**Police in Congo have arrested 13 suspected sorcerers accused of using black magic to steal or shrink men's penises after a wave of panic and attempted lynchings triggered by the alleged witchcraft.**

**Reports of so-called penis snatching are not uncommon in West Africa, where belief in traditional religions and witchcraft remains widespread, and where ritual killings to obtain blood or body parts still occur.**

**Purported victims, 14 of whom were also detained by police, claimed that sorcerers simply touched them to make their genitals shrink or disappear, in what some residents said was an attempt to extort cash with the promise of a cure.**

**Kinshasa's police chief Jean-Dieudonne Oleko said, "You just have to be accused of that, and people come after you. We've had a number of attempted lynchings. ... You see them covered in marks after being beaten."**

**Whatever the psychological basis for the creation of an anti-Church with witches and sorcerers joined with Satan to mock and desecrate the symbols and rituals of the Church, the practical result was a stronger, more powerful Church. No one knows how many witches, heretics, or sorcerers were tortured or burned at the stake by the pious, but the fear generated by the medieval and Spanish Inquisitions must have affected nearly all in Christendom. Being accused of being a witch was as good as being convicted. To deny it was to prove your guilt: Of course a witch will say she is not a witch and that she does not believe in witchcraft. Throw her in the river! If she sinks and drowns that will prove she is not a witch; if she swims, we will know the devil is assisting her. Pull her out and burn her to death, for the Church does not like bloodshed! In truth, the Church ran a Reign of Terror the superior in many ways to those of Stalin or Hitler. Obviously, in terms of absolute numbers terrorized or killed, Stalin and Hitler far surpassed the Church. But their Terrors lasted only a few years and were restricted to limited territories; the Church's Terror lasted for several centuries and extended to all of Christendom.**

**The cruelties and delusions went on for centuries. Witch-hunting was not abolished in England until 1682. The hunt spread to America, of course, and in 1692, in Salem, Massachusetts, nineteen witches were hanged. (In 1711, the Massachusetts State Legislature exonerated all but six of the accused witches.**

**The last judicial execution for witchcraft in Europe took place in Poland in 1793, when two old women were burned. A wizard, however, died as a result of an unofficial ordeal by water in England in 1865, and in 1900 two Irish peasants tried to roast a witch over her own fire.**

**wicca: A good general rule seems to be that there is no single set of beliefs or practices which constitutes Wicca, though one belief seems to recur: An it harm none, do what you will. Finally, it should be noted that Wicca is not related to** [**Satan**](http://www.skepdic.com/satan.html) **worship.**

**many african nations including ghana 1996 & benin 2001**

**height of witchcraft = 400 years: 1400’s - 1700’s.**

**male witches are often called warlocks or sorcerers.**