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5 August 2010

NGA103556.E

Nigeria: Support services available to gay men in Lagos and Abuja (2009 -July 2010)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on support services available to gay men in Lagos and Abuja was limited among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, a research scientist who is also Head of the Research Capacity Building Unit at the African Population and Health Research Centre in Kenya provided information in 4 August 2010 correspondence with the Research Directorate. The Research Scientist also serves as a Professor at the University of Uyo in Nigeria and has published journal articles on sexuality in Nigeria (Research Scientist 4 Aug. 2010). On the subject of support services in Lagos and Abuja, the Research Scientist stated:

I do not know and have not heard of any service in place to support gay men anywhere in Nigeria. Both widespread homophobia and the underground nature of gay organizing in Nigeria partly make this impossible. Instead, I have heard stories of gay men being refused treatment in public and private hospitals on the suspicion that their conditions (e.g., anal lacerations or sores) are caused by their particular sexual practices. Suspicion that a man is gay in Lagos or Abuja is good enough grounds for providers to deny him ART [antiretroviral therapy] in government health centers. Some male gay doctors in Lagos and Abuja have been known to clandestinely organize treatments for other gay men. (ibid.)

Similarly, a representative of Alliance Rights Nigeria, a non-governmental organization (NGO) working for gay and lesbian rights in Nigeria (Stop TB Partnership n.d.), stated in 4 August 2010 correspondence that, similar to the rest of Nigeria, there is no protection or support available to gay men living in Abuja and Lagos. However, the Alliance Rights Nigeria Representative also added that there are some health services supported by foreign donors that provide assistance to men who have sex with men (MSM) as well as to gay men living with HIV/AIDS (4 Aug. 2010).

The Research Scientist also provided the following information:

[t]he mistreatment of gays and lesbians continues in Nigeria. The cities of Lagos and Abuja are no exceptions. Increasing religious fundamentalism in these cities continues to worsen matters for self-identified gay men or men suspected of being gay. Instances where clerics and politicians based in these cities have achieved popularity by campaigning against same-sex relationships are known. In Lagos, men can also easily get their fellow men mobbed by falsely accusing them of making passes at them. (4 Aug. 2010)

Corroborating information regarding political campaigns and false accusations of homosexuality could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. According to the Alliance Rights Representative, "gay men in Lagos and

Abuja face a lot of stigmatization, harassment, violence and even death threats" (4 Aug. 2010). However, the Alliance Rights Representative also stated that, in other parts of Nigeria, gay men face "more harassment and brutality" than they do in Lagos and Abuja (4 Aug. 2010). The Representative stated that this was because in Lagos and Abuja, gay men have access to the aforementioned health services (Alliance Rights 4 Aug. 2010).

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

Alliance Rights Nigeria. 4 August 2010. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Research Scientist, African Population and Health Research Centre [Kenya]. 4 August 2010. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

Stop TB Partnership. N.d. "Organization Contact Information: Alliance Rights Nigeria." <http://www.stoptb.org/partners/partner_profile.asp?PID=2264> [Accessed 4 Aug. 2010]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Academics with relevant expertise from Purchase University and from Queens University, were unable to provide information, as was a representative from Changing Attitudes Nigeria.

Publications, including: *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, *Sexuality in Africa Magazine*.

Internet sites, including: 365 Gay, *The Advocate*, AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Behind the Mask, Changing Attitudes Nigeria, *Daily Independent* [Lagos], Freedom House, Fridae, Fyne Times, Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide, Gay Today, GlobalGayz, Human Rights Watch, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (ILGA), International Gay and Lesbian Review, International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association, International Resource Network for Africa, *National Life*, NGO News Africa, Panapress, *Pink News*, Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists, *This Day*, *Wall Street Journal*.

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