1.3.5. Student cults

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2021

[Main COI reference: Targeting, 2.3]

Student cults in Nigeria, also referred to as ‘university cults’ or ‘confraternities’, resemble criminal gangs [Security situation 2021, 1.4.1]. Some of the most well-known cults are the Black Axe and Eiye. Cults are banned in several states; however, enforcement is weak [Security situation 2021, 1.3.2.3]

Student cults are characterised by violent initiation rites and conduct illegal activities such as: killings, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, slavery, drug trafficking, smuggling, extortions, kidnapping, forced recruitment (including child recruitment), etc.

Political parties often recruit cult members and use them to kill or attack political opponents or to exercise violence during elections.

Some sources report that it is ‘extremely difficult’ to leave a cult after being initiated. Persons who quit the confraternities or cults may be killed, out of fear of revealing the cult’s secrets [Targeting, 3.11.1.1].

Student cults mostly operate in the South-West and South-South regions of Nigeria [Security situation 2021, 1.4.1].

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