Response to Information Request TUR42961.E

Turkey: Military and societal treatment of homosexuals who have been deemed unfit to serve in the military and/or who have been discharged from the military due to their sexual orientation (January 2002 - September 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Culture describes Turkey as having a "restrictive" military policy on homosexuals (2004), which prohibits military service by homosexuals (GLBTQ 2004; Turkish Daily News 17 July 2003). The Turkish military officially recognizes homosexuals as "threats to the armed forces and discharges them for indecency if [their sexual orientation is] discovered" (GLBTQ 2004). Homosexuality is deemed to be an illness by the military, and those who are affected by it are exempt from serving (Turkish Daily News 8 Sept. 2003; KAOS GL 31 Oct. 2002; ibid. 2002; The Nonviolent Activist July-August 2002). Homosexuals seeking exemption are required to provide the military with a photograph of themselves while on the receiving end of anal intercourse as proof of their sexual orientation (ibid.; see also KAOS GL 31 Oct. 2002; ibid. 2002). A photograph of oneself on the giving end of anal penetration will not result in military exemption (The Nonviolent Activist July-August 2002). A medical examination of the anus may also be required by the military (KAOS GL 31 Oct. 2002). In 2002, KAOS GL, an advocacy group based in Turkey and aimed at combating discrimination against homosexuals (9 Sept. 2004), reported that in reality, very few conscripts apply to the military for exemption from military service on the basis of their sexual orientation because homosexuals who are exempted from military service on this basis face "repressive Islamic social pressures" (The Nonviolent Activist July-Aug. 2002) and problems in respect of employment opportunities and social acceptance (KAOS GL 31 Oct. 2002).

Additional and more recent information on the military and societal treatment of homosexuals who have been deemed unfit to serve in the military and/or who have been discharged from the military due to their sexual orientation, 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


Additional Sources Consulted

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