



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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28 October 2004

MAR43088.FE

Morocco: Legality and possibility of marriage between a non-Muslim man and a Muslim woman; social and legal consequences of such a marriage, including a prison sentence for the man including a prison sentence for the man
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Little information on marriages between non-Muslim men and Muslim women could be found by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information could be useful.

According to a 19 August 2002 article in *Aujourd'hui le Maroc*, there are no religious restrictions on mixed marriages between Moroccan men and foreign women. However, there are restrictions on marriages between Moroccan women and foreign men-non-Muslim men are not allowed to marry Muslim women without converting to Islam (*Aujourd'hui le Maroc* 19 Aug. 2002; *La Gazette du Maroc* 30 Dec. 2002). In addition, children born of marriages between Moroccan women and foreign men do not have Moroccan citizenship (*ibid.*; *Aujourd'hui le Maroc* 21 Jan. 2002; *Le Matin* 20 Jan. 2004).

In a 30 December 2002 article, *La Gazette du Maroc* pointed out that a Moroccan woman who decides to marry a foreign man is [translation] "very brave" because she risks being rejected by her family, neighbours, friends and society in general. Another article in the same newspaper indicated that [translation] "mixed marriage is generally frowned upon in Morocco because of religious restrictions" (*La Gazette du Maroc* 3 Feb. 2003).

A member of the board of directors of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (Association marocaine des droits humains, AMDH) provided the following information during a 25 October 2004 telephone interview.

According to Islamic law, marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men are not permitted. In order to marry a Muslim woman, a non-Muslim man must convert. The procedure is quick and involves reciting a phrase in front of two imams. Subsequently, practising Islam is not required. A marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man does not lead to legal problems later; however, social problems can exist with other women and with children (for women who do not tell everyone that their husband is Muslim.)

For further information on the situation of atheists in Morocco, consult MAR43087.FE of 27 October 2004.

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

Association marocaine des droits humains (AMDH). 25 October 2004. Telephone interview with a member of the board of directors.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: Women Living Under Muslim Laws.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), Arabic News, *Emarrakech* , European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Freedom House, *La Gazette du Maroc* , Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Le Journal de Tanger* , *Libération* , Maghreb Arabe Presse, *Maroc Hebdo International* , *Le Matin* , *L'Opinion* , *Tel Quel* , United States Department of State, World News Connection (WNC).