

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.

1 November 2012

NGA104232.E

Nigeria: Whether each state has a ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Existence of Ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a chief in Yoruba and Iboland, who was formerly a commissioner of local government and chieftaincy affairs, expressed the view that there are ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs in every state (Chief 25 Sept. 2012).

Sources indicate that there is a bureau or ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs in the following 24 states:

- Abia (Abia State n.d.);
- Akwa Ibom (Akwa Ibom State n.d.; *The Moment* 19 Dec. 2011);
- Anambra (Anambra State n.d.);
- Benue (*The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2012);
- Borno (Borno State n.d.; *Daily Trust* 12 Sept. 2011);
- Ebonyi (*The Moment* 29 Dec. 2011; *Daily Independent* 14 Mar. 2011);
- Edo (Edo State n.d.a);
- Ekiti (*The Guardian* 17 Feb. 2012). The Ekiti State website similarly indicates the existence of a Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (22 Feb. 2012), as well as a Committee on Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs (10 Feb. 2012);
- Imo (Imo State n.d.). *Leadership* newspaper indicates the existence of a Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Imo State (15 Nov. 2010);
- Katsina (*Leadership* 30 Sept. 2012);
- Kebbi (*Blueprint* 12 Apr. 2012);
- Kogi (Kogi State n.d.; *The Nigerian Tribune* 31 July 2012);
- Lagos (Lagos State n.d.; *This Day* 14 Jan. 2011);
- Nasarawa State (Nasarawa State 20 Dec. 2011);
- Niger (*Vanguard* 17 June 2012). On the other hand, the Niger State website lists a Ministry of Local Government (n.d.a) and a Commissioner for Local Government, Community Development and Chieftaincy Affairs (n.d.b).
- Ogun (Ogun State 11 Aug. 2008; *Vanguard* 26 Mar. 2012);
- Ondo (Ondo State n.d.). *Vanguard* newspaper indicates the existence of a Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Ondo State (5 Oct. 2011);
- Osun (Osun State n.d.; *Daily Champion* 23 Aug. 2011);
- Oyo (Oyo State [2012]);
- Rivers (Rivers State n.d.);
- Plateau (Plateau State n.d.). *Leadership* newspaper indicates the existence of a Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Plateau State (10 Aug. 2012);
- Sokoto (*Vanguard* 5 Apr. 2012);
- Taraba (*Daily Trust* 13 Feb. 2012; *The Tide* 1 Aug. 2012);
- Yobe (Yobe State n.d.; *Leadership* 29 Aug. 2011).

Media sources list a Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs for the states of Bauchi (*The*

Guardian 16 July 2012) and Zamfara (*Vanguard* 13 Apr. 2012). Corroborating information could not be found on the state government websites.

A Ministry of Local Government is listed on the state-government websites of Gombe State (n.d.) and Kano State (n.d.).

The Kwara State website indicates that the Ministry of Local Government has a Department of Chieftaincy Affairs (n.d.). However, media sources state that Kwara State has a Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy Affairs and Community Development (*The Guardian* 23 Aug. 2012; *The Punch* 20 Aug. 2012).

The Cross River State website indicates the existence of a Ministry of Local Government Affairs (Cross River State n.d.a) and a Department of Chieftaincy Affairs (ibid. n.d.b).

The Jigawa State website states that there is a Ministry for Local Government (n.d.a), and the Office of the Secretary to the State Government website states that the office has a Directorate of Chieftaincy Affairs (Jigawa State n.d.b).

The Kaduna State website indicates that there is a Ministry of Local Government and a Ministry of Chieftaincy Affairs (Kaduna State n.d.). *Daily Trust* makes mention of a Commissioner of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in a 26 March 2012 article.

The Delta State website lists a Directorate of Local Government Affairs (Delta State n.d.).

2. Functions of Ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs

According to the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), a [British] Commonwealth organization dedicated to strengthening democratic local government through programs, research and events (Commonwealth n.d.), "at the state level, the relevant ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs or bureau of local government affairs is responsible for the administration of the state-level Acts governing local authorities" (CLGF n.d.). The CLGF adds that there are 768 local government authorities and six area councils (ibid.).

The functions of state ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs include:

- administering and monitoring local governments (Oyo State [2012]);
- supervising the activities of local governments (Ogun State 11 Aug. 2008; Osun State n.d.);
- controlling the finances of local governments (Oyo State [2012]);
- dispersing funds from a federal account to local governments (Ogun State 11 Aug. 2008);
- administering property rates (ibid.; Oyo State [2012]);
- coordinating the affairs of local government councils (Osun State n.d.; Edo State n.d.b);
- overseeing chieftaincy matters in the state (Ogun State 11 Aug. 2008; Oyo State [2012]; Osun State n.d.).

According to the Edo State government website, the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs can resolve conflicts between traditional rulers, and solve communal crises in the state (n.d.a).

3. Commissioners of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs

According to the CLGF, state ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs are headed by commissioners for local government, who are state-level ministers (n.d.). The Chief in Yoruba and Iboland indicated that commissioners are appointed by a minister (25 Sept. 2012). The CLGF indicates that state and local government interaction, is "mediated by the individual state-level ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs and coordinated by a commissioner for local governments" (n.d.).

4. Concerns Related to Ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs

Media sources report on concerns related to ministries of local government and chieftaincy affairs, including:

- inadequate monitoring of council areas and chieftaincy matters in Osun State (*Daily Champion* 23 Aug. 2011);
- delaying salary payments in Benue State (*The Guardian* 6 Aug. 2012);
- withholding the minimum wage from local government employees in Ekiti State (*Leadership* 17 Sept. 2012);
- underfunding local governments, resulting in local governments being unable to pay staff salaries in Kwara State (*The Punch* 20 Aug. 2012);
- "negligence in the discharge of ... duties" by commissioners in Plateau State (*Leadership* 10 Aug. 2012);
- missing funds in Kaduna State (*Blueprint* 5 Mar. 2012) and Ebonyi State (*Daily Independent* 14 Mar. 2011);
- mismanaged funds in Oyo State (*Vanguard* 14 Dec. 2011);

- not following through with projects in Osun State (*Daily Champion* 23 Aug. 2011);

According to *Vanguard*, in an article about Sokoto State civil servants working less than their scheduled hours, when journalists visited the state Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the Director of Local Government Matters was the only director in the office at the time (5 Apr. 2012).

According to *Blueprint*, an Abuja-based newspaper, the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Kebbi State is at risk of a cholera outbreak because of unsanitary conditions caused by trespassers defaecating around the building (12 Apr. 2012). *Blueprint* reports that the general manager of the Kebbi Urban Development Authority indicated that "very soon the place will be evacuated..." (12 Apr. 2012). Corroborating and further information 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.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following organizations were unsuccessful: Canadian High Commission in Lagos; Embassy of Nigeria in Ottawa; ministries of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs in Edo State, Ekiti State, Kaduna State, Lagos State, Oyo State, Taraba State.

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential*; Africa Research Bulletin; Al Jazeera; All Africa; Amnesty International; Bauchi State; Bayelsa State; Benue State; *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*; *Canadian Journal of African Studies*; Congressional Research Service; eoi.net; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; Katsina State; Minority Rights Group International; Nigeria – Federal Capital Territory Administration, Federal Ministry of Information, Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Office of the Speaker, State House (Abuja); Sokoto State; United Kingdom Border Agency; United Nations – Integrated Regional Information Networks, Refworld; United States Department of State; World Organization Against Torture. Attempts to access the following state government websites were unsuccessful: Adamawa, Ebonyi, Enugu, Kebbi, Taraba, and Zamfara.

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Date modified: 2013-07-17