Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 January 2011.

Are there any reports of the kidnapping in the Kirika area of River State, in August/September 2010? Any reports of the kidnapping of people from this area, for use in rituals?

A 2001 *Agence France Presse* report on the treatment of persons suspected of kidnapping schoolchildren for money ritual purposes states:

> "Fifteen suspected kidnappers of children were lynched this week by angry mob who accused them of black magic in the southwest Nigerian city of Ibadan, witnesses said Saturday. The suspects were killed around the Ring Road area of the city, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) north of Lagos, after confessing that they had kidnapped schoolchildren for money ritual purposes, one witness, Taiwo Adeleye, said. Adeleye told AFP by telephone that one of them, a woman who pretended to be insane, was caught attempting to abduct a school boy. 'She was beaten to a coma until she died,' he said. Belief in black magic is widespread in Nigeria where many people are killed regularly on the suspicion that they are kidnappers." (Agence France Presse (24 March 2001) *15 suspected kidnappers lynched in southwest Nigeria*)

An article on ritual killing published by *Skeptical Briefs* states:

> "Generally, ritual killing is a common practice in Nigeria. Every year, hundreds of Nigerians lose their lives to ritual murderers, also known as headhunters. These head hunters go in search of human parts-head, breast, tongue, sexual organs-at the behest of witchdoctors, juju priests, and traditional medicine men who require them for some sacrifices or for the preparation of assorted magical potions. Recently, there have been several reported cases of individuals who were kidnapped, killed, or had their bodies mutilated by ritualists in Nigeria." (Skeptical Briefs, Volume 14.2 (June 2004) *Ritual Killing and Pseudoscience in Nigeria*)

A *BBC News* report states:

> "A Nigerian man who killed his friend in central Plateau state to sell his body parts for ritual witchcraft purposes has been sentenced to death by hanging. Jacob Wakfan, 35, confessed to luring his victim into the bush and stabbing him and removing his penis and tongue. 'The convict's desire to make quick money led him to commit this heinous and treacherous act,' judge Felicia Dusu said, AFP news agency reports. Belief in witchcraft or 'juju' is widespread in Nigeria. According to the BBC's Yusuf Sarki Muhammad in Abuja, despite condemnation of traditional ritual killings, they are common across the country - in the Muslim north and the Christian south. Last week, police in the south-western city of Ibadan found three headless bodies in what they suspect are ritual killing murders. Traditional healers are widely consulted for cures of various ailments and magical powers to protect their clients from a wide range of misfortunes, or to bring good luck. In some traditional practices, human body parts are used to make the charms more powerful." (BBC News (17 March 2005) *Hanging for Nigeria ritual murder*)

A *Vanguard* article recounts the experiences of an alleged kidnap victim as follows:

> "According to her: 'I saw the bus, stopped it and entered. There were five people sitting in the bus and I did not know that they were ritualists and victims earlier abducted. Few minutes after the bus took off, the driver diverted to another route and when I complained, the driver said that he was running away from armed robbers who disturb people along the usual route. But to my surprise, the driver was now taking various routes that I could not explain until we appeared at the Lagos Ibadan Expressway. Then we entered a thick forest in Ibafo, Ogun State, where before I knew it, six men had emerged from the bush holding guns and charms. The men shouted at us to come down and immediately our hands and legs were tied. I heard the men talk to one another on what they would do to us and how to kill us. One of them said that we would be used for money ritual today.'" (Vanguard (24 June 2007) *Nigeria: 'My Narrow Escape From Ritualists Hideout'*)

A *Daily Trust* article states:

> "Police in Owerri, Imo State, yesterday discovered a human head and arrested three suspects, including a native doctor. Parading the suspects with the human head before newsmen at the Police Command, state Commissioner of Police Mr. Aloysous Okorie said Emeka Uwakwe, Anthony Obioha and Chimezie Anyaoha were arrested for beheading an 18 year-old lady, Chinwe Perpetual Obieri, at Arondizeogu in Ideator North LGA for money ritual. The commissioner said the ugly incident which occurred on the 26th of July when the lady believed to be a girl friend to the prime suspect, Emeka Uwakwe, left home without disclosing to her parents where she was going." (Daily Trust (20 August 2009) *Nigeria: Police Find Human Head, Nab Native Doctor*)

A *Vanguard* article on the apprehension of an individual caught in possession of human body parts states:

> "When the bag was eventually forced opened, the policemen were taken aback by the starling discovery of some human parts. They included four fresh human heads which were dripping with blood, a heart, two hands believed to be those of females , following the painted long nails and a female private part. Meanwhile, sympathizers who were at the scene of the strange discovery later gave Oriyomi a hot chase and got him apprehended; accusing him of being a kidnapper and a murderer. But for the intervention of the policemen, Oriyomi would have been lynched. In his confessional statement to the police, Oriyomi who resides in Iboro Ayetoro area of Ogun state revealed that the human parts were exhumed from a burial ground in Badagry area of Lagos. On how that was possible, he stated, 'I was passing by the burial ground last night (Saturday) and noticed that none of the guards was around. I then sneaked in and exhumed these parts and sneaked out again'. Asked what his intention was , he revealed, 'I am tired of life. There is no job, no money to even feed myself let alone getting married and start raising a family of mine. I had to do this out of frustration. I wanted to use it for money ritual because things are really tight for me'." (Vanguard (30 July 2010) *Nigeria: Human Parts Merchant in Police Net*)

A *This Day* article on the arrest of alleged kidnappers states:

> "A three man gang of the suspected kidnappers were reportedly arrested by security operatives August 16th while ambushing to kidnap a businessman at Ikpe Mbiabet, Essien Udim LGA. Rugbere said two set of kidnappers were arrested at Umon Okon village in Essien Udim LGA August 15th, while another two man gang suspect were

nabbed in Ika LGA August 14th while on a plot to kidnap a contractor in the area. The Police boss who further disclosed that another three suspected kidnappers including a lady entered the police net August 6th just as three men suspected to be ritualists were arrested September 5th. The Commissioner explained that the ritualists, all residing at Port Harcourt were caught in the act of exhuming the corpse of a hunchback at Idu Uruan in Uruan LGA of the state for money ritual." (This Day (9 September 2010) *Nigeria: 10 Suspected Kidnappers Arrested in Akwa Ibom*)

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

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