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2.4. Members of militant groups in the Niger Delta and individuals perceived as supporting them

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last updated: February 2019

Currently, the most active militant groups are the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) and, to a lesser extent, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). There are other smaller and less known groups. Local communities and their leaders, who protest against the environmental impact of the oil production, may be perceived as supporters of the militant groups.

COI summary

[*Targeting*, 3.2]

A large-scale amnesty and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programme is in place since 2009. It was initially envisaged for 5 years, however it has been extended several times and in 2018 it is ongoing (although cut by 70% in 2015).

In relation to the increased attacks on oil and gas installations in 2016, President Buhari announced that ‘militants in the Niger Delta will be given the Boko Haram treatment if they continue with their nefarious acts’.

The level of armed violence remained low due to the reinstated amnesty programme, new deployments of troops and peace initiatives by local, regional, and national leaders. However, local Ijaw representatives claimed that the operations unjustly targeted and demolished their communities.

There are also reports of arbitrary arrests on suspicion of having links with militant groups and prolonged detention without trial, including of individuals whose release has been ordered by court.

Risk analysis

Criminal prosecution in itself does not amount to persecution. However, some of the acts to which individuals under this profile could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (e.g. arbitrary arrest and detention).

Not all individuals under this profile would face the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution. The individual assessment of whether or not there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: level of involvement with the militant organisation, activities of the applicant, etc.

Former members of the militant groups participating in the DDR programme generally do not have a well-founded fear of persecution related to their past involvement.

Nexus to a reason for persecution

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is for reasons of (imputed) political opinion.

Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile (see the chapter on Exclusion).

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