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Senegal: Forced recruitment of adult Dioula living in Ziguinchor by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance, MFDC); the consequences of refusing recruitment and the protection offered by police forces; the MFDC's geographical area of operation and influence (2003 - Aug. 2005)

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No information on the forced recruitment of adult Dioula living in Ziguinchor by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance, MFDC) or on the consequences of refusing recruitment and the protection offered by police forces in such cases could be found among the sources consulted. However, the following information may prove useful.

Some sources noted that the MFDC has been accused of recruiting child soldiers, but MFDC leaders have denied the accusation (*The Independent* 29 Mar. 2004; WMRC Daily Analysis 5 Apr. 2004).

According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004*, "[t]here were reports that MFDC rebels in Casamance continued to commit armed robberies and rapes" in 2004 (28 Feb. 2005, Intro.).

Some sources, however, noted that violent clashes between security and MFDC forces decreased considerably in 2004 (*Le Messager* 5 Jan. 2005; NRC/Global IDP Project 17 Feb. 2005; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). MFDC attacks against civilians also "declined significantly during the year" (*ibid.*, Intro.).

On 30 December 2004, the MFDC and the Senegalese government signed a formal ceasefire (*ibid.*, Sec. 5; *Le Monde* 30 Dec. 2004).

Rival factions within the MFDC were not present for the signing of the peace agreement (*ibid.*). The MFDC's Northern Front (Front Nord), which controls the northern area of the Ziguinchor region, had indicated in a communiqué that it would not take part in the peace agreement (*ibid.*).

No information on MFDC activities after the signing of the peace agreement could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. The following section offers information on the MFDC's area of operation in 2003 and 2004.

The MFDC's geographical area of operation (2003-2004)

In early April 2004, MFDC rebels attacked Senegalese government forces in the village of Guidel, "a stronghold of MFDC forces under Salif Sadio, one of the key commanders who opposes the peace process" (WMRC Daily Analysis 5 Apr. 2004). The rebel ambush in Guidel, a village located approximately 15 km from Ziguinchor, occurred while the military was clearing landmines (AFP 2 Apr. 2004). In early May 2004, in the village of Aniack, located 15 km east of Ziguinchor, [translation] "heavily armed men claiming to be members of the MFDC raided the town and beat its residents" (*Wal Fadjri* 11 May 2004). Also at that time, there were reports of [translation] "abductions of civilians hoping to resettle" in Casamance (*ibid.*).

In January 2003, Senegalese military operations against the MFDC were staged in areas neighbouring Ziguinchor, in the resort of Cap Skirring, and in the Nyssia region, 20 km to the southwest of Ziguinchor (BBC 8 Jan. 2003). "In 2003, intermittent rebel attacks and Senegalese military reprisals caused the internal displacement of an estimated 17,000 people, mostly in Ziguinchor, ... in Bignona, and the Oussouye area near the border with Guinea-Bissau" (NRC/Global IDP Project 17 Feb. 2005).

In November 2004, two MFDC rival factions clashed close to Diakaye in the Bignona region, near the Gambian border (WMRC Daily Analysis 15 Nov. 2004; *Wal Fadjri* 13 Nov. 2004).

Earlier that year, the Guinea-Bissau army launched offensives to oust the MFDC, whose rebels benefit from the long common border to seek refuge in that country (ibid. 26 Feb. 2004; WMRC Daily Analysis 5 Apr. 2004).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: *Africa Confidential*, *Afrol News*, *Human Rights Watch*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, *Le Soleil* [Dakar], *Sud Quotidien* [Dakar].

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