

Nigeria Police News

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Nigeria's judicial system is so flawed, human right groups say, that police frequently take the law into their own hands, torturing and executing suspects without trial, particularly those suspected of armed robbery. "People accused of heinous crimes like armed robbery, murder and rape can buy their freedom in court," Shehu Sani, Director of the Civil Rights Congress, a coalition of human rights groups in northern Nigeria. "This frustrates the police who re-arrest these people and kill them," he said. "Others are killed because they might implicate some influential people while still others die as a result of torture to exert confessions," Sani added. The accusations come on the heels of an 18 November statement by Human Rights Watch (HRW) which said that the Nigerian police may have killed more than 10,000 people since 2000. HRW also called on Nigeria's police chief, Mike Okiro, to follow the lead of the Nigerian army who recently apologised for mass killings it committed in 2002 in Zaki Biam, in central Benue State. But human rights advocate Sani said that the army massacre was a one-off while police killings occur daily. "Tendering an apology will not change anything," he said. "The best remedy is to re-orient the police through vigorous human rights education."