

970 INMATES AWAITING EXECUTION IN PRISONS

DECEMBER 3, 2012 BY ADELANI ADEPEGBA



Prisoners in Prison.

No fewer than 970 inmates on death row are currently languishing in the nation's prisons awaiting their execution.

They comprise 951 males and 19 females.

Findings revealed that the inmates had been on death row for years, following the refusal of state governors to sign their execution order.

As at July 2012 for instance, the prisons in River State had 157 inmates consisting of 149 males and eight females on death row. The figure from the state is the highest in the country.

The state is followed by Delta State, which has 149 convicted inmates, comprising 146 males and three females.

Ogun State has 132 condemned felons followed by Plateau State, which has 125 males and one female awaiting Governor Jonah Jang's execution order.

Other states with high death row inmates are Lagos 83; Kaduna 79; Enugu 75; Kano 51; Katsina 43; Edo 35; Cross River 17, Jigawa 18, Kebbi 13; Kwara 12, Federal Capital Territory 10, Niger 10, Ondo seven, Benue six, Sokoto six, Osun five and Taraba four.

Apart from felons, the prisons have 463 convicts serving life sentence for various crimes. They comprise 455 males and eight females.

Of the 51,004 prison inmates nationwide, 33,731 – comprising 32,997 males and 734 females – are awaiting trial inmates.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Prisons Service, Kayode Odeyemi, has absolved the NPS of blame for the delay in the execution of inmates on death row.

According to him, the service cannot carry out executions without orders from the governors.

He said, “How can we carry out executions without executive orders from the governors? We don’t have the power to do that and since the governors are reluctant to sign the death warrants, we have to keep the condemned inmates on death row indefinitely.”

Apart from the governors’ reluctance to sign death warrants, the civil society groups have also resisted moves to execute convicts.

For example, a move by Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State to implement a Supreme Court judgment that condemned Osaremwinda Aiguohian and Daniel Nsofor, to death by hanging has attracted criticism from civil society groups, Amnesty International and the National Human Rights Commission.

Following petitions, the governor reviewed the death sentences on four convicts, and commuted two other persons to life imprisonment, while another two were set free.

He, however, confirmed the execution of Aiguohian and Nsofor, who were said to have strangled a woman to death after forcibly dispossessing her of money and other personal effects.

No date has been fixed for the execution of the two convicts.