

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: BGD17686
Country: Bangladesh
Date: 2 December 2005

Keywords: Bangladesh – Mixed marriages – Hindus – Muslims

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Background: This is a supplementary request in relation to Research Response BGD17626.

Question

I would like to have one or more independent assessments on the probability of harm faced by people in a mixed Hindu-Muslim marriage, from an activist and appropriate NGO in Bangladesh and/or from any appropriate human rights organization in Bangladesh.

RESPONSE

I would like to have one or more independent assessments on the probability of harm faced by people in a mixed Hindu-Muslim marriage, from an activist and appropriate NGO in Bangladesh and/or from any appropriate human rights organization in Bangladesh.

Dr Kazi Nurul Islam, President of the Bangladesh Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom and Professor and Chairman of the Department of World Religions at the University of Dhaka, was contacted in regards to this matter on 17 November 2005 (RRT Country Research 2005, Email to Dr Kazi Nurul Islam 'Refugee Review Tribunal Information Request: BGD17686', 17 November – Attachment 1).

Dr Kazi Nurul Islam replied on 28 November 2005. The information is as follows:

Bangladesh has been a country of interreligious harmony for centuries. But in the recent past particularly after the change of the Govt. in 2001 the fanatics have got an upper hand. It is unfortunate that some fanatics have been made even ministers in the present Govt.

Interreligious marriage is not uncommon in Bangladesh. But according to Muslim rule the non-Muslim spouse will have to be converted into Islam first. If a Muslim boy marries a Christian or Jewish girl conversion is essential. If they are not converted, neither the family members, nor the society nor even the civil court accept this marriage. As a result the couples concerned face immeasurable harassment and there are certain cases where they are kidnapped and killed.

Not only as President of International Association for Religious Freedom, Bangladesh but also as a man of conscience I feel that this kind of discrimination, torture, harassment in the name of religion has to be stopped.

At this moment the situation in Bangladesh is very grave. The entire world knows that the fanatics are killing even the judges. The nation is heading towards a civil war between Fanatics and Moderate Muslims. That is why I do hereby strongly urge upon you to help this couple and save them from an absolutely uncertain life (Nurul Islam, Dr Kazi 2005, Email: 'Re: Refugee Review Tribunal Information Request: BGD17686', 28 November – Attachment 2).

Attempts to contact other experts failed to elicit a response.

List of Attachments

1. RRT Country Research 2005, Email to Dr Kazi Nurul Islam 'Refugee Review Tribunal Information Request: BGD17686', 17 November.
2. Nurul Islam, Kazi 2005, Email: 'Re: Refugee Review Tribunal Information Request: BGD17686', 28 November.