

LGBTQ Iranian Refugees in the United Kingdom and Turkey

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Reasons for Fleeing

- Sharia Law⁸
- Forced eviction⁸
- Blackmailing⁸
- Anti-protest crackdowns
- Capital punishment¹
 - Men under 18: 74 lashes
 - Men over 18: Public hanging
 - All women: 60 lashes
 - Women after 3 convictions: Public hanging

"In Iran we don't have homosexuals like in your country."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
(2007 speech at Columbia University)



No Return Home

Ramin Haghjoo⁷

- Assaulted during protest
- Home raided by security forces
- Waited for USA asylum in Turkey
- Until Iran law changes, resides in US



Turkey

Attitude

- Conservative society
- Verbal/ physical assault on homosexual refugees

Refugee Policies

- 1951 Convention: Agreed to only accept European refugees⁴
- 1967 Protocol: Continued to refuse non-European refugees⁴
- 2004 National Action Plan: Adopted European Union asylum regulations; accepts non-European refugees⁴
- Present: Article 56 of Civil Code forbids "immoral" activities and protests for rights
- UN Refugee Agencies: Do not recognize LGBTQ refugee status²

Outcomes

- Live in isolated refugee communities
- Unable to come out, find employment, or obtain education
- Wait at least two years for asylum acceptance²

United Kingdom

Attitude

- Predominantly accepting society of LGBTQ individuals
- Discrimination against refugees

Refugee Policies

Home Office:

- Carry out deportations of "illegal" LGBTQ refugees
- Refusing sexual identity as reason for asylum (based on lack of evidence)⁵
- Law firms: Unwilling to support anti-deportation cases⁵
- UN Refugee Agencies: Recognize LGBTQ refugee status and encourage expression of identity¹¹

Outcomes

- Threat of deportation
- Able to come out, find employment, obtain education
- Refugees can marry UK citizens to help avoid deportation

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