



**Q09760. Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 27 April 2009**

**Current information on the situation in Nigeria with regard to police ineptitude and corruption.**

The 2008 *US Department of State's* annual human rights report on Nigeria, in a section titled 'Role of the Police and Security Apparatus', states:

"The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is responsible for law enforcement. Internal security is the duty of the SSS, 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. Police routinely stopped drivers who had committed no traffic infractions, refusing to allow a car to continue until the driver paid a bribe. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) made efforts to strengthen the Police Monitoring Unit which was supposed to visit police stations and search police officers for signs of accepting bribes. During the year, the unit visited six police stations in the FCT and reportedly arrested eight officers for extorting bribes from the public. In November, the IGP arrested seven officers for mounting illegal checkpoints at the border between Ogun and Oyo States." (US Department of State (25 February 2009) - *Nigeria: "Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2008"*)

A report from the *UN Human Rights Council* states:

"A 2001 CCA report indicated that corruption is believed to be widespread and endemic in Nigeria; however, only a few cases of bribery and corruption are reported to the police yearly.<sup>93</sup> In 2005, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions noted that the fight against corruption at all levels is closely linked to issues of extrajudicial executions.<sup>94</sup> While he noted initiatives that have succeeded in targeting some of the most prominent cases,<sup>95</sup> he stated in 2008 that police corruption is rampant.<sup>96</sup> In 2007, the Special Rapporteur on torture also noted that corruption is endemic." (UN Human Rights Council (formerly UN Commission on Human Rights) (05 January 2009) - *Nigeria: "Compilation Prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Accordance with Paragraph 15*

*(B) of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1; Nigeria [A/HRC/WG.6/4/NGA/2]" )*

*Human Rights Watch* in their annual report on Nigeria state:

"Nigeria's poorly trained and under-resourced police force was in 2008 responsible for serious and persistent abuses, including extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects, torture, and extortion. In January 2006 the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions found that "the practice of summarily executing suspected criminals by the Nigerian Police is widespread and systematic." More than 10,000 Nigerians have been killed by the police since 2000.

The police routinely use torture as a tactic of interrogation and as a tool of extortion. Woefully under-equipped to carry out criminal investigations, the police often rely on confessions extracted by torture as the sole method of gathering evidence. Police also routinely extort bribes from ordinary Nigerians through the threat of arrest or violence, most commonly at checkpoints set up along Nigeria's roads. Meanwhile, thousands of people accused of common crimes continue to be detained without trial for months or even years in sub-standard conditions.

Lack of political will to hold the police to account remains the single biggest obstacle to ending abuses by the Nigerian police force." (*Human Rights Watch* (14 January 2009) - *World Report 2009 – Nigeria*)

An *IRIN* news report from 2008 states:

"Police corruption is a common and acknowledged problem in Nigeria.

In November 2007, Human Rights Watch called for an inquiry into police conduct after the Inspector General of Police, Mike Okiro, boasted having killed 785 armed robbers between June and September 2007.

The human rights watchdog estimated that as many as 10,000 people may have died as a result of police brutality between 2000 and 2007.

"If I told you that doesn't happen here, I would be lying to you," said Felix Ogbaudu, the Port Harcourt Police Commissioner. "But there is corruption everywhere."

Ogbaudu suggested that better pay and working conditions would abate the problem." (*Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)* (28 January 2008) *Nigeria: Police corruption blamed for wave of arrests* )

Another *IRIN* report regarding policing in Lagos states:

"As a result, working conditions for Lagos police "are among the worst even by West African standards," according to Innocent Chukwuma, head of the non-profit CLEEN Foundation, which promotes public safety and justice in Nigeria.

"Less than 10 percent of police officers have official accommodation in barracks or privately rented apartments," she told IRIN. "Many others sleep in broken-down vehicles or vehicles they seize from people; others sleep in their offices."

Some resort to bribes to get by. "We fuel our patrol vehicles by raising our own money from the public," revealed a sergeant and member of the elite anti-riot mobile force, who requested anonymity. "We buy almost everything ourselves; torches, even our belts and boots."

Senior officers also expect junior officers to pay them a proportion of the bribe money they raise each day. "They must settle with us," he said." (Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (22 January 2009) *Nigeria: Policing Africa's most populous city*.)

## References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

**Sources Consulted:**

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