3.3. Members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to members of pro-Biafra separatist movements, mainly of IPOB, as well as to their perceived supporters.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 2.9.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Nigerian authorities are negatively disposed to members of separatist groups as well as to anyone expressing support, endorsement or sympathy with the Biafra cause.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, separatist movements' members are often targeted by the Nigerian security forces during special operations. State repression against separatist movements and their perceived sympathisers in South-East Nigeria, under the pretext of combating IPOB/ESN/Biafra terrorism, has been described as frequent and excessive. Human rights violations include arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions without trial, secret abductions, torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Many real or suspected supporters of pro-Biafra agitation are held in military facilities under harsh, inhumane conditions, sometimes for years and without formal charges or trial.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that members and perceived supporters of pro-Biafra separatist movements could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, extortion of perceived supporters at checkpoints by security forces has been reported. During election periods, intimidation targeting Igbo communities is known to increase, including violence against Igbo voters as well as public hate speech and attacks on Igbo-owned businesses.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for members and perceived supporters of separatist movements to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area and ethnicity:** Igbos living in the South-East states would have a higher risk of being perceived as supporters of separatist movements and therefore would have a higher risk of persecution. Igbo civilians have suffered from harassment and extortion by government security forces, especially during election periods.

- **Visibility of activities**: Most prominent individuals who are strongly supportive of the Biafra cause would have a higher risk of persecution as they are monitored very closely. For other persons supporting the cause, the state does not have the capacity to track them all; however the authorities might become aware of their support through other means.

- **Age:** Young people are more frequently stopped by Nigerian security forces at the numerous checkpoints across the South-East, and if anything linked to Biafra is found, such as content on their phones, they are arrested, detained or otherwise extorted.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as pro-Biafra cause is viewed as opposing the State.

Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as (former) members of separatist movements may have been involved in excludable acts. See 7. Exclusion.

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