

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## 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.

6 February 2013

### CHN104301.E

China: Treatment of sexual minorities in Guangdong Province, including state protection and support services (2011-February 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Treatment of Sexual Minorities

Information on the treatment of sexual minorities in Guangdong was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

An online survey of 421 students from middle and high schools, universities and vocational schools across the country in 2012, conducted by one LGBT organization based in Beijing, Chengdu and Shanghai, and a second based in Guangzhou [the capital of Guangdong] found that 77 percent of respondents have experienced a type of bullying by classmates or teachers based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Aibai n.d, 5-6, 10).

Media sources reported in 2012 on the case of a transgender woman who began her gender transition a few years earlier (*The Huffington Post* 15 June 2012; *Gay Star News* July 2012). The woman, who is from Foshan, Guangdong Province, was reportedly allowed to continue receiving her retirement pension from the Foshan government after announcing her gender change (ibid.).

Media sources report on the story of Wu Youjian, an LGBT activist based in Guangdong (*SCMP* 2 Oct. 2011; *China Daily* 6 Jan. 2013). The state-owned *China Daily* explains that Wu Youjian was the first Chinese mother to openly support her gay son (6 Jan. 2013). Wu has reportedly been involved in LGBT activism for "several years" and published a book in 2010 about the gay community in China (*SCMP* 2 Oct. 2011). However, the *China Daily* writes that, seven years after her first appearance on television supporting her son, she remains "a lone voice among the parents of gays and lesbians who struggle to accept their children's sexual preferences" (6 Jan. 2013).

#### 2. Public LGBT Events

*China Daily* reports that the first public wedding of a lesbian couple took place in Shenzhen, Guangdong, on 4 January 2013, while noting that same-sex marriages are not legally valid (5 Jan. 2013). *Gay Star News*, an online news source that aims to "highlight important lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersex stories from around the world which are currently being overlooked" (18 Jan. 2012), reports that a student announced that he was gay to an audience of several hundred people during his graduation speech in 2012 from the Guangdong University of Finance and Economics (20 Aug. 2012). The same media source reports that an organization known as China Pride organized a "'kissing festival'" in April 2012, during which three same-sex couples kissed in public in Guangzhou (4 Apr. 2012). It adds that "there was no negative reactions from passersby" (*Gay Star News* 4 Apr. 2012).

Sources report on public events held in Guangdong to mark the 2012 International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, including the following:

- A week-long campaign was run at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou to promote gender equality (IDAHO [2012a]; All China Women's Federation 22 May 2012). According to the Global Webportal for Information and Action on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), the theme of the campaign was "establishing a rainbow campus by the joint efforts from heterosexuals and homosexuals" ([2012a]).
- Activists in Guangzhou raised a rainbow flag to promote equality (IDAHO [2012b]).
- Two LGBT organizations promoted "LGBT knowledge" in Guangdong Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (All China Women's Federation 22 May 2012).
- In Dongguan, Guangdong Province, a local branch of the Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays organization (PFLAG China) spoke to pedestrians and took group photos to counter homophobia (ibid.).

### 3. Health

*China Daily* reports that, according to Guangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the incidence of HIV/AIDS among the gay population in Guangzhou rose from 1.7 percent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2010, with "many" new cases among people under the age of 15 (30 Nov. 2010). A manager of a local HIV prevention program reportedly said that the rise in HIV infections "reflects the long-term challenges that gay men face in accessing information on safe sex and a shortage of health and education resources" (*China Daily* 30 Nov. 2010).

Citing an article published in the Chinese newspaper *Southern Metropolis Daily*, the Nanfang, an online news source based in the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong that mainly reports on local events and places of interest (n.d.), indicates that, according to the director of the Guangzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 20 percent of new HIV infections in Guangzhou in 2011 occurred among men who have sex with men (The Nanfang 21 Dec. 2011).

### 4. State Protection

Information on state protection for sexual minorities in Guangdong was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The *South China Morning Post* reports that the education department of Guangdong announced a draft regulation in 2013 that would ban people with HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections from applying for jobs as teachers (8 Jan. 2013).

According to the *Southern Metropolis Daily* article cited by the Nanfang, the city of Guangzhou opened its first HIV/AIDS outpatient facility exclusively for gay men in early 2011 (The Nanfang 21 Dec. 2011). Officials at the facility reportedly said that, as of December 2011, the clinic had provided services to 3,000 men, including long-term treatment for 300 of them (ibid.). The article also indicates that almost 300 HIV positive gay men "come regularly" to receive free testing and psychological support and that the clinic had enough resources to treat approximately 60 percent of the people who test positive for HIV (ibid.).

### 5. Support Services

*China Daily* reported in 2010 that six out of eleven NGOs working on HIV/AIDS prevention in Guangzhou were focusing their public awareness and intervention work on the gay community (30 Nov. 2010). The *New York Times* reports that the Lingnan Health Center, an organization founded in 2008 in Guangzhou that is mostly run by gay volunteers, provides HIV testing, counselling and information on medical treatment to gay men (2 Jan. 2013).

PFLAG China has a chapter in Guangzhou (PFLAG n.d.) and the organization as a whole is reported to comprise 150 parents of LGBT people in China (*China Daily* 6 Jan. 2013).

The Associated Gay/Les Campus in Guangzhou was founded in 2006 and aims to "make an effort to improve the living standard and other rights for domestic LGBT youth through local service, public endorsement and nationwide cross-region youth/school LGBT group support" (Aibai n.d.).

Further information on these organizations could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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.

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### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** ecoinet; Factiva; Freedom House; GlobalGayz; Human Rights Watch; International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission; International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association; United Nations – Refworld; United States – Department of State; Xinhua News Agency.

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