



## **Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 26 June 2012**

### **Recent reports regarding the treatment of persons who convert from Islam to Christianity. Recent reports on Sharia law in relation to religious conversion.**

Recent reports regarding the treatment of persons who convert from Islam to Christianity in Nigeria were scarce among sources consulted by the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints.

The most recent *US Department of State* religious freedom report for Nigeria, in “Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom”, states:

“In many communities Muslims or Christians who converted to another religion reportedly faced ostracism by adherents of their former religion.” (US Department of State (13 September 2011) *July-December, 2010 International Religious Freedom Report: Nigeria*)

A report published jointly by *Global Campaign to Stop Killing and Stoning Women and Women Living Under Muslim Laws* states:

“The present system of Shari'a in Nigeria has been described as ‘political Shari'a’ due to its concentration on hudud punishments. In each of the twelve northern states implementing Shari'a, the penal codes dictate fixed punishments for the hudud offenses of zina (including fornication, adultery, and same-sex sexual relations), rape, theft, robbery, drinking of alcohol, and apostasy.” (Global Campaign to Stop Killing and Stoning Women / Women Living Under Muslim Laws (1 March 2010) *Stoning is Not Our Culture: A Comparative Analysis of Human Rights and Religious Discourses in Iran and Nigeria (Nigeria excerpt)*)

A fact-finding mission report published by the *Danish Immigration Service*, in a section titled “The death penalty according to the Shari'a penal codes” (section 2.3), states:

“It was stated in a 2004 National Study Group on the Death Penalty report that the 12 states that have Shari'a penal codes are Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Borno and Gombe. According to the same report, offences in the Shari'a Penal Codes that attract the death penalty include adultery (zina), apostasy (ridda)...” (Danish Immigration Service (October 2008) *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria*, p.23)

A *UN Human Rights Council* report, in a section titled “Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and the right to participate in public and political life” (paragraph 39), states:

“CSW reported that, in Sharia states, converts from Islam can experience extreme societal pressure and even persecution, since under the genre of Sharia law currently prevalent in these states, conversion is seen as apostasy and can mean death. CSW indicated that there are several reports of converts being attacked, imprisoned and even killed for changing their faith.” (UN Human Rights Council (27 November 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*, p.7)

A report from the Christian news agency *BosNewsLife* states:

“A militant group seeking to enforce Sharia, or Islamic law, throughout Nigeria, has shot and killed two children of an ex-terrorist and ‘murderer’ because he converted to Christianity, well-informed missionaries told *BosNewsLife* Wednesday, November 23. Boko Haram, meaning ‘Western education is a sin’, carried out the killings this month after discovering that a former fellow fighter refused to kill a Christian and instead accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, explained Rae Burnett, Africa Director of the U.S. based Christian Aid Mission (CAM) group.” (*BosNewsLife* (23 November 2011) *Nigeria Militants Kill Children of Christian Convert, Missionaries Say*)

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

#### **References:**

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