



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		22 November 2005
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Biographies		
Organization Chart	Lebanon: The existence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormonism); the government's attitude toward Mormons; protection offered by the state; and internal flight alternative (2005)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References		
Publications	The existence in Lebanon of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was confirmed by a news bulletin appearing on the Church's Website, which indicated that its mission in Athens, Greece, oversees "approximately 100 missionaries in Greece, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan" (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 11 July 2003). The director of the Beirut-based Public Interest Advocacy Centre Lebanon (PINACLE) indicated that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a [translation] "very marginal" presence in Lebanon and is a [translation] "closed community that maintains a low profile" (27 Oct. 2005).	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions	Legal counsel for the Church stated that the congregation in Lebanon is "small, meets regularly, and has a Lebanese president" (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 23 Sept. 2005). The Church, for whom legal counsel spoke, was unaware of whether its members are subjected to ill-treatment by the Lebanese authorities, nor did the lawyer have any information on specific cases of such (ibid.).	
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages	According to the director of PINACLE, the state does not officially recognize the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and so it is without legal status (27 Oct. 2005). The Church petitioned the Council of State for recognition [translation] "almost ten years ago," but was denied (PINACLE 27 Oct. 2005).	
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets	According to <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004</i> , "a [religious] group that seeks official recognition must submit its dogma and moral principles for government review" and "ensure that the number of its adherents is sufficient to maintain its continuity" (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2c). A religious group may also "apply to obtain recognition through existing religious groups" (<i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2c).	
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News		
Information Sheets	According to the <i>International Religious Freedom Report 2004</i> , the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is "registered under the Greek Orthodox faith" (15 Sept. 2004, Sec. 11). According to legal counsel, the Church is also a recognized charitable organization (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 23 Sept. 2005).	
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure	<i>Country Reports 2004</i> noted that a religion's "official recognition conveys certain benefits, such as tax-exempt status" and recourse to its "own courts for	

family law matters, such as marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance" (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2c).

Moreover, even though Church members, and those of other religious groups as well, are practitioners of an unrecognized religion, the Lebanese Constitution provides for freedom of worship (PINACLE 27 Oct. 2005).

The Lebanese government requires that "religious affiliation be encoded on national identity cards, but not on passports" (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2c).

The *International Religious Freedom Report 2004* indicated that "there were no incidents of violence against religious persons and buildings" during the reporting period (15 Sept. 2004, Sec. III).

No additional information on the attitude of the Lebanese government toward members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, on protection offered by the state or on internal flight alternative could 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

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004. 28 February 2005. "Lebanon."

United States Department of State.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41726.htm>> [Accessed 16 Sept. 2005]

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 23 September 2005. Telephone interview with legal counsel.

_____. 11 July 2003. "The Church in the News."
<<http://www.lds.org/news/archiveday/0,5287,17171,00.html>> [Accessed 14 Sept. 2005]

International Religious Freedom Report 2004. 15 September 2004. "Lebanon."

United States Department of State.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35502.htm>> [Accessed 16 Sept. 2005]

Public Interest Advocacy Centre Lebanon (PINACLE). 27 October 2005. Correspondence from the director.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The Institute for Human Rights Lebanon did not respond to a request for information within the time constraints for this Response.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, *The Daily Star* [Beirut], ECOI.net, Forum 18, Freedom House, Institute for Human Rights Lebanon, International Christian Concern, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).


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