



NGA34869.E 13 July 2000

Subject: »Nigeria«: Treatment of homosexuals, specifically cohabiting lesbians

Regional Office: 2

From: Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of homosexuals is scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. No reports pertaining to »homosexual« cohabitation, specifically lesbian cohabitation, could be found among the sources consulted. Please consult NGA32977.E of 12 October 1999 for information on the treatment of homosexuals, including societal perceptions and legality.

In a 24 June 2000 report carried by Xinhua, a clerk, arrested for homosexuality in Nigeria's northern Zamfara State, "may be stoned to death if convicted under the Islamic law Sharia adopted by the state January this year." No additional information on this incident could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to a PlanetOut Website article of 4 May 2000, an independent Nigerian newspaper report on a gay wedding prompted Kano legislature member Yusuf Abdullahi to refer to the report as "an embarrassment to the image of the state and to all Moslems." His motion for an investigation passed and the reporter, as well as the editor, were called to testify before the legislature on 5 May 2000 (ibid). No additional information on this incident could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

On 29 December 1999, P.M. News reported that two female cadets had been arrested for allegedly engaging in a lesbian affair at the »Nigeria« Police College in Ikeja. The report also stated that the accused were allegedly "undergoing severe [unidentified] punishment" (ibid.). A police sergeant stated that "there was no option than to give them summary dismissal for constituting a public disgrace to the force" (ibid.).

According to IGLHRC, 1997 *Year in Review*, lesbian activists in »Nigeria« had reported a proposed law that would allegedly "criminalize same-sex relations between women with up to 3 years imprisonment" (GayLawNet n.d.). No additional information regarding this report was found among sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

A review of *Out in the World*, a publication by Neil Miller, on The Blackstripe Website, a "resource for news, information and culture affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people of African descent," states that there are approximately 33 different cultures, including the Yoruba in Northern »Nigeria«, where marriages between women are recognized (n.d.). The review states that "academics are quick to deny that lesbianism has any role in such arrangements despite considerable evidence to the contrary" (ibid.). Buchi Emecheta, a Nigerian writer, offered a personal view, on the New Internationalist Website, of Nigerian societal perceptions of homosexuals, which included the subject of female marriages (Nov. 1989). According to Emecheta, these unions are not sexual but an arrangement whereby a "rich woman" unable to produce a son "would pay a dowry for the younger girl and marry her" (ibid.). Emecheta states that the younger girl would be encouraged to take a lover and produce a child for the "rich woman" (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not



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