



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		17 June 2005
About the Board	LBN100237.E	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Lebanon: The prevalence of forced marriages among Christians in Beirut and in smaller towns; societal attitudes toward a woman who refuses such a marriage; the consequences faced by women who refuse such a marriage; the protection available against such consequences (January 2004 - June 2005)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References		
Publications		
Tribunal	Information on forced marriages among Christians in Lebanon was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.	
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division	The following information was provided in correspondence to the Research Directorate from a "prominent" professor of political science at the American University of Beirut, who specializes in social science research and methodology, among other things (Prominent Lebanese 2003):	
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions	1. Forced marriages are unheard of among Christians in Beirut, Lebanon.	
Forms	2. Forced marriages among Christians in smaller towns of Lebanon are extremely rare.	
Statistics	3. The societal attitudes in Lebanon do not promote forced marriages. I would even say that societal attitudes are antipathetic towards forced marriages.	
Research	4. There are absolutely no consequences [against women who refuse arranged or forced marriages]. By the way, arranged marriages, which continue to exist in Lebanon, require mutual consent and are not usually forced on women.	
Research Program	5. There is no protection because forced marriages are not an issue in Lebanon (12 June 2005).	
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	Similarly, the Chairman of the Australian Arabic Council, Roland Jabbour, was reported by one Australian newspaper as saying that "most forced marriage cases [in Lebanon] involved Muslims, with the husbands usually from rural villages" (<i>Herald Sun</i> 28 Feb. 2005). The Chairman also added that "[s]ome of these families are bound by customs and traditions but the practice doesn't accurately reflect the whole Lebanese community" (ibid.).	
Recent Research		
Media Centre	According to the Director of the Institute of Women's Studies in the Arab World at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, "reliable information" concerning forced marriages among Christians is "not available in Lebanon" (10 June 2005).	
News		
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure		

Additional information on forced marriages among Christians 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

Herald Sun [Melbourne]. 28 February 2005. John Masanauskas. "Forced to Wed at 14." (Bad Thinking Website)
<http://www.badthinking.com/blog/archives/2005/02/teenage_austral.html>
[Accessed 16 June 2005]

Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanese American University. 10 June 2005. Correspondence from the Director.

Professor of Politics, American University of Beirut. 12 June 2005. Correspondence.

Prominent Lebanese. 2003. "A.U.B. Professor Hilal Khashan, PSPA."
<http://prominentlebanese.com/professors/khashan_hilal.asp> [Accessed 16 June 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

An Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the California State University did not respond to a letter requesting information.

Associate Professor of Sociology, Oregon State University.

The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LCRVAW) did not respond to a letter requesting information.

A Professor of Sociology at the American University of Beirut did not respond to a letter requesting information.

Unsuccessful attempts to contact The National Commission for Lebanese Women.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), BBC, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), *Freedom in the World 2004*, Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), *International Religious Freedom Report 2004*, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), World News Connection (WNC).

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