

Monday, 27 May 2013

Pakistani women say 'I do' in UK's first Muslim lesbian wedding



Two Pakistan women are believed to have become the first Muslim lesbian couple to tie the knot in a civil ceremony in the UK, British press reported on Sunday.

Rehana Kausar, 34, and Sobia Kamar, 29, former students in the UK, applied for political asylum following their marriage at the registry office in Leeds earlier this month, *The Independent* reported.

"This country allows us rights and it's a very personal decision that we have taken. It's no one's business as to what we do with our personal lives," Kausar was quoted as telling the Birmingham-based Sunday Mercury newspaper.

The couple reportedly told the registrar during the ceremony that they met 3 years ago while studying business and health care management at Birmingham and were living together in South Yorkshire for about a year.

Relatives of the couple said that the women have received threats of death both in the UK and from their opponents in Pakistan, where these kinds of relationships are considered illegal by law.

Homosexuality is strictly forbidden in Islam.

A relative told the Sunday Mercury: "The couple did not have an Islamic marriage ceremony, known as a nikah, as they could not find an imam to conduct what would have been a controversial ceremony. They have been very brave throughout as our religion does not condone homosexuality."

In recent years in Britain, some Muslim gay and lesbian couples have opted for a nikah, an Islamic matrimonial contract, but this contract is not recognized in the UK unless accompanied by a civil ceremony, *The Independent* reported.

In November 2012, Mohammed Ludovic Lütfi Zahed, an Algerian homosexual man, announced plans to open a “mosque for gays” in France, which would be a place of worship for Friday prayers at first, then would hold same-sex Muslim marriages.