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Activists call on British government to deport African exorcist

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A Pentecostal preacher who claims to deliver people from witchcraft is a danger to children and should be deported from England, activists say.

Helen Ukpabio, a woman who wears colorful West African clothes and hats and who calls herself a "Lady Apostle," is the founder of the controversial Liberty Foundation Gospel Ministries in Nigeria. It has 150 branches in Africa and Europe.

She specializes in "liberating" captives in "deliverance sessions" and holds house meetings in London with people who believe she has power to expel demons.

"There have been numerous cases of children in the U.K. being tortured and sometimes killed due to the beliefs that Helen Ukpabio espouses," said Gary Foxcroft, executive director of the Witchcraft and Human Rights Information Network.

He called on Home Affairs Minister Theresa May to deport Ukpabio immediately, adding: "Whilst the government has moved swiftly to block entry to the U.K. for Islamic preachers whose presence is harmful to the public good, there have been no cases of Christian pastors facing such measures."

Ukpabio advises parents: "If a child under the age of 2 screams in the night and is always feverish with deteriorating health, he or she is a servant of Satan."

In recent years, an 8-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy were tortured and killed by guardians or relatives who said Satan had entered their bodies, though there is no reported link to Ukpabio.

During the last 10 years, British police have been involved with 81 cases of African children being abused, tortured and sometimes killed after treatment by so-called spiritual mediums.

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