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 there is no known grassroots activism among lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgender (zenana) communities in Pakistan. This lack of activism, the silences around sexuality(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


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...

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