3.4. Individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: March 2026

This profile refers to Igbo individuals in the South-East region who do not support the Biafra cause or are perceived as such by the separatist groups.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 2.9.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Due to actions linked to separatist groups, civic space in the South-East is reported as increasingly shrinking, and individuals who publicly criticise those groups' methods or advocate for moderation and non-violence could face potential repercussions. Since 2021, a sit-at-home order has been enforced by IPOB in the South-East, imposing a shutdown of businesses and services every Monday. This order was originally intended as a symbolic act of solidarity to demand the release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, they have been targets of violence, including killings, by members of the separatist groups. Targeted killings of individuals who defy sit-at-home order have been also part of the separatist groups' enforcement methods.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures should also be considered. More specifically, when defying the sit-at-home order, they have been targeted with threatening messages as well as by the burning of vehicles and looting.

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

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals (perceived as) not supporting the pro-Biafra cause to face persecution should take into account

risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Visibility**: traditional leaders, religious figures, journalists, politicians, and civil society representatives perceived as unsupportive of the Biafra cause are particularly targeted. Civilians refusing to take part in weekly pro-separatist actions, in particular those not closing their businesses/services during the sit-at-home order, are also considered as enemies of the cause. Furthermore, individuals that publicly criticise those groups' methods, or advocate for moderation and non-violence would face a higher risk.

- **Occupation**: young Igbos serving in the Nigerian security agencies, and particularly in the Nigerian army, have been specifically targeted by armed groups in the South-East. Their family-members can also be targeted.

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 behaviour perceived as questioning the legitimacy, methods, or direction of the agitation organised by pro-Biafra separatist groups is labelled as 'treason' or betrayal of the cause.

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