

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** NGA34743  
**Country:** Nigeria  
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**Questions**

1. How are kings appointed at village level in Nigeria?
2. What is their role? How much political influence and power do they have?
3. Is the position passed on to father and son only if the son has a son himself? If not, how is the position passed on?
4. [Deleted]
5. [Deleted]
6. Is Ekiti State still part of Nigeria? Who is the current Alara?
7. A brief update on the adequacy of state protection in Nigeria, particularly related to the effective (or otherwise) investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, such as murder.
8. Any relevant information about the Igwe ethnic group, such as whether it is predominant, whether there are any reports of discrimination against people of Igwe ethnicity, and whether local village kings have to be from a particular ethnicity.

**RESPONSE**

A map of Nigeria which indicates the locations of the states of Enugu, Ekiti and Lagos is provided as a general reference at Attachment 1 (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Cartographic Section 2004, 'Nigeria – Map No. 4228', United Nations website, October <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/nigeria.pdf> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 1).

Map searches failed to find the locations of Akpankume and Orun Ekiti. However, a number of the electronically-sourced maps consulted showed the similarly named village or town of Akpakume in Enugu State (see, for example, 'Enugu Ngwo' 2000, *Microsoft Encarta Interactive Atlas 2000* – Attachment 2; and 'Akpakume' (undated), CityMapHQ website [http://www.citymaphq.com/nigeria/nigeria\\_general/akpakume.html](http://www.citymaphq.com/nigeria/nigeria_general/akpakume.html) – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 3).

A news article from July 2002 indicates that Akpakume is in the Udi local government district (Uneze, A. 2002, 'Nigeria: Past Civilian Regimes Responsible for Our Woes – Nnamani', *AllAfrica Global Media*, source: This Day, 5 July <http://allafrica.com/stories/200207050186.html> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 4).

- 1. How are kings appointed at village level in Nigeria?**
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A search of the sources consulted indicates that practices relating to the appointment and roles of kings in villages in Nigeria vary between ethnic groups.

It is noted that searches on the Igwe ethnic group indicate that the word “Igwe” is not the name of any ethnic group in Nigeria but is an honorific specific to traditional rulers within the Igbo (or Ibo) ethnic group. The following information therefore focuses on practices amongst the Igbo, the majority ethnic group in southeastern Nigeria.

The website of the Nigerian Embassy in Moscow provides the following brief introductory information regarding ethnicity, including the observation that the Igbo “traditionally live in small, independent villages, each with an elected council rather than a chief”:

Nigeria’s three largest ethnic groups, the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, represent 71 percent of the population...

The Hausa, concentrated in the far north and in the Republic of Niger, are the largest of Nigeria’s ethnic nations. Most Hausa are Muslims engaged in agriculture, commerce, and small-scale industry. While most live in smaller towns and villages, others occupy several larger indigenous cities. Many people of non-Hausa origin, including the city-based Fulani, have become assimilated into the Hausa nation through inter-marriage and acculturation. Other Fulani continue to depend on their livestock and have retained their own language, Fulfulde, and cultural autonomy.

The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria incorporate seven subgroups – the Egba, Ekiti, Ife, Ijebu, Okun (Kabba), Ondo, and Oyo – each identified with a particular paramount chief and city. The Ooni of Ife is the spiritual head of the Yoruba. There is a strong sense of Yoruba identity but also a history of distrust and rivalry dividing the various groups. The majority of Yoruba are farmers or traders who live in large cities of pre-colonial origin.

The Igbo of southeastern Nigeria traditionally live in small, independent villages, each with an elected council rather than a chief. Such democratic institutions notwithstanding, Igbo society is highly stratified along lines of wealth, achievement, and social rank. Overcrowding and degraded soil have forced many Igbo to migrate to nearby cities and other parts of Nigeria ('Nigeria: Culture' (undated), Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Moscow website <http://www.nigerianembassy.ru/Nigeria/culture.htm> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 5).

More detailed information regarding prevailing hierarchies at the village level amongst the Ibo was found on the Igboguide website, including the following:

Before European colonisation, the Igbo-speaking people were not united as single people, but lived in small-dispersed compounds in the rainforest, built up of clusters of huts belonging to the same patrilineage. The largest political unit was the village group averaging about 5,000 persons, who shared a common market, meeting place and common beliefs and cults. These village groups were ruled by a council of elder age grades, lineage heads and influential wealthy men.

...

With the colonisation in the early part of the twentieth century, the British introduced a system based on 'indirect rule' in the north of Nigeria, leveraging the existing northern emir hierarchies. A few years later, the colonial rule decided to introduce this system in the south as well. They commissioned 'warrant chiefs' to rule the districts in Igboland, but due to the lack of social hierarchies, the mandate for their authority did not work out as well as it did in the north. After the independence, the role of these district officers was quickly transformed and adapted to Igboland's 'traditional' title society, which used to be based on traditional worship titles.

Nowadays, each community consisting of a number of villages, wards and/or clans, can nominate their traditional ruler, also called Igwe or Eze. The Igwe has this role for life and can give titles to his community people, mostly out of recognition for their achievement and character. The title system varies from community to community, but except from different names, the hierarchy itself is in most cases the same. In most communities, the title system starts with the Nze title, given to persons in recognition of their community contribution. When the Nze titleholder reaches the elder age and remains in the village, he becomes part of the Igwe's cabinet. Upon becoming a senior elder, the Igwe may honour him with the Özö or Ichie title, standing directly below the Igwe.

These titles and many other chieftaincy titles, each signifying certain achievements come along with privileges and symbols of authority. One could be allowed to wear a red or black cap, to hold a walking stick, an elephant tusk, a horsetail or a fan of ram or cow skin, all dependent on the local customs and the rank of title. Chieftaincy titleholders are privileged to do the "chief handshake". This handshake starts with touching each other's hand with the upper-side three times before shaking. If one of the persons does not recognise the other as a chief, even though he might pretend to be one, the touching stops after two times before the shaking. War heroes are a separate category of titleholders, they can wear parrot's plumes in their hats and are the only ones allowed to dance the war dance.

Among his cabinet members, the Igwe appoints his Prime Minister and secretary and together with his full cabinet, the Igwe-in-council serves the community in matters of peace, development and values. For instance, he is called upon in cases of resolving internal conflicts. If so, each party needs to bring four kola nuts, a gallon of palm wine and 1,000 Naira to the ruler. The case is put forward, and the ruler will make the final judgement. The money, palm wine and kola nuts are returned to the winner, the latter two being given in most cases to the Igwe as a token of gratitude. The losing party is expected to pay on top of their deposit the penalty or fine as stipulated by the Igwe. If the parties do not agree with the settlement, the case can be brought to court and fought out in a more formal way.

The Igwe-in council also works together with government, but they do only have an advisory role in this context. Villages and communities have many other groups and opinions represented ('Igbo insight guide to Enugu and Igboland's Culture and Language – Village' (undated), Igboguide website <http://www.igboguide.org/index.php?l=chapter10> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 6).

Authoritative information regarding the appointment and role of kings amongst the Igbo is provided in a number of responses to information requests by the Research Directorate of the

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC), and the most relevant information from these responses follows.

In a response dated 12 June 2000, the Research Directorate of the IRBC reports that, amongst the Igbo people, the title of king (or Eze) “is increasingly being purchased, but there are many which are still based on family linkage and inheritance”. According to information in the IRBC response:

In his book *Anioma: A Social History of the Western Igbo People*, Ohadike describes “the eze or ozo title system” as it was in the nineteenth century (1994, 87-90). He explains that the “eze” title was one of several which allowed a male “to climb the social ladder”... He writes that “the eze title was acquired by purchase” and that to qualify a man had to first purchase junior titles and to have satisfactorily carried out the duties associated with those titles...

Movements from the junior toward the higher titles were the preliminaries that would eventually lead to the acquisition of the eze title. The final ceremony involved a ritual death and resurrection, without which immortality could not be attained. The entire process of eze-taking must of necessity be consummated by this ritual death and resurrection. Men who were able to complete the process were called *ndi ichie*, “the immortals”; to take the ozo or eze title and receive the gift of immortality transformed the recipient from the status of an ordinary human to that of a god. The Igbo also believed that as immortality could not be inherited, so could a title not be passed down from father to son or daughter ...

The taking of the eze title was very expensive, demanding elaborate feasting, the offering of animal sacrifices, and the paying of very high initiation fees...

Every Niger Igbo man coveted the eze title (or some of its variants, *alo* or *ichie*) because it guaranteed its holder a seat in the governing council of his town. It also entitled him to certain portions of livestock slaughtered in his lineage, together with portions of all fees paid by new initiates into the title association. Furthermore, the title exempted its holder from all manual labor. His red cap, decorated with eagle feathers, and his staff of office, *otonsi*, were immediately recognized anywhere he went. He was greeted with the salutation, “**igwe**” (His Highness), and anyone who troubled him or failed to give him the respect he deserved was made to pay a heavy fine. It was perilous to cause an eze man bodily harm. These chiefs constituted the privileged, non-laboring, ruling class (*ibid.*, 88-89).

Further information on the eze title was provided in 3 June 2000 correspondence from the “Special Representative for the Ebonyi State Government of Nigeria for Britain and Europe” who is affiliated with the Young Igbos Social Club in London, U.K. The club was formed in 1991 as a social and cultural organization for Igbos living in the U.K.. He wrote that the information he provided is his personal viewpoint.

The Ibos are highly democratic village societies and traditionally did not really have Eze (or king) in most villages or towns. With colonialism, paramount chiefs were appointed by the British and this spread the practice of Eze. In general, Eze is acquired by self-coronation. The person is usually wealthy and pays the cost of the coronation but not in all cases.

The Eze Title is acquired in several ways depending on the town or village. To be sure, one has to be specific about the village. However these are how Ezes may be coronated.

a) Inheritance. It devolves directly to a son. This is limited in Ibo land. It is a practice that is often resisted amongst the Ibos East of the Niger river but more acceptable, west of the Niger.

b) Rotation. It is rotated between certain families or clans, and the eldest, appointed person or the wealthiest depending on the village or town is crowned.

c) Rulership of Elders. The head of the elders become Eze or the elders appoint the Eze. This is on the wane and is hardly practised anymore.

d) Self-Coronation. This has become the dominant route to Eze. People first acquire the title of Ozo or Chief. Then the Chiefs compete to be accepted as Eze. The person that succeeds normally pays for the cost of their coronation.

In modern times it is increasingly being purchased, but there are many which are still based on family linkage and inheritance.

...

The Special Representative for the Ebonyi State Government of Nigeria also wrote the following with respect to the rituals accompanying the installation of an Eze:

It is impossible to give any general guidelines to rituals. They vary most considerably from village/town to village/town. Many of the rituals can be paganistic such as: taken oaths with idols, masquerading with “spirits of the dead” and many acts that are definitely non-Christian. Most born again Christians would find it impossible to participate in any truly traditional coronation. In a few villages they compromise and it is done under the church.

In a situation where the title is inherited, for instance to a first son, it can pose serious complications if the son is a committed Christian and the coronation is truly pagan, and the son refuses to be crowned. In a more traditional society such Christian refuseniks were ostracised or even killed. In any case it can create a real social trauma or stigma in which the refusenik can end up in exile, out of social stigma, or in the more serious cases, for fear of death or injury for committing an abomination (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, *NGA34530.E – Nigeria: Succession practices for the “Eze” (king) within the Amakor-Nanka community in Anambra State, including whether it is hereditary to the eldest son; rituals performed in the succession ceremonies and whether they could be considered unacceptable for a Christian to perform; consequences to an individual for refusing to accept succession and state protection available*, 12 June – Attachment 7).

In a response dated 27 September 2000, the Research Directorate of the IRBC cites advice that “[i]n many Igbo regions both acquired and inherited forms of eze title exist”:

The following information was provided by an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale who has conducted research in the Igbo speaking region of Nigeria since 1989 and whose “areas of expertise” are: “Sociocultural anthropology, heuristic ethnography, critical theory, social epistemology, historical anthropology, medical anthropology, ritual studies, expressive culture.” In the summer of 2000 his work in the Igbo-speaking region of Nigeria concerned “the role of [traditional] healers as professional mediators in the lives of people striving to cope with the demands of life in industrial Nigeria. His most recent book, *Dancing Histories: Heuristic Ethnography with the Ohafia Igbo*, “outlines a method for incorporating indigenous knowledge into anthropological work as a source of theoretical alternatives.”

In correspondence dated 1 September 2000 the Assistant Professor wrote:

There are over 10 million Igbo speaking people living all over Nigeria and, in fact, all over the world. Some are highly educated, Some are illiterate. The cultural region in Nigeria that is traditionally referred to as “Igboland” exhibits a broad range of cultural variation and the meaning of “eze” and the rites associated with the title vary widely from one area to another. ...

The term “eze” is sometimes translated as “king” but usually as “chief.” In many Igbo regions both acquired and inherited forms of eze title exist. More recently, some “autonomous communities” also elect an eze to represent them in the local government, but this does not replace other forms of eze. An eze may be chief of a city, a region, a village, or a lineage, or he may just be an important man who has contributed much to the community and applied for the title.

In response to a question about the ceremonial rituals associated with assuming the title of “eze,” and possible conflicts that Christians may experience, the Assistant Professor wrote:

While I am not a expert on eze related customs and rites I can say that they vary geographically and also vary depending on the type of eze title involved. It has been estimated that the Igbo are 90% Christian but these Christians range from evangelical “born agains” to the many “nominally” Christian Igbos who rarely attend church. Virtually every denomination of Christianity is present in Igboland including many West African denominations that incorporate indigenous practices. Many Igbo Christians see little conflict between Christianity and such largely secular rituals as those associated with eze titles. Many fundamentalist denominations, however, consider virtually all indigenous Igbo culture to be demonic and forbid their members to have anything to do with it.

When asked about the recourses available to an individual who does not want to serve as “eze” he wrote:

While Igbo traditionalists reject the fundamentalist view of Igbo culture they take a live-and-let-live attitude. I can’t imagine anyone ever being “forced” to take an eze title because it is an honor, not an obligation. An eze is a leader and if an heir proves inadequate, a substitute is chosen. A father might pressure his son to assume the role but others in the lineage would be likely to support the son’s petition to abdicate (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, NGA35586.E – *Nigeria: Follow-up to NGA34530.E of 12 June 2000 on the succession practices for the “eze” (king)*, 27 September – Attachment 8).

In a response dated 10 December 2002, the Research Directorate of the IRBC provided the following further information regarding traditions for selecting Igbo kings:

An “igwe” is a king, basically, and this is a title used consistently throughout northern Igbo-speaking areas. The term is associated with the sky deity, pointing to the king’s elevated status – also to his consecration/installation as something like a divinity on earth...

English-speaking Igbo frequently use the titles of English royalty (“Your Highness”) to refer to their indigenous rulers.... The main thing to remember is that kings partake of the divinities in this region and are important ritual practitioners; any igwe is also the head of the royal cult – and his ancestors are invoked on behalf of the entire town. Most northern Igbo kingships are not hereditary in a simple sense, however. There are kingly clans whose male members are eligible for kingship, and then there are kingmaker clans, whose elders have the task of “discovering” the new king during the interregnum. This is a process that is part-divination... and part hard-nosed indigenous politics (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002,

NGA39797.E – *Nigeria: The Igwe of Nnewi-Chi; links to the Ofo shrine in Nkwo-Nnewi; the name of the ruler, rituals practised, and the tradition for selecting a chief*, 10 December – Attachment 9).

The Research Directorate of the IRBC provided advice on 9 July 2004 indicating that the Enugu State Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs has a role in “bringing disputants together, holding hearings and trying to find a solution to the frequent disputes related to chieftancy”:

Two American university professors... indicated in 28 June 2004 correspondence that, in Nigeria, the institution of chieftancy varies from community to community (Professor of anthropology 28 June 2004; Professor of religion 28 June 2004). They added that each state has a Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs (ibid.; Professor of anthropology 28 June 2004).

In its February 2003 report on Nigeria, Human Rights Watch (HRW) explained that “many ethnic groups and communities have traditional leaders or chiefs, who are chosen according to different traditions in different parts of the country.” The report also indicated that traditional leaders are recognized by the Nigerian government with which they operate and have considerable influence, especially at the local level (HRW Feb. 2003).

In describing the mandate of a Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs, the professor of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania explained that bureaucrats are responsible for bringing disputants together, holding hearings and trying to find a solution to the frequent disputes related to chieftancy (28 June 2004).

According to the Internet site of the Enugu State [one of the 36 states in Nigeria], the Ministry of Chieftancy Matters “co-ordinates the activities of the Traditional Rulers in the state,... supervises the selection of the Traditional Rulers in the various Autonomous Communities in the state and ensures that the selection conforms with the existing rules and laws,.... assists in the settlement of disputes among the Traditional Rulers and disputes between Traditional Rulers and their subjects,... [and] heads the welfare of all the Government Recognized Traditional Rulers, including payment of their monthly stipends and allowances” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, NGA42749.FE – *Nigeria: Whether each state has a Ministry of Local Government and Chieftancy Affairs; if so, its jurisdictions* (July 2004), 9 July – Attachment 10).

An RRT research response prepared in January 2002 provided information regarding resolution of chieftancy and land disputes in Nigeria, although with a focus on the Yoruba rather than the Igbo (RRT Country Research 2002, *Research Response NGA14954*, 30 January – Attachment 11).

That response cites information provided to the RRT by Dr Axel Harneit-Sievers who advised, in part, that:

The Igbo hardly had chiefs in pre-colonial times, and no centralized states; whereas in Yorubaland there were strong pre-colonial chieftancies, many “city states” and at least one major state on the regional level (“Oyo empire”, 17th to 19th century). Legitimacy for chiefs (including their right to address land issues is therefore much stronger in the Yoruba Southwest than in the Igbo Southeast (Harneit-Sievers, Dr Axel 2002, Email to RRT Country Research ‘Re: NGA14954 – Nigeria’, 29 January – Attachment 12).

#### 4. [Deleted]

## 5. [Deleted]

## 6. Is Ekiti State still part of Nigeria? Who is the current Alara?

Searches indicate that Ekiti State remains part of Nigeria and that the Yoruba is the main ethnic group in the state and in southwestern Nigeria more generally (see, for example, ('Nigeria: Culture' (undated), Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Moscow website <http://www.nigerianembassy.ru/Nigeria/culture.htm> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 5).

Information on traditional rulers amongst the Yoruba is provided in a response by the Research Directorate of the IRBC on 1 March 1992:

The information contained in this response was provided by a Yoruba professor of African Politics at the University of Texas at Houston, during a telephone interview with the IRBDC...

The Oba or king is a traditional ruler and this is an hereditary title, according to the Yoruba professor. He further stated that there are about 150 Obas in Yorubaland today... Obas are classified into categories based on the size of the community, seniority or the number of years the institution has existed in a given state. The explained [sic] that Obas fall into three categories: A, B, C. The old "kingdoms" of Ife, Ondo, Oyo, Abeokuta, Ilesa and Obomoshos are classified under "A" because in these states the institution of kingship has been in existence since pre-colonial times; those that were created during colonial times are classified as "B"; whereas those that were created after independence are classed under "C". He further explained that Obas and their traditional institutions are a dying breed in present-day Nigeria in the sense that they have lost their power and influence to the modern government. Most Obas, explained the professor, have political and business interests and their cooperation with the government is mutually beneficial (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1992, NGA10364 – *Nigeria: Information on the administrative hierarchy within the Yoruba tribe including the difference among ruling houses, chiefs, Obas, elders, whether they can refuse a title, initiation rites surrounding the institution of kingship, the influence of Obas among the local community and the present government's attitude towards them*, UNHCR Refworld website, 1 March <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6abc76e.html> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 13).

Information provided on the website of the Ekiti State Government indicates that the title of the traditional ruler of the town of Orun-Ekiti is "Olorun", rather than "Alara". The title of "Alara" appears to pertain only to the towns of Aramoko-Ekiti, Ara-Ikole-Ekiti and Ara-Ijero-Ekiti. No information is provided regarding the current Olorun of Orun-Ekiti ('Grading of traditional rulers in Ekiti state' 2007, Ekiti State Government website, 20 October <http://ekitinigeria.net/Discover-Ekiti/Grading-of-Traditional-Rulers-in-Ekiti-State.html> – Accessed 21 April 2009 – Attachment 14).

An article dated 10 July 2006 in *This Day* reported on a meeting of the Ekiti Council of Obas in the state capital, Ado-Ekiti. The article indicates that the "royal father" of Ekiti State is the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Oba Rufus Adejugbe, Aladesanmi III. The Olorun of Orun-Ekiti is not mentioned amongst the attendees at the meeting of "notable Ekiti Obas" (Suleiman, T. 2006, 'Nigeria: Monarch Appeals to Indigenes On Fayose', *AllAfrica Global Media*, source: This Day, 10 July <http://allafrica.com/stories/200607101065.html> – Accessed 21 April 2009 – Attachment 15).

The palace of the Olorun of Orun-Ekiti was, however, mentioned in an article dated 21 September 2009 in *The Nation*, in which it was reported that:

There was drama at the Election Tribunal in Ado-Ekiti yesterday when a presiding officer in the April 14 Governorship/State Assembly election refuted the result announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Mr Stephen Ogunjemilua served as a presiding officer at the polls conducted in Orun, Ise/Orun Local Government Area and he came to testify over the disputed House of Assembly seat won by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Mr Adeolu Aluko.

Aluko's election is being challenged by the Action Congress (AC) candidate Mr Alabi Idowu.

Ogunjemilua was one of the witnesses said to be held hostage at the palace of the Olorun of Orun-Ekiti last Monday by Idowu's counsel, Chief Anthony Adeniyi (Ogunmola, O. 2007, 'Drama as presiding officer disowns INEC result', *The Nation*, 21 September <http://www.thenationonline.com/dynamicpage.asp?id=31840> – Accessed 21 April 2009 – Attachment 16).

A follow-up article dated 29 October 2007 similarly reported:

During the trial of Ise/Orun state constituency, the Palace of Olorun of Orun-Ekiti became a prison for three witnesses who wanted to appear for the AC candidate Mr. Idowu Alabi, who contested against the PDP candidate, Hon. Adeolu Aluko (Ogunmola, O. 2007, 'Ekiti tribunal and its unending drama', *The Nation*, 29 October <http://www.thenationonline.com/dynamicpage.asp?id=35660> – Accessed 21 April 2009 – Attachment 17).

## **7. A brief update on the adequacy of state protection in Nigeria, particularly related to the effective (or otherwise) investigation and prosecution of serious crimes, such as murder.**

The US Department of State's report on human rights practices in Nigeria in 2008 includes information on the role of the police and other security apparatus, noting "the inefficacy of the police, who were unable to control societal violence". According to the report:

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is responsible for law enforcement. Internal security is the duty of the SSS [State Security Service], which reports to the president through the national security advisor. Due to the inefficacy of the police, who were often unable to control societal violence, the government continued to rely on the army in some cases. Each NPF state unit was commanded by an assistant inspector general. The constitution prohibits state- and local-level governments from organizing their own police forces. The NPF committed human rights abuses and generally operated with impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, and sometimes execution of criminal suspects. The SSS also was responsible for a variety of human rights abuses, particularly in limiting freedom of speech and press.

Corruption was rampant, most often at highway checkpoints...

Although citizens could report incidents of police corruption to the NHRC, this agency was not empowered to act in response to such complaints.

On January 8, the federal government inaugurated a 16-member Police Reform Committee to examine the NPF and identify measures to enhance its effectiveness. However, no action had been taken by year's end (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Section 1(d) – Attachment 18).

The report indicates that, notwithstanding the “excessive or deadly force” used at times by the police, many serious crimes remained unresolved. The report observes that the “government generally did not provide police in rural areas with sufficient resources to control societal violence”:

Police officers were not held accountable for excessive or deadly force or for the deaths of persons in custody. Police generally operated with impunity in the apprehension, illegal detention, and sometimes execution of criminal suspects.

...

Police and military personnel used excessive and sometimes deadly force in the suppression of civil unrest, property vandalism, and interethnic violence.

...

Unlike last year, there were no reports of killings by unknown assailants that may have been politically motivated.

There were no developments in the following 2007 cases: the February case in which unknown gunmen killed PDP Chieftain Lawson Onokpasa of Delta State; the March case in which unidentified gunmen assassinated Taofiki Onigboho, a relative of a suspected criminal working for Governor Rasheed Ladoja, in Ibadan; or the August case in which Victor Obafaiye, the principal witness for the opposition Action Congress in the Kogi State election tribunal case, was killed.

Despite President Yar'Adua's 2007 directive to the inspector general of police to reopen all unresolved cases of killings of political figures, there were no developments in the May 2007 arrest of nine suspects allegedly connected to the 2006 killing of Lagos State gubernatorial candidate Funsho Williams – including the three mobile policemen responsible for guarding him and four colleagues close to him – all of whom were imprisoned without trial; or the June 2007 reopening of the case of Bola Ige, the former attorney general whose killing in 2001 was widely believed to be linked to a political dispute between the then governor and deputy governor of Osun State.

There were no developments in the following 2006 killings, which may have been politically motivated: the January killing by unknown assailants of Hajiya Saudatu Rimi, wife of former Kano State governor Alhaji Abubakar Rimi; the June abduction and July killing of Plateau State gubernatorial aspirant Jesse Aruku of the Advanced Congress of Democrats party; the August killing of Ekiti State PDP gubernatorial candidate Ayodeji Daramola; and the December killing by unknown assailants of Timothy Ageba Uttah, the former council chairman of Gboko Local Government Area and PDP aspirant for the state House of Assembly of Benue State.

There were no developments in the 2006 killings of four persons in Emohua and six persons in Gokana by gangs controlled by rival political leaders in Rivers State.

Killings carried out by organized gangs of armed robbers remained common during the year. In Lagos State, groups of street youths, popularly known as “area boys,” operated illegal highway checkpoints at which they demanded money from motorists. There were no

developments in the case of six “area boys” arrested in 2006 for allegedly killing two Federal Road Management Agency officers.

There continued to be reports of street mobs killing suspected criminals during the year. There were no arrests reported from these mob actions, and no developments in cases from previous years.

...

There were numerous ethnic or communal clashes during the year. The government generally did not provide police in rural areas with sufficient resources to control societal violence (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Sections 1(a) and (c) – Attachment 18).

Reports in the local media make more specific reference to recent violent crime in Enugu State and to the response of the authorities in the cases reported.

An article in *The Vanguard* on 3 December 2008 reported that the traditional ruler of Obe in Enugu State had been abducted and killed. The report observes that it was not clear whether the attackers “wanted a ransom but could not get and acted dastardly in frustration or they were purely on a mission to assassinate the king”:

The Traditional Ruler of Obe autonomous community in Nkanu West local government area of Enugu State, Igwe Uche Nwachime, has been assassinated by unknown assailants who dumped his remains at a refuse site on the Enugu-Aba-Port Harcourt expressway.

The incident occurred last weekend just as another report emerged yesterday of the abduction of the younger brother of Prof. Dora Akunyili, Director-General of National Agency for Foods, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Mr. Paul Edemobi.

He was reportedly abducted in Enugu Monday night by the kidnappers who are demanding N30m ransom from his family as condition for his release. Edemobi is the proprietor of Paul and Grace Foundation, a non-profit organization located at 10B Savage Crescent, GRA Enugu, which renders free medical services to children and aged people.

It was gathered that Edemobi was abducted by the gun-wielding hoodlums at the Independence Layout area of the coal city and taken to an undisclosed location from where they contacted his relatives demanding the ransom.

Sources hinted that the traditional ruler of Obe, who was the proprietor of Mac Royal Hotel, Presidential Road, Enugu, was abducted from the hotel on Saturday night by some gunmen who allegedly operated with AK47 rifles and that the incident took place in the presence of some persons who had gone to transact a business with him.

It was disclosed that the family members of the king could neither trace him nor his assailants until Monday when his corpse was found at the refuse dump.

It was not clear yesterday whether the attackers were kidnappers who wanted a ransom but could not get and acted dastardly in frustration or they were purely on a mission to assassinate the king (Edike, T. 2008, ‘Nigeria: Monarch Assassinated in Enugu, Akunyili’s Younger Brother Kidnapped’, *AllAfrica Global Media*, source: The Vanguard, 3 December <http://allafrica.com/stories/200812030185.html> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 19).

An article dated 14 February 2009 in *The Vanguard* reported kidnapping to be a growing business in the south-east, including in Enugu State, and state government responses to this:

Kidnapping as “weapon of the weak pretending to be strong,” was first heard on Saturday, February 18, 2006. This was when Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) claimed responsibility for the abduction of nine foreign workers during its attack on an oil facility...

#### Kidnapping as Business in Igboland

But kidnapping also became a big business idea. And so, it did not take long for those impoverished, the poor and jobless graduates to enter into the trade. More so, their ilk in the neighbouring states followed suit. And like cancer, kidnapping as big business and alternative employment spread to the neighboring states of Imo, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi and Enugu, all in the South East.

In Enugu, a monarch, Igwe Uche Nwachime, in Nkanu West Local Government, was abducted and killed. The proprietor of Grand Riveri Hotel, Enugu, was kidnapped but was released after the ransom N5m was said to have been paid. The younger brother of the former NAFDAC DG, Prof. Dora Akunyili, was captured. His captors reportedly asked for N30m.

In Abia, as the snatching of the Enyimba Club chairman, Anyasi Agwu; heralded the uncomfortable phenomena and erstwhile ASUBEB chairman, Comrade Iruke, a lawyer, Ngozi Ukwani, Justice Awa U. Kalu who was shot in a failed kidnapping bid, a magistrate, a an electrical dealer, and a host of Abia State top functionaries also became victims.

In Anambra, a couple were kidnapped immediately after their wedding. they were later released after three days in captivity. Last December 17, a bank manager in Oba was kidnapped. A month earlier, an assembly man representing Anaocha I Constituency, Chief Joseph Dimobi, was kidnapped.

Dimobi was picked in his country home in Aguluzigbo about 10.30 p.m. by kidnappers who demanded a N30 million ransom. Dimobi was concluding arrangements to perform the funeral rites of his late father when he was kidnapped.

Other lawmakers in the state ran away, switching off their phones because “one never can tell who would be the next target,” the speaker said.

Before then, the state Chairman of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) was kidnapped. He was later released after allegedly paying a ransom of N3 million.

The spate of kidnapping has forced state governments in the region into thinking of making kidnapping a capital offence. Governor Sullivan Chime’s government has declared that it would make kidnapping a capital punishment in Enugu State, the same thing Imo and Anamabra states one thinking along that line too. Abia has already signed that into law.

The Abia State government, through its commissioner for Information, Chief Ralph Egbu, told Saturday Vanguard that it has been fighting the scourge.

The deputy governor, Comrade Chris Akomas said the government constituted a Joint Task Force made of the military and Police, with appropriate logistical back up of 47 brand new vehicles. It beefed up security around the notorious Enugu\_Port Harcourt expressway with

crack anti\_insurgent troops as well as providing dedicated hotlines, all the time for the people to call.

The government said it provides confidentiality to informants and to date Governor Theodore Orji is said to continue to pay a reward of N1m whose information has resulted in successfully dislodging and arresting the criminals.

Kidnapping, as a capital punishment in the state, comes with it a forfeiture of the accused's property to the state upon conviction. The state said it increased a number of Mobile Police Anti\_crime formations to three in the state, provided 65 Operational vehicles and logistics to its security agencies, drafted in detachments of Army and Navy.

It has also created a bye-law for effective Vigilance Groups to collaborate with the Security Agencies. It combs villages, houses and plantations in the state, threatening also to depose any traditional ruler, in whose domain kidnapping and armed robbery occur (Kalu, U. 2009, 'Nigeria: South East in the Grip of Kidnappers', *AllAfrica Global Media*, source: The Vanguard, 14 February <http://allafrica.com/stories/200902160122.html> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 20).

**8. Any relevant information about the Igwe ethnic group, such as whether it is predominant, whether there are any reports of discrimination against people of Igwe ethnicity, and whether local village kings have to be from a particular ethnicity.**

As previously mentioned in response to questions 1-3, a search of the sources consulted indicates that the word "Igwe" does not refer to an ethnic group in Nigeria but is an honorific specific to the Igbo (or Ibo) ethnic group. The following information relates to the Igbo ethnic group.

Information from Encyclopaedia Britannica indicates that the Igbo "constitute the majority" of the population of Enugu State ('Enugu' 2009, Encyclopaedia Britannica Online <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9001474> – Accessed 22 April 2009 – Attachment 21).

The website of the Enugu State states that the people of Enugu State "are Igbo by ethnic grouping":

Enugu State has a population of 3,257,298 (2006 Census) with a population density that is two and a half times the national average. Its people are Igbo by ethnic grouping...

The vernacular spoken is Igbo but English is widely used ('The People' 2009, Enugu State Government website <http://www.enugustate.gov.ng/people.html> – Accessed 23 April 2009 – Attachment 22).

The US Department of State's report on human rights practices for 2008 reports on Nigeria's ethnic minorities as follows:

**National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities**

The country's population was ethnically diverse and consisted of more than 250 groups, many of which were concentrated geographically and spoke distinct primary languages. There was no majority ethnic group; however the three major groups – Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba – jointly constituted approximately half the population. Ethnic discrimination was practiced

widely by members of all ethnic groups and was evident in private-sector hiring patterns, de facto ethnic segregation of urban neighborhoods, and a low rate of intermarriage across major ethnic and regional lines. There was a long history of tension among some ethnic groups.

Many groups complained of insufficient representation in government.

The law prohibits ethnic discrimination by the government, but claims of marginalization continued, particularly by members of southern groups and Igbos. In particular the ethnic groups of the Niger Delta continued their calls for high-level representation on petroleum agencies and committees and within the security forces. The constitution requires that the government have a “national character,” meaning that cabinet and other high-level positions are distributed to persons representing each of the 36 states. Traditional relationships continued to be used to impose pressure on individual government officials to favor their own ethnic groups for important positions and other patronage.

In 2006 HRW published a report on discrimination against nonindigenes. While all citizens have the right to live in any part of the country, state and local governments frequently discriminated against those whose ethnic group was not judged to be indigenous to the area, occasionally compelling individuals to return to a part of the country where their ethnic group originated but to which they had no personal ties. The government sometimes compelled nonindigenes to move by use of bulldozers, threats with clubs and torches, and discrimination in hiring and employment. When they were allowed to stay, these persons experienced discrimination including denial of scholarships and exclusion from employment in the civil service, police, and the military (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Section 5 – Attachment 18).

The US Department of State report also provides information regarding the separatist Igbo group known as MASSOB:

Members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), a separatist group espousing Igbo unity and the secession of Igbo- majority states, initiated frequent violent clashes with the government, particularly in Onitsha, Anambra State. Police sometimes reacted by arresting large numbers of MASSOB members. In June police arrested 78 MASSOB members during a commemoration celebration of the Nigerian Civil War-era secessionist state of Biafra and charged them with conspiracy to commit a felony because of their intent to stage a protest that would result in political unrest.

On May 15, an Abuja Court of Appeal granted MASSOB leader Ralph Uwazurike continued bail after a High Court judge released him on bail in October 2007 for three months. The Court of Appeal also granted bail to the 10 others accused with Uwazurike of treason and stated the evidence in the case was weak. However, on the same day, all of the accused were rearraigned on charges of treason because the High Court judge who had granted bail was transferred, requiring the trial to start anew for the third time since 2005. Although all of the accused remained free on bail, there was no progress in the trial by year's end.

Most of the 69 MASSOB members arrested in a 2006 sweep remained in detention at year's end (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Nigeria*, February, Section 1(d) – Attachment 18).

An RRT research response dated 15 November 2006 provides further information on whether discrimination is suffered by the Igbo people and regarding MASSOB (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response NGA30831*, 15 November – Attachment 23).

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UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

US Department of State website <http://www.state.gov>

#### **United Nations**

UNHCR Refworld website <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld>

#### **Non-Government Organisations**

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>

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

#### **International News & Politics**

Africa Confidential website <http://www.africa-confidential.com>

Africa Daily website <http://www.africadaily.com>

All Africa.com <http://allafrica.com>

BBC News website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Daily Trust <http://www.dailytrust.com/>

The Guardian (Nigeria) <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com>

This Day <http://www.thisdayonline.com/>

Vanguard <http://www.vanguardngr.com/>

#### **Topic specific**

Ekiti State Government Information website <http://ekitinigeria.net/>

Enugu State website <http://www.enugustate.gov.ng/>

#### **Search Engines**

Copernic search engine <http://www.copernic.com/>

### Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

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