



Nigeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 21 August 2012

Information on a group called Deygbam.

A report issued in March 2008 by *Human Rights Watch* points out that:

“Deebam is the street wing of the campus-based Klansmen Konfraternity and is one of the most effectively organized and most violent cult gangs in Rivers State. Deebam has been responsible for numerous kidnappings of expatriate oil workers and wealthy Nigerians and engaged in several bloody turf wars with rival groups in different parts of Rivers State.” (Human Rights Watch (27 March 2008), *Politics as War, The Human Rights Impact and Causes of Post-Election Violence in Rivers State, Nigeria*, pp.55-56)

This report also states:

“Deebam differs from the street wings of other cult groups in that it is largely autonomous from its parent Klansmen cult. Its members have often been hired by sponsors who are not themselves members of the Klansmen.” (ibid, p.56)

Research carried out by *Accord* issued in April 2008 citing another source states that:

“Deebam is the street wing of the Eternal Fraternal Order of the Legion Konsortium, known more commonly as the Klansmen Konfraternity (KK) (Ndubuaku, 2001). The group is a violent and secretive cult comprising mainly unemployed youth. It has no political agenda. Instead, it simply strives to expand and consolidate its territorial control.” (Accord (29 April 2008) *De Gbam (auch Dey Gbam, Deygbam, Degbam, Deebam)*)

Utilizing the same source, this report also states:

“Deebam has several affiliated cult cells scattered across much of southern Nigeria. The cult is most deeply rooted in the Niger Delta region. Deebam does not directly oppose the state; however, the cult group has engaged in clashes with state security forces as a result of its violent running rivalry with Deewell” (ibid).

Citing another source this report notes:

“The group derives funding from a wide range of sources. Deebam has hired out the services of its members as mercenaries. The group levies membership dues of differing levels, depending on geographic area. These dues provide a significant portion of the group’s funds. Many members are involved in organized crime, including drug trafficking, the weapons trade, hostage taking, and armed robbery...” (ibid)

A report issued in December 2007 by the *Small Arms Survey* notes:

"Its tendency to strike at the slightest provocation adds to the group's reputation as an actively violent gang." (Small Arms Survey (December 2007) *Small Arms, Armed Violence, and Insecurity in Nigeria: The Niger Delta in Perspective*, p.113)

This report also notes:

"Deebam draws its membership from the large pool of unemployed youths, school dropouts, and criminal elements of rural communities and urban slums." (ibid, p.114)

This report also states:

"Given its lack of a political ideology, the group has proven indiscriminate in its missions, fighting for anyone with sufficient funding." (ibid, p.115)

A report published in February 2009 by the *Coventry Cathedral* states:

"Membership of Dey Gbam is predominantly unemployed youth and youth of school age who have opted for Dey Gbam rather than school. Dey Gbam has been drafted into service by prominent persons in an effort to secure political positions and electoral advantage." (Coventry Cathedral (February 2009) *The Potential for Peace and Reconciliation in the Niger Delta*, p.129)

Citing another source, research issued in April 2009 by the *Refugee Review Tribunal of the Government of Australia* points out that

"The Bush Boys...Greenlanders and Dey Bam appear to form an affiliation at various times. These groups are formed around Ijaw issues and are in one sense ethnic based groups." (Refugee Review Tribunal of the Government of Australia (30 April 2009) *Research Response NGA34744 - Nigeria – Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force – NDPVF – Niger Delta Non Violent Movement – Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta – MEND – September 2005 hostage drama – Treatment of journalists – press freedom*)

A publication issued in January 2012 by the *United Kingdom Border Agency* lists 'Dey Gbam' among "List of Cult Groups Banned Under the Secret Cult and Similar Activities, Prohibition Law 2004." (United Kingdom Border Agency (6 January 2012) *Nigeria, Country Of Origin Information (COI) Report*, p.53)

A publication by the *Jamestown Foundation* in September 2007 points out that:

"Deebam was created in 1991 as a street/creek wing of the Klansmen Konfraternity (KK), a group also called the Eternal Fraternal Order of the Legion Konsortium. In the KK's parlance, Deebam means "Be Strong." KK was founded at the University of Calabar in Cross River State in 1983 by five students... (Jamestown Foundation (27 September 2007) *Origins of the Niger Delta's Deewell and Deebam Militias*)

This report also states:

"...initiation into Deebam is extremely tough and membership dues and contributions are high, explaining why many Deebam cultists take to organized crime such as commercial election rigging and other vices to meet their membership obligations." (ibid)

It is also pointed out in this publication that:

“In spite of police and military raids on Deebam's hideouts, they still have many areas they control, especially in Rivers State. They control large parts of the Ogoni area...In Port Harcourt, they are in charge of the majority of the slums...they were the first street gang to emerge in Rivers State...” (ibid)

This document also notes that:

“It is estimated that they can call on more than 700 active members.” (ibid)

Commenting on Port Harcourt in Rivers State, a report issued in March 2005 by the *Danish Immigration Service* notes that:

“...there are, according to the state government, more than 100 smaller armed groups, locally known as “cults.” Many of these “cult” groups, with names such as the Icelanders, Greenlanders, KKK, Germans, Dey Gbam, Mafia Lords, and Vultures, were originally formed in the early 1990's as university fraternities, but later largely evolved into criminal gangs.” (Danish Immigration Service (18 March 2005) *Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria (19 October to 2 November 2004)*, p.19)

A report issued in June 2008 by the *Conflict, Security and Development Group* states:

“...socio-economic factors have also created youthful social forces such as the Bakassi Boys, the Area Boys, the Egbesu Boys, Plateau Boys, the O'odua People's Congress (OPC) and numerous cult groups that abound in the Niger Delta region, the prominent ones being DeyGbam, DeyWell, Assenasawo, Icelanders, Greenlanders, Vikings, Njamanze Vigilante Group and Isongufuro. These cult groups are mostly involved in struggles over territorial control and organized crime: robbery, car theft, extortion and the drug trade. The police are unable to engage them either through the use of force or by persuasion. These cult groups are found mostly in Port Harcourt and to a lesser extent in Yenogoa. Some of the youth in these cults join militia groups or mutate into militants in the struggle for regional self-determination.” (Conflict, Security and Development Group (June 2008) *State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making, Nigeria Country Study*, p.28)

The *Port Harcourt Telegraph* in August 2012 states:

“AT least four persons were reportedly killed in Idu community in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni local Government Area as a result of cult war between suspected Deygbam and Dewell cult groups. The cause of the clash could not be ascertained immediately but a source revealed to Port Harcourt Telegraph that it was a supremacy battle between the miscreants.” (Port Harcourt Telegraph (21 August 2012) *Cult War Claims 2 Lives in Idu: ...C.D.C. Chairman petitions police*)

A report published in the *Port Harcourt Telegraph* issued in February 2012 notes:

“It was a sad day for some residents of Azikwe Street, Mile II Diobu in Port Harcourt when suspected Degbam cultists ransacked the area and embarked on a looting spree. Our crime correspondent who witnessed the scene, reports that the hoodlums

numbering over 50, were carrying guns, machets, rods and other dangerous weapons.” (Port Harcourt Telegraph (6-12 February 2012) *Degbam Cult Members Launch Attack ... Some Arrested For Robbery*)

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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.

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