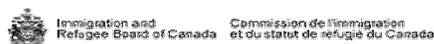


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Canada

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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5 December 2006

ZZZ102079.E

Pakistan/Canada: Lahore Ahmadiyya organizations located in Canada; their mission and activities; membership requirements including whether an individual without status in Canada can be a member; procedure for verification of membership
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Mission

The Web site of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement for the Propagation of Islam, also known as Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam Lahore (AAIIL) (AAIIL n.d.a), indicates that the organization's main objective is "to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world - Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad" (AAIIL n.d.b).

An individual in Calgary who identifies himself as a Lahore Ahmadi (a follower of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement) provided the following information in correspondence with the Research Directorate dated 27 November 2006:

The main object[ive] of this Movement is to present the true, original message of Islam to the whole world - Islam as it is found in the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Mohammed ... , obscured today by grave misconceptions and wrong popular notions. Islam seeks to attract the hearts and minds of people toward the truth, by means of reasoning, good moral example, and the natural beauty of its principles. It neither aspires to gain political power, nor allows the use of force in support of the faith. (27 Nov. 2006)

Organizations in Canada

Information on the status of Lahore Ahmadiyya organizations in Canada is contradictory among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. According to its Web site, AIIIL has one office located in Toronto, Ontario (n.d.a). However, both the telephone number and email address provided are out of service (AAIIL n.d.a). The Research Directorate was able to contact the Secretary of the Ontario office through one of the branches in the Netherlands. The Secretary of the Ontario office provided the following information in correspondence with the Research Directorate dated 20 November 2006: "The Ontario Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam (Lahore) [OAAIIL] was officially established as a [r]eligious [c]haritable [o]rganization on March 10, 1994, B[usiness] N[umber] #26035 2137 RR0001" and is located at 175 Toryork Drive in Toronto.

The Lahore Ahmadi located in Calgary, however, provided the following information to the Research Directorate in a telephone interview on 16 November 2006. The source stated that there was no registered Lahore organization in Calgary, although they were in the process of trying to establish one. In further correspondence with the Research Directorate dated 27 November 2006, the Lahore Ahmadi stated that "[t]here is no registered office in Canada." However, he indicated that there were two Canadian representatives: one located at the same address as the OAAIIL office in Toronto and the other located at 19 Scenic Gardens NW in Calgary, Alberta.

In further correspondence dated 21 November 2006, the Secretary of the Ontario office indicated the following:

The Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam (Lahore) AAIIL is a world wide organization with branches in many countries around the world.

... As far as I know, there is a group of individuals in Calgary who are also Lahore Ahmadis. I do not know if they are formally organized or registered. Also, a few years ago I know there was a registered Lahore jamaat [congregation] in Vancouver but as I believe most of those people have moved out of Vancouver and settled in other parts of Canada and other countries.

...

This Web page has been archived on the Web.

The OAAIIL is an independent branch of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam (Lahore). We do have communication with all the Anjumans around the world as we meet on occasion for international conferences. We are the only Muslim organization with a common ideology which is to understand Islam and the Holy Quran in a rational, tolerant and peaceful manner as taught by the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement - Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The central Anjuman (organization) of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement is in Lahore, Pakistan and all the Lahore jamaats around the world have a common Spiritual Leader or Amir in Lahore. However, all the jamaat (congregations) are financially independent. Our jamaat here in Toronto, ... by virtue of its small membership, has very limited resources.

In further correspondence with the Research Directorate dated 27 November 2006, the Lahore Ahmadi stated that the official name of the movement is Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Isha'at Islam (Lahore). He indicated that other names were used by people unfamiliar with the organization such as Lahori Ahmadies, Lahore Ahmadiya Jama'at, Lahori Group of Ahmadies and Paighamies. The source added that the head office is located in Lahore, Pakistan at the following address: Darus Salaam, 5 - Usman Block, New Garden Town, Lahore, Pakistan.

Membership

Information regarding membership was contradictory among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. During a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 16 November 2006, the Lahore Ahmadi in Calgary stated that they do not issue membership cards or certificates and that there is no prescribed form to complete to become a member.

In correspondence dated 21 November 2006, however, the OAAIIL Secretary indicated the following:

Membership [at the OAAIIL] is completed by filling out an application form. We have a very small membership but we have a lot of supporters simply because the Ahmadiyya Movement has been victimized over the years by the orthodox Muslim community and many people feel they would be subject to discrimination [because of their] association with the Ahmadiyya Movement. ... An individual without status in Canada can be a member of a Lahore organization located in Canada because we are a religious organization not a political one.

... In previous years we issued membership cards for our members to make it easy ... for them to remember when their contributions were due. ... [H]owever, we do not have a procedure in place for membership verification except through family contacts.

In addition, the Web site of the AAIIL states that Muslims wishing to join the movement must first understand and declare the terms of the pledge and then complete a pledge form and submit it online (n.d.c). A copy of both the terms of the pledge and the pledge form are attached to this Response to Information Request.

The OAAIIL Secretary indicated in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 22 November 2006 that the application form they use for new members is similar to the one found on the AAIIL's Web site, but not identical.

The Secretary added that, apart from full membership, there is also partial membership where an individual is simply a supporter of the OAAIIL (22 Nov. 2006). In such cases, the individual would not have to take the pledge and would have no voting rights within the organization (OAAIIL 22 Nov. 2006).

When asked whether the organization has provided any confirmation of membership to members who have requested it, the Secretary stated that, to her knowledge, they had done so three times in the last five years (ibid.). In such cases, the Secretary indicated that, as per common practice, they would contact the central organization in Lahore, Pakistan to ask for confirmation that the person in question was a Lahore member and, following the verification of the member's application form, the OAAIIL would then issue a letter to the member indicating the date he/she joined the organization (ibid.).

Additional information on the Lahore Ahmadiyya organizations located in Canada could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam Lahore (AAIIL). N.d.a. "Our Worldwide Missions." <<http://www.aaiil.org/text/cntct/contact.shtml>> [Accessed 31 Oct. 2006]

_____. N.d.b. "Home." <<http://www.aaiil.org/index.shtml>> [Accessed 9 Nov. 2006]

_____. N.d.c. "Joining our Movement." <<http://www.aaiil.org/text/join/mainjoin.shtml>> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2006]

Lahore Ahmadi, Calgary, Alberta. 27 November 2006. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

_____. 16 November 2006. Telephone interview.

Ontario Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam (Lahore) (OAAIIL). 22 November 2006. Telephone interview with the Secretary.

_____. 21 November 2006. Correspondence from the Secretary.

_____. 20 November 2006. Correspondence from the Secretary.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement offices in Amsterdam, Netherlands; Freeport, Trinidad and Tobago; Paramaribo, Suriname; Rotterdam, Netherlands; two offices in the Hague, Netherlands; and Wembley, UK.

The Nation of Islam (NOI) Canada did not provide information within the time constraints for this Response.

A Lahore Ahmadiyya member in Vancouver did not have information.

Attachments

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-e-Islam Lahore (AAIIL). N.d.d. "The Terms of the Pledge."
<<http://www.aaiil.org/text/join/pledge/terms.shtml>> [Accessed 8 Nov. 2006], 2 pp.

_____. N.d.e. "E-Pledge Form to Enter the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement for the Propagation of Islam."
<<http://www.aaiil.org/text/join/pledge/pledgeform.shtml>> [Accessed 8 Nov. 2006], 3 pp.

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