

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: IND32354
Country: India
Date: 9 October 2007

Keywords: India – Rajasthan – Makrana – Muslims – Business owners – Police – State protection

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. Is the population of Makrana in Rajasthan mainly Muslim?**
- 2. Are the majority of the police in Makrana Muslim?**
- 3. Is it unlikely that Hindu business owners would get police protection against Muslims in Rajasthan?**

RESPONSE

1. Is the population of Makrana mainly Muslim?

Definitive information on whether the population of Makrana is mainly Muslim was not found in the sources consulted. The 2001 census of India refers to Makrana as an urban agglomeration comprising the Makrana municipality and Makrana village. There is information stating that Muslims comprise 90% of the craftsmen in Makrana. The population of Nagaur district, in which Makrana is located, is predominantly Hindu.

Makrana is located in the Nagaur district of Rajasthan some 110kms west of Jaipur and 190kms north-east of Jodhpur. It is renowned as a marble-producing area ('Nagaur (district, India)' (undated), Encyclopaedia Britannica Online <http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-401640/Nagaur> – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 1; 'Makrana' 2000, *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas* – Attachment 2).

According to the Census of India 2001 the population of Makrana urban agglomeration (UA) is 91,853 comprising: 83,329 in the municipality (M) and 8,524 in the village out growth

(OG). A UA is defined in the census as a contiguous urban spread constituting a town and its adjoining urban OGs. OGs are two or more physically continuous towns together and any adjoining urban outgrowths of such towns. Examples of OGs are a railway colony, university campus, port areas, etc., that may rise near a city or statutory town outside its statutory limits but within the revenue limits of a village or villages contiguous to the town or city ('Census of India 2001: View Population Details: Makrana' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/Population_Finder.aspx?Name=makrana&Criteria=U – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 3; 'Census of India 2001: Alphabetical list of towns and their population: Himachal Pradesh' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/towns/hp_towns.pdf – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 4).

Information (dated 1997) accessed from the Stone Craft India website¹ describes Makrana as the marble capital of India having 5,000 craftsmen, who are quarry workers, lathe workers and machine workers – 90% of which are Muslims making items such as ashtrays, candle stands, furniture, lamps and doorknobs. In comparison, the 2001 census figures mentioned above indicate a municipality population of 83,329 and a village population of 8,524 (Chari, Pushpa 1997, 'About – Stonecrafts of North India', Stone Craft India website, (sourced from *The Hindu*), 16 March <http://www.stonecraftindia.org/about/stonecraft-north.html> – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 6).

Another news article, with an undated year sourced from *The Indian Express* on Yahoo! News – India, also states that about 90% of the craftsmen in Makrana are Muslims, excelling in making idols and temples ('Marble Men' (undated year), Yahoo! News – India, (sourced from *The Indian Express*) 2 July <http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:bZKfKLjA3-QJ:in.news.yahoo.com/060701/48/65jzv.html+makrana+muslims&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=16&gl=au> – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 7).

In respect of the population of Nagaur district, 2001 census figures indicate a total population of 2,775,058 of which 356,405 [12.8%] were Muslims and 2,399,173 [86.4%] Hindus ('Census of India 2001: Basic Data Sheet: Nagaur' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Dist_File/datasheet-0814.pdf – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 8).

Also from the 2001 census figures, 8.5% of the Rajasthan population is Muslim ('Religion: Muslims' (undated), Census of India, Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website <http://www.censusindia.net/religiondata/Summary%20Muslims.pdf> – Accessed 3 October 2007 – Attachment 9).

¹ The Stone Craft India website describes itself in the following terms:

This website is a monumental effort of scholarship and research on the part of Crafts Council of India - a non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes fellowship among the craftspeople of the world and offers them encouragement, help and advice. This website covers every aspect of India's treasure house of stone craftsmanship from the hoary past to the exciting, if slightly uncertain, present ('Welcome to Stone Craft India' (undated), Stone Craft India website <http://www.stonecraftindia.org/index.html> - Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 5).

Of interest are the attached 2007 news articles reporting on the safety situation in the Makrana mines (Nandi, Palak 2007, 'Mined', *The Indian Express*, 15 January <http://www.indianexpress.com/printerFriendly/20909.html> – Accessed 3 October 2007 – Attachment 10; 'Miners pay heavy price for India's famed marble' 2007, *Dawn*, 31 May <http://www.dawn.com/2007/05/31/int25.htm> – Accessed 4 October 2007 – Attachment 11).

2. Are the majority of the police in Makrana Muslim?

No information was found in the sources consulted on whether the majority of the police in Makrana are Muslim. News articles dated 2001-2002 noted that there are few Muslims in the Rajasthan police force.

A January 2002 *Times of India* article states that "barely a thousand" of the 55,000 police in Rajasthan are Muslims (Bhandari, Prakash 2002, 'Rajasthan allows beards for Muslim policemen', *Times of India*, 5 January – Attachment 12).

BBC News reported in December 2001 that there are "very few" Muslims in the 50,000-strong Rajasthan police force ('Muslim police keep beards in Rajasthan' 2001, *BBC News*, 28 December http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1730480.stm – Accessed 5 October 2007 – Attachment 13).

3. Is it unlikely that Hindu business owners would get police protection against Muslims in Rajasthan?

No information was found in the sources consulted on police protection against Muslims for Hindu business owners in Rajasthan. Police forces generally in India have a reputation for inefficiency, corruption and indifference. The Supreme Court has also reportedly stated that no police force can grant blanket protection to all witnesses appearing in criminal cases. With respect to Rajasthan a Transparency International India survey ranks the State as the fifth most corrupt state in a survey of 20 States in India. A majority of the respondents in Rajasthan considered the police department to be the most corrupt department in the State with 62% having direct experience of bribing them. There are also reported instances of Rajasthan police bias against Muslims.

The US State Department reports that, generally in India, corruption was endemic in the government and police forces. The government made few attempts to combat the problem, except in instances raised by the media. The report also refers to police failing to file arrest warrants, police torture and custodial abuse (US Department of State 2007, '[Introduction]', 'Disappearance', 'Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment', 'Prison and Detention Center Conditions' and 'Role of the Police and Security Apparatus' in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006 – India*, 6 March – Attachment 14).

In October 2005 Transparency International India published the results of study of corruption in India. The survey had a sample of 14,405 respondents in over 151 cities and 306 villages in 20 States. From each State, between 527-960 sample households were interviewed. Included in the findings was that more than 60% of the people who interacted with the police faced difficulties relating to behaviour of the personnel. The most common complaints were police indifference or corruption (Transparency International India 2005, *India Corruption Study 2005*, October, p.5, 30-31

<http://www.tiindia.in/data/files/India%20Corruption%20Study-2005.pdf> – 18 October 2006 – Attachment 15).

A January 2007 news article reported a Supreme Court of India on witness protection in criminal cases in the following terms:

The Supreme Court made it clear on Monday that protection cannot be provided to witnesses appearing in criminal cases as it is not ‘physically possible’ for police to grant protection to the thousands coming to courts on a daily basis...

The court also made it clear that ‘the government cannot be asked to provide protection to all the witnesses and that no police force can provide a blanket protection’ (‘No protection for witnesses in criminal cases: SC’ 2007, *Rediff News*, 22 January <http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/jan/22witness.htm> – Accessed 5 October 2007 – Attachment 16).

In respect of Rajasthan, Transparency International India found that 91% of respondents considered the police as the most corrupt department in the State and 62% had direct experience bribing the police (Transparency International India 2005, *India Corruption Study 2005*, October, p.145 <http://www.tiindia.in/data/files/India%20Corruption%20Study-2005.pdf> – 18 October 2006 – Attachment 15).

Of interest are the following reports of police action taken against Muslims in Rajasthan.

Muslim groups in Rajasthan have reportedly accused police of harassing the Muslim minority “by implicating them in false cases, displaying bias against them and discriminating against them in all walks of life” (‘Muslims see harassment under pressure’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 December <http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/16/stories/2006121608190500.htm> – Accessed 5 October 2007 – Attachment 17).

According to the *The Hindu* news article the Rajasthan Muslim Forum, an umbrella organisation of Muslim group, cited:

...a number of instances in the State since the BJP came to power in 2003, in which Muslims were “targeted by the administration in connivance with Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal activists”, while pointing out that Muslims could not expect justice under BJP rule.

The cases included anti-Muslim violence in Sarada (Udaipur), Mandal and Jahazpur (Bhilwara) and Karauli, implicating Muslims in “false cases” during an anti-encroachment drive at Hasanpura (Jaipur), lathi-charge on Muslim crowds in the Walled City of Jaipur last month, and the arrest of ‘innocent’ Muslims after a rally organised by Bajrang Dal on December 6 in Suket (Kota) (‘Muslims see harassment under pressure’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 December <http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/16/stories/2006121608190500.htm> – Accessed 5 October 2007 – Attachment 17).

The US Department of State reported:

In March 2007 a Hindu color splashing procession (Rangteras’) through a Muslim-dominated locality led to an incident of communal violence. Allegedly, the processionists raised inflammatory slogans and vandalized 26 shops belonging to Muslims. According to the Rajasthan Muslim Forum, the state police did not take any action to stop the violence and arrested all Muslims who attempted to file complaints against the rioters (US Department of

State 2007, 'Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination' in *International Religious Freedom Report 2007 – India*, 14 September – Attachment 18).

Also, in attacks on Christians in Rajasthan and Assam during 2004-2006 police reportedly provided protection from the attackers in some instances and in other cases failed to intervene (US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May <http://www.uscifr.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2005annualRpt.pdf#page=1> – Accessed 17 May 2005 – Attachment 19).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>
Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>
Frontline <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/>
The Hindu <http://www.hinduonnet.com/>
India Today <http://www.indiatoday.com/itoday/20030317/login.sphtml>
Indian Express <http://www.indianexpress.com/>
Rajasthan Police website <http://rajpolice.nic.in/indexfrm.htm>
Times of India <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)
BACIS (DIAC 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. 'Nagaur (district, India)' (undated), Encyclopaedia Britannica Online <http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-401640/Nagaur> – Accessed 4 October 2007.
2. 'Makrana' 2000, *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas*. (CD ROM)
3. 'Census of India 2001: View Population Details: Makrana' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/Population_Finder.aspx?Name=makrana&Criteria=U – Accessed 4 October 2007.
4. 'Census of India 2001: Alphabetical list of towns and their population: Himachal Pradesh' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/towns/hp_towns.pdf – Accessed 4 October 2007.
5. 'Welcome to Stone Craft India' (undated), Stone Craft India website <http://www.stonecraftindia.org/index.html> - Accessed 4 October 2007.

6. Chari, Pushpa 1997, 'About – Stonecrafts of North India', Stone Craft India website, (sourced from *The Hindu*), 16 March <http://www.stonecraftindia.org/about/stonecraft-north.html> – Accessed 4 October 2007.
7. 'Marble Men' (undated year), Yahoo! News – India, (sourced from *The Indian Express*) 2 July <http://72.14.253.104/search?q=cache:bZKfKLjA3-QJ:in.news.yahoo.com/060701/48/65jzv.html+makrana+muslims&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=16&gl=au> – Accessed 4 October 2007.
8. 'Census of India 2001: Basic Data Sheet: Nagaur' (undated), Census of India, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Dist_File/datasheet-0814.pdf – Accessed 4 October 2007.
9. 'Religion: Muslims' (undated), Census of India, Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India website <http://www.censusindia.net/religiondata/Summary%20Muslims.pdf> – Accessed 3 October 2007.
10. Nandi, Palak 2007, 'Mined', *The Indian Express*, 15 January <http://www.indianexpress.com/printerFriendly/20909.html> – Accessed 3 October 2007.
11. 'Miners pay heavy price for India's famed marble' 2007, *Dawn*, 31 May <http://www.dawn.com/2007/05/31/int25.htm> – Accessed 4 October 2007.
12. Bhandari, Prakash 2002, 'Rajasthan allows beards for Muslim policemen', *Times of India*, 5 January. (FACTIVA)
13. 'Muslim police keep beards in Rajasthan' 2001, *BBC News*, 28 December http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1730480.stm – Accessed 5 October 2007.
14. US Department of State 2007, '[Introduction]', Disappearance, 'Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment', 'Prison and Detention Center Conditions' and 'Role of the Police and Security Apparatus' in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006 – India*, 6 March.
15. Transparency International India 2005, *India Corruption Study 2005*, October, p.5,29-38,145-147 <http://www.tiindia.in/data/files/India%20Corruption%20Study-2005.pdf> – 18 October 2006.
16. 'No protection for witnesses in criminal cases: SC' 2007, *Rediff News*, 22 January <http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/jan/22witness.htm> – Accessed 5 October 2007.
17. 'Muslims see harassment under pressure' 2006, *The Hindu*, 16 December <http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/16/stories/2006121608190500.htm> – Accessed 5 October 2007.
18. US Department of State 2007, 'Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination' in *International Religious Freedom Report 2007 – India*, 14 September.

19. US Commission on International Religious Freedom 2005, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May
<http://www.uscifr.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2005annualRpt.pdf#page=1> – Accessed 17 May 2005.
(CISNET India CX159264)