


In 2007, there was a crackdown against the Mungiki sect by police and security forces (AFP 21 Apr. 2009; Wall Street Journal 1 May 2008; Jane's 7 Mar. 2008). Hundreds of young Kikuyu men, suspected of being Mungiki members, were killed during the crackdown (Wall Street Journal 1 May 2008; BBC 29 Apr. 2008; KNCHR Nov. 2007, Para. 1; HRW Jan. 2009). The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), an independent human rights group established by the Kenyan government (n.d.), issued a preliminary report in November 2007 that indicates that the bodies of almost 500 young men were found between June and October 2007; most had been shot in the back of the head (KNCHR Nov. 2007, Para. 1).
At the end of 2007, the Mungiki sect re-emerged amid the violence that erupted along ethnic lines after the disputed re-election of President Mwai Kibaki, an ethnic Kikuyu (Wall Street Journal 1 May 2008; UN 22 Feb. 2008; Jane’s 7 Mar. 2008). Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports that 1,133 people were killed in the post-election period (Jan. 2009). The Mungiki positioned themselves as protectors of the Kikuyu population against opposition forces drawn from other ethnic groups (ibid.; UN 22 Feb. 2008).


Sources indicate that there are allegations that the Mungiki sect is closely allied with senior Kikuyu politicians (UN 22 Feb. 2008; Jane’s 7 Mar. 2008). The International Crisis Group suggests that some parliamentarians might have been sworn in by force, but that some find the sect useful (21 Feb. 2008, 13-14). After the post-election violence, speculation was rife that the government had recruited and assisted the Mungiki sect to carry out attacks (AFP 21 Apr. 2009; Jane’s 7 Mar. 2008; HRW 16 Mar. 2008, 44; ibid. 6 Feb. 2008). An article by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) alleges that Mungiki members met with senior officials at the president’s official residence to discuss hiring the sect as a defence force; the government denies such claims (5 Mar. 2008). According to the Wall Street Journal, the Mungiki resurgence in 2008 was a blow to President Kibaki’s government as he had worked to weaken the group (1 May 2008).


In February 2009, after a fact-finding mission to Kenya, the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Arbitrary or Summary Executions issued a report which indicated that “[k]illings by the police are widespread” (UN 26 May 2009, Para. 5). The Special Rapporteur reports that he received “compelling evidence” that death squads targeted Mungiki members and that police had engaged in summary executions of suspected Mungiki members (ibid., Para. 10). The Special Rapporteur declared that police killed with impunity and often under orders from senior officers (ibid.). The report called for the country’s police commissioner and attorney general to be replaced (ibid., Para. 21, Para. 30). According to HRW, the Minister for Internal Security acknowledged to Parliament in February 2009 that police death squads had carried out extrajudicial killings of suspected members of the Mungiki sect over several years (HRW 29 June 2009, 6). In June 2009, a Kenyan delegation to a UN human rights hearing in Geneva acknowledged that police had committed extrajudicial killings, but denied that such killings had been sanctioned by the Kenyan government (Human Rights House Network 4 June 2009).


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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References


Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sources, including: Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, Jamestown Foundation, Newsweek, Small Arms Survey, United Kingdom (UK) Home Office.

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