

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: NGA34366
Country: Nigeria
Date: 6 February 2009

Keywords: Nigeria – Social Democratic Party – Christians – Homosexuals

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Questions

- 1. Please provide information on the Social Democratic Party (SDP).**
- 2. Please provide information on the current situation of Christians in Nigeria.**
- 3. Please provide information on the current situation of homosexuals in Nigeria.**

RESPONSE

A map of Nigeria is included as Attachment 1 ('Map – Geography' (undated), Motherland Nigeria website <http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/geography.html> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 1).

- 1. Please provide information on the Social Democratic Party (SDP).**

Sources quoted below report that the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was formed by Presidential Decree on 7 October 1989 and officially banned in November 1993.

The 1993 *Political Handbook of the World* provides the following information on the SDP:

Upon assuming power in December 1983, the Supreme Military Council banned all political parties, arrested many of their leaders, and confiscated their assets. The ban was lifted on May 3, 1989, and 13 parties were legalized, two of which were to be selected to contest upcoming elections. However, the government subsequently became dissatisfied with that process, dissolved the existing parties, and declared that two new parties would be created. The political platforms of the new groups (NRC [National Republican Convention] and SDP [Social Democratic Party], below) were dictated by the regime, which also provided financial support until January 1991 when it declared the parties to be "on their own".

...**Social Democratic Party (SDP)**. Also formed by presidential decree on October 7, 1989, the “little bit to the left” group endorsed the formation of agricultural cooperatives, government economic intervention, and an extensive social welfare program. In the last regard, leaders subsequently described the SDP as the “party for the poor and lower”, on whose behalf they vowed to pursue “freedom from diseases, poverty, ignorance, exploitation, and oppression”. The SDP won a majority in 232 of the 438 local councils elected in December 1990. Also winning a slim majority of state assemblies in December 1991, it went onto defeat the NRC in a majority of federal Senate and House races on July 4, 1992.

...*Leaders*: Moshood Kashimawo Olawal ABIOLA (1993 presidential candidate), Alhaji Baba Gana KINGIBE (1993 vice presidential candidate and Chairman of the Party), Augustus BABALOLA (Deputy Chairman), Alexis ANIELO (National Secretary) (Banks, Arthur S. (ed.) 1993, ‘Social Democratic Party’, *Political Handbook of the World: 1993*, CSA Publications, New York, pp.614-615 – Attachment 2).

The Minorities at Risk Project provides the following information on the formation of the SDP and its participation in elections:

- Oct 7, 1989** President Babangida announced the dissolution of all 13 political parties which had applied for registration. He announced the creation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The members of the 13 parties were to merge with the newly created parties. The original members of the 13 groups were prohibited from recruiting new individuals to either party. Local elections were postponed.
- Jan 1990** In early January, Adamu M. Fika and Stephen B. Agodo were appointed to head the two national parties, the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) respectively.
- Dec 8, 1990** Local elections were held for the first time since the military coup of 1983. A low voter turnout was cited in the south of the country. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) won 232 chairmanships of local government and had a total of 2,934 councilors elected. The National Republican Convention (NRC) won 206 chairmanships and had 2,558 councilors elected.
- Dec 14, 1991** State elections took place peacefully. The NRC, right of center party, won 16 of the 30 state governorships and gained control of 13 state assemblies. The SDP won control of 16 assemblies, including those in three states- Lagos, Katsina and Cross River, where the NRC won the gubernatorial poll. The results were thought to hail the end of the regionalization of Nigeria.
- Jul 4, 1992** The SDP won 52 seats and the NRC won 37 seats in the Senate elections. The SDP won 314 seats, the NRC 275 seats in the House of Representative elections. SDP support came from Lagos, the Yoruba-speaking region of the south-west and the middle-belt states. NRC support came mainly from Moslem Hausa and Fulani-speaking states in the north. Fighting was reported at polling stations in several states, mainly in the southeast, and a few elections were postponed in other areas for various reasons.
- Sep 1992** Primary elections were held and appeared to be bedeviled by corruption, in spite of a decree which imposed severe penalties on anyone found guilty of electoral corruption.

- Nov 16, 1992** President Babangida announced a delay in the transfer from military to civilian rule. Presidential elections were to be held on June 12, 1993 instead of December 5, 1992. The 23 prospective presidential candidates who had contested the discredited primaries would not be permitted to run again and were prohibited from joining the political parties.
- Jun 12, 1993** Presidential elections took place as scheduled. The voting went smoothly but there was a low voter turnout.
- Jun 15, 1993** The Association for a Better Nigeria (ABN) won a ruling in the Abuja High Court directing the NEC to halt the publication of election results. The NEC [National Electoral Commission of Nigeria] complied on June 16. Both political parties issued demands for the release of election results. As tensions increased the military tightened security in the main cities.
- Jun 18, 1993** Defying the Court ruling, the Lagos-based Campaign for Democracy (CD) released what it claimed to be the final banned election results. According to them, SDP candidate, Moshood Dashimawo Olawale “MKO” Abiola, who is a Muslim Yoruba, had easily defeated NRC candidate, Bashir Othma Tofa, a Moslem from the north, winning outright in 19 of the 30 states. About one-third of northerners voted for Abiola, seeing him as being more independent of the military than Tofa. After the following months of Yoruba protests, however, Abiola lost support in the north as the Hausa/Fulani began to fear southern domination.
- Jun 23, 1993** Two days after the NEC had lodged an appeal against the Abuja High Court ruling with the Federal Court for Appeal in Kaduna, the NDSC [National Defence and Security Council] announced that the presidential elections had been annulled.
- Jun 24, 1993** Moshood Abiola, a Muslim Yoruba and member of the SDP, proclaimed himself President of Nigeria and urged the international community to support him against the military. The CD called for mass disobedience until the NDSC rescinded their annulment.
- Jun 25, 1993** President Babangida promised that the transfer to civilian rule would occur as scheduled but a new poll would be held and new rules written so that Abiola and Tofa would be banned from the new election.
- Jul 13, 1993** The NDSC formally withdrew its offer of setting up an interim government and called for new elections. The new election date of August 14, was announced a few days later. The SDP repeated its refusal to participate in the new elections stating that the June elections were free and fair. The NRC accepted the new dates.
- Jul 31, 1993** President Babangida resurrected the idea of an Interim National Government (ING), that would consist of members of both parties and military personnel. The proposal was rejected by Abiola.
- Aug 4, 1993** Abiola fled Nigeria after receiving death threats. He began a trip to seek international support.
- Aug 26, 1993** President Babangida stepped down, handing over power to a non-elected Interim National Government (ING). Two advisory bodies were created, the National Defence Council (NDC) and the National Security Council (NSC).

The NDSC became obsolete, but several of its members joined the new Cabinet and Councils.

- Sep 24, 1993** SDP leader, Abiola, returned to Nigeria and was greeted by over 100,000 supporters.
- Oct 3, 1993** The SDP, previously divided over support for Abiola, reconciled and announced that they would boycott any new elections. They viewed the June 12 elections as free and fair and demanded the installment of Abiola as president. In contrast, the NRC, on 19 October, rejected the June 12 elections and embraced the idea of new elections.
- Nov 10, 1993** The Lagos High Court declared the ING [Interim National Government] unconstitutional and illegal in a ruling of a case filed by Moshood Abiola.
- Nov 15, 1993** Shonekan's plans to hold new elections appeared non-viable after a voter registration campaign met with a complete boycott in the south-west, a stronghold of Abiola.
- Nov 17, 1993** Nigeria came once again under the control of the military. The Defence Minister, Gen. Sanni Abacha, took over as Head of State after forcing the resignation of Chief Ernest Adegunle Shonekan, head of the Interim National Government. Abacha took over the positions of Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.
- Nov 18, 1993** General Abacha announced the dissolution of the main organs of the state and established the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). Almost every political appointment or governmental structure created under Babangida was dismissed and dissolved. Abacha called on the unions to return to work immediately. He lifted the bans on the media and promised to establish a constitutional conference with full constitutional powers (Minorities at Risk 2007, *Chronology for Ijaw in Nigeria*, 10 January <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=47506> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 3).

The US Department of State reports that in 1989 the Nigerian Government created the SDP and NRC and “wrote their manifestos, constitutions, and platforms, and gave them the exclusive right to contest elections.” The US Department of State provides the following information on the 1993 presidential election in Nigeria:

From February to April, Nigeria's two permitted political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), staged presidential nominating conventions at the ward, local government, state, and national level. On June 12, the SDP's Moshood K.O. Abiola and the NRC's Bashir Tofa squared off in what national and international observers characterized as the freest and fairest election in Nigeria's history. But this assessment did not address itself to the process leading to the election, whose integrity suffered from the military regime's extensive manipulation, including the exclusion of many prospective candidates. From early official and unofficial returns it appeared Abiola had won a landslide victory. However, before formal results were announced, Babangida again usurped the democratic process, annulling the June 12 results. Babangida rationalized his action by claiming that he and the NDSC had uncovered evidence of massive electoral fraud, but he never presented evidence to the Nigerian people and never released the June 12 results.

...From February to April 1993, the SDP and the NRC conducted nominating conventions under the close supervision of the Government. M.K.O. Abiola emerged as the SDP presidential candidate, while Bashir Tofa secured the NRC nomination.

On June 12, Nigerians voted in what national and international observers judged the freest and fairest election in the country's history. However, this assessment did not take account of the process leading to election day which was marred by extensive manipulation by the military regime, including the exclusion of many prospective candidates. Early official results and unofficial returns appeared to indicate that Abiola had won a landslide victory. However, before the National Electoral Commission could announce formal results, an Abuja high court issued a restraining order blocking their release. The court issued the order after an organization seeking to extend military rule filed a suit challenging the election's validity. On June 23, General Babangida nullified the election results, claiming that he and the NDSC had uncovered evidence of widespread electoral fraud, but he never presented any evidence to substantiate his allegation. Many Nigerians believe that he canceled the election because he opposed the results (US Department of State 1994, *Nigeria Human Rights Practices 1993*, 31 January, Introduction & Section 3 – Attachment 4).

According to an Assistant Professor at the Florida International University, “the SDP was officially banned in November 1993” and “has since split into many factions”:

In a 17 June 1997 telephone interview with the DIRB, an assistant professor specializing in Nigerian religion and politics at Florida International University stated that the SDP was officially banned in November 1993. He stated that the SDP has since split into many factions, with some members actively working in cultural associations in collaboration with student unions, while others have joined the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). Still other former SDP members support the government, while others are committed to supporting the democratic process and the result of the 12 June 1993 election, which was won by the imprisoned presidential candidate, Chief Mashood Abiola. The professor stated that SDP members who are vocal and who identify themselves with Chief Abiola are subject to harassment and detention. This information was corroborated by a former professor of government at the University of Texas in Austin, now working for the Ford Foundation in New York, during an 18 June 1997 telephone interview with the DIRB (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1997, *NGA26095.E – Nigeria: Update to Response to Information Request NGA18919.E of 8 November 1994 on the current activities of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), including its leaders, and whether members (other than high-profile national leaders) are being arrested*, 19 June – Attachment 5).

According to the UK Home Office, “Abiola declared himself President in a symbolic ceremony on 11 June 1994 and was arrested on 23 June 1994 on charges of treason. He died in prison in July 1998 whilst still awaiting trial, and just when it was widely believed that he was about to be released” (UK Home Office 2004, *Nigeria Country Report*, April, Annex B – Attachment 6).

2. Please provide information on the current situation of Christians 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 Christians experience discrimination and violence in some areas of Nigeria, particularly where they are in the minority such as the north and parts of the middle belt.

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada provides the following information on the religious break-down of Nigeria:

Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, traditional beliefs (e.g., animism) 10%.

Northern Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, while the south is largely Christian.

Predominantly Muslim states include Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebi, Nawarawa, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara. Mainly Christian states include Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. Mixed Muslim and Christian populations are found in Benue, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Plateau and Taraba (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *Country Fact Sheet NIGERIA*, August – Attachment 7).

The US Department of State provides the following information on the religious break-down of Nigeria:

While some groups estimate the population to be 50 percent Muslim, 40 percent Christian, and 10 percent traditional indigenous, it is generally assumed that the proportion of citizens who practice Islam or Christianity are roughly equal and include a substantial number who practice traditional indigenous religious beliefs alongside Christianity or Islam. The predominant form of Islam is Sunni. Members of the Ahmadiyya Movement maintain a presence in Lagos and Abuja. The Christian population includes Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and a growing number of evangelical and Pentecostal Christians and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

The North, dominated by the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups, is predominantly Muslim. However, significant Christian communities have resided and intermarried with Muslims in the North for more than 50 years. Both Muslims and Christians reside in large numbers in the Middle Belt, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). In the southwest, where the Yoruba ethnic group predominates, Christians and Muslims reside in equal numbers. While most Yorubas practice either Christianity or Islam, the practice of traditional Yoruba religious beliefs continues. Southern ethnic groups are predominantly Christian. In the east, where the Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists are the majority, although many Igbos continue to observe traditional rites and ceremonies in tandem with Christianity. In the oil-rich and restive Niger Delta region, where the Ogoni and Ijaw ethnic groups prevail, Christians are the majority, with 1 percent of the population adhering to Islam (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Section 1 – Attachment 8).

International Crisis Group (ICG) writes that “Nigerians have turned to religion as a coping strategy in an environment rife with economic uncertainty, social inequality and political exclusion.” ICG continues:

Religious populism has contributed to national divisiveness since the return to open and competitive politics. Implementation of a Shari’a (Islamic law) civil and criminal code in twelve northern states in 1999-2000 and aggressive Christian revivalism in the south have compounded and sometimes superseded ethnicity. In the north, fundamentalist Muslim denominations have presented the rest of the country as the land of *al-fasad* (corruption); in the south, non-mainstream Christian churches, especially among Pentecostals and other evangelicals, have viewed the Islamic *umma* (community) as a fundamentalist conspiracy. Nigerians have turned to religion as a coping strategy in an environment rife with economic uncertainty, social inequality and political exclusion. Religious activities have expanded through proselytising, sometimes in cutthroat struggles for converts between Islam and Christianity. Religious strife, with or without ethnic overtones, has taken its toll in the north, especially in the Middle Belt, which has emerged as the spiritual and sometimes physical battleground in competition for religious and political control, often entangled in land tenure, migration, community boundary or local inequality issues.

However, as much as it would be erroneous to depict Nigeria's ethnic divide as infighting among the "big three", Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo, it would also be misleading to describe Muslims and Christians as massed against each other. Much bloodshed has been the result of sectarian violence within the communities themselves. The religiously almost evenly split south west has been spared Muslim-Christian conflict, perhaps as a result of its strong Yoruba ethnic identity, or simply because of effective mutual deterrence. "In any case, all forms of popular revolt, whether they are ethnic, religious or factional, gush from the same wellspring of unbearable frustrations", explained a religious leader. The political mobilisation of religion is nothing new in Nigeria.

...The rise of religious revivalism seems to hinge on faltering governance. Stepping in to provide basic services and organise grassroots communities, religious organisations have become credible, legitimate alternatives to the faltering state, adept at articulating communal aspirations and values. Religious networks also provide avenues of advancement for the enterprising outside the collapsing framework of corrupt institutions and a run-down economy. Finally, religious mobilisation has opened windows of opportunity, as they connect Christians and Muslims to international networks. Christians draw on ideas, staff, and material support from churches in the U.S. and Europe; Muslims find models and donors in the Islamic world (International Crisis Group 2006, *Nigeria: Want in the midst of Plenty*, 19 July, pp.24-25 – Attachment 9).

Please see Question 1 of *Research Response NGA32240* dated 23 August 2007 for information on Christians in Nigeria. This response contains useful and relevant information from the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief who visited Nigeria between 27 February and 7 March 2005 (RRT Research & Information Service 2007, *Research Response NGA32240*, 23 August – Attachment 10).

A report prepared by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights dated 27 November 2008 provides the following information on the treatment of Christians in Nigeria:

18. CSW [Christian Solidarity Worldwide] reported that Non-Muslims in the northern and central "sharia States" are generally denied the same rights, societal advantages and governmental protection that Muslims enjoy, and to which they are entitled. Some states have forcibly deprived Christians of their churches and premises, denying them compensation. Christians are rarely reimbursed adequately for losses incurred during episodes of religiously-motivated violence. They do not always receive sufficient protection from state authorities when such violence occurs, nor are their attackers ever prosecuted; religious repression to some degree condoned by the local authorities.

19. CSW also reported discrimination towards Christians in obtaining state sector jobs, and in progressing in their professions, with such deliberate exclusions extending to representation within local government authorities and the education system. CSW indicated that Christian students being denied the opportunity of attending higher educational facilities or of receiving scholarships to assist in the pursuit of further studies.

...23. HRW [Human Rights Watch] reported that more than 11,000 Nigerians have died in violent intercommunal clashes since 1999, and though intercommunal violence remains common, the government has failed to take measures to effectively address these problems. CSW also indicated that in recent years a number of religiously motivated assaults, riots and killings have originated in educational establishments usually following unsubstantiated accusations of blasphemy, and that efforts by local authorities to protect Christians have been woefully inadequate in most of the Sharia States. The actions of some state authorities even suggest a degree of culpability or complicity in some incidents.

...39. ...CSW said there are increasing reports of Christian women and children being abducted and forcibly converted, some State Sharia Commission being implicated in such abductions, with intimidation and threatened violence by the abductors to families attempting to rescue their children (UN Human Rights Council 2008, *Summary Prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Accordance with Paragraph 15 (C) of the Annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1* – Nigeria*, 27 November, UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/49465a120.pdf> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 11).

The Introduction of the US Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria* provides the following summary of religious freedom in Nigeria:

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief through worship, teaching, practice, and observance. Twelve northern states use Shari'a courts, alongside common law and customary law courts, to adjudicate criminal and civil matters for Muslims.

The Government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government during the period covered by this report.

Hostility between Christians and Muslims remained acute in certain areas, exacerbated by discriminatory and unequal employment patterns and resource competition (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Introduction – Attachment 8).

The US Department of State provides the following information on societal abuses and discrimination in respect of religion in Nigeria during 2008:

Christians in the predominately Muslim northern states continued to allege that local government officials used zoning regulations to stop or slow the establishment of new churches.

...Although the expanded jurisdiction of the Shari'a does not technically apply to non-Muslims in civil and criminal proceedings, certain social mores inspired by the Shari'a, such as separation of the sexes in public schools, health care, and transportation services, have affected non-Muslim minorities in the North.

...Tension between Christians and Muslims remained acute in some areas, and conflicts of a seemingly socioeconomic or political nature often divided people along religious lines. Events, particularly of a religious tenor, occurring in other regions of the country or parts of the world, heightened tensions between religious groups.

Religious differences often exacerbated ethnic differences. Competition for scarce resources, in concert with unequal and discriminatory employment practices, provoked violence between individuals of different religious or ethnic communities. Religion was also often a catalyst for hostility, used by politicians and others to foment discord.

While the law prohibited religious discrimination in employment and other practices, private businesses occasionally discriminated on the basis of religion or ethnicity in their hiring practices. In nearly all states, rivalries between "indigene" groups (those whose ethnic group is considered native to a location) and "settlers" (people who have ethnic roots in another part

of the country, even though they may have lived in a different location for several generations) led to some societal discrimination against minority ethnic and religious groups.

While religious organizations were banned from primary school campuses, violence between Christians and Muslims continued to escalate at secondary school and university campuses. A recent survey by Jama'atul Nasril Islam found that 80 percent of the interreligious conflicts that have occurred in the North over the past 10 years have taken place either at secondary schools or universities and were instigated by students in the majority of cases.

Disagreements over the placement of mosques or churches in government secondary school premises or universities have often led aggrieved parties to violent protests (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Section II 'Restrictions on Religious Freedom' & Section III – Attachment 8).

According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) annual report published in May 2008, the "response of the government of Nigeria to persistent religious freedom concerns continues to be inadequate. These concerns include an ongoing series of violent communal conflicts along religious lines; the expansion of sharia (Islamic law) into the criminal codes of several northern Nigerian states; and discrimination against minority communities of Christians and Muslims." The USCIRF notes that "in recent years, Nigerian security forces have responded more quickly to quell sectarian violence and have taken steps to address the activities of Islamic extremist groups." The USCIRF is concerned that the "prosecution of those accused of instigating sectarian violence remains inadequate. Moreover, many Muslims and Christians have been identified as perpetrators of violence over the years, but very few, if any, have been prosecuted or brought to justice. At the same time, security and police forces have sometimes been accused of using excessive force, including extrajudicial killings, to curb communal violence" (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2008, 'Nigeria', *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, pp.262-264 – Attachment 12).

Minority Rights Group's *State of the World's Minorities 2008 – Events of 2007* includes a table identifying those groups of peoples most under threat at the beginning of 2008. Nigeria is ranked eighth for peoples most under threat with Christians in the North included as one of the groups most under threat (Minority Rights Group 2008, *State of the World's Minorities 2008 – Events of 2007*, 11 March, p.50 – Attachment 13).

A 2008 publication by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) reports that "for Nigeria's large Christian population, religious freedom in a *Shari'a* system is hugely problematic and as yet there is no sign that the tensions of the past will disappear." The report continues:

In principle *Shari'a* law does not apply to non-Muslims in civil and criminal matters. And yet, the lives of many non-Muslims in Nigeria have been affected in various ways. In Kano State public consumption and distribution of alcohol is banned; in other states alcohol can only be consumed inside federal buildings like police stations.

One priest told *Aid to the Church in Need* that indigenous people from Kano who refuse to abandon their Christian names risk losing rights and privileges. According to sources in Yobe state, a Christian name alone bars an applicant from a government post, In Zamfara State many public facilities are strictly segregated by sex. Meantime, in Maiduguri, Borno State, a source close to ACN spoke of a ban on Christian public rallies and outdoor services. The source said indigenous people in the region who had converted to Christianity risked being killed by extremists.

Christian communities in the 12 *Shari'a* states have experienced widespread religious intolerance and discrimination. These include Christian students and teachers facing trumped up charges for blaspheming against Islam, a court action which forced them to leave school. Elsewhere, Christians are repeatedly denied permits to build churches and cemeteries.

Church buildings are destroyed after being judged illegal. Christian teenagers are abducted and forced to convert, especially girls given in marriage to Muslim men. And Muslims who convert to Christianity are intimidated and receive death threats. In some cases, Christians are forced to go before *Shari'a* courts, even though they have the right not be judged by such tribunals. Other reports describe how Christian girls are compelled to wear Islamic dress in public schools (Pontifex, John & Newton, John (eds.) 2008, 'Nigeria', *Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2007/2008*, Aid to the Church in Need, pp.68-69 – Attachment 14).

The USCIRF reports that “[s]ince 1999, more than 10,000 Nigerians have been killed in sectarian and communal attacks and reprisals between Muslims and Christians.” The USCIRF reports that “[e]thnic and religious violence continued throughout the past year [2007], although the number of deaths resulting from the violence decreased compared to previous years” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2008, 'Nigeria', *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p.263 – Attachment 12).

There are numerous reports of attacks on Christians. The most recent mass incident occurred in Jos in November 2008. An article dated 11 December 2008 by the Christian news service Compass Direct reports that the “murderous rioting sparked by Muslim attacks on Christians and their property on Nov. 28-29 left six pastors dead, at least 500 other people killed and 40 churches destroyed.” The article also notes that more than 25,000 people have been displaced by the violence:

What began as outrage over suspected vote fraud in local elections quickly hit the religious fault line that quakes from time to time in this city located between the Islamic north and Christian south, as angry Muslims took aim at Christian sites rather than at political targets. Police and troops reportedly killed about 400 rampaging Muslims in an effort to quell the unrest, and Islamists shot, slashed or stabbed to death most of more than 100 Christians.

...Rioting erupted in Jos in the wee hours of Nov. 28 while results of local council elections held the previous day were still being awaited. In the Nov. 27 elections, according to reports, Muslims in Jos North who suspected vote fraud – specifically, the late arrival of election materials to polling sites – raised a lament, and by 1 a.m. on Nov. 28 Muslim youth had begun burning tires, schools and churches.

The killing of non-Muslims followed in the early morning. Muslims began attacking Christians in areas such as Nasarawa Gwong, Congo-Russia, Rikkos, Ali Kazaure, Bauchi Road, Dutse Uku, Ungwar Rimi, and Tudun-Wada. Commands to defy authorities and join the “jihad” blared from a mosque loudspeaker in the Dilimi area, according to advocacy group Christian Solidarity Worldwide, including instructions to ignore a night-time curfew and attack anew.

Authorities' efforts to halt the rampage, including a Muslim assault on a police barracks, accounted for the estimated 400 corpses reportedly deposited in a key mosque, according to CSW, citing security sources.

Christians tried to defend their lives and properties, and non-Muslim youths reportedly began retaliatory attacks on Muslims, mosques and Muslim houses in the early morning. The Nigerian military arrived before noon to try to rein in the mayhem, which continued into the night.

...The Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama, Roman Catholic archbishop of Jos Archdiocese and Plateau state chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria, said in a statement that fanatical Muslims ignited the violence by attacking Christians.

“We were greatly taken aback by the turn of events in Jos – we thought it was a political issue, but from all indications it is not so,” he said. “We were surprised at the way some of our churches and properties were attacked and some of our faithful and clergy killed. The attacks were carefully planned and executed. The questions that bog our minds are: Why were churches and clergy attacked and killed? Why were politicians and political party offices not attacked, if it was a political conflict?” (‘Nigeria: Six Pastors Killed, 40 Churches Razed in Jos Violence’, 2008, *Compass Direct News*, 11 December <http://www.compassdirect.org/en/display.php?page=news&lang=en&length=long&id=5725&backpage=archives&critere=&countryname=Nigeria&rowcur=0> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 15).

An article dated 1 December 2008 by Christian Solidarity Worldwide reports that “there is increasing resentment in the Christian community at “biases and inaccurate reporting of events” by the international media.” The article continues:

Several international news agencies have reported that the violence was triggered by the results of a local government election. However, sources in Jos point out that voting passed off peacefully and the violence broke out in the early hours of Friday 28 November before electoral results had even been announced. Moreover, instead of targeting political institutions, rioters armed with guns, spears, machetes and other weapons immediately attacked Christian businesses, churches and the homes of clergymen. A local source informed Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW): “As usual they took Jos by surprise, and are now hiding behind election results to launch and excuse their mayhem.”

...There is also growing evidence that the weekend’s violence may have been planned in advance. So far 500 Muslim rioters have been arrested, some of whom were dressed in fake police and military uniforms. Two hundred are now known to be citizens of the neighbouring Republic of Niger, while 300 are from the northern Nigerian states of Kano, Katsina and Sokoto. Some of the rioters informed police that they arrived in Jos three days prior to the violence. “They had weapons, many weapons” said another source, “they were ready, very ready”.

Commenting on the weekend’s violence, Rt. Rev Dr. Benjamin Kwashi, Anglican Archbishop of Jos told CSW: “This crisis is a wake up call to state and federal authorities to undertake a serious appraisal of all the previous crises in Jos and elsewhere that have affected the church in northern Nigeria, and to ensure that truth is told, truth is maintained and justice is done. We have become a convenient scapegoat and target for those with grievances about events both at home and abroad. The Church in northern Nigeria needs urgent national and international protection. We have suffered this violence for over 20 years and it is now becoming unbearable” (Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2008, ‘Jos, Nigeria – ‘Inaccurate reporting’ causes resentment among Christian community’, 1 December <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/article.asp?t=press&id=805&search=> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 16).

For more information on recent attacks against Christians in Nigeria please see:

- US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Section III – Attachment 8;
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2008, ‘Nigeria’, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, pp.263-264 – Attachment 12;
- Pontifex, John & Newton, John (eds.) 2008, ‘Nigeria’, *Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2007/2008*, Aid to the Church in Need, pp.69-71 – Attachment 14;
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
<http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=Nigeria&related=35>;
- Compass Direct <http://www.compassdirect.org/content/index.php?id=25>; and
- International Christian Concern
<http://www.persecution.org/suffering/news.php?selectYear=2008&selectMonth=all&selectCountry=Nigeria&SearchText=&image.x=40&image.y=8>.

Dambatta, Deputy Director of Information in the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Nigerian Federation provides the following information on the Nigeria Inter Religious Council (NIREC):

The Nigeria Inter Religious Council (NIREC) came into being after the dawn of democracy in 1999 to serve as a platform for high-level dialogue between the leaders of Christians and Muslims in this country, thereby promoting public good.

It organises conferences designed to promote understanding, appreciation of one another and the generation of mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. It is made up of 50 members, 25 from the Christian side and the balance from the side of Muslims. The organisation is co-chaired by two eminent Nigerians: the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa’ad Abubakar, CFR, and the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja and President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Dr. John Onaiyekan, CON (Dambatta, Salisu Na’inna 2008, ‘Nigeria: Nirec Calms Religious Frayed Nerves’, *Daily Trust*, 22 June, allAfrica.com website <http://allafrica.com/> – Accessed 3 February 2009 – Attachment 17).

The US Department of State reports that “President Umaru Yar’Adua continued to support the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), cochaired by Christian Association of Nigeria President Archbishop John Onaiyekan and Jama’atul Nasril Islam President Sultan Muhammadu Abubakar, which advises the Government on ways to mitigate violence among religious communities. NIREC meets on a quarterly basis, rotating its meetings at locations throughout the country.” The USCIRF reports that Abubakar “has expressed support for further addressing the issue by opening NIREC offices at the state and local levels to promote dialogue and greater understanding between Muslims and Christians” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2008, ‘Nigeria’, *Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*, May, p.265 – Attachment 12; and US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Section II – Attachment 8).

3. Please provide current situation of homosexuals in Nigeria.

The information provided in response to this question includes sources from 2008 and 2009 only. Previous RRT Research Responses provide in-depth information on homosexuality in Nigeria:

- Question 1 of *Research Response NGA32705* dated 5 December 2007 provides information on the treatment of homosexuals by their family in Nigeria. Question 2 provides information on the treatment of homosexuals by the Anglican Church in Nigeria. Question 3 provides information on the treatment of homosexuals by the police in Nigeria (RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response NGA32705*, 5 December – Attachment 18);
- Question 1 of *Research Response NGA30400* dated 3 August 2006 provides information on the legality of homosexuality in Nigeria. The information provided has been organised under the following three headings: Legal Situation, Shari’a Law and *Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act 2006*. Question 2 provides information on homosexuality in Nigeria. The information provided has been organised under the following four headings: General, Anglican Church, Yoruba and Gay Organisations (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response NGA30400*, 3 August – Attachment 19); and
- *Research Response NGA16816* dated 11 June 2004 provides information on the treatment of homosexuals in Nigeria. The information provided has been organised under the following seven headings: Legal Situation, Shari’a Law, Anglican Church, Alliance Rights Nigeria, AIDS, UN Resolution and 1993-2002 (RRT Country Research 2004, *Research Response NGA16816*, 11 June – Attachment 20).

According to Nigeria’s *Criminal Code Act* and Shari’a law, sexual activity between men is illegal. Sources report that a bill prohibiting same sex marriage is currently before the National Assembly of Nigeria. In Nigerian society religion (Christianity and Islam) and family (marriage and child-rearing) are important, therefore homosexuality is not accepted. Homosexuality is also considered un-African and a Western perversion. Sources report that homosexuals experience discrimination and violence. A number of gay organisations are active in Nigeria although open and outspoken members experience difficulties.

The information provided in response to this question has been organised under the following headings:

- Legal Situation;
- Societal Attitudes;
- Violence;
- Anglican Church;
- HIV/AIDS;
- LGBT Support Groups;
 - Changing Attitude Nigeria (CAN).

Legal Situation

According to the US Department of State, “Homosexuality is illegal under federal law; homosexual practices are punishable by prison sentences of up to 14 years” (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007 – Nigeria*, 11 March, Section 5 ‘Other Societal Abuses and Discrimination’ – Attachment 21). The applicable sections of Nigeria’s *Criminal Code Act* are as follows:

214. Any person who

(1) has carnal knowledge of a person against the order of nature; or

(2) has carnal knowledge of an animal; or

(3) permits a male person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature; shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished with 14 years' imprisonment.

215. Every person who attempts to commit one of the offences described in the preceding Section shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished with seven years' imprisonment.

216. Every person who "deals with" a boy under 14 years of age unlawfully and immorally shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished with seven years' imprisonment.

The concept of "dealing with" comprises any act which constitutes assault if perpetrated without consent.

217. Any male person who, whether in a public or private domain, commits any act of gross indecency with another male person, or suborns another male person to commit an act of gross indecency with him, or attempts to instruct any other male person to suborn any such act, be it with himself or with a third male person, whether publicly or privately, shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished with three years' imprisonment (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *NGA42748 – Nigeria: Situation of homosexuals and their treatment under sharia law (June 2002-July 2004)*, 14 July – Attachment 22).

The report of the joint fact-finding mission by the UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria on 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008 was published on 28 October 2008. The report provides the following information on the enforcement of sodomy laws in Nigeria:

5.1 According to LEDAP [Legal Defence and Assistance Project] officials, Nigerian law does not clearly define sodomy, and the law on sodomy covers other types of non-conformist sexual behaviour or acts, which are all regarded as "sodomy". Under the law on sodomy, nobody can be convicted without a confession. No one has been convicted for sodomy under common law as sodomy is hard to prove.

5.2 ...As regards arrests of homosexual men, a "New York Times" report, dated 18 December 2005, stated that "in practice, gay men are often arrested and jailed until they can bribe their jailers to let them go."

...5.8 ...However, the spokeswoman for Global Rights stated that violence against homosexuals is widespread, and that societal disapproval of homosexuality meant that, even if a bribe was offered to the police to drop sodomy charges, at least 65% of such charges and prosecutions would go ahead, in her opinion at least.

...5.18 According to a report published in the allAfrica.com website, a further incident took place in October 2007 in Abuja, when two men appeared before an Abuja magistrates' court for allegedly practicing homosexuality. It was reported that members of a vigilante group had caught the men having unlawful sexual intercourse with each other. One of the men claimed that he had been tricked by the other and was granted bail. [8] (Annex D) (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

According to the US Department of State, "In the 12 northern states [Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno, Zamfara and Gombe] that had adopted

Shari'a law, adults convicted of engaging in homosexual intercourse are subject to execution by stoning, although no such sentences were imposed during the year [2007]" (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007* – Nigeria, 11 March, Section 5 'Other Societal Abuses and Discrimination' – Attachment 21). Human Rights Watch (HRW) provides the following information on the composition of the Shari'a laws in northern Nigeria:

Most of Nigeria's Northern provinces now have their own penal codes. These combine principles of Islamic law with elements of the Northern Nigeria Penal Code adopted at the time of independence.

The penal codes of Kano and Zamfara states have simply taken over the language of the British colonial provisions on "carnal intercourse against the order of nature," and put it under the shari'a-esque heading of "sodomy (liwat)." They provide punishments of 100 lashes for unmarried offenders, and death by stoning for married ones (Human Rights Watch 2008, *This Alien Legacy – The Origins of "Sodomy" Laws in British Colonialism*, December, p.60 – Attachment 24).

Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in his report dated 14 May 2008 notes that "Nigeria also argued that "the notion that executions for offences such as homosexuality and lesbianism are excessive is judgemental rather than objective. What may be seen by some as disproportional penalty in such serious offences and odious conduct such may be seen by others as appropriate and just punishment". Alston continues:

This argument is also unconvincing. The provision by twelve Nigerian States of the death penalty for sodomy contradicts not just settled international law, but the federal law of Nigeria itself. The Special Rapporteur's recommendation was simply that Nigeria take action to ensure the conformity of the law of its States with the Nigerian federal Constitution.

78. No action has been taken on that front. In fact, Nigeria continues to hand down death sentences for sodomy and adultery. In October 2006, the Special Rapporteur wrote an allegation letter to Nigeria concerning two individuals who were sentenced to death by stoning for sodomy in June 2006. Nigeria did not respond (UN Human Rights Council 2008, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, A/HRC/Add.3, 14 May* – Attachment 25).

A December 2008 report by HRW reports that "[a]rrests under Nigeria's federal sodomy law happen steadily, as local headlines suggest: "Paraded by Police for Homosexuality, Married Man Blames 'Evil Spirit' For His Unholy Act"; or "Caught in the Act: 28-yr-old Homosexual Arrested by OPC [O'odua People's Congress] While in Action." HRW reports that "[c]ourts in the north have handed down death sentences for homosexual conduct under the combined shari's-and-colonial codes, though there have been no accounts of executions-yet" (Human Rights Watch 2008, *This Alien Legacy – The Origins of "Sodomy" Laws in British Colonialism*, December, pp.59-60 – Attachment 24). The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service provide further information on the enforcement of Shari'a law in Nigeria:

2.4 Chino Obiagwu, National Co-ordinator, Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP), stated that according to Shari'a law all Zina crimes, i.e.adultery, sodomy etc. are punishable by death. Furthermore, the death penalty is mandatory for these types of crimes. Obiagwu

estimated that 10 to 12 persons have been found guilty of sodomy and have been condemned to death by stoning.

2.5 Olawale Fapohunda, Managing Partner, Legal Resources Consortium (LRC), Lagos, explained that although a number of shari'a courts have imposed the death penalty, no execution has yet been carried out. According to Obiagwu (LEDAP), the most recent execution according to Shari'a law took place in 2002 in Katsina where a man was found guilty for the murder of his wife and subsequently hanged.

2.6 Obiagwu (LEDAP) explained that in most cases, death sentences in Lower Shari'a Courts are appealed to Upper Shari'a Courts or a State Shari'a Court, where the vast majority of them are dismissed due to procedural mistakes. The final appeal option is the Federal High Court or the Supreme Court but death penalty cases according to Shari'a law have not yet been taken through the federal justice system. This is because these cases are dismissed earlier in the Shari'a court system.

...5.4 The LEDAP officials added that the Shari'a penal codes were adopted by the 12 northern states from 2000 to 2001. Between 2003 and 2007, 20 people have been charged under the homosexuality provisions of Shari'a law, although not all have been convicted. Between 10 and 12 people have been sentenced to death by stoning, but these sentences have not been implemented, as they have been overturned on appeal by the federal courts.

5.5 According to Global Rights, people convicted of homosexual acts under Shari'a law, known as zina, will receive 100 lashes, but a fourth conviction would lead to death by stoning. Whilst those convicted of sodomy would be put to death immediately, however, under Shari'a law the crime must be witnessed by four witnesses.

5.6 An Associated Press report, dated 13 February 2007, stated that although sentences of amputations and death by stoning are routinely imposed under Shari'a law, no stonings have ever been carried out, and no amputations have been carried out since 2001. The report further stated that according to top Islamic court officials, the amputations and stonings ordered by the lower courts have little legal justification. The result is indefinite jail stays for prisoners waiting for a higher court to overturn their sentences (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

Recent examples of the enforcement of Shari'a law include:

- *Pink News* (11 April 2008): “Two women in Kaduna, Nigeria have been sentenced to six months in prisons and 20 lashes each for having a lesbian relationship. The Sharia court said that Malama Hauwa and Hajiya Ai'sha were violating the tenets of Islam and the teachings of Shari law. The women claimed in court to have been married for five years. Ai'sha said she had paid a dowry of 5,000 Nigerian naira (£21) to her 'wife' at the start of their relationship. However, she also said she also has sex with men, and denied she is a member of any “group or association of lesbians, saying although there could be many others who practised same-sex love, she had no knowledge of the existence of any near her,” reports Nigerian newspaper *Punch*” (Grew, Tony 2008, 'Nigerian Sharia court punishes lesbian couple', *Pink News*, 11 April, [asylumlaw.org website http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/NIGERIA041108.pdf](http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/NIGERIA041108.pdf) – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 26);

- US Department of State: “An August 8, 2007, police in Bauchi State arrested 18 men for alleged homosexual activity, which carries the death penalty under the Bauchi State Shari’a Penal Code. The court later amended the charges to include vagrancy and cross-dressing, which carry penalties of 1 year of confinement and 20 lashes” (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report 2008 – Nigeria*, 19 September, Section II ‘Abuses of Religious Freedom’ – Attachment 8). The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service report that the men’s families disowned them (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October, Paragraph 5.16 <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23);
- UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service: “According to another BBC News Online report, in April 2007, four women were accused of organising a same-sex marriage ceremony in Kano. [1b] (Annex D). Another BBC News Online report stated that the women involved denied the allegations that they had “married” and said that they would challenge the Hisbah Board. Hisbah’s deputy commander said that the women faced one of two punishments. For a married woman, the offence would be considered adultery, the punishment for which is death by stoning. The punishment for a single woman would be caning. [1c] (Annex D). A Global Rights representative added that the charges were dropped when the local Hisbah could not produce witnesses” (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October, Paragraph 5.17 <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23);

The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service provide the following information on a Nigerian bill to ban same sex marriage and criminalise “any form of advocacy, association expression and speech, in public or in private on lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender issues.” The report continues:

5.9 According to LEDAP officials, a bill known as the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill 2005 failed to pass through the Nigerian parliament. A further bill, the Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Bill 2006 also failed, due to the dissolution of parliament prior to the 2007 elections. ... The LGBT Director of Global Rights stated that the government supported the Bill, which criminalises with up to five years in jail, any form of advocacy, association, expression and speech, in public or in private on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. Under the proposed law, people of the same sex might be targeted if they shared a house, even if they were only doing so for economic reasons. The Bill was voted in first and second hearings, both in the House of Representatives and the Senate, but had not been approved by the time the legislative term ended in June 2007 (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

According to HRW, on 15 January 2009 “the Nigerian House of Representatives voted favourably on the second reading of a bill “to prohibit marriage between persons of same gender.” The Nigerian “House of Representatives referred the bill to its committee on Human

Rights, Justice, and Women's Affairs, which will hold a joint public hearing on it. If the House approves the bill on a third reading, it must then be approved by the Senate and President Yar'Adua." Members of the Nigerian House of Representatives "reportedly justified the bill by citing links between "sodomy" and HIV and AIDS, making clear that they see the marriage ban as a deterrent to homosexual conduct". HRW continues:

In a letter to President Umaru Yar'Adua, leaders of the House of Representatives and Senate, the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission, and other national, regional, and international bodies, the group urged legislators and the president to reject the bill. The letter urged the country's leaders to combat an environment of stigma and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Nigerians.

...In its letter, Human Rights Watch pointed to grave human rights issues raised by the proposed law:

- The evident intent of the new bill is to extend the already-existing penalties for homosexual conduct.
- Criminalizing "living together as husband and wife" further expands these punishments. They would no longer be limited to sexual acts between people of the same sex, but would potentially include mere cohabitation or any suspected "intimate relationship" between members of the same sex. Far less evidence would be needed for conviction, and prejudice and suspicion would be a basis for arrests. This threatens all Nigerians' right to private life.
- The proposed five-year sentence for those who "abet" a same-sex relationship is greater than the punishment stipulated in the bill for those who enter into a "same gender marriage." This provision could be used to punish anyone who gives any help or advice to a suspected "same gender" couple – anyone who rents them an apartment, tells them their rights, or approves of their relationships. Advocates, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders would be ready targets.
- Under the bill's provisions, anyone – whether Nigerian or foreign – who enters into a "same gender marriage," or simply has a "same gender relationship" in another country and wishes to continue it in Nigeria, could be subject to criminal penalties when they set foot on Nigerian soil. This provides the state with even broader powers to invade people's privacy (Human Rights Watch 2009, 'Bill Would Assault Rights of All, Reinforce Punishment for Homosexual Conduct', 26 January <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/26/nigeria-reject-same-gender-marriage-ban> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 27).

HRW notes that the Act's "all-embracing provisions would render the bill uniquely severe among the world's anti-gay laws. The trajectory from punishing acts to repressing a whole class of persons was complete." The Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) in Africa "believe this bill will disastrously endorse a climate of homophobia and escalating hate crime against gay and lesbian Nigerian citizens, making them among the most vulnerable in the world to human rights violations, rape, severe abuse and extortion with no recourse to justice." According to Reverend Rowland Jide Macaulay, Pastor of the House of Rainbow MCC in Lagos, "Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender (LGBT) citizens of Nigeria, both at home and abroad live in fear each day" (Human Rights Watch 2008, *This Alien Legacy – The Origins of "Sodomy" Laws in British Colonialism*, December, p.62 – Attachment 24; and International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 2009, 'Nigeria: Enough Hatred in the Name of God!', 22 January <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/article/takeaction/partners/849.html> – Accessed 4 January 2009 – Attachment 28).

The US Department of State and Amnesty International report that a “similar bill was discussed by the previous Lagos state House of Assembly; the bill did not pass [in 2007]” (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007* – Nigeria, 11 March, Section 5 ‘Other Societal Abuses and Discrimination’ – Attachment 21; and Amnesty International 2008, ‘Nigeria’, *Amnesty International Report 2008*, 28 May – Attachment 29). However, the UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service report that in May 2007 Lagos state passed anti-gay legislation:

5.7 In May 2007, Lagos State passed its own anti-gay legislation, which according to a spokeswoman for the NGO Global Rights, was particularly alarming because Lagos was the most cosmopolitan city in Nigeria. She said that there was a rising trend of conservatism and intolerance in the State which was extending even beyond people of different sexual orientation. Recently, even women wearing trousers and body-hugging tops have been arrested on the streets of the city and charged in court for wearing indecent clothing under section 249 a(i) of the criminal code punishing “indecent dressing” (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

Societal Attitudes

The US Department of State reports that due to “widespread taboos against homosexuality, very few persons were openly homosexual” in Nigeria (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007* – Nigeria, 11 March, Section 5 ‘Other Societal Abuses and Discrimination’ – Attachment 21). The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service provide the following different opinions on societal attitudes towards and violence against homosexuals in Nigeria:

5.8 At a meeting with the Nigerian NGO, Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), a spokesman stated that he believed that homosexual acts or behaviour were tolerated in Nigeria, as long as they were carried out discreetly and in private, but homosexuals would be arrested for offending public decency if they showed affection in public. He added that violent attacks against homosexuals were not a common occurrence in Nigeria. He further stated that the public have little confidence in the police who are perceived to be inefficient and corrupt, but believed that they would provide protection for homosexuals threatened with violence for being homosexual. However, the spokeswoman for Global Rights stated that violence against homosexuals is widespread, and that societal disapproval of homosexuality meant that, even if a bribe was offered to the police to drop sodomy charges, at least 65% of such charges and prosecutions would go ahead, in her opinion at least (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

An article dated 19 January 2009 in *Leadership* reports that residents of the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria “have condemned gay marriage, describing it as an immoral act and a deviation from God’s purpose of creating marriage institution.” The article continues:

A resident of Maitama, Mr. Moses Odeh, said: “Gay marriage is contrary to God’s will and it is an insult to God’s intelligence, for God who created Adam and Eve and made them different sexes is not a fool.”

Another residents of Wuse Zone 6, Solomon Idiku, condemned the act, describing it as immoral and a sign of the end time.

...He added: “This is a big time immoral act against God and humanity, I therefore, call this a sign of end time.”

Mrs. Paulina Obarike, on her own part said: “I am surprise when I see two men been wedded in church in our country. When I saw this people (the couple) in newspaper, I couldn’t believe what I saw. I asked myself, how they could give birth to children. Because to my understanding, marriage is to bring together to produce children.”

She added: “my question is, is God going to be happy with this type of marriage and whoever joins them (couple) and wife and husband.”

Many other residents, who were interviewed, condemned the act of gay marriage. They said it was unnatural and abhorrent, and a direct contradiction of God’s statutes.

Mr. Moses Ukpa, resident in Asokoro noted that homosexuality was a criminal act in Nigeria’s law books and those who are caught as gay couples should be prosecuted forthwith in order to serve as a deterrent to others (Onche, Comfort 2009, ‘Nigeria: FCT Residents Condemn Gay Marriage’, *Leadership*, 19 January, allAfrica.com website <http://allafrica.com/> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 30).

An article dated 1 January 2009 in *The Vanguard* reports that Ruth Simon and Clementina Jerome were “dismissed from the police for allegedly engaging in lesbianism” but “have denied the allegation and called for a review of the case” (‘Nigeria: We Are Not Lesbians, Say Dismissed Policewomen’ 2009, *Vanguard*, 1 January, allAfrica.com website <http://allafrica.com/> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 31).

An article dated 14 August 2008 in *IRIN News* reports that there “is no explicit gay scene in Nigeria” although there is “Ibiza, Excelsior, or a couple of other gay-tolerant clubs in Abuja.” The article notes that it is hard to be gay in Nigeria because of the legality of homosexual sex, a rising tide of religious fundamentalism, “cultural traditions that generally abhor same-sex coupling” and pressure from parents to marry and have children:

The internet, with social networking websites like Facebook, and the more discreet clubs provide enough opportunities to hook up. “Very few relationships are formed, most of it is about the sex or the benefits,” said Okem.

“The majority of ‘passive’ [recipient] gay men have accepted their sexuality ... some ‘actives’ may have done it once or twice and liked it – but wouldn’t agree they are gay. There is a financial exchange then, but more usually it is actives that take money for sex.”

...Unlike Okem [HIV activist, not his real name], who has not told his parents or ruled out getting married, Orazulike [Executive Director of Alliance Rights Nigeria] is open about his sexuality and feels attitudes are beginning to change. “People are coming to the realisation that there are gays in Nigeria,” he told IRIN/PlusNews. “There is a level of toleration.”

In the Muslim north there has historically been a cultural acceptance of “Dan Daudu” – men who live as women – despite the contradiction to traditional Islamic teaching. But even in the

south, with its avowedly macho outlook on life, Orazulike said he had never been confronted with anti-gay aggression. That could be a testament both to his discretion, and to the innocent incredulity with which many Nigerians regard homosexuality.

“We don’t intend to rub people’s faces in it, otherwise they are forced to react; just live your life,” Orazulike explained (‘Gays hesitate at the closet door’ 2008, *IRIN News*, 14 August <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=79810> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 32).

An article dated 8 August 2008 in *Leadership* reports that a communique signed by Chairmen of NIREC, Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Muhammad Saa’d Abubakar, the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, Dr. John Onaiyekan and NIREC Secretary, Prof. Is-haq Oloyede was issued at the end of a NIREC meeting in Lagos. In the communique, “the religious leaders observed that the increasing rate of homosexuality, lesbianism and incest was disappointing to the image of the country. They stated that “[s]uch practice is illegal and repugnant to the norms of religion, tradition and culture” (‘Nigeria: Clerics Condemn Incidence of Homosexuality’ 2008, *Leadership*, 8 August, allAfrica.com website <http://allafrica.com/> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 33).

Davis Mac-Iyall, Director of Changing Attitude Nigeria (CAN) who currently lives in exile writes in an article posted on the EDGE Boston website on 17 April 2008 that “[o]ne of the few common perspectives between Islam and popular Christianity in Nigeria is a hatred of homosexuality.” Mac-Iyall believes that “[a]nyone who is found out to be returning to Nigeria because they have failed to gain asylum on the grounds of homosexuality is essentially walking into an execution chamber.” Mac-Iyalla says. They will be known to the authorities.” When Abuja was bidding to the host the 2014 Commonwealth Games, Mac-Iyalla, Mike Hersee of CAN and British activists Peter Tatchell produced a report entitled *Abuja’s Bid – Sins of Omission* which documented “how the behaviors and planned laws of the Nigerian government were in flagrant breach of established human rights agreements.” The report “put an international spotlight on Nigeria and was discussed at the highest levels” and resulted in the Nigerian government temporarily backing down “a little on its virulent homophobia” (Stiffler, Scott 2008, ‘Nigeria: Hotbed of Homophobic Violence’, EDGE Boston website, 17 April <http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glbt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=73209> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 34).

Global Rights Nigeria conducted media tracking of LGBTI [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex] issues in Nigeria between 15 January and 5 August 2007. There were 34 reports in the reporting period with most of them reporting on the arrest of 18 men in Bauchi. Global Rights Nigeria found that in “a nutshell, all the incidents tracked in this report are a clear picture of the hate and gross violation of LGBTI human rights in the country by individuals, communities, organizations and the government itself”:

a) Accuracy.

The Nigerian articles analyzed in the process of this media tracking are very accurate with respect to reporting the exact situation of the issues monitored, compared to those articles that are non-Nigerian. The Nigerian article seems to be more accurate because they are privileged to be in each state where the issues are unfolding, and are therefore opportune to have first-hand information about issues of their reporting.

...b) Factuality/impartiality.

The Nigerian articles tracked in the process of this report, despite their being factual in reporting LGBT issues are relatively impartial, because it is glaring how they tend to portray such issues in very negative way, by reporting views and analysis based on presumed African cultural and religious perspective which are unfavorable to human rights of individuals and communities based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

...c) Objectivity.

...The Nigerian articles appears to only expose the societal, religious and cultural views and opinions about LGBT individuals and communities, which only castigate and condemn rights of LGBT people in the country.

d) Balance.

...The Nigerian articles monitored, appears to have some bias with respect to the nonchalant nature of reporting without being able to expose human rights abuses of LGBTI people.

...e) Promotion of human rights.

...The Nigerian articles clearly reports the issues in a very narrow perspective, by only exposing LGBT issues without being objective and respecting the human rights of the people concerned.

...f) Minimization of harm.

The Nigerian articles tracked in this report do not seem to minimize harm, because they did not positively condemn the attempts to violate human rights.

...g) Entrenchment of democracy.

The Nigerian articles did not entrench democracy, but rather portrayed a picture of violation and exposure of personal life of LGBT people in Nigeria. They did not entrench democracy because they do not seem to respect the democratic idea of freedom of expression and the right to personal liberty.

...Conclusion

Generally, Global Rights' media tracking on LGBTI issues which began in August last year indicates that media coverage of LGBT issues have increased both in quantity and quality. It is evident from the number of news articles and editorials in which the issues of LGBTI have been discussed. The quantity of news coverage of LGBTI issues have increased tremendously because of the continuous curiosity of the media and people in general on LGBT issues especially as a result of the introduction of the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act with the Parliament. Coverage of LGBT issues in the media also increased largely as a result of on-going awareness among media practitioners that LGBT rights are human rights. Although there is a great deal of homophobia generally in Nigeria, the quality of news in the media in terms portraying a less hostile outlook about LGBT issues has slightly improved, compared to reports published before August 2007. This may have to do with the inflammatory effects of the electoral campaign on topics considered highly sensitive.

...However, the major concerns of an LGBT individual and an LGBT human right defender in Nigeria, still remains the same fear of always not having some level of positive response to their threatening situation. This situation, without doubt is accentuated by the so called "cultural" and "religious norms" which in different ways determine individual socio-cultural and economic values of everyday life (Global Rights 2008, *Media Quarterly Report [August 05, 2007 – January 15, 2008]*, 15 January, Asylum Law website, pp.5-7 <http://www.asylumlaw.org/docs/sexualminorities/NigeriaGlobalRightsLGBTIReport080507.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 35).

Violence

According to HRW, “Violence against LGBT people is frequent in Nigeria” (Human Rights Watch 2009, ‘Bill Would Assault Rights of All, Reinforce Punishment for Homosexual Conduct’, 26 January <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/26/nigeria-reject-same-gender-marriage-ban> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 27). The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service met with Nigerian NGO, Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) and Global Rights during their fact-finding mission to Lagos and Abuja. A spokesman for CLO stated that “violent attacks against homosexuals were not a common occurrence in Nigeria.” However, “the spokesman for Global Rights stated that violence against homosexuals is widespread” in Nigeria (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October, Paragraph 5.8 <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

Reverend Jide Macaulay of the House of Rainbow MCC told Behind the Mask that “the LGBTI community continuously faces rampant homophobia in Nigeria.” Macaulay continues:

“The state of homophobia is devastating. We are having extra special sessions to record the atrocities against LGBT people, and meeting with people to share their stories. These stories include homophobic attacks by strangers and domestic homophobic assaults”, he pointed (Mhlongo, Mongezi 2008, ‘Nigerian media perpetuates homophobia’, Behind the Mask, 2 October <http://www.mask.org.za/article.php?cat=nigeria&id=1964> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 36).

An article dated 17 April 2008 on the EDGE Boston website reports that “[e]ven in Africa – a continent not known for its gay-friendly cultures or governments – Nigeria stands out for the virulence of violence against gay men in particular as well as lesbians.” According to MacIyall, the “real threat of death or serious injury is not from legal actions by the state, but from mob violence and unofficial actions by the police who are a law unto themselves...In that way, there is very little difference between North and South.” The article continues:

Although prosecutions for incidents of anti-gay violence are virtually unheard of, those accused of homosexual acts are frequently taken into custody and held on the basis of nothing more than suspicion. Hersee says this terror campaign has transformed Nigeria into a place where no one--including or especially police--does anything to help victims of anti-gay attacks.

In Lagos, for example, Omotayo Joshua was attacked by a gang saying they were “cleansing” Lagos of homosexuals. He was able to tell his mother why he was attacked before he died of his injuries. But no one has made any effort to find his murderers.

Hersee also cites a 2005 case that occurred in Katsina, a northern Nigerian state that imposes Sharia law. Accused of sex after they were seen leaving public toilets together, the men were jailed for six months. The police said they could not find any witnesses, but the Sharia court repeatedly gave them more time to come up with witnesses.

These men were lucky: They eventually were freed due to lack of evidence, Hersee believes such an incident--one of many such-- “reveals a completely twisted legal system where a

flimsily perception of homosexuality leads to the court doing its best to provoke the police into coming up with evidence suitable for conviction and potentially stoning to death.”

Not only do church and state work against gay men and lesbians, but so do blood relations. “A lot of people have been abused and reportedly tortured at the hands of their own families,” Bumgardner observes. “A young man was turned over by his father to his uncle, who imprisoned him on a military compound and tortured him trying to get him to profess heteronormativity.”

A similar attempt at conversion occurred in Port Harcourt, where five lesbians were raped by a gang of boys who said they were “curing” them of homosexuality (Stiffler, Scott 2008, ‘Nigeria: Hotbed of Homophobic Violence’, EDGE Boston website, 17 April <http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glbt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=73209> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 34).

Anglican Church

An article posted on the EDGE Boston website on 17 April 2008 reports that homosexuality “serves as a rare source of agreement between Islam and Christianity” in Nigeria:

Those attempting to live openly face hostile society and laws. They’ve become political footballs for various forces, especially Peter Akinola, the Anglican archbishop of Nigeria. Akinola recently served as president of the Christian Association of Nigeria, the umbrella group for most of the churches of Nigeria.

Now, Akinola is aligning himself with anti-gay Episcopalians in the U.S. and is starting a breakaway denomination. Mike Hersee of Changing Attitude Nigeria, believes Akinola is using the issue of homosexuality: “It’s power dressed up as morality.” Hersee notes that Akinola’s power grab is happening in a place where “religion holds much greater sway than it does in more developed countries. This influences all levels of society, including politics.”

...Homosexuality also serves as a rare source of agreement between Islam and Christianity. Hersee describes both religions, as practiced in Nigeria, as being “particularly hard on homosexuality as a convenient way of bonding between Nigerians across the whole country, and also as a way of maintaining the appearance of being vigilant against destructive forces.”

A Sept. 7, 2007, report from the German journal Gay Republic Daily, recounted how the newly appointed Bishop Orama of Uyo described gay people as “insane, satanic and not fit to live.” He only claimed it to be a misreporting of what was actually said several days after the Archbishop of Canterbury stepped in to condemn the comments. Mac-Iyalla believes Uyo only refuted his comments because of the unexpected furor they created outside Nigeria.

This incident is typical of how homosexuality is, according to Hersee, “always attacked by religious authorities, and in turn by government and ordinary people.” Thus there is much more threat to an ordinary quiet life of someone gay or lesbian in Nigeria than in most other African countries. When people know, it becomes necessary to act outraged (Stiffler, Scott 2008, ‘Nigeria: Hotbed of Homophobic Violence’, EDGE Boston website, 17 April <http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glbt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=73209> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 34).

The article also reports on the MCC’s House of Rainbow in Lagos. The MCC is “a Protestant denomination that was founded to be gay friendly”:

MCC works mostly in the capital, the sprawling city of Lagos. Its House of Rainbow is a community of very young gay men, for whom MCC offers a spiritual home and a safe space to be themselves “in a country where just to exist is a criminal act and punishable in some very extreme ways.” House of Rainbow also serves as a hiding place where LGBT Nigerians receive counseling and support from others who are gay.

...MCC has sent people there just to eyewitness the experience and provide some financial support for the community. But otherwise, Bumgardner says, they “say OK, you articulate the strategy and tell us where we fit in.” (Stiffler, Scott 2008, ‘Nigeria: Hotbed of Homophobic Violence’, EDGE Boston website, 17 April <http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=gblt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=73209> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 34).

Pink News reports that in 2006 Reverend Jide Macaulay established the House of Rainbow. His father, Professor Kunle Macaulay, Director of Studies at United Bible University has said he loves his son but does not agree with his ministry for LGBT:

His father was a supporter of draconian laws to penalise Nigerian gays and lesbians discussed last year.

“My journey in the Pentecost movement and my ordination service in 1998 shaped my life, but also confused me,” Rev Macaulay wrote on the Metropolitan Community Churches website.

“MCC affected my faith and belief system, and allowed me to reconcile my sexuality and spirituality.

“I recently transferred my clergy status to MCC (‘Nigerian speak out against son who founded gay church’ 2008, *Pink News*, 8 October <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/news/articles/2005-9245.html> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 37).

HRW reports that in “September 2008, several national newspapers published articles criticizing a Christian church in Lagos that ministers to LGBT people: the articles included names, addresses, and photographs of members of the congregation and the church’s pastor. Police harassment and threats forced the church to shut down and the pastor to flee the country. Some members of the congregation lost their jobs and homes and had to go into hiding, and several of them continue to be under threat of physical harm and harassment.” Behind the Mask reports that *The Nation*, *PM News*, *The Vanguard* and *The Sunday Sun* reported on the House of Rainbow MCC printing photographs, names and physical addresses of members of the church. Stephanie Adaralegbea, a Nigerian transgender was attacked by a group of young men, “I practically escaped death just a few days ago when a group of about eleven to fifteen boys attacked me with planks, sticks and iron bars...The lewd boys thought I was a girl and they wanted to get fresh with me. On discovering that I was transgender they raised a volcanic alarm that drew the attention of other people in the neighbourhood”. Adaralegbea believes the “media crackdown has placed them in danger and they are “living in morbid fear and trepidation”” (Mhlongo, Mongezi 2008, ‘Nigerian media perpetuates homophobia’, Behind the Mask, 2 October <http://www.mask.org.za/article.php?cat=nigeria&id=1964> – Accessed 4 February 2000 – Attachment 36; and Human Rights Watch 2009, ‘Bill Would Assault Rights of All, Reinforce Punishment for Homosexual Conduct’, 26 January

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/01/26/nigeria-reject-same-gender-marriage-ban> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 27).

An article dated 12 October 2008 in *Vanguard* reports on the condemnation of the House of Rainbow by some Anglican clerics:

The church is described as the first sponsored attempt by any Nigerian cleric to openly counter efforts of Most Rev. Peter Jasper Akinola, Primate, Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), who had led other Anglicans to vehemently oppose the ordination of Gene Robinson, an openly confessed gay bishop, in November 2003.

Akinola, as the bishop of Abuja, is the current Anglican Primate of the Church of Nigeria. He is the chairman of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa and chairman of the South-South Encounter of the Anglican Communion which has continued to insist on Bible principles and the teachings of the apostles (apostolic tradition) in a particular way.

...Akinola has been in the forefront of the fight against the weird intrusion of homosexuality into the Christian faith. Just like most parts of the world were shocked with that ordination, Akinola has earned accolades from around the world for his doggedness in condemning the practice; at one point threatening to lead other African countries out of the Anglican fold if the practice of gay ordination continued.

Time Magazine named him among the 100 most influential persons in the world. So when, Rev. Macaulay appeared in the scene with a gay church in Nigeria, many Nigerians who had thrown their weight behind Akinola saw the move as a sponsored plot by the ECUSA [Episcopal Church in the United States of America] to undermine the efforts of the Nigerian primate who recently led Conservative Anglicans to hold a global gathering to affirm their orthodox Christian roots in Jerusalem.

...Speaking in an interview, the national president of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, PFN, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, urged all Nigerians to rise up against any such ungodly practice in any part of the country, because it is an attempt by some pervert minds in the country who are being sponsored from other climes to undermine the enviable gains made so far by our Anglican brother, Primate Peter Akinola.

Describing the current action of some individuals in the Christendom in the country as deplorable the PFN helmsman said, "It (gay church) is totally unacceptable in any part of the country. It is coming from the very bottom of the pit of hell and there is no way we can accept everything from the West, hook, line and sinker.

Our people must grow up and shun some of these ungodly practices from the West because the resultant effect will not be palatable to any one of us, whether Christian or not. It is obvious that the devil is trying to neutralise the gains our brother in the Anglican Church, Primate Peter Akinola, had made since the controversial ordination of a gay bishop in the US in 2003" (Eyoboka, Sam 2008, 'Nigeria: Homosexuality is Totally Unacceptable – Clerics', *Vanguard*, 12 October, allAfrica.com website <http://allafrica.com/> – Accessed 6 February 2009 – Attachment 38).

HIV/AIDS

An article dated 14 August 2008 in *IRIN NEWS* reports that gay men in Nigeria are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS:

Being gay means becoming invisible and, as a result of that secrecy, much more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

A behavioural surveillance survey by the ministry of health in 2007 found that, after sex workers, men who have sex with men (MSM) were the group most at-risk of HIV infection, with a prevalence rate of 13.4 percent – three times the national average of 4.4 percent. There was considerable variation in three cities surveyed, but in the commercial capital, Lagos, prevalence hit 25 percent.

...“A lot of stigma is associated with the moral aspect [of homosexuality]. It drives people into the closet – they don’t want to come out, which means they can’t access [AIDS] services,” said one senior HIV researcher, who asked not to be named as he did not have clearance to talk to the media.

Okem [AIDS activist, not his real name] said it was a little more complicated. “The vast majority of MSM believe you cannot contract STIs [sexually transmitted infections] from anal sex. In Nigeria we don’t talk about anal sex, and all the [AIDS] interventions are targeted at heterosexuals and vaginal sex. The perception of gay people not using condoms is not because we don’t want to, but because we are not well informed.”

...Gays and lesbians are beginning to organise: at least 10 groups have been formed in Nigeria and are pressing for better representation in the AIDS response, which the government seems ready to grant. Alliance Rights Nigeria, one of the oldest, was set up in 1999 in response to the toll of AIDS deaths among MSM, who were “dying in ignorance”, said the group’s executive director, Ifeanyi Orazulike.

...“We don’t intend to rub people’s faces in it, otherwise they are forced to react; just live your life,” Orazulike explained. That approach is likely to guide Nigeria’s AIDS response to the gay and lesbian community, where a little tact may be required to avoid the attention of the national assembly and some of the more conservative elements in government.

“There will be no specific intervention response that targets this group,” said the researcher, who works for a major funding agency. “It will be a package to address the most at-risk groups, and we’ll reach them that way, but not as a population cohort themselves” (“Gays hesitate at the closet door’ 2008, *IRIN News*, 14 August <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=79810> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 32).

LGBT Support Groups

Please see Question 2 of *Research Response NGO30400* for information on gay organisations in Nigeria (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response NGA30400*, 3 August – Attachment 19).

The UK Home Office and Danish Immigration Service provide the following information on LGBT support groups in Nigeria:

5.10 Prior to the year 2000, there were no known incidents of gay Nigerians openly declaring their sexual orientation. A spokeswoman for Global Rights in Abuja said that there were three local groups that work on sexual rights but their members do so under various guises because of the hostile environment. The groups are the International Centre for Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights (Increase), Alliance Rights, and the Centre for Youth Policy Research and Advocacy (Cyprad). In spite of their low key approach, members of these groups still fall victims to societal intolerance and hostility towards homosexuals.

5.11 According to Global Rights, Increase works openly on health issues; its members address sexual and reproductive health and do not publicly address homosexuality. Its members have been the target of personal attacks and victimisation because they open their doors to suspected gay people in the communities where they work. Alliance Rights advertises itself as a human rights group but is actually a support group for gay men. Its members have literally lost their lives on account of discrimination following suspicions of their sexual orientation. Even though they took the precaution of not disclosing their membership list and nominating only one member to act as contact person for the group, at least two members have died from complications related to discrimination that they suffered. Cyprad publicly campaigns on the rights of youths and contemporary social-cultural impediments to their development. Its members have been shunned for defending the rights of young people to choose partners of the same sex.

5.12 Another group, Changing Attitudes Nigeria (CAN), an Anglican Church gay rights group is also reportedly based in Abuja. The spokeswoman for Global Rights had heard of them but as far as she was aware, their leader Sir Davis Mac-Lyalla was no longer in the country. This appears to be borne out by an article in Jazzolog, dated 22 May 2007, which stated that he is in exile in Togo. [5] (Annex D)

5.13 Another group, Support Project in Nigeria (SPIN), a human rights group based in Lagos, was founded in 2004 and has over 3,000 members located in Lagos, according to its website. It states that its mission is “to build a democratic and accountable NGO that will promote the health and rights of all persons irrespective of race, religion, sexual orientation, social orientation and social status. To act as a support/companion to sexual minority persons in Nigeria in the areas of mental health, HIV/AIDS and STI awareness, prevention, care and treatment”. SPIN networks with various health and gay organisations including Alliance Rights. [6] (Annex D) (UK Home Office & Danish Immigration Service 2008, *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria 9-27 September 2007 and 5-12 January 2008*, 28 October <http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/2F5AF3E1-0D42-431D-9013-B75488053160/0/NigeriafactfindingrapportIFAfinal.pdf> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 23).

Changing Attitude Nigeria (CAN)

Please see Question 2 of *Research Response NGO30400* for background information on Changing Attitude Network in Nigeria (RRT Country Research 2006, *Research Response NGA30400*, 3 August – Attachment 19).

An article posted on the EDGE Boston website on 17 April 2008 provides background information on Davis Mac-Iyalla, the Director of CAN:

In 2003, Mac-Iyalla was serving as headmaster of an Anglican school. After the death of Bishop Ugedede, he was fired by church authorities who had learned of his homosexuality.

Mac-Iyalla then founded Changing Attitude Nigeria, which, Hersee notes, “existed originally to challenge Anglican Church of Nigeria by initiating a listening process that had been agreed to at the last Anglican Lambeth Conference, and to demonstrate to those who claim that there are no gay people in Africa that there are and always have been, as well as challenging their perceptions of gay people from misreading the Bible.”

Archbishop Akinola effectively blocked Changing Attitude Nigeria’s goal of fostering understanding and acceptance. On the church’s website, he accused Ma-Iyalla of various

criminal activities, such as defrauding a dying bishop and obtaining church documents by deception.

Unemployable and receiving death threats, Mac-Iyalla was smuggled out of the country to Togo, where he now lives (Stiffler, Scott 2008, 'Nigeria: Hotbed of Homophobic Violence', EDGE Boston website, 17 April

<http://www.edgeboston.com/index.php?ch=news&sc=glt&sc2=news&sc3=&id=73209> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 34).

Changing Attitude reports that on 22 March 2008 Mac-Iyalla received a text message threatening his life: "Davis Mac-Iyalla you refused to repent and leave homosexuality and now we will wipe you out and your homo friends out now. If Nigeria is too small for you to hid. Togo will be easier to get you. Prepare your soul to go to hell because we are coming to send you there." Reverend Colin Coward, Director of Changing Attitude England also received a text message on 24 March 2009: "evil homosexual promoter, we gave your nigerian homosexual representative and his followers long time to repent but he underrated us. now we are going and nothing will stop us. we are not mere boosters we mean every words but keep encouraging them to pollute our country with abomination and immorality . come and save them if you can". Mac-Iyalla and Reverend Coward both received further text messages. The text messages followed an attack on the co-leader of Changing Attitude in Port Harcourt. On 30 March 2008 Mac-Iyalla was attacked in Lome, Togo:

Davis Mac-Iyalla was attacked on Sunday morning, 30 March 2008, near the post office in Lome. He had travelled there on the back of a motorbike, and doesn't know if he had been followed from his flat. There were many witnesses to what happened. Two men and a woman in a car drove up. One of the men got out, approached Davis and called him brother in English. He asked Davis for his passport and Davis said he didn't have one. He then asked Davis who is his contact in Abuja and Davis said he didn't have a contact. He then asked if Davis could give them the documents and Davis said What documents?

At that moment the man produced a knife and slashed Davis's hand, and then a syringe with which the man tried to inject Davis. Davis managed to defend himself and knock the syringe away. The man ran back to the car and the three drove off. Davis retrieved the syringe, took it to the police station and reported the attack. The police analysis of the contents of the syringe is awaited. Davis then went to the hospital where his hand was dressed. He was given a strong sedative and went the house of lesbian friends to recover in safety.

He remained incommunicado until Saturday 5 April 2008, fearing for his safety and his life. Both Davis and the Port Harcourt leader report that unknown men seeking them have been witnessed at their respective homes (Coward, Colin 2008, 'Nigerians threaten English and Nigerian Directors of Changing Attitude', Changing Attitude website, 10 April <http://www.changingattitude.org.uk/news/newsitem.asp?id=352> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 39).

An article dated 31 July 2008 in *BBC News* reports that in 2005 Mac-Iyalla founded the Nigerian branch of Changing Attitude, "an Anglican pressure group that campaigns for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the life of the church." According to Mac-Iyalla the success of Changing Attitude "offended the leaders of the Nigerian church" who issued a statement denying that he was a practising Anglican. Mac-Iyalla states that "People began to send me death threats by e-mail, by text messages, and it got so serious I had to flee Nigeria to Togo." He received a handwritten death threat and then in March he was physically attacked and stabbed in his forearm with a syringe. On arrival in the UK for the Church of England's General Synod meeting Mac-Iyalla, along with the

Director of Changing Attitude, England received further death threats. Mac- Iyalla applied for asylum in the UK and it was granted (Landau, Christopher 2008, 'Gay Nigerian tells of death threats', *BBC News*, 31 July <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7535533.stm> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 40).

UK Gay News reports that on 20 March 2008 one of the leaders of CAN in Port Harcourt was violently attacked at the funeral ceremony of Mac-Iyalla's sister. The victim was slapped, punched, kicked and spat on while those beating him shouted "You notorious homosexual, you think can run away from us for your notorious group to cause more abomination in our land?" The victim believes that "Those who attacked me were well informed about us so I suspect an insider or one of the leaders of our Anglican church have hands in this attack":

Speaking from Devizes in Wiltshire, England, Colin Coward, the director of Changing Attitude called on the Church of Nigeria to denounce the attack.

"The attack on one of the CAN leaders in Port Harcourt is a terrifying indictment of the attitude of the Church of Nigeria to LGBT people.

"Violence against LGBT people has been encouraged by Archbishop Peter Akinola and the leaders of the Church of Nigeria. They have attacked the presence of LGBT in church and society, and supported a bill which would reinforce prejudice against LGBT people.

...In a statement, Changing Attitude Nigeria said: "The thugs who attacked the Port Harcourt leader told him: 'We will not rest until we silence you and any who join you to pollute the land with the abominable act of homosexuality. You are perverts who go around corrupting and inducting young people into our evil society. We will kill you and it will be a favour to the country. Nigeria will not contain you or any other person that practises homosexuality' ('Gay Nigeria Christian Leader Narrowly Escapes Death in Brutal Attack' 2008, *UK Gay News*, 21 March <http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/08/Mar/2101.htm> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 41).

Pink News reports that on 4 December 2008 Stephen Wariebi Hobobo was granted asylum in the UK. Stephen went into hiding following his assault on 20 March 2008 while attending the funeral of Mac-Iyalla's sister in Port Harcourt. He arrived in the UK in April 2008 and applied for asylum in May 2008. *Pink News* reports that "[i]n granting asylum because of their sexuality to Davis and Stephen, the UK Government accepts that Nigeria is now too dangerous as a country for any LGBT person who is actively and publicly visible." The article continues:

Stephen's invisibility was compromised in 2007 when the CAN group in Port Harcourt developed a relationship with an orphanage as part of their group ministry and pastoral work. On Sunday 17 June 2007, 48 lesbians and gay men held a party for the children of the Orphanage Home, Borokiri, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A report of the party was posted on the Changing Attitude web site on 19 June 2007 which included a picture of Stephen. We posted the report and pictures of the Port Harcourt orphanage event on the web site and named people because we wanted to prove that lesbian and gay Christians in Nigeria are not only concerned with their own campaign but are actively demonstrating Christian witness to others.

...Changing Attitude has tried to maintain a fine balance between protecting lesbian and gay group members in Nigeria and providing information to the public to demonstrate the reality of lesbian and gay activity and experience. Davis Mac-Iyalla has been the public face for LGBT members of Changing Attitude Nigeria. Our inability to name individuals and publish

pictures of Changing Attitude activity in Nigeria enables those opposed to us to claim that none of these things happen in reality. It is a difficult to raise the profile of LGBT people and protect them from attack at the same time ('Second Changing Attitude Nigeria leader granted asylum in UK' 2008, *Pink News*, 8 December

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/aroundtheworld/2008/12/second-changing-attitude-nigeria-leader-granted-asylum-in-uk/> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 42).

Changing Attitude provides information on Charles, a member of Changing Attitude in Port Harcourt who was detained by police, lost his job and apartment and interrogated by his family because of sexuality:

In a message sent to the CA Nigeria egroup, Charles reported a party that had been held in Port Harcourt at the end of November. As a result of a tip off from a gay man who had been pensioned off by the police, the party was invaded by security operatives. An unspecified number of gay men present at the party were arrested and detained. Charles learnt about the party and arrest from one of them having been out of town on official business.

He was at work on 2 December when six security personnel went arrived and requested an interview with him. He was summoned to the manager's office, arrested and taken in for questioning. He was told that one of the men detained at the party had named him as a gay man living in Port Harcourt. Those arrested had been tortured to force them to reveal the names of every gay person known to them and with whom they had had sex.

He was next taken to his house where the police searched his apartment and confiscated his Laptop, cell phones and iPod in their search for evidence against him. He had recently formatted his laptop and deleted all emails and photos that might have shown him to be a gay man. He was returned to the police station and held in detention for two days. His family members were eventually notified. The organised a lawyer who negotiated for Charles to be released on bail for the sum of \$700, which will never be returned.

The police accused the gay men arrested at the party of being cult members. Charles was shocked that the Nigerian police equate being gay lifestyle as something that is about fetishism and the occult. When he returned home he was interrogated by members of his family. They are unaware of his sexual orientation and he continued to deny that he is gay to avoid raising further tensions. He felt painfully humiliated.

He returned to work to find a letter of suspension waiting at the front desk. He was later dismissed from work on the 29 December on the grounds that he had brought "disgrace" to the establishment.

To add to this catalogue of events resulting from his arrest, Charles' landlord has given him notice to vacate his house on or before January 30. His pleas fell on deaf ears (Coward, Colin 2009, 'Police arrest more Nigerian gay men', Changing Attitude website, 17 January <http://www.changingattitude.org.uk/news/newsitem.asp?id=398> – Accessed 4 February 2009 – Attachment 43).

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IRIN News <http://www.irinnews.org/>

Topic Specific Sites – Christians

Aid to the Church in Need <http://www.aidtochurch.org/>

Christian Solidarity Worldwide <http://www.csw.org.uk/>

Compass Direct News <http://www.compassdirect.org/>

Forum 18 <http://www.forum18.org/>

International Christian Concern <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>

Worldwide Religious News <http://www.wwrn.org/>

Worthy News <http://worthynews.com/>

Topic Specific Sites – Homosexuality

365 Gay <http://www.365gay.com/>

The Advocate <http://www.advocate.com/>

Asylum Law (Sexual Minorities & HIV Status) <http://www.asylumlaw.org/>

Behind the Mask <http://www.mask.org.za/>

Changing Attitude <http://www.changingattitude.org.uk/>

EDGE Boston <http://www.edgeboston.com/>

Gaydar Nation <http://www.rainbownetwork.com/>

Global Gayz <http://www.globalgayz.com/>

GMax <http://www.gmax.co.za/>

The Gully <http://www.thegully.com/>

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission <http://www.iglhrc.org/>

International Lesbian and Gay Organisation <http://www.ilga.org/>

New York Blade <http://www.nyblade.com/>

Pink News <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/>

Sodomy Laws <http://www.sodomylaws.org/>

UK Gay News <http://ukgaynews.org.uk/>

Search Engines

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>

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)

RRT Library Catalogue

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