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1.2.3. Separatist movements

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: February 2019

[*Targeting,* 3.3]

In the South East of Nigeria there are several groups aiming for secession, among which the two main groups currently are the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (**MASSOB**) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (**IPOB**). Both organisations claim to be non-violent and aim to reach secession through referendum. They mostly engage in awareness-raising activities, marches, and other gatherings. However, the leader of IPOB has reportedly endorsed violence as means for resuscitating Biafra.

In March 2016, MASSOB and IPOB issued a joint statement that all Fulani herdsmen should retreat to northern Nigeria, as 'their safety [could] no longer be guaranteed'.

MASSOB was banned by the Nigerian authorities in 2001 and its members were accused of being 'armed criminals and robbers'. In 2017, the Nigerian authorities declared IPOB a terrorist organisation. However, there are no confirmed reports of violence by the two organisations.

The activities of MASSOB and IPOB to-date do not involve acts of persecution or serious harm and, in general, they would not fall under the scope of Article 6 QD.

The reach of a specific non-State actor and their ability to trace and target the applicant depend on the individual case. The individual power positions of the applicant and the actor of persecution or serious harm should be assessed, taking into consideration their social status, wealth, connections, gender, level of education, etc.

Finally, it should be noted that persecution or serious harm by non-State actors has to be assessed in light of the availability of protection according to Article 7 QD.

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