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Nigeria: Process to obtain a death certificate from the National Population Commission (NPC), including persons entitled to obtain one, the documents that must be submitted, the cost, and the time required to issue the certificate
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The National Population Commission (NPC) in Nigeria indicates on its website that one of the functions of its Vital Registration Division is the "design, production and issuance of births and deaths certificates" (Nigeria n.d.). However, a counsellor at the Deputy High Commission of Canada to Nigeria in Lagos, indicated, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, that it is not common for the NPC to issue death certificates because most people do not see the need to do so (Canada 25 Feb. 2011). But if someone does try to obtain a death certificate from the NPC, he or she must present a death certificate issued by the hospital in which the person died, an application and proof that the deceased is a blood relative (ibid.).

The Counsellor also indicated that if the person who wants the death certificate is Christian, he or she must have the deceased certified dead by a hospital doctor so that the body can be "deposited in the mortuary" (Canada 25 Feb. 2011). According to the Counsellor, it is not necessary for the person to have died in the hospital in order to obtain a death certificate from there (ibid.). Furthermore, a hospital-issued death certificate is considered a legal document (ibid.).

Somewhat similarly, the First Secretary at the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, indicated that hospitals issue death certificates and inform the NPC (Nigeria 23 Feb. 2011). A doctor's report indicating that the person is dead is needed to obtain a death certificate (ibid.). The cost to obtain the death certificate, according to the First Secretary, "varies from hospital to hospital" (ibid.). Information on the time it takes to issue a death certificate could not be found within the time constraints of this Response.

The First Secretary indicated that the wife, husband, children or siblings of a deceased person are able to obtain the death certificate (ibid.). This statement was corroborated by the Counsellor, who indicated that, by providing proof of identity, the biological children or someone who is a blood relative of the deceased can obtain a death certificate (Canada 25 Feb. 2011). The Counsellor also added that a "family member sometimes could be someone appointed to represent the family as a result of literacy or financial ability" (ibid.).

The Counsellor explained that there are cases where a death certificate will not be issued:

Sometimes when someone dies in a suspicious circumstance and is [the] subject of [a] police investigation, if the deceased family refuses autopsy examination, the hospital authority, on the instruction of the police, may not issue a death certificate. If the deceased is a criminal and dies in protective or government custody, the body will never be released to the family and as such a death certificate will not be issued. (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 purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Canada. 25 February 2011. The Deputy High Commission of Canada to Nigeria, Lagos. Correspondence with a counsellor.

Nigeria. 23 February 2011. Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa. Correspondence with the First Secretary.

_____. N.d. National Population Commission (NPC). "Vital Registration." <<http://www.population.gov.ng/index.php?id=22>> [Accessed 21 Feb. 2011]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact a representative at the National Population Commission (NPC), a representative at the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN), and a representative at the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential* [Cambridge]; AfricaFiles; *Africa Research Bulletin* [Oxford]; *Africa Today* [London]; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; *Jeune Afrique* [Paris], *Nigeria Communications Week* [Lagos], Nigeria - Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Republic of Nigeria; *Nigeria Independent*, *Nigerian Newsworld* [Lagos], Panapress [Senegal]; United Nations (UN) - Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), Refworld.

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