

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** IND32375  
**Country:** India  
**Date:** 9 October 2007

Keywords: India – Maharashtra – Sindhis – Caste violence – Police – Community organisations

This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services 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. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

---

**Questions**

- 1. Are Sindhi community organisations aware of any instances in which Sindhis have been attacked as Dalits in Maharashtra? Can they comment on whether mainstream Hindus might perceive certain Sindhi castes as being associated with untouchable status?**
- 2. Are Sindhi community organisations aware of lower caste Sindhis being refused protection by police in Maharashtra, or elsewhere, on the basis of their identity?**
- 3. If it is the case that lower caste Sindhis have experienced problems in Maharashtra, can Sindhi community organisations comment on whether conditions are more favourable for lower caste Sindhis in other states of India?**

**RESPONSE**

On 9 October 2007 the Tribunal received the following overall advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT):

Summary

We have spoken with two prominent representatives of the Sindhi community in the state of Maharashtra. Our inquiries did not reveal any systematic evidence of discrimination against Sindhis in Maharashtra either as a linguistic minority as a whole or, against any specific caste groups within the Sindhi community. This cable outlines the answers we received to the questions posed in reftel.

Main Cable

Further to reftel, while there are instances of discrimination against linguistic and caste groups in Maharashtra and throughout India, our inquiries revealed no specific discrimination against Sindhis. We consulted with consular experts in this field both in New Delhi and in Mumbai who were not aware of any systematic discrimination against Sindhis in Maharashtra. Our Mumbai contacts commented that Sindhis were generally a strong and well off community. DIAC did not have any information on this community (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, *DFAT Report 708 – RRT Information Request: IND32375*, 9 October – Attachment 1; for the Tribunal Email which elicited this response, see: Research & Information 2007, ‘Country Information Request IND32375’, 17 September – Attachment 2).

**1. Are Sindhi community organisations aware of any instances in which Sindhis have been attacked as Dalits in Maharashtra? Can they comment on whether mainstream Hindus might perceive certain Sindhi castes as being associated with untouchable status?**

On 9 October 2007 the Tribunal received the following advice from DFAT:

Inquiries were made with a prominent Sindhi lawyer and the leader of a Sindhi community organisation, both based in Mumbai, revealing the following answers:

...Respondents were not aware of any instances in which Sindhis had been targeted or attacked, either for being a linguistic minority, or for being of a certain caste. There were no castes within the Sindhi community and mainstream Hindus knew this. Only in the past had Sindhis been divided into three “castes”. Even then however, unlike most other Hindu communities, these “castes” had only been associated with professions and did not have a rigid hierarchy. None of the three “castes” were seen as having untouchable status by those within the Sindhi community or by non-Sindhi Hindus (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, *DFAT Report 708 – RRT Information Request: IND32375*, 9 October – Attachment 1; for the Tribunal Email which elicited this response, see: Research & Information 2007, ‘Country Information Request IND32375’, 17 September – Attachment 2).

**2. Are Sindhi community organisations aware of lower caste Sindhis being refused protection by police in Maharashtra, or elsewhere, on the basis of their identity?**

On 9 October 2007 the Tribunal received the following advice from DFAT:

Neither respondent was aware of instances where lower caste Sindhis were refused protection by police in Maharashtra, or elsewhere on the basis of their identity. Again respondents disputed the concept of “lower caste Sindhis” as Sindhis did not have such a caste system. There was no targeted hostility towards Sindhis by the Maharashtra police that respondents were aware of (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, *DFAT Report 708 – RRT Information Request: IND32375*, 9 October – Attachment 1; for the Tribunal Email which elicited this response, see: Research & Information 2007, ‘Country Information Request IND32375’, 17 September – Attachment 2).

**3. If it is the case that lower caste Sindhis have experienced problems in Maharashtra, can Sindhi community organisations comment on whether conditions are more favourable for lower caste Sindhis in other states of India?**

On 9 October 2007 the Tribunal received the following advice from DFAT:

Respondents said that they were not aware of Sindhis as a minority group being specifically targeted in any state of India. According to one respondent, Sindhis were seen as having a positive economic impact on states they lived in as they were usually involved in business. Another respondent stated that those Marathis (the major ethnic group in Maharashtra) who were opposed to other ethnic groups living in Maharashtra, did not target Sindhis any more than they targeted any other minority group. Minorities from Uttar Pradesh and the Southern states were more likely to be discriminated against than Sindhis as they were greater in number (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, *DFAT Report 708 – RRT Information Request: IND32375*, 9 October – Attachment 1; for the Tribunal Email which elicited this response, see: Research & Information 2007, ‘Country Information Request IND32375’, 17 September – Attachment 2).

### **List of Sources Consulted**

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

### **List of Attachments**

1. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2007, *DFAT Report 708 – RRT Information Request: IND32375*, 9 October.
2. Research & Information 2007, ‘Country Information Request IND32375’, 17 September.