

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. [Please provide updated information about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.](#)
2. [Please also provide brief information about the Christian – Muslim clashes in 2003 in Jos.](#)
3. [Please provide information about the existence and practices of voodoo cults Nigeria. What are the common beliefs with respect to these?](#)
4. [Is there any evidence that people who refuse to join are being harmed?](#)
5. [Please provide information about the O’odua People’s Congress \(OPC\), its formation, policies, activities, leaders, platform, etc.](#)
6. [Provide information about the treatment of the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria. Is there a concentration in any particular area of Nigeria? How are they treated by other ethnic / religious groups and the authorities?](#)

RESPONSE

1. **Please provide updated information about the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.**

Nigeria is basically divided into the Muslim north and the Christian south. Both Christians and Muslims live in the middle belt. Sources report that the relationship between Christians and Muslims remains tense in some areas of Nigeria.

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief visited Nigeria between 27 February and 7 March 2005. Whilst in Nigeria, “the Special Rapporteur noted that tensions and lack of understanding between Muslim and Christian communities, which has been so far contained and confined to certain areas, had aggravated in recent years.” According to the Special Rapporteur “while economic, political and other factors contribute to such tensions, they have often led to polarization along religious lines” (UN Commission on Human Rights

2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Asma Jahangir – Mission to Nigeria*, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2, p.2 – Attachment 1).

The Special Rapporteur reports that religion is a sensitive matter in Nigeria:

17. In Nigeria religion undoubtedly has a very important place in the daily lives of its citizens. A significant majority of Nigerians are not only believers but regularly attend religious services and are active members of their religious communities. For these reasons, religions also constitute a very sensitive feature of today's Nigeria.

18. According to different sources, approximately half of the population is Muslim, about 40 per cent is Christian and the remaining 10 per cent practice traditional African religions or other beliefs, or have no religion. Religious affiliation is usually but not always linked to ethnicity. While most Hausas/Fulanis are Muslims, Yorubas and Igbos are mainly Christians. Geographically, the majority of the population of the north of the country is Muslims while most of the Christians live in the South. States of the so-called "middle belt" have both Christians and Muslims in different proportions (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Asma Jahangir – Mission to Nigeria*, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2 – Attachment 1).

According to the Special Rapporteur, the "Government of Nigeria generally does not deliberately violate the right to freedom of religion or belief." The UN Rapporteur continues:

33. The Government of Nigeria generally does not deliberately violate the right to freedom of religion or belief. Although Nigerian authorities have often limited or restricted important religious gatherings or religious ceremonies or, in some places, prohibited the use of microphones, in order to prevent interreligious tensions, the Special Rapporteur has not received indications of the existence of a policy that would directly limit the right to freedom of religion or belief of Nigerians.

34. This however does not mean that Nigerians do not suffer from violations of their right to freedom of religion or belief (see paras. 39-45 below) and that the Government fulfils its obligations in terms of freedom of religion or belief. There are indeed strong and consistent indications that violations of this particular right occur in many parts of Nigeria and are either committed by non-State actors – or are the consequences of acts committed by non-State actors – or indirectly result from the Government's policy or, on the contrary, from the absence of appropriate measures to protect.

...36. Many of the Special Rapporteur's interlocutors from all religious communities agreed that the Federal Government as well as state governments interfered excessively with the religious life of Nigerians. For most of them, this attitude is the main explanation for the current problems faced by religious communities in Nigeria. Some examples of this interference are the selective subsidizing of religious communities, including by financing pilgrimages for both Christians and Muslims, the use of public money to build places of worship and the appointment of persons to government positions or in public services on the basis of their religion.

37. In this context, state governments tend to follow the opinion of the religious majority living within their jurisdiction and guide their policy according to the wishes of this majority. Partly as a result of this policy, authorities are said to use religions to achieve their own political agendas. Particularly in the so-called "middle belt" states where the population is relatively mixed, members of state governments are usually drawn from the predominant religious community in the state. Key positions are held by members of the majority and only a few members of religious minorities are represented in the administration (UN Commission

on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, Asma Jahangir – Mission to Nigeria, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2 – Attachment 1).

According to the Special Rapporteur, both Christians and Muslims complained of limitations on their right to freedom of religion with the limitation generally affecting Muslims in Christian areas and Christians in Muslim areas. The UN Rapporteur continues:

39. Both Christians and Muslims complained of limitations on the right to freedom of religion or belief suffered by members of their respective community. Generally, the limitations affecting Muslims usually occurred in areas inhabited predominantly by Christians while the limitations affecting Christians occurred in predominantly Muslim areas. Most of the time, the limitations were imposed by either non-State actors, in particular religious groups, or state governments, or a combination of both, but rarely were there complaints of limitations imposed by the Federal Government, apart from those restricting rights in situations that could potentially foment religious violence. Nigerians who are neither Muslim nor Christian complain of neglect by the Government and of being “overpowered” by the tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities.

40. In the majority of cases, Christians linked the limitations and violations that they were suffering to the adoption and implementation of sharia penal codes in a number of northern states (see sect. IV below). Sometimes, Muslims also claimed that limitations or violations of their rights were also due to the adoption of sharia penal codes (see next section), either because of retaliatory measures taken by Christians or because they could be subjected to a judicial interpretation of sharia which may not be acceptable to them.

41. A number of Muslims complained of being portrayed as “barbaric”, “militants” and “anti-women”. They were deeply hurt by this stereotyping in some national and international media. They alleged that they were not adequately represented in the police service or the armed forces. In addition, they pointed out that they were poorly represented at the peace conferences held in the Plateau region. In their defence, they gave examples of the tolerance shown by their community: Sunday rather than Friday had since time immemorial been accepted as the weekly national day of rest, and there were more Christian foreign missionaries in Nigeria than Muslims. Others who were uncomfortable with the recent introduction of sharia in the northern states feared further backlash because the “open-ended monopoly of interpreting sharia” had been left in the hands of poorly-trained judges.

42. It seems that the grave outbreaks of intercommunal violence that have unfolded along religious lines have provoked real tensions between religious communities and generated the imposition of numerous de facto and de jure limitations on the manifestation of religious belief by one or the other group. The Special Rapporteur has noted, particularly in Kaduna and Jos, that the mere existence of these tensions has created a climate of unease and, for a number of people, a real fear of openly manifesting their religion, for example by wearing certain dress or participating in public religious events. Some Muslim scholars and lawyers complained that they dared not openly criticize the substance or implementation of the sharia penal provisions. These tensions therefore undoubtedly limit the freedom of religion or belief of a number of Nigerian citizens (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, Asma Jahangir – Mission to Nigeria, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2 – Attachment 1).

The Special Rapporteur provides the following information on violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The Special Rapporteur notes that while the reasons for this violence are “manifold and complex”, the instigators “have found that they can gain more support if they put their arguments in religious terms.” The Special Rapporteur continues:

80. Over the last few years, a number of violent riots and other attacks have occurred in several locations in Nigeria and caused the deaths of several thousand people, probably constituting one of the most serious human rights concern in the country. The Special Rapporteur will not provide a detailed description of these tragic events in the present report because she does not have the capacity to investigate the circumstances of large-scale events of this sort, and because a number of very detailed and well-documented reports have been written out by non-governmental organizations. Rather, she would like to focus her attention on the religious aspects of the killings and emphasize that religious violence is also an element of the overall situation of freedom of religion or belief in Nigeria as described elsewhere in the report.

81. The following instances of violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria are particularly relevant to her mandate:

- Between 21 and 25 February 2000 and between 22 and 23 May of the same year, at least 2,000 people were killed in Kaduna (and in the south of Nigeria as retaliation) as a result of the adoption of a sharia penal code by Kaduna State;
- Between 7 and 13 September 2001, in Jos and surrounding areas of Plateau State, more than 1,000 people were killed after a Christian woman tried to walk through a praying Muslim congregation outside a Mosque;
- Between 21 and 23 November 2002, in Kaduna, 250 people were killed after a press article mentioned that the Prophet Muhammad would have approved the holding of the Miss World contest in Nigeria;
- On 24 February and on 2 and 11 May 2004, at least 1,000 people were killed in a cycle of retaliatory violence in the town of Yelwa, Plateau State and Kano State.

82. Most interlocutors at governmental level as well as from the civil society stated that those events were the result not only of religious intolerance but also, if not mainly, of political, economic and ethnic factors. In Jos, for example, the riots were explained as a conflict between the indigenous people and settlers and their respective rights, particularly in terms of land acquisition and property.

83. The Special Rapporteur notes that the reasons for this violence are manifold and complex, but she has also observed that in most cases the violence has unfolded along religious lines: it is noticeable that the instigators of this violence have found that they can gain more support if they put their arguments in religious terms. Religious beliefs not only constitute a very emotional issue in Nigeria, but also provide a relatively simple and easy way to identify an opponent.

84. These instances of violence are striking in their intensity. In each case, a great number of killings occurred in only a few days. This also shows that a very significant portion of the population took part in the killings or has been affected by them. For this reason among others, the killings are still very much in the minds of all those living in the places affected by the violence. So many people have been implicated in – and suffer from – the violence that a majority of the people in those places live in an atmosphere of fear, anger and sadness which, in a way, prevents the population from returning to normal life. In some places, the Special Rapporteur felt an atmosphere of real tension as if the violence had occurred more recently than it actually did.

85. In the many consultations held during her visit, especially with representatives of religious groups, the Special Rapporteur clearly felt a high level of tensions and strong indications that the situation could degenerate into a conflict of much larger intensity. Members of religious communities and representatives of non-governmental organizations often expressed their fear of further violence and their exasperation with regard to the current situation. Some of them even warned that members of one or the other community could not contain their

frustration much longer and asserted that dissatisfaction and sometimes anger were affecting an increasing number of Nigerians.

86. A significant number of interlocutors at various levels and from different backgrounds confirmed that members of both Muslim and Christian communities were currently accumulating weapons, which they receive by different means, including from abroad. This is indeed alarming and sounds like a warning which must be heeded.

87. The most striking aspect of this violence is the way the authorities responded to it. According to the majority of the reports submitted to the Special Rapporteur, the authorities in most cases did not initiate the mechanisms designed to prosecute the offenders and compensate the victims. Despite efforts, including numerous requests, to secure information, the Special Rapporteur has not received figures or other factual information on prosecutions initiated after the riots and remedies provided to the victims. On numerous occasions, the Special Rapporteur unsuccessfully tried to obtain from government officials copies of reports of commissions of inquiry that had been established by the Government to investigate the causes and circumstances of some of the riots.

88. On the contrary, the Special Rapporteur's interlocutors, including at the highest official level, claimed that the identification of the instigators of the riots as well as the assessment of damages suffered by the victims were particularly arduous. It was argued that rather than prosecution and punishment, the promotion of peace and reconciliation was the authorities' priority.

89. The main significant measure taken by the Federal Government in recent times was the imposition of a state of emergency in Plateau State during the second half of 2004 after the killings in Yelwa in May.²² While this had the effect of preventing further violence while it was in force, it is not known whether it has helped to address the root causes of the problem.

90. Finally, despite the periodic recurrence of such violence, no warning mechanisms seem to have been put in place or to function properly in spite of the high degree of predictability of some of the incidents (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, Asma Jahangir – *Mission to Nigeria*, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2 – Attachment 1).

According to the Special Rapporteur, "there cannot be a lasting solution without proper justice for the perpetrators and victims of all acts of violence on religious grounds that have occurred." According to the Special Rapporteur, "a long-term effort to promote respect and tolerance...is necessary to gradually erase the tensions and misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians." The Special Rapporteur continues:

95. The Special Rapporteur is of the opinion that there cannot be a lasting solution without proper justice for the perpetrators and victims of all acts of violence on religious grounds that have occurred. A climate of impunity can only encourage those who plan to foment further violence, whatever their motivations may be, and reinforce the feeling of injustice of the victims, thereby paving the way for retaliatory action. Impunity further strengthens the fears of those who have been affected by previous instances of violence and inherently limits the enjoyment of their right to freely manifest their religion or belief. In the context of this mandate, reports have often pointed out that perpetrators who enjoy impunity, even for well-intentioned reasons, remain active in keeping religious tensions alive. Impunity therefore only escalates religious intolerance.

96. A long-term effort to promote respect and tolerance, including religious tolerance, among members of the Nigerian society is necessary to gradually erase the tensions and

misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians. For that purpose, measures at the Federal level have to be complemented by mechanisms at the local level. In this regard, the Special Rapporteur has been encouraged by grass-roots initiatives which aim at building bridges between communities and help them to understand each other's concerns. Other local measures aimed at finding solutions to specific disputes through dialogue between communities are also an essential means of opening minds to other forms of conflict resolution that are particularly appropriate in the Nigerian context.

...98. The Special Rapporteur considers that reports according to which members of both communities are arming themselves, whether for defensive purposes or for future aggression, constitute a sign that there remains a willingness to provoke or accept more violence. While the authorities have reacted by taking some appropriate actions in this regard, a more comprehensive policy should be adopted to address this particularly worrying development. While in most instances of violence, attacks were carried out with no arms or with objects used as weapons, it is clear that the alleged stocking of proper weapons can only increase the scale of future violence and the number of casualties (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, Asma Jahangir – *Mission to Nigeria*, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2 – Attachment 1).

According to the US Department of State, “interreligious tension between Christians and Muslims remained high in some areas, and there were several violent economic, ethnic, and political conflicts that took on religious overtones” in 2006. The US Department of State continues:

Census results were not scheduled to be released until at least November 2006. The census had been expected to settle the question of whether Christians or Muslims make up the majority in the country. However, the religious issue proved so divisive that questions related to it were eventually removed from the census form.

...Religious differences often mirror regional and ethnic differences. For example, persons in the North and in parts of the Middle Belt are overwhelmingly Muslim and from the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups that tend to dominate these areas. Many southern ethnic groups are predominantly Christian. In many areas of the Middle Belt, Muslim Fulani tend to be pastoralists, while the Muslim Hausa and most Christian ethnic groups tend to be farmers or work in urban areas. Consequently ethnic, regional, economic, and land use competition often correlate with religious differences between the competing groups.

It is not unusual for different ethnic groups with a long history of conflict to have adopted different religions with the effect of exacerbating existing tensions. Communal conflicts in Plateau and Kano States in 2004 led to the deaths of thousands and a several-month-long states of emergency in Plateau State. There have been incidents of violence in Plateau State since, but not on the scale of the previous reporting period. For example, in April 2006 at least twenty-five persons were killed and hundreds fled their homes during fighting between the Pan and Goma people of Plateau state over land ownership.

There were also instances of violence primarily based on religious issues or because of their religious affiliations.

...The law prohibits religious discrimination in employment and other practices; however, private businesses frequently discriminated on the basis of religion or ethnicity in their hiring practices and purchasing patterns. In nearly all states, ethnic rivalries between “indigene” groups and “settlers” led to some societal discrimination against minority ethnic and religious groups (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Nigeria*, 15 September, Introduction & Section III – Attachment 2).

For more information on violence between Muslims and Christians in 2006 please see the US Department of State's most recent *International Religious Freedom Report* which is included as Attachment 2 (US Department of State 2006, *International Religious Freedom Report 2006 – Nigeria*, 15 September – Attachment 2).

2. Please also provide brief information about the Christian – Muslim clashes in 2003 in Jos.

The information provided in response to this question has been organised into the following three sections:

- [Jos](#);
- [Background](#); and
- [Violence in Jos in 2003](#).

Jos

Jos and the Plateau State are marked on the attached map (US Central Intelligence Agency 1993, 'Nigeria Political Map', Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas website http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/nigeria_pol_1993.pdf – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 3).

For information on Jos please see Attachment 4. (Wikipedia 2007, 'Jos', 17 July <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos> – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 4: **Users should be aware that [Wikipedia](#) is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is written collaboratively by volunteers.** The Research Service recommends that users of Wikipedia familiarise themselves with the regulatory practices which Wikipedia employs as a preventative measure against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy.)

Background

In September 2001, Christians and Muslims clashed in Jos. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the tension between the mainly Christian indigenes and mainly Muslim settlers may have caused the violence. HRW provide the following information on the September 2001 violence in Jos.

From September 7 to 13, 2001, Jos, the capital of Plateau State in central Nigeria, became the scene of mass killing and destruction for the first time in its recent history. Hundreds of people were killed and tens of thousands displaced in less than one week. Violence suddenly erupted between Christians and Muslims in a city where diverse communities had coexisted peacefully for years and which had prided itself on avoiding the intercommunal violence that had plagued neighboring states. Three months later, the inhabitants of Jos are still counting their dead and assessing the massive damage done to their homes and property. While the total number of victims is not yet confirmed, initial figures compiled by local human rights groups, religious communities and other organizations indicate that more than 1,000 people were killed in just six days.

...Opinions about who was primarily to blame for the outbreak of violence varied and were sometimes highly polarized. However, all those interviewed by Human Rights Watch agreed on one conclusion: that the violence could have been foreseen but that government authorities failed to take action to prevent it. The state government adopted a passive attitude and

appeared not to take seriously the numerous, explicit threats issued by both “indigenous” and “non-indigenous” groups in Jos in the weeks leading up to the crisis. All those interviewed also deplored the lack of police presence and intervention during the crisis and the failure of the police to ensure protection and security for the population. Eventually—but only after many lives had been lost—it was the military, not the police, who intervened to restore law and order. Human Rights Watch made repeated attempts to meet state government authorities and senior police officers in Jos to seek their accounts of events; however, they were not available to meet us. In November 2001, as this report is being prepared, two commissions of inquiry, one appointed by the federal government and the other by the Plateau state government, have recently begun their investigations into what occurred (Human Rights Watch 2001, *Jos: A City Torn Apart*, December, Vol. 13, No. 9(A), p.2 – Attachment 5).

According to HRW, “the violence then spread out of Jos to other parts of Plateau state, and scores, and possibly hundreds, more people were killed in 2002 and 2003 in a cycle of attacks and counter-attacks by both Muslims and Christians.” HRW continues:

Muslims and Christians from different ethnic groups have become increasingly well-armed and have attacked their opponents with impunity, using religion as a tool to whip up sentiment and to spur on their followers.

Despite the escalation of the conflict in Plateau State since September 2001, and clear warning signs of the likelihood of further violence, the Nigerian government did not take any effective action and allowed the conflict to spiral out of control. Finally, when Yelwa was attacked on May 2-3, 2004, the scale of the violence could no longer be ignored. On May 18, 2004, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a state of emergency in Plateau State.

Relative calm was restored in the following months, and the Plateau State government embarked on a number of initiatives as part of a peace process under the state of emergency. But since the state of emergency in Plateau State was lifted in November 2004, the momentum to find long-term solutions to the conflict seems to have been lost. Critically, justice has not been delivered. There have been some arrests, but the people responsible for planning or organizing the violence have not been prosecuted; neither have the police or soldiers responsible for killings in Kano. As evidenced by the chain of events in Plateau State over the last four years, the mere absence of fighting since May 2004 cannot be interpreted as a definitive end to the conflict. Until the root causes of the conflict are addressed, the violence could be reignited at any time (Human Rights Watch 2005, *Revenge in the Name of Religion – The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States*, May, Vol. 17, No. 8(A), p.2 – Attachment 6).

According to HRW, the conflict in Plateau State is a result of the competition between indigenes and settlers. HRW continues:

At the root of the conflict in Plateau State is the competition between “indigenes” and “non-indigenes.” Throughout Nigeria, groups considered “indigenes”, or the original inhabitants of an area, are granted certain privileges, including access to government employment, scholarships for state schools, lower school fees, and political positions. To secure access to these privileges, they have to produce an “indigene certificate” which is granted by the local authorities. “Non-indigenes” or “settlers” are denied these certificates and the accompanying privileges. Different groups are considered “indigenes” or “settlers” in different areas. The definition of the term “indigene” is commonly understood to be based on a person’s place of origin, but many people born and brought up in a particular area are not accorded that status, even though they may never have lived in any other part of Nigeria. No official document or legislation defines these categories precisely or sets out clear criteria as to how a person’s

“indigeneship” is determined. The Nigerian constitution refers to the concept of “indigene” but fails to define it.

...The concept of “indigeneship” has been exploited by various groups to further their own interests. In Plateau State, ethnic groups who have been living in the area for several generations are still considered as “settlers” by “indigenes” who claim that their own ancestors were there before them. Different groups voice competing claims to “indigeneship” or “ownership” of the same town or area, as in the case of Yelwa and Jos. In Plateau State, the “indigenes” have most often tended to be Christians while the “settlers” have tended to be Muslims, but there are exceptions, for example the Gamai ethnic group, who consider themselves to be “indigenes” and who include members of both faiths.

The dispute between “indigenes” and “non-indigenes” has surfaced in different contexts. In some instances, for example in Jos, the two groups have fought primarily over political positions. In other cases, the dispute has focused on the use of land.

...As explained above, neither the conflict between “indigenes” and “non-indigenes” nor the conflict over land and livestock were originally about religion. However, religious identity has gradually overtaken other considerations in Plateau State and has proved to be one of the most effective ways of mobilizing people: not only does it have a strong emotional appeal, but it has enabled both sides to reach out to a much larger number of people from many different ethnic groups. Religious rhetoric and prejudice have escalated, not only among local communities, but among Christian and Muslim leaders at state level, and even, sometimes, at national level. Whereas in previous phases of the conflict, ethnic allegiance tended to be stronger than religious allegiance, in the last one to two years, the question of religion has become paramount, leading to situations where members of the same ethnic group—for example the Tarok or the Gamai—have clashed because they were from different faiths (Human Rights Watch 2005, *Revenge in the Name of Religion – The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States*, May, Vol. 17, No. 8(A), pp.8-10 – Attachment 6).

Violence in Jos in 2003

A number of violent incidents between Christians and Muslims occurred in Jos during 2003. They are as follows. Please note that other violent incidents took place in Jos in 2003, however, the reports only referred to the ethnicities of those involved not their religion:

- 2003: “In the northern city of Kano Christians were targeted in an uprising in 2003 that was supposedly in retaliation for the killings of Hausa in Jos” (‘Nigeria: Jos voters angry and divided’ 2007, *IRIN*, 8 April, ReliefWeb website <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MCON-7257HG?OpenDocument> – Accessed 21 August 2007 – Attachment 7);
- January 2003: “Hausa Fulani militia attacked and burnt down houses” in Kak – Sop – Jos (‘The Christians that the World forgot about; the Muslim who have taken advantage...Nigeria: A Short Chronicle’ 2003, Biafra Nation website http://www.biafraland.com/Muslim_rampage.htm – Accessed 21 August 2007 – Attachment 8);
- 4 April 2003: “Hausa/Fulani militia attacked. One woman was killed and houses burnt in Fobur – Jos (‘The Christians that the World forgot about; the Muslim who have taken advantage...Nigeria: A Short Chronicle’ 2003, Biafra Nation website http://www.biafraland.com/Muslim_rampage.htm – Accessed 21 August 2007 – Attachment 8).

3. **Please provide information about the existence and practices of voodoo cults Nigeria. What are the common beliefs with respect to these?**
4. **Is there any evidence that people who refuse to join are being harmed?**

No information on the existence of voodoo cults in Nigeria was found amongst the sources consulted.

Vodun sometimes known as voodoo is a religion practiced in Benin, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Haiti, Togo and the USA. According to the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, the “evil, imaginary religion” known as voodoo “has been created for Hollywood movies” and “does not exist in reality.” According to Canadian photographer and journalist, Bob Burch, the Ewe, Fon and Yoruba ethnic groups of eastern Ghana, Togo, Benin and western Nigeria form the heartland of Voodoo worship in West Africa. For more information on Voodoo please see Attachment 9 and Attachment 10 (Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance 2006, ‘Vodun (and related religions)’, 6 February <http://www.religioustolerance.org/voodoo.htm> – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 9; and Burch, Bob 2007, ‘West Africa: The Truth about Voodoo’, *Travel Africa Magazine*, 22 August http://www.travelafricamag.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=277 – Accessed 21 August 2007 – Attachment 10).

The following reports on *juju* (fetish magic or supernatural/occult powers), cults, secret societies, witchcraft and ritual murders in Nigeria may be of interest:

- Professor Dorward, African Research Institute at La Trobe University Melbourne (9 August 2006): ritual killings in Nigeria (Dorward, Professor David 2006, Email ‘Re: Request for Information on Nigeria’, 9 August – Attachment 11);
- Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (August 2006): *juju*, cults and ritual murders in Nigeria (Skogseth, Geir 2006, *Report Fact-finding trip to Nigeria (Abuja, Lagos and Benin City) 12-26 March 2006*, August, Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre website, pp.18-22 – Attachment 12);
- UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (October 2005): *juju*, secret societies and cults in Nigeria (UN Commission on Human Rights 2005, *UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Asma Jahangir – Mission to Nigeria*, 7 October, E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.2, Paragraph 26, 28-29 & 79 – Attachment 1);
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (22 July 2005): ritual murder and human sacrifice (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *NGA100384.E – Nigeria: Prevalence of ritual murder and human sacrifice and reaction by government authorities (March 2000 – July 2005)*, 22 July – Attachment 13);
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (12 July 2005): Ogboni society (Immigration and Refugee Board 2005, *NGA100180.E – Nigeria: Ogboni society including history, structure, rituals and ceremonies; membership and consequences for refusing to join (April 2000-July 2005)*, 12 July – Attachment 14);
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (14 June 2005): witchcraft in Nigeria (Immigration and Refugee Board 2005, *NGA100176.E – Nigeria: The belief in witchcraft; treatment of those accused of being witches and the treatment of their families; police reactions to the killing of those accused of being witches; whether there are safe areas or villages to which those accused of being witches can go (October 2002 – June 2005)*, 14 June – Attachment 15);

- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (23 February 2005): student cults (Immigration and Refugee Board 2005, *NGA43278.E – Nigeria: Societal and government reaction to student cult activities (2002-2004)*, 23 February – Attachment 16);
- Danish Immigration Service (January 2005): cults in Nigeria (Danish Immigration Service 2005, *Report on human rights issues in Nigeria – Joint British-Danish fact-finding mission to Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria 19 October to 2 November 2004*, January, pp.20-21 & 38 – Attachment 17);
- Adewale Rotimi, Obafemi Awolowo University (2005): student cults (Rotimi, Adewale 2005, 'Violence in the Citadel: The Menace of Secret Cults in the Nigerian Universities', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, pp.79-98 <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol14num1/rotimi.pdf> – Accessed 21 August 2007 – Attachment 18);
- Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (October 2004): possibility for relocation of asylum seekers who fear persecution from cults (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration 2004, *Report from a fact-finding trip to Nigeria (Abuja, Kaduna and Lagos) 23-28 February 2004*, October, Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre website, pp.14-15 – Attachment 19);
- Heinz Jockers, Institute for African Studies, Hamburg (28 June 2002): secret societies, human sacrifices and student cults in Nigeria (Restoy, Enrique & Jockers, Heinz 2002, *Country Report – Nigeria*, Presented at the ACCORD/UNHCR: 8th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Vienna, 28-29 June 2002, 28 June, pp.166-167 – Attachment 20);
- Questions 3 and 4 of *Research Response NGA15333* dated 21 August 2002 provides information on secret cults in Nigeria (RRT Country Research 2002, *Research Response NGA15333*, 21 August – Attachment 21).

5. Please provide information about the O'odua People's Congress (OPC), its formation, policies, activities, leaders, platform, etc.

The Tribunal has completed a number of responses on the OPC:

- *Research Response NGA15264* dated 12 July 2002 provides information on the philosophy of the OPC, groups and institutions the OPC target, OPC activities in 2000, 2001 and 2002 and the government's attitude to the OPC (RRT Country Research 2002, *Research Response NGA15264*, 12 July – Attachment 22);
- Question 1 of *Research Response NGA17338* dated 31 May 2005 provides information on OPC activities in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Question 2 provides information on the government's attitude to the OPC. The response refers to a useful HRW report dated February 2003. This report provides extensive information on the OPC including information on killings and abuses by the OPC, human rights violations against real or suspected OPC members and relations between the OPC, the government and the police. The report covers the period May 1999 to February 2003. Pages 1 to 4 summarise the report, pages 4 to 6 provide background information on the OPC, pages 6 to 8 provide information on the structure, composition and membership of the OPC and pages 8-10 provide information on OPC vigilantism (Human Rights Watch 2003, *The O'odua People's Congress: Fighting Violence with Violence*, February, Vol. 15, No. 4(A) – Attachment 23; and RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response NGA17338*, 31 May – Attachment 24);
- Question 1 of *Research Response NGA30401* dated 10 August 2006 provides background information on the OPC. Question 2 provides information on OPC factional leader Gani Adams. Question 4 provides information on the government's attitude to the OPC.

Question 5 provides information on the “magical” means OPC members use to protect them and overpower their opponents. Question 6 provides information on the OPC split into two factions. Question 7 provides information on the hierarchy and structure of the OPC (RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response NGA30401*, 10 August – Attachment 25).

The US Department of State provides the following information on the OPC in 2006:

Unlike in the previous year, there were no politically motivated arrests of members of the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC), a militant Yoruba group operating in the southwest that claims its objective is to protect the collective rights of the Yoruba within the federation.

Several OPC members continued to be detained for most of the year on charges stemming from October 2005 clashes between rival OPC factions, but OPC leader Fredrick Fasehun was released in April on bail for medical reasons. In December charges were dismissed against Fasehun, Gani Adams, and four others, and all of those who had been detained were released from prison (US Department of State 2007, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006 – Nigeria*, 6 March, Section 1d Arrest and Detention – Attachment 26).

6. Provide information about the treatment of the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria. Is there a concentration in any particular area of Nigeria? How are they treated by other ethnic/religious groups and the authorities?

The information provided in response to this question has been organised into the following three sections:

- [General](#);
- [Yoruba](#);
- [Situation of Yoruba](#).

General

The US Department of State provides the following information on ethnic groups in Nigeria:

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. The four largest ethnic groups, which comprised two-thirds of the country’s population, were the Hausa and Fulani of the north, the Yoruba of the southwest, and the Ibos of the southeast. The Ijaw of the South Delta were the fifth largest group, followed by Kanuri in the far northeast, and the Tiv in the Middle Belt. **Societal discrimination on the basis of ethnicity 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** [Researcher Emphasis Added]. There was a long history of tension among some ethnic groups (see section 2.c.).

Many groups complained of insufficient representation in government office.

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 problems and within the security forces. Middle Belt and Christian officers dominated the military hierarchy, and some persons in the North believed that the northern Hausa were

underrepresented in the military. Northern Muslims accused the government of favoring Yorubas or Christians from the Middle Belt for those positions. Traditional relationships continued to be used to impose considerable pressure on individual government officials to favor their own ethnic groups for important positions and patronage.

...In Plateau State, the Hausa and Fulani, most of whom were Muslim and considered non-indigenes, claimed to face significant discrimination from the local government in scholarships and government representation.

...Religious difference often mirrored regional and ethnic differences and resulted in numerous deaths and the displacement of thousands of persons during the year (see section 2.c.). There were no developments in previous years' incidents of ethno-religious violence (US Department of State 2007, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006 – Nigeria*, 6 March, Section 5 National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities – Attachment 26).

An April 2006 HRW report provides information on the discrimination faced by citizens who are judged to be settlers in the particular state or local government area of Nigeria in which they live:

The population of every state and local government in Nigeria is officially divided into two categories of citizens: those who are indigenes and those who are not. The indigenes of a place are those who can trace their ethnic and genealogical roots back to the community of people who originally settled there. Everyone else, no matter how long they or their families have lived in the place they call home, is and always will be a non-indigene.

This rationale, however, has been twisted beyond recognition by state and local policies, often unsupported by any law or other form of legal justification, that marginalize and exclude non-indigenes in ways that have nothing to do with the preservation of cultural identity and autonomy. As a matter of government policy, many states refuse to employ non-indigenes in their state civil services, and most if not all of Nigeria's thirty-six states deny them the right to compete for academic scholarships. State universities generally discriminate against non-indigenes in their admissions policies and charge higher fees to non-indigene students who do manage to secure admission. Non-indigenes must also contend with a range of less formal discriminatory practices, such as barriers to political participation and discrimination in the provision of basic services and infrastructure to their communities, that government does nothing to stop or even discourage. All of these practices have been made more harmful—and become more controversial—by increasing levels of chronic poverty throughout Nigeria.

...Taken as a whole, these discriminatory policies and practices effectively relegate many non-indigenes to the status of second-class citizens, a disadvantage they can only escape by moving to whatever part of Nigeria they supposedly belong in. But many Nigerians have no real ties to the regions they are said to originate from, and feel that they should have some way of becoming full citizens of the places they call home. Worse still, Nigeria is home to communities of people who are discriminated against as non indigenes even though their families have occupied their land for a century or more and no longer have any idea where their ancestors migrated from. A Nigerian who cannot prove that he is an indigene of somewhere by producing a "certificate of indigeneity" is discriminated against in every state of the federation and is barred from many opportunities at the federal level as well.

Nigeria's federal government has done nothing to curb this state and local discrimination against non-indigenes, even though it makes a mockery of the Nigerian Constitution's guarantee of freedom from discrimination (Human Rights Watch 2006, *"They Do Not Own This Place" – Government Discrimination Against "Non-Indigenes" in Nigeria*, April, Vol. 18, No. 3(A), pp.1-2 – Attachment 27).

Yoruba

According to the Minorities at Risk Project, the Yoruba are the second largest ethnic group in Nigeria after the Hausa/Fulani. The Yoruba constitute 21% of the Nigerian population. For information on the history of the Yoruba in Nigeria please see Attachment 28 (Minorities at Risk Project 2003, *Assessment for Yoruba in Nigeria*, 31 December <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=47505> – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 28).

HRW provide the following information on the Yoruba in Nigeria:

Nigeria's population of more than 120,000 million is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups. The Yoruba are among the largest; a 1991 government census put the number at 29 million. The current number is likely to be significantly higher, although no accurate population statistics are available in Nigeria. Their historical homeland is the southwest of the country, where they are the majority group. However, like many other ethnic groups, Yoruba have moved around the country over the years and have settled in other regions too. Before and after independence from Britain in 1960, there were conflicts among different ethnic groups in Nigeria in the competition for political control. Following the withdrawal of the British colonial authorities, the Yoruba found themselves pitted against the Hausa, in particular, the majority ethnic group in the north of Nigeria who had tended to be favored by the British under colonial rule and who dominated the political and military elite.

...In addition to its broad aims, the creation of the OPC was a specific reaction to the annulment of the elections of June 12, 1993, by the military government of the time, and the subsequent arrest of Moshood Abiola (a Yoruba), the candidate widely believed to have won the cancelled presidential elections, who later died of a heart attack in detention in July 1998. Outrage at the annulment of these elections, combined with the broader struggle against military repression and frustration at political and economic marginalization, acted as strong motivating factors to galvanize the disenfranchised population, particularly the youth (Human Rights Watch 2003, *The O'odua People's Congress: Fighting Violence with Violence*, February, Vol. 15, No. 4(A), p.4 – Attachment 23).

According to Wikipedia, the Yoruba are the main ethnic group in Ekiti, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Kogi, Edo and Ayo states. According to Wikipedia, the main Yoruba cities are Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Akure, Ilorin, Ijebu Ode, Ogbomoso, Ondo, Ota, Shagamu, Iseyin, Osogbo, Ilesa, Oyo and Ile-Ife. (Wikipedia 2005, 'Yoruba', 28 October – Attachment 29: **Users should be aware that [Wikipedia](#) is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is written collaboratively by volunteers.** The Research Service recommends that users of Wikipedia familiarise themselves with the regulatory practices which Wikipedia employs as a preventative measure against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy.)

According to *Ethnologue*, the Yoruba language was spoken by 18,850,000 Nigerians in 1993 and Yoruba is the official language of the South West of Nigeria (Gordon, Raymond G Jr (ed) 2005, 'Yoruba – A language of Nigeria', *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 15 th ed, SIL International, Dallas http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=yor – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 30).

Situation of Yoruba

According to the Minorities at Risk Project, the “Yoruba do not face any ecological or demographic constraints; nor do they face significant levels of cultural, political or economic discrimination.” The Minorities at Risk Project continues:

The Yoruba are at a low risk for rebellion. Even though they do have a history of protest, they have not engaged in militant activities against the Nigerian government in the past. At present, the group does not face any significant political, economic or social discrimination. There is, however, some risk of renewed protest, since the Nigerian government continues to adopt repressive tactics. In addition, there are reports of communal violence between the Yoruba and the majority Hausa-Fulani communities. If not managed, these factors could contribute to increasing discontent, and perhaps even violence (Minorities at Risk Project 2003, *Assessment for Yoruba in Nigeria*, 31 December <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=47505> – Accessed 22 August 2007 – Attachment 28).

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