



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Sierra Leone - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 and 19 March 2010

Information on fear of harm from herbalists and those using black magic

An *Agence France Presse* news story in June 2009 notes:

“Belief in witch doctors runs deep in Sierra Leone” (Agence France Presse, (28 June 2009), *Mob tries to attack Sierra Leone 'witch doctors'*).

A news story in the *Concord Times* from April 2009 states:

“Public relations officer of a group of native witch doctors Wednesday told journalists that they have organized themselves to crackdown on what they referred to as the indiscriminate killing of people within the Freetown municipality allegedly by witch hunters. Chief Alikali Sesay N'buma was speaking during the opening ceremony of a cultural event organized by the attitudinal and behavioral change (ABC) secretariat as part of the national pride week celebrations. He said the death of innocent people allegedly in the hands of wicked herbalists is a major concern and that they have galvanized some one hundred witch hunters to go on the hunt of those believed to be engaging in what he called an evil practice” (Concord Times, (23 April 2009), *Sierra Leone: 100 Witch Doctors Storm Freetown*).

An *Open Society Institute* publication from 2006 states:

“Many Sierra Leoneans, especially those in rural areas, perceive the legal system and the government in a way not unlike the way they perceive black magic: as something to be feared rather than understood” (Open Society Institute, (2006), *Between Law and Society: Paralegals and the Provision of Primary Justice Services in Sierra Leone*, p.15).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources consulted by the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints.

References

Agence France Presse, (28 June 2009), *Mob tries to attack Sierra Leone 'witch doctors'*

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gVxJ3XOTS20Bgz-BBzJPvdfaYV1A>

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Concord Times, (23 April 2009), *Sierra Leone: 100 Witch Doctors Storm Freetown*

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200904230983.html>

(Accessed 18 March 2010)

This is a subscription database

Open Society Institute (2006) *Between Law and Society: Paralegals and the Provision of Primary Justice Services in Sierra Leone*

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/46725d142.pdf>

(Accessed 18 March 2010)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International

Asylum Aid

BBC News

BBC Monitoring

Europa World Regional surveys of the world

European Country of Origin Information Network

Electronic Immigration Network

Freedom House

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

International Crisis Group

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Minority Rights Group International

Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

Online Newspapers

Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Reliefweb

United Kingdom Home Office

Office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights Treaty Body Database

United Nations Development Fund for Women

United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR Refworld

United States Department of State