



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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29 April 2003

GMB41486.E

Gambia: Response of police and other state authorities to reports of family disputes or threats by family members; legal recourse available to such victims, particularly females
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No references on the response of the police and other state authorities to reports to family disputes or threats by family members over religious conversion, and on the legal recourse available to such victims, particularly women, could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the following information may be of interest:

According to the *International Religious Freedom Report 2002*, although the Gambian population is 90 per cent Muslim, religious pluralism and freedom are permitted (7 Oct. 2002 Sec.1). The Christian community is mainly Catholic; however, "several Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and various small Protestant evangelical denominations" are also represented (*International Religious Freedom Report 2002*, 7 Oct. 2002, Sec. 1).

Sources consulted by the Research Directorate point out that cordial and harmonious relationships exist among various religious groups and that inter-religious marriages are legal and socially acceptable (ibid.; YMCA Fall 2002; CCOM Jan. 2002). In the General Adviser's Report to the European Liaison Committee and the North American Partners Meetings, the Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), noted that "Gambia continues to be a model of Christian-Muslim positive interaction and understanding in the continent" (CCOM 2002).

PROCMURA is operated by the Churches' Commission on Mission (CCOM), "the official meeting point for the departments and agencies of the British and Irish churches concerned with world mission and evangelisation" (CCOM n.d).

With regard to family violence, including abuse, *Country Reports 2002* states that "police tended to consider these incidents to be domestic issues outside of their ordinary jurisdiction" (31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5).

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

Churches' Commission on Mission (CCOM). 2002. Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). "General Adviser's Report to the European Liaison Committee and the North American Partners Meetings, January/March 2002." <http://www.geocities.com/ccom_africa_forum/doc_files/procmura_ga_report_2002_utrec> [28 Apr. 2002]

_____. n.d. "Churches' Commission on Mission ." <<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/ccom/ccom%20%20About%20CCOM%20.htm>> [Accessed 24 Apr. 2003]

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002. 31 March 2003. United States Department of State. Washington, DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18205>> [Accessed 28 Apr. 2003]

International Religious Freedom Report 2002. 7 October 2002. United States Department of State. Washington, DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13836.htm>> [Accessed 28 Apr. 2003]

YMCA International. Fall 2002. *the International Observer*. No. 8. Sam Thorpe. "The YMCA in a Predominantly Muslim Country." <<http://www.ymcainternational.org/Muslim.htm>> [Accessed 28 Apr. 2003]

Additional Sources Consulted

Africa Confidential

Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series

Amnesty International

Country Reports 2000-2001

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Internet sources, including:

Africa Online

Search engines, including:

Google

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