, in addition to women being forced to take a back seat socioculturally, the lack of political willingness to implement the texts and laws that promote women's rights prevents women from becoming liberated (15 Oct. 2004). Nevertheless, schools accept unmarried mothers, and there are several non-governmental organizations that are working to improve the sociocultural and political status of women (CONAG-DCF 15 Oct. 2004).

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

Coalition nationale de Guinée pour les droits et la citoyenneté des femmes (CONAG-DCF), Conakry. 15 October 2004. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by the president.

Countries of the World and Their Leaders Yearbook 2005. 2004. Vol. 1. Under the direction of Karen Ellicott. Detroit: Thomson-Gale.

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003. 25 February 2004. United States Department of State. Washington, D.C. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27731.htm>> [Accessed 12 Oct. 2004]

Embassy of the Republic of Guinea, Ottawa. 12 October 2004. Telephone interview with the first secretary.

Organisation guinéenne de défense des droits de l'homme et du citoyen (OGDHC), Conakry. 13 October 2004. Telephone interview with the president.

Additional Sources Consulted

An oral source did not respond to an information request within the time constraints.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Famafrigue; International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH); Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Children of Guinea; Women Living Under Muslim Laws; Women's Human Rights Net.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.