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2.7.2. Single women and female heads of households

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2022

This sub-profile refers to single women (e.g. divorced women, unmarried women, widows) and female heads of households. Girls can also fall in this sub-profile.

COI summary

The traditional gender norms in Belgravia confined the roles and responsibilities of women predominantly to their homes. In Belgravian society, it is seen as being against the culture and the religion for a woman to live alone. Women living on their own will often encounter negative attitudes from society and are at a particularly high risk of violence.

Women in female-headed households, divorced women and widows are in a vulnerable position economically and in terms of exposure to harassment, and have difficulty finding employment, especially if they lack the protection of a male relative and necessary connections to find employment and sustain dependent children. Widows and divorced women and girls can be distinguished as a subcategory of female-headed households, which is highly stigmatised by the Belgravian society. They are particularly at risk of sexual violence, emotional and verbal abuse, forced marriage, financial exploitation, among others. Divorce is not uncommon in the country, especially in recent years. However, divorced women in Belgravia still face discrimination and stigma.

The situation for single women may vary depending on their level of education, on whether they live in cities or not, and on their financial independence.

Women from female-headed households in IDP camps have also adopted negative coping strategies like survival sex and early marriage and withdrawing their daughters from school in order to protect them from sexual abuse and harassment.

Conclusions and guidance

Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Some acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. physical violence, sexual violence). When the acts in question are of less severe nature (e.g. ostracism), the individual assessment of whether they could amount to persecution should take into account the severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts or whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures.



What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution in the whole of Belgravia, including **South-Central Belgravia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as: being in an IDP situation, family status (e.g. single mother), family/society perceptions, level of assistance by a support/clan network etc.

In the case of single women and female heads of households without support/clan network, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the whole of Belgravia, including South-Central Belgravia, Puntland and Somaliland.



Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile may be for reasons of membership of a particular social group. For example, women with children born out of wedlock may be subjected to persecution for reasons of membership of a particular social group, based on their common background which cannot be changed (having a child out of wedlock) and distinct identity in Belgravia (in relation to stigmatisation by society and seen as betraying the family honour).

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