

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: MNG33526
Country: Mongolia
Date: 10 July 2008

Keywords: Mongolia – Tavilan – GLBT Groups

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. When was Tavilan established and does it continue to operate?**
- 2. Please provide any background material on Tavilan, eg. its size, form of membership, activities, physical location/address, key personnel, or other information that might be relevant to establishing if a person has had direct contact with the organisation?**

RESPONSE

1. When was Tavilan established and does it continue to operate?

Sources indicate that Tavilan was established in about March/April 1999, but no definitive information could be found in the searches conducted to determine if Tavilan still operates.

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report from December 2003 indicates that Tavilan “became Mongolia’s first lesbian and gay rights group” in April 1999 (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *MNG42200.E – Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities*, 5 December – Attachment 1).

A July 2006 conference paper by Anaraa Nyamdorj Olhонууд also provided information on Tavilan (also known as Тавилан or ‘Destiny’):

Тавилан/Destiny

Founded in March 1999 by several Mongolian gay men and expatriate gay men then living in Mongolia. Funding source: private donations. It was an officially registered non-governmental organisation that was officially active between the early 1999 to 2000, and beginning from 2000 March, upon expiration of the NGO’s registration license, it continued

its activities informally (Olhunuud, A. N. 2006, 'Life Denied: LGVT Human Rights in the Context of Mongolia's Democratisation & Development', Paper presented at the Outgames International LGBT Human Rights Conference, 26-29 July, Montreal, Canada – Attachment 2).

Little information could be found on the recent activities of Tavilan. An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report from March 2007 seems to suggest that Tavilan was still active in 2006, as it noted that “A doctoral candidate in social welfare at the University of California in Berkeley, who lived in Mongolia between 1995 and 1999...referred to a **conversation in November 2006 with a Tavilan representative** who claims that “harassment and maltreatment, including death threats” directed against gays and lesbians is “ongoing” in Mongolia (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *MNG102126.E – Mongolia: The treatment of homosexuals by authorities and by society in general; recourse available to those who have been harassed based on their sexual orientation (2004 – March 2007)*, 16 March <http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451031> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – Attachment 3).

Beyond this, no other information could be found in the searches conducted on the recent activities of Tavilan.

2. Please provide any background material on Tavilan, eg. its size, form of membership, activities, physical location/address, key personnel, or other information that might be relevant to establishing if a person has had direct contact with the organisation?

Limited information could be found on the activities undertaken by Tavilan. Sources indicate that it was formed in March/April 1999 with 22 founding members. Reports suggest that this later increased to about 130 people, but in December 2000 only 5 people attended their second general meeting (Sanders, D. 2005, *Flying The Rainbow Flag In Asia*, paper presented at 1st International Conference Of Asian Queer Studies, Bangkok, Thailand, 7-9 July 2005 <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers/Sanders.pdf> - Accessed 4 July 2008 – [Link](#); ‘Tavilan: the organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Mongolia’ (undated), Chris ‘A web site for various purposes’ website <http://www.cix.co.uk/~cjeffries/tavilan/index.htm> – Accessed 21 July 2006 – [Link](#); Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *MNG42200.E – Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities*, 5 December – [Link](#)).

Sources indicate that Tavilan opened a small office in Ulaanbataar with the aim of protecting and promoting the rights of GLBT groups, and to provide a social forum for GLBT people in Mongolia (‘Mongolian Gay & Lesbian group formed’ 1999, Queer Resources Directory website, 6 July <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/world/asia/mongolia/first.gay.and.lesbian.group.formed-07.06.99> - Accessed 4 July 2008 – [Link](#)).

In November/December 2000, Tavilan gained a grant from the Mongolian AIDS Foundation in order to operate a 24-hour hotline for people who had questions about AIDS prevention (‘First Ever Hotline for/by the LBGTT Community in Mongolia’ 2000, GlobalGayz website, 17 December <http://www.globalgayz.com/mongolia-news.html> - Accessed 4 July 2008 – [Link](#)).

Beyond this point, the activities of Tavilan become more difficult to trace. The founder of Tavilan posted an internet message in 2002 complaining about the lack of support for GLBT movements in Mongolia, and, as noted above, an Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada report from March 2007 mentions a doctoral candidate's contact with "a Tavilan representative" in November 2006 (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *MNG42200.E – Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities*, 5 December – [Link](#); Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *MNG102126.E – Mongolia: The treatment of homosexuals by authorities and by society in general; recourse available to those who have been harassed based on their sexual orientation (2004 – March 2007)*, 16 March <http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451031> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – [Link](#)).

Further details on Tavilan appear in the following references, which have been provided in approximate order of relevance (these are not attached, they are hyperlinked only):

- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *MNG102126.E – Mongolia: The treatment of homosexuals by authorities and by society in general; recourse available to those who have been harassed based on their sexual orientation (2004 – March 2007)*, 16 March <http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451031> – Accessed 27 March 2008 – [Link](#) – Mentions contact with Tavilan in November 2006
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *MNG42200.E – Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities*, 5 December – [Link](#) – Provides a general background of Tavilan
- 'Tavilan: the organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Mongolia' (undated), Chris 'A web site for various purposes' website <http://www.cix.co.uk/~cjeffries/tavilan/index.htm> – Accessed 21 July 2006 – [Link](#) – Provides a general background of Tavilan
- International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) 1999, 'World Legal Survey. Mongolia' http://www.ilga.org/Information/legal_survey/asia_pacific/mongolia.htm – Accessed 19 September 2002 – [Link](#) – Brief outline of Tavilan's activities
- 'Mongolian Gay & Lesbian group formed' 1999, Queer Resources Directory website, 6 July <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/world/asia/mongolia/first.gay.and.lesbian.group.formed-07.06.99> – Accessed 4 July 2008 – [Link](#) – Brief outline of Tavilan's early activities
- 'First Ever Hotline for/by the LBGT Community in Mongolia', 2000, *Mongolia News Report 2000-02*, 17 December, Global Gayz.com website <http://www.travelandtranscendence.com/mongolia-news.html> – Accessed 19 September 2002 – [Link](#) – Describes the development of the telephone hotline
- Smith, R. 2002, 'Queer Mongolians: Is Isolation Their Destiny?', *International Institute for Asian Studies Newsletter*, no. 29, November http://www.iias.nl/iiasn/29/IIASNL29_14.pdf – Accessed 9 July 2008 – [Link](#) – Describes the decline in support for GLBT groups in Mongolia

- RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response MNG32859*, 4 February – [Link](#) – Information on GLBT groups in Mongolia, including Tavilan.
- RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response MNG33229*, 14 April – [Link](#) – Information on Tavilan
- RRT Country Research 2002, *Research Response MNG15421*, 20 September – [Link](#) – Information on Tavilan
- Sanders, D. 2005, *Flying The Rainbow Flag In Asia*, paper presented at 1st International Conference Of Asian Queer Studies, Bangkok, Thailand, 7-9 July 2005 <http://bangkok2005.anu.edu.au/papers/Sanders.pdf> – Accessed 4 July 2008 – [Link](#) – Brief mention of Tavilan
- Gmünder, B. 2005, *Spartacus: International Gay Guide 2004/2005*, p. 706 – [Link](#) – Brief mention of Tavilan.

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>
 All the web <http://www.alltheweb.com/>
 Altavista <http://www.altavista.com/>
 Ask <http://www.ask.com/?ax=5>
 Exalead <http://www.exalead.com/search>
 Yahoo! <http://search.yahoo.com/>

Government Information & Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb.gc.ca/>
 UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>
 US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>
 Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/index.shtml>

Databases:

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)
 REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
 ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
 RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *MNG42200.E – Mongolia: Update to MNG31446.E of 26 March 1999 on the current treatment of homosexuals by the authorities*, 5 December.
2. Olhunuud, A. N. 2006, 'Life Denied: LGVT Human Rights in the Context of Mongolia's Democratisation & Development', Paper presented at the Outgames International LGBT Human Rights Conference, 26-29 July, Montreal, Canada.
3. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *MNG102126.E – Mongolia: The treatment of homosexuals by authorities and by society in general; recourse available to those who have been harassed based on their sexual orientation (2004 – March 2007)*, 16 March <http://www.cisr-irb.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451031> – Accessed 27 March 2008.