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2 September 2009

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Nigeria: The death registration process, including the process to obtain a death certificate
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

During two separate telephone interviews, an official with the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa provided the following information on the death registration process as well as on the process for obtaining death certificates in Nigeria.

In a 13 August 2009 telephone interview, the Official explained that the National Population Commission, a federal entity, is responsible for death and birth registrations (13 Aug. 2009). According to the Official, the registration of a death is not automatic and would generally only happen in cases where a will was involved or in the case of legal disputes (ibid.). According to the Official, "most" deaths are not registered (ibid.) In a subsequent telephone interview on 27 August 2009, the Official explained that only family members of the deceased could apply for the registration of a death, stating that in her opinion any other cases would be "fraudulent" (27 Aug. 2009).

Discussing death certificates, the Official indicated that they were not always issued (13 Aug. 2009). The Official explained that if a death was determined at a hospital or other medical facility a doctor would issue a death certificate on behalf of the hospital (ibid). In cases when the deceased was kept in a mortuary for several days while waiting for a funeral and burial, the mortuary would require a death certificate (ibid.). According to the Official, if the death occurred elsewhere, such as at home, a doctor at the mortuary where the body was brought would issue the death certificate (ibid.). However, the Official also gave the example of members of the country's Muslim community who, according to religious traditions, strive to have a burial before sundown on the same day the death occurred and therefore the body would not be kept in a mortuary (ibid.). In a subsequent interview, the Official clarified that as speed of burial was generally the priority in the northern, mostly Muslim part of the country, next of kin there would not necessarily attempt to obtain a death certificate (27 Aug, 2009).

The Official explained that the content of death certificates would vary depending on the issuer, but would generally include the name of the deceased and the date and cause of death, if known (ibid.). The Official explained that there would be fees for producing a death certificate, with the costs varying depending on the issuer of the certificate (ibid.). While the Official was not aware of the exact fees, she explained that, for example, a private hospital would charge more than a public hospital and the cost might be added to the bill for treatment at medical facilities (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

Nigeria. 27 August 2009. Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa. Telephone interview with an official.

_____. 13 August 2009. Nigeria High Commission, Ottawa. Telephone interview with an official.

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet Sources, including: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Factiva, Washington D.C., Nigerian High Commission to the United Kingdom, Nigerian Population Commission

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