

WorldWide Religious News (WWRN)

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"Death sentence for Nigeria cult"

("BBC News," December 20, 2006)

Lagos, Nigeria - Seven members of a Nigerian cult have been sentenced to death by hanging for murdering a Muslim cleric in Lagos.

High Court judge Benedict Shitta-Bey said the prosecution had proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the men had murdered Sheikh Sofwan Akodo.

The members of the Alawo Masquerade cult reportedly killed Mr Akodo during a festival in a row over money.

Masked figures in the Oro festival usually dance outside demanding gifts by pretending to charge at spectators.

This local Yoruba festival usually last several nights.

As in many West African cults of this kind, women and outsiders are forbidden to look on at the masked figures in the masquerade.

Correspondents say Yorubas may be practising Christians or Muslims, but there are still shrines to the old gods scattered around the countryside and traditional festivals are still celebrated and taken extremely seriously.

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*Fresh Shrines,
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