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12 September 2005

KEN100466.FE

Kenya: Situation of people of Indian origin; whether Sikhs are treated differently than other people of Indian origin; state protection available to people of Indian origin (September 2002 - September 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No recent information on the situation of Sikhs and other people of Indian origin, including their treatment by government authorities and by other Kenyans, could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, in 8 September 2005 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Ottawa who has published extensively on Kenya indicated that, in general, the situation of Asians in Kenya has not really changed, even under the new regime [that came to power in December 2002]. He explained that Asians are still "subjected to widespread resentment" by other Kenyans and that they "remain easy targets for petty or semi-organized crime" (Assistant professor of political science 8 Sept. 2005).

In other correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 16 September 2002, the same professor stated that

[t]here is definite resentment of Asian Kenyans by African Kenyans, for the most part because of the Asian community's wealth. Many Asians are in financial partnership with senior KANU [Kenya Africa National Union] officials, which also breeds resentment from opposition supporters (though some Asians contribute to the opposition also in order to hedge their bets). Asians are obvious targets for petty or semi-organized crime. Those Asians that oppose the government are certainly potential targets for government-sponsored violence (hard to prove, since it would probably be disguised as "private" violence), but then that would not clearly be because of their ethnicity *per se* (ibid., 16 Sept. 2002).

According to the professor, the state offers "little or no protection" to individuals of Asian origin (ibid., 8 Sept. 2005).

The information communicated by the professor could not be corroborated by other sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The following information on the economic situation of Indians in Kenya, however, might be useful.

In a paper published on 9 April 2004 by the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization, Kenya was described as "an exceptionally tolerant society" where the Indian minority is an "economically prosperous community" that is not subjected to the "violent discrimination" that Indians in Uganda faced under Idi Amin. In the same vein, the author of a 6 June 2005 article appearing in the Ugandan newspaper *The Monitor* wrote, "From Mombasa [Kenya] to Kigali [Rwanda], from Iganga [Uganda] to Lusaka [Zambia], from Mbale [Uganda] to Dar es Salaam [Tanzania], the Indians are the most prosperous and viable local social group."

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

Assistant professor of political science, University of Ottawa. 8 September 2005. Correspondence.

_____. 16 September 2002. Correspondence.

The Monitor [Kampala]. 6 July 2005. Timothy Kalyegira. "The Indian Success Story Examined." (AllAfrica/Factiva)

Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. 9 April 2004. Jean-Pierre Lehmann. "Kenya - Globalizing Flowers: The Country Still Has Long Way To Go To Integrate More Profitably with the World."
<<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=3666>> [Accessed 2 Sept. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The coordinator of the Kenyan section of the Human Rights House Project and the publication manager for *The International Indian* did not respond to information requests within the time constraints of this Response.

Publications: *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, Resource Centre country file.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica, Amnesty International, *Daily Nation*, *East Africa*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net), Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), *Kenya Times*, United States Department of State.

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