

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#) > [Research Program](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

18 November 2009

PAK103285.E

Pakistan: Situation of homosexuals in urban centres, particularly in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore (December 2007 - November 2009)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Evidence of open and active gay communities in urban centres of Pakistan, including Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Specific information relating to the situation of homosexuals in urban centres was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. A 3 April 2009 article in *The Independent*, which discusses *Chay*, Pakistan's first magazine about sexuality, notes that in Lahore and Karachi, the "gay scene is largely underground" (*The Independent* 3 Apr. 2009). This information could not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Though not specific to urban centres, the following information may be of interest. A 6 February 2008 International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) report, submitted to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council for its 2008 Universal Periodic Review, indicates that

[t]here is no known grassroots activism among lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender (zenana) communities in Pakistan. This lack of activism, the silences around sexualit(ies), and deeply closeted status of most gays and lesbians in Pakistan (many of whom lead double lives to avoid revealing their sexual orientation) makes it difficult to accurately assess their living conditions and human rights situation. Anecdotal information from Pakistani gay people who have left the country describes fear, secrecy, isolation, suicides, forced marriage, family and community pressure to conform to heterosexual norms.

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

The Independent [London]. 3 April 2009. "Let's Talk About Sex, and Rights, Pakistan." <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/lets-talk-about-sex-and-rights-pakistan-1661110.html>> [Accessed 10 Nov. 2009]

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC). 6 February 2008. "Human Rights and Transgender People in Pakistan." <<http://www.iglhrc.org/binary-data/ATTACHMENT/file/000/000/73-1.pdf>> [Accessed 5 Nov. 2009]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Al-Fatiha, Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Imaan, Pakistan Society, AIDS Prevention Association of Pakistan (APAP), Sathi Foundation and a social anthropologist did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: 365 Gay.com, The Advocate, Al-Fatiha Foundation, Asian Human Rights Commission

(AHRC), Asylum Aid, Australia Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, GlobalGays.com, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Imaan, International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, *New Internationalist*, Pink News, Social Science Research Network (SSRN), SodomyLaws.org, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (SAHRDC), United Kingdom (UK) Border Agency, United Nations (UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN).

[Click here for tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)
Date modified: 2013-07-17

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.