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Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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21 July 2006

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Liberia: Treatment of homosexuals; availability of state protection and the existence of organizations that help them (July 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Current information on the treatment of homosexuals in Liberia could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

However, reports state that homosexual acts, seen as "voluntary sodomy" (ILGA 31 July 2000), are illegal (*ibid.*; *The Daily Texan Online* 7 Mar. 2003; *Behind the Mask* 26 July 2004) and that homosexuality is a "social taboo" in Liberia (*ibid.*). Without specifying the period, *The Daily Texan Online* indicates that people convicted of homosexuality under the Liberian Penal Code receive multi-year jail sentences (7 March 2003)

The Analyst, a Liberian newspaper, quotes 2005 Liberian senatorial candidate Clemenceau Urey disparaging homosexuality in a speech to university students about impending elections (22 Feb. 2005). Urey later finished third in a close multi-candidate senate race in Montserrado County, narrowly one (NEC 19 Oct. 2005) of the two seats available in each county (Liberia 23 Dec 2004). Urey ran for the Unity Party (NEC 19 Oct. 2005), which finished second overall in voting for the senate (NEC 2005). *The Analyst* reports that Urey said that "Liberian law defines marriage as union between opposite sex and does not recognize same-sex marriage. Therefore there is no way future lawmakers can make laws to legalize homosexuality in the foreseeable future" (22 Feb. 2005). He is also quoted as saying that "[h]omosexuality is unclean, unbiblical, unacceptable and unhealthy. Those who practice it are sick ... [and t]hose who engage in such acts become outcast in certain societies and opportunities to advance may be denied them" (*The Analyst* 22 Feb. 2005). No information about Clemenceau Urey's continuing political career could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The ILGA report also provides the following information:

While it is true that there are Gays in Liberia, such people operate underground. They are believed to be residing in concession areas and cities. Members of the Gay society carry on their activities under the thick curtain of darkness, in secret, for fear that if it becomes public knowledge, they could be arrested, prosecuted, ostracized, ex-communicated and ridiculed by their non-gay friends, families and society at large (ILGA 2000; see also *Daily Texan Online* 7 Mar. 2003)

No information on the availability of state protection or organizations that help homosexuals in Liberia could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

The Analyst [Monrovia]. 22 February 2005. "Clemenceau Urey Cautions AMEU Students." <<http://www.mask.org.za/printpage.php?id=318>> [Accessed 19 July 2006]

Behind the Mask. 26 July 2004. Daniel Somerville. "No Nation for Gays." <<http://www.mask.org.za/printpage.php?id=317>> [Accessed 19 July 2006]

The Daily Texan Online. 7 March 2003. Scott Zawko. "Liberia Still Backwards in Gay Rights." <<http://www.dailytexanonline.com/media/storage/paper410/news/2003/07/03/Opinion/Liberia.Still.Backwards.In.Gay.Rights-493099.shtml?norewrite200607191241&sourcedomain=www.dailytexanonline.com>> [Accessed 14 July 2006]

The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). 31 July 2000. "World Legal Survey: Liberia." <http://www.ilga.info/Information/Legal_survey/Africa/Liberia.htm> [Accessed 19 July 2006]

Liberia. 23 Dec 2004. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Republic of Liberia: The Electoral Reform Law*. (National Elections Commission) <<http://www.necliberia.org/content/legaldocs/laws/elereformlaw.pdf>> [Accessed 16 July 2006]

National Elections Commission (NEC). 2005. "2005 Election Results: Results by Political Party and Gender." <<http://www.necliberia.org/results/Senate/SenateByPPGender.html>> [Accessed 21 July 2006]

_____. 19 October 2005. "2005 Election Results: Montserrado County." <http://www.necliberia.org/results/Senate/Results_3000.php> [Accessed 21 July 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Source: The editor of *The Liberian Dialogue*, a non-partisan, issue-oriented web magazine, did not respond within time constraints.

Publications: *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Jeune Afrique*, Resource Centre country file.

Internet Sites, including : Afrik.com, Afrol News, AllAfrica, Amnesty International (AI), ECOI.net, Freedom House, FIDH, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), IRIN.

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