

## **African-Cuban religion sacrifice punished**

By Kenneth D. MacHarg

Quito, Ecuador--Cuban authorities have executed two men in the eastern part of the country for killing a two-year-old boy. A local newspaper said the boy's murder appeared to be a ritual sacrifice related to an African-Cuban religion.

The Sierra Maestra newspaper in Santiago de Cuba, reported the executions in a brief item in its May 27 edition. It did not say exactly when the death sentences were carried out or when the crime was committed.

It said the two men executed "in recent days" were Armando Grinan Bell and Mario Magdaleno Pedrozo Cosme.

"These citizens, falsifying the true ritual sense of the syncretic cults, in this case the one known as Regla de Palo or Palomonte, kidnapped and killed a boy of two years and seven months," the newspaper said.

It added that two other people, Rafael Puente Camue and Zaida Grinan Gonzalez, were also tried in the case and were serving 30 and 15 year prison sentences for their involvement.

The newspaper did not give details of the murder but said the killing was carried out by devotees of Palo de Regla, one of Cuba's animist religions of African origins in which sacrifice of animals such as chickens is sometimes used.

The 1993 edition of "Operation World" reports that approximately twenty-five percent of Cuba's population is involved in occult groups which resemble Haitian voodoo.

The death penalty is rarely applied in Cuba except in the most serious of cases.

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