

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

31 May 2012

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Nigeria: Whether the police force has a national computer network for information sharing; nature and extent of communication between police offices across the country; whether police offices in different states are obligated to report to each other regarding persons of interest who are suspected of having relocated; whether a link to a police computer network is available at international airports

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1. National Computer Network

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a police spokesperson located in Kano state indicated that both police officers and "recruited individuals" have access to a national computer network (Nigeria 20 Feb. 2012). He added that information is centralized on a database at the police headquarters in Abuja, but can be accessed across the country (ibid.). Information corroborating the existence of a national computer network, and discussing the content of a national computer network, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Media sources report on a police communications service to assist police to monitor "unlawful activities" (Nigerian Bulletin 12 June 2009; *This Day* 12 June 2009; *Abuja Inquirer* [June 2009]). According to media sources, this communications mechanism is called POLCOM (*Abuja Inquirer* [June 2009]; Nigerian Bulletin 12 June 2009). The Nigerian Bulletin, an online news source, describes POLCOM as "the Police Communications Network" (ibid.). The *Abuja Inquirer* describes POLCOM as consisting of 100,000 mobile telephone lines for police ([June 2009]). The *Abuja Inquirer* also reported, without providing detail, that, according to the Commissioner of Police, a "[t]racking [d]igital device" was installed in Lagos, Abuja and states in the Niger Delta, and that there were plans to implement the device in the rest of the states (*Abuja Inquirer* [June 2009]). Further information on the tracking digital device could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The *Abuja Inquirer* reports the goal of POLCOM as being to "provide every police formation in the country with telephone lines and boxes and all personnel with SIM for [an] effective communication network" (ibid.). According to the Inspector General of Police, POLCOM will "ensure broader communication coverage and reduced cost of communication among members of the police community who are connected" and will "greatly enhance community policing which intends to cover every nook and cranny of the country" (ibid.).

Media sources reported the June 2009 announcement of a telephone communication service for police communication (*This Day* 12 June 2009; Nigerian Bulletin 12 June 2009). According to the Inspector General of Police, the telephone service is part of the POLCOM project (ibid.). This service reportedly entails the use of a closed user group, also referred to in the media coverage as the "Police Community," which will be available to all policemen and their family members throughout Nigeria (ibid.; *This Day* 12 June 2009). On 12 June 2009, media sources reported that 100,000 Nigerian police force staff would be part of the closed user group (ibid.; The Nigerian Bulletin 12 June 2009), and the Nigerian Bulletin reported that the service would be extended to 350,000 policemen within the succeeding year (ibid.). Media sources reported that a closed user group allows the creation of groups that have "restricted" access, the members of which can communicate with each other as well as other users outside the group (ibid.; *This Day* 12 June 2009). It was reported that users would be able to make free calls and send free text messages to other users (Nigerian Bulletin 12 June 2009). Information on the implementation of POLCOM and closed user groups could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

SERVICOM is described on its website as being a "social contract between the federal government of Nigeria and its people" (Nigeria n.d.b) that "monitor[s] and report[s] ... on the progress made by [m]inistries and [a]gencies in performing their obligations under SERVICOM" (ibid. n.d.c). In order to begin reforming police communication, SERVICOM says that it has implemented a pilot project in Abuja which aims to improve the police response to reported crimes (ibid. n.d.a). According to SERVICOM, hand-held sets, as well as "[a] mast and generators for charging batteries in case of power failure," have been provided (ibid.). Further information on SERVICOM's reform initiatives could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Nature and Extent of Communication Across Nigeria

In June 2009, at the time of the POLCOM announcement, the Inspector General of Police reportedly remarked that "one of the greatest challenges police are facing in Nigeria is a lack of adequate communication equipment" (*Abuja Inquirer* [June 2009]). In a report on intelligence and policing in Nigeria, Adediran Daniel Ikuomola, a professor of sociology at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, said, "Material inputs in terms of funding, crime prevention/control, detection, investigation, traffic-control and accident-prevention, communication and data-gathering research needs are ... inadequate" (Ikuomola spring 2011, 480). According to the newspaper *Daily Trust*, the Chairman of Nigeria's Police Re-organization Committee indicated that the committee plans to recommend modern police communication equipment for the force (21 Feb. 2012).

3. Reporting Obligations between Police Offices in Different States

Information on whether police offices in different states are obligated to report to each other regarding persons of interest who are suspected of having relocated could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Computer Networks at International Airports

Information on whether there is a link to a police computer network at international airports could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Sources: Attempts to contact the following individuals and organizations were unsuccessful: CLEEN Foundation; Police Force public relations officer; Human Rights Monitor; International Centre for Nigerian Law; lawyer in Enugu State; lawyer, solicitor and advocate to the Supreme Court of Nigeria; National Human Rights Commission; Police Service Commission; Police spokespersons in Abuja, Ebonyi, Edo, Gombe, Kano, Lagos, and Ogun; a public relations officer in Delta State. The following were unable to provide information for this Response: representative of the Nigeria High Commission in Ottawa, representative of Nigeria Police Watch.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential*; *Africa Research Bulletin*; AllAfrica.com; Amnesty International; CLEEN Foundation; ecoi.net; Human Rights Watch; Factiva; International Crisis Group; Nigeria – Nigeria Police Force, Police Service Commission; Nigeria Police Watch; Open Society Institute; United Nations Refworld; United States – Department of State.

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