



Q10007. Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 22 May 2009

Information on membership and treatment of members of the PDP Party

Section 2.2 of an April 2009 *UK Home Office Operational Guidance Note for Nigeria*, under the heading ‘Country assessment’, states:

“The most recent elections, held in April 2007, were heavily criticised by foreign and domestic observer groups for poor organisation and large-scale vote rigging. Umaru Yar’Adua of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) won the presidential election with 70% of the vote. In February 2008, a tribunal dismissed petitions from the losing presidential candidates (Muhammad Buhari and Atiku Abubakar) to annul the election results. The Supreme Court rejected subsequent appeals in December 2008, thereby upholding the election of President Yar’Adua. The results of the April 2007 gubernatorial elections were also subjected to legal challenges, with a number of results overturned as a result.²” (UK Home Office (14 April 2009) – *Operational Guidance Note: Nigeria*)

Section 1a of the *United States Department of State 2008 Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Nigeria*, under the heading ‘Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life’, states:

“There were no developments in the following 2007 cases: the February case in which unknown gunmen killed PDP Chieftain Lawson Onokpasa of Delta State; the March case in which unidentified gunmen assassinated Taofiki Onigboho, a relative of a suspected criminal working for Governor Rasheed Ladoja, in Ibadan; or the August case in which Victor Obafaiye, the principal witness for the opposition Action Congress in the Kogi State election tribunal case, was killed.

Despite President Yar’Adua’s 2007 directive to the inspector general of police to reopen all unresolved cases of killings of political figures, there were no developments in the May 2007 arrest of nine suspects allegedly connected to the 2006 killing of Lagos State gubernatorial candidate Funsho Williams – including the three mobile policemen responsible for guarding him and four colleagues close to him – all of whom were imprisoned without trial; or the June 2007 reopening of the case of Bola Ige, the former attorney general whose killing in 2001 was widely believed to be linked to a political dispute between the then governor and deputy governor of Osun State.

There were no developments in the following 2006 killings, which may have been politically motivated: the January killing by unknown assailants of Hajiya Saudatu Rimi, wife of former Kano State governor Alhaji Abubakar Rimi; the June abduction and July killing of Plateau State gubernatorial aspirant Jesse

Aruku of the Advanced Congress of Democrats party; the August killing of Ekiti State PDP gubernatorial candidate Ayodeji Daramola; and the December killing by unknown assailants of Timothy Ageba Uttah, the former council chairman of Gboko Local Government Area and PDP aspirant for the state House of Assembly of Benue State.” (United States Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) - *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria*)

A December 2008 *IRIN News* report under the heading ‘Disputed election results’, states:

“People fled their homes when fighting broke out in Jos North on 28 November following local council elections between candidates of the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP); members of ANPP accused the PDP of rigging the vote.

In Jos North local government area the ANPP is led by a Muslim and the PDP a Christian; the fraud allegations triggered sectarian violence, according to Oxford University researcher Adam Higazi.” (IRIN News (01 December 2008) – *NIGERIA: Aid agencies struggle to cope after Jos carnage*)

A March 2008 *BBC News* report states:

“The governing People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria has elected Vincent Ogbulafor as its new leader at a convention in the capital, Abuja. Mr Ogbulafor is the party’s former general secretary and is considered a compromise candidate, able to unite different factions of the party. His election is seen as a setback for ex-leader Olusegun Obasanjo who was backing his own candidate. The PDP won heavily in disputed 2007 polls and dominates national politics. It won a large majority in last year’s elections for the presidency, the legislature and state governors” (BBC News (09 March 2008) - *Nigerian party picks new leader*).

Section III.A.3 of a December 2007 *International Crisis Group* report, under the heading ‘The criminal hostage-taking industry’, states:

“Abductions usually follow a pattern: the victim is released in exchange for a ransom that may be reduced from an original demand as high as N150 million (\$1.2 million) to some N10 million (\$80,000).⁶⁵ Governments in the region claim they do not pay and only help those doing the negotiating with “logistics”. This is disputed. In Ondo State, the government said it paid none of the N500 million (\$4 million) demanded by those who abducted eleven PDP leaders; the state chapter of the opposition Labour Party said N25 million (\$200,000) was paid.⁶⁶” (International Crisis Group (ICG) (05 December 2007) - *Nigeria: Ending Unrest in the Niger Delta* p.8-9)

A November 2007 *Amnesty International USA* statement notes:

“Political violence has already been reported in several states. The worst incidents occurred in Kano State, where six people were confirmed dead by

the police. Supporters of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigeria People's Party clashed over the results of the polls held on 17 November. Amnesty International received reports suggesting that upto 20 people may have been killed in several areas throughout Kano state. As a result of the incidents the federal government deployed the army in Kano State. In Kwara State, a journalist who witnessed voting irregularities was attacked by political supporters. In Benin State, a member of the PDP allegedly received death threats from political opponents.

In the run-up to general and parliamentary elections in May 2007, Amnesty International publicly called on Nigerian politicians to protect human rights and to refrain from using violence before, during and after the elections. Despite warnings by Nigerian and international civil society, the elections of May 2007 resulted in the killing of 200 people. Among those killed were candidates running for political office like PDP prospective candidate for Governor of Lagos State, Chief Funsho Williams and PDP prospective candidate for Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Ayo Daramola" (Amnesty International USA (26 November 2007) - *Nigeria: Local government elections -- no lessons learned*).

An *IRIN News* report from October 2007 states:

"In some Nigerian states, powerful political "godfathers" control politicians, the report said. "In return, the 'godfathers' have captured government institutions to serve their own interests."

In Oyo State, one of several examples cited in the report, the ruling "People's Democratic Party (PDP) godfather Lamidi Adedibu recruited gangs that sowed terror on the streets of the state capital Ibadan and other cities".

Besides surveying what it calls "systemic violence openly fomented by politicians and other political elites", the report shows "corruption that both fuels and rewards Nigeria's violent brand of politics at the expense of the general populace". The report also seeks to show "the impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these abuses". " (IRIN News (09 October 2007) – *NIGERIA: Violence, corruption, institutionalised – HRW report*)

References:

Amnesty International USA (26 November 2007) - *Nigeria: Local government elections -- no lessons learned*

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/document.php?lang=e&id=ENGAFR440272007>

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<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4756aeae2.pdf>

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IRIN News (01 December 2008) – *NIGERIA: Aid agencies struggle to cope after Jos carnage*

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81766>

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<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74712>

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<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/49e474092.pdf>

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United States Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) - *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Nigeria*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119018.htm>

(Accessed 22 May 2009)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

All Africa

Amnesty International

BBC News

ECOI: European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Human Rights Watch

International Crisis Group (ICG)

IRB: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

United Kingdom: Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

United States Department of State