

# THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR AND THE RESURGENCE OF BIAFRA AGITATION IN NIGERIA

Ignatius Nnamdi Aguenne (Ph.D)  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Sociology Psychology  
Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu  
Phone: 07036596997  
Email: aguenennamdi@gouni.edu.ng

Innocent Aja Ngene (Ph.D)  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Political Science  
Alex Ekwueme Federal University  
Ndufu Alike  
Phone: 08038209541  
Email: ajangenefunai@gmail.com

And  
Joseph Aigbiremohn (Ph.D)  
Department of Sociology Psychology  
Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu  
Phone: 08033397427  
Email: joseph1982triplets@yahoo.com

## THE NIGERIAN CIVIL WAR AND THE RESURGENCE OF BIAFRA AGITATION IN NIGERIA

### ABSTRACT

*The Nigerian Civil War, better known in historical literature as the Nigeria-Biafra war, was a civil war fought in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. The conflict was sparked by the desire of the south-eastern region of Biafra to secede from Nigeria, and the war resulted in the deaths of an estimated three million Igbos especially women and children. The federal government of Nigeria had at the end of the war, declared 'no victor no vanquished' and promised a three-pronged approach to reintegrate the Igbos into the scheme of things in Nigeria. The three-pronged approach were anchored on 'reconstruction', 'rehabilitation' and 'reconciliation' ('3Rs'). However, since the end of the war in 1970, there has no attempt to reconstruct what were destroyed in the then Biafra enclave, no attempt to rehabilitate the people who suffered collateral and material damages, neither had there been any attempt to reconcile the Igbos with the rest of the Nigerians. Rather, there had been systematic dehumanization, marginalization and exclusion of the Igbos from the economic, political, military and social scheme of things in Nigeria. The after war mantra of 'no victor, no vanquished' had been a mere rhetoric. In this paper, we reviewed and provided evidence that the inability of successive federal governments in Nigeria to reintegrate the Igbos and provide a level playing field for all Nigerians to thrive had been the major catalyst for the resurgence of the agitation for Biafran secession. The theoretical framework is based on Galtung's conflict triangle. The study found out that unequal distribution of resources was the major cause of agitation. The study concluded that national resources should be equally distributed the study recommended the restructuring of Nigeria*

**Keywords:** Leadership Challenges, Agitation for Secession, Marginalization, sit-at-home, general insecurity, Amalgamation and restructure.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*"There can be no justice without peace, and there can be no peace without justice," said Martin Luther King in 1967. Peace and justice go hand in hand, and neither can exist without the other. Peace can be achieved through the adoption of the principles of good governance, strong social institutions, and transparency in governance. Leadership, depending on its qualities, drives society in either a desirable or undesirable direction.*

According to Anderson (1983), a nation is a socially constructed community that is imagined by those who identify as belonging to a certain group. As a process at the core of political culture, self-understanding, and solidarity, imagined communities drew attention to the dynamics of socially and culturally structured

imagination. This goes beyond nationalism studies and constitutes a major contribution to our understanding of social imaginations. Integration is replacing diversity as the greater good takes precedence above personal preferences.

There was no distinct geographical or political entity known as Nigeria before to the union in 1914.

The Igbos, one of the dominant ethnic group in Nigeria can be found in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, which today comprised people in Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States. There are also large cache of Igbos in Delta and River states.

The Nigerian soldiers from the Northern region did not hide their disdain with the ostensibly (unintended) outcome of the coup and began almost immediately and surreptitiously to plan for a revenge coup. Unsurprisingly, there was a counter-coup six months later that resulted in the death of General Aguiyi Ironsi and many other military officers especially of the Igbo extraction. That coup brought in Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as new Head of State on July, 1966 (Madiebo, 1980).

The death of General Aguiyi Ironsi and the ascension of Col. Yakubu Gowon as Commander-in-Chief of the Nigeria Armed Forces did not go down well with military tradition. Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who was then the Military Governor of the South Eastern Region opposed the ascension of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon. Lt. Col. Ojukwu contended that Brigadier Ogundipe, who was next in command should have mounted the saddle of leadership of the Armed Forces and not Lt. Col. Gowon who, for all intent and purposes, was his contemporary in the army. Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, who saw the former as a military comrade and did not acknowledge his leadership, was unwilling or unable to accept instructions from the former, which resulted in a standoff between them (Madiebo, 1980).

Besides this battle of ego, on a greater political scale, the ascension of Lt. Col. Gowon after the murder of then Military Leader, General Aguiyi Ironsi, was interpreted as a further symbol of Northern domination by the vast majority of Nigerians especially the Igbos (Awofesso, 2017; Kanu, 2022). As was expected, ethnic tensions flared between the Igbos, the immediate constituents of Lt. Col. Ojukwu and the Hausa-Fulani's, the primary constituents of Lt. Col. Gowon. Before long, the deep-seated hatred and animosity the Hausa-Fulani had for the Igbos began to manifest in brutal and ferocious fashions. The Hausa-Fulani's in the Northern Nigeria began to show their resentment over Igbos staying in their midst in the Northern Nigeria. The situation swiftly spiraled out of control and resulted in the systematic and serial killings of Igbo people living in northern Nigeria. While an uncountable number of Igbo corpses were brought back, many of the Igbos in Northern Nigeria escaped to their ethnic enclaves in the South East, and the fortunate ones had their limbs severed or became crippled. Some pregnant women had to have their intestines removed after being raped (Madiebo, 1980; Nwanko, 1980; Augustine, 2010). The situation was rather grave for the Igbos in the military. Many of Igbo soldiers serving in other locations especially in the Northern Nigeria and Lagos were brutally killed while those who were lucky fled home either naked or in underpants (Madiebo, 1980).

While all these were going on, Lt. Col. Ojukwu tried various conciliatory moves to stem the tide without success. For instance, there was a peace conference brokered by the then Ghanaian president, Lt. Gen. J.A. Ankrah, in the city of Aburi, Ghana, which was attended by both leaders. In the meeting, certain principles were agreed (which has come to be known as the "Aburi Accord") for implementation (Madiebo, 1980). However, Lt. Col. Gowon on his return to Nigeria after the conference, reneged on the implementation of this accord following advice from some of the Northern Leaders and the former colonial masters, Britain. Several political commentators (Anim, 1980; Madiebo, 1980, Efiog, 2000, Ajaegbo, 2001; Vande, 2012; Owen, 2016; Ibeanu & Iwuamadi, 2016) have argued that if the agreement reached at the Aburi conference were implemented by Gowon, most probably, the ugly civil war that claimed over 3 million Igbos, mostly civilians would have been averted.

The movement for Biafra was launched in 2009 by Uwazurike through his Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). However, a former member of his, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, founded his own organization, Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). He feels that the MASSOB has to be more radical and militant in its approach. As a gifted and practical engineer, he promoted his own cause through Radio Biafra for the benefit of the Igbo people.

The South Eastern Governors forum of Nigeria comprising Enugu state, Anambra state, Imo state, Abia state and Ebonyi state on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 had a meeting at Enugu. The deliberated on the well being of the South Eastern States one of the items in their agenda was group visit to President Bola Tinubu for political resolution of the lingering court case between Mazi Nnamdi Kalu the leader for the agitation for the Biafra State and the federal government of Nigeria to secure his release.

In late October 2023, Biafrans hosted by Ekpa and his organization, the Biafra Republic Government in Exile (BRGIE) convened in Helsinki, Finland to discuss the potential for a possible Biafra referendum to reclaim the

lost sovereign nation. On 1 February 2024, a self-determination referendum tagged the "Biafra self-referendum" was initiated.

As of 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, Ekpa is in detention in Finland being accused of sponsoring terrorism in South Eastern Nigeria

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

For Nigeria and the Igbo people, the Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Nigeria-Biafra War, is a historical struggle of great significance (Kanu, 2022). This terrible struggle claimed the lives of around three million individuals between 1967 and 1970. But after the war, the federal administration proclaimed the first post-war period to be one of "Reconstruction," "Rehabilitation," and "Reconciliation" (the "3Rs"). In other words, the federal government of Nigeria led by Lt. Col. Gowon promised to reconstruct war-torn areas in the former Biafra enclave, rehabilitate the survivors of the war and reconcile the entire people of Nigeria (Kanu, 2022).

In this paper, we provide evidence that the inability of the successive federal government in Nigeria to commit to its avowal of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation of the Igbos back to the scheme of things in Nigeria is at the root of the renewed resurgence of the non-state actors on the revival of the Biafra nation. The failure of successive federal government of Nigeria to integrate the Igbos and the continued marginalization of the people of the defunct Biafra is fuelling the resurgence for the establishment of the state of Biafra out of Nigeria.

Speaking in Kaduna on Saturday, May 8, 2021, at a gathering hosted by the Association of Eze Ndi-Igbo in Diaspora, ShehuSani, a former senator from Kaduna Central in Kaduna state, referred to the marginalization of the Igbo people as a collective punishment. He claimed that the Igbo people's representation in politics is impacted by the injustices they endure. Because of the previous Biafra war, your people have been systematically excluded and marginalized; this is a collective punishment. Every time we elect a new government, the Igbo people are left out and other tribes are given enticing posts. You demonstrate to those who do not support Nigerian rights when you deny an Igbo man a position. Igbo people in Nigeria have been viewed with distrust and as disloyal and unpatriotic since the end of the civil war. The nation's stability and tranquility could be undermined by the ongoing bloodshed in the nation. When government jobs become inherited, there can be no peace or stability (Vanguard newspapers, Saturday, May 8, 2021).

### **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The general objective is to find out the reason for the resurgence of Biafran agitations in Nigeria.

The specific objectives include;

1. To ascertain whether the Igbo people are still marginalized in Nigeria
2. To ascertain whether the detained leader the IPOB is given fair trial after 4 year in DSS detention.
3. To ascertain the need for the sit at home order in the south east by IPOB.
4. To ascertain the level of antiigbo sentient in Nigeria

### **1.3 Research Questions**

From the objectives of the study the following research questions were raised;

1. Are the Igbo people still marginalized in contemporary Nigeria?
2. Is the detained IPOB leader receiving fair trial?
3. What is the need for the sit at home order in the south east by IPOB?
4. What is the level of antiigbo sentiment in Nigeria today

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design**

To do this, the paper employs a multi-method approach that includes historical, thematic, critical, and analytical inquiry. The Ecological Theory is used to underpin the study while the scuffle model provides the analytical framework.

### **2.2 Data Collection**

The data for the study were gathered from textbook, journal article and internet materials. These were complemented by oral interview, in-depth interview, group discussion and participant observation, interview of key informant mostly through zoom. The interview were mostly on sit at home days

### **3.0 FINDINGS/DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1 Finding/Result**

The leader of the IPOB standing trial in a federal court in Abuja presided over by justice Binta Nyako after he was brought back from Kenya to Nigeria under controversial circumstances. The federal government accused him of terrorism and enrolled nine court charges against him because of the broadcast he made in the United Kingdom. When his lawyers argued that the location of the crime was United Kingdom and it was only a united kingdom court can give order for him to be tried in Nigeria. The federal Government removed the location of the crime from their charges.

The leader of IPOB requested that the presiding judge justice Binta Nyako to rescue herself from the case since he has no confidence in her trial because for him there cannot be any fair trial when key sections of the constitution and key supreme court judgments are violated.

The trial Judge rescue herself and gave the case file back to the chief judge of the federation.

In 18 October, 2024 A federal high court in Abuja threatened to imprison the director general of the state security service Adeola Ajayi for denying Nnamdi Kanu access to his people and lawyers. He has been reminded in the detention of state security service since 2020 instead of prison yard.

The federal government of Nigeria has refused Political solution to the freedom of the detained IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu insisting on judicial outcome which the IPOB leader has faulted. The government is now demanding the extradition of Simon Ekpa from Finland and pointing accusing fingers to the Government of Finland and European Union for their support. The federal government has refused to restructure Nigeria or engage the agitators to dialogue. The fear of many Nigerians is that the issue of Biafra is now an ideology so detaining Simon will not end the agitation. Another person will emerge who might be more radical than Simon Ekpa.

This will mean more trouble for Nigeria. The result also found out that there are other Igbo people residing outside the south East mostly in the south-South geopolitical zone. Most of them denied Igbo identity during the massacre of the Igbo people in 1967-1970 Nigeria Biafra civil war. They denied to escape massacre. Many of them are now identifying with the Igbo culture and tradition a former Governor of River State and former minister of transport Mr. Rotimi Amechi has insisted publicly that he is an Igboman and wear Igbo attire.

#### **3.2 Discussion**

##### **A. The Resurgence of Biafra Agitation**

The emergence of secession movements such as IPOB, Eastern Security Network (ESN), and others is indicative of the corruption, marginalization, and injustice inherent in Nigeria's unequal resource allocation. The leadership of IPOB, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, has pushed for a referendum to allow the people of southeast Nigeria to choose between joining a failing nation like their own or creating a new nation called Biafra. The Nigerian Federal Government firmly and undemocratically opposed all the calls and petitions for the country to hold a referendum. These boisterous meetings escalated into rallies, which in many cases resulted in violence. As a result, the Nigerian federal government imprisoned and brutalized numerous IPOB members, including the group's leader Nnamdi Kanu, and held them in detention facilities.

A police raid on an IPOB gathering in Enugu in August 2020 resulted in the deaths of 21 members and two police officers. Following the event, IPOB urged its members to begin "self-defense" training. Numerous police officers and other security personnel have been slain in the assaults plaguing the country's southeast in 2022, and the gang has been charged with being behind them. It has disclaimed involvement in the attacks. 2021) (Politics Today).

After a number of court appearances following Kanu's release, the Court of Appeal in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, withdrew all fourteen accusations brought against him by the Federal Government on October 13, 2022, in response to the problems and irregularities surrounding his rendition and detention. The appeals court cleared him of all charges and declared his kidnapping to be illegal. However, Kanu was dismissed but not

exonerated, according to the Attorney General of the Federation and the Minister of Justice. While Nigerians wait for their decision, the federal government of Nigeria has appealed to the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

According to a Premium Times(2018) investigation, the IPOB was originally unarmed association until its members became the targets of extrajudicial executions by the Nigerian military and police between 2015 and 2016. By 2017, the federal government of Nigeria had declared IPOB a "terrorist organization" by a federal court decree (Asadu, 2021). Since then, there have been violent clashes between security personnel and members of IPOB especially the ESN – the youth wing of the association.

## **B. History of Secession Attempts in Nigeria**

It should be noted that agitation for secession did not start with the Igbos in Nigeria. Indeed, according to Tamuno (1970), Ahmadu Bello had asserted that the North would have preferred a distinct political future instead of the error of 1914. This remark by Ahmadu Bello and subsequent efforts by him and other political leaders and elites from the Northern region to carve out the Northern region from Nigeria marked the beginning of Nigeria's history of secession efforts.

According to Tamuno (1970), the Emir of Zaria had also threatened the colonial government with secession if the Northern region of Nigeria were not given at least 50% of the seats in the national assembly in Nigeria. The colonial administration had no option than to comply with the Emir's ultimatum to call for secession from the rest of Nigeria if the North was not given 50% of the seats in the national assembly during a 1950 constitution meeting in Ibadan.

In 1953, it was the turn of the Yoruba to threaten secession because Awolowo and his party wanted Lagos to be ruled as a part of the Western Region but the colonial authority and Nigeria wanted it to remain a neutral area as the Federal Capital. The right of the west to choose whether or not to be a part of Nigeria was highlighted by Awolowo in a letter to the Colonial Government in 1953 prior to the constitutional convention of 1954 (Tamuno, 1970).

Awolowo's Action Group advocated at a constitutional convention in Lagos in 1954 in favor of including a clause in the constitution that would have allowed one of the federating areas to leave the union. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), disagreed with this. The conference came to a close with the declaration that the secession clause would be removed (Tamuno, 1970).

Michael Okpara, the premier of the Eastern Region, had also threatened to break away from Nigeria as a result of the outcome of the elections in December 1964. The Middle Belt Region is largely identified by its ethnic ground; but, in modern Nigeria, due to herdsman's murdering, raping, and destruction of their land, it is no longer the ground but rather the whole Middle Belt population.

Moreover, according to Awofeso (2017), on February 23, 1960, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, led by Isaac Boro proclaimed the Niger Delta republic an independent state and battled the federal troops in a 12-day fight. They were detained and given a death sentence for treason, but Gowon commuted their sentences later on.

## **C. Marginalization of Igbo People**

In 1991, the state of Kano was split into two, with Jigawa becoming the new state that resulted from the division of the former state (Adisa, 2011). Not only are the unequal financial distributions to the north viewed as unfair, but there are also clear political disparities when it comes to solving national problems. Consider Nwabuo's (2019) statement that, "In 2015, the Southeast was underrepresented in the leadership of all branches of government." The false assertion that "the zone did not produce any ranking senator or member of the house of representatives on the platform of the APC" (para. 7) was used to justify this at the time. Because the states and LGAs established by military decree to the detriment of the Southeast undermine their efficacy, the interests of the region are never sufficiently safeguarded. Restructuring Nigeria was called for, among other reasons, because of the listed effects of the formation of States and LGAs. Nsoedo (2024).

The Igbo people experience severe harassment and extortion at the frequent police checkpoints that are found on both their native territory and the routes that lead to the Southeast. When people from Southeast visit their families around the holidays, the harassment is more severe (Okolie, 2017). Former Anambra governor Mr. Peter Obi expressed his disapproval of Customs' actions on public roads, especially those that connect to the Igbo heartland. He noted multiple Customs checkpoints along the route from Ore to Onitsha (Olowookere, 2016). Buhari's claimed battle against corruption is called into question by the Customs' extortion of containers that had been cleared at the ports on the routes going to the Southeast (Nsoedo 2024).

Since the conclusion of the Civil War, the federal government has not provided the Southeast with genuine public electricity support. The federal government continued to fund other power projects in other parts of Nigeria, especially the northern region, despite the region's disproportionate revenue generation for the sector (Nsoedo 2024), leaving the Oji power generating facility to rot

#### **D. Anti-Igbo Sentiment**

**Igbophobia** is defined as hostile and judgmental behaviors, such as violence directed against Igbo individuals and bias stemming from politics and religion outside of Nigeria.

A Yoruba supremacist and secessionist who left Nigeria and moved to the UK in August 2019 was arrested by British authorities for using YouTube to publish violent hate speech against the Igbo people. In March 2022, he was found guilty on eight counts of inciting racial hatred and sentenced to four and a half years in jail. (The Free Press, 2024; Wikipedia)

#### **Igbophobia and the APC**

Noticeable instances of igbophobia surfaced inside the Nigerian government after the PDP lost control to the APC in 2015. Under the APC's leadership, prejudice against Igbos became more systemic, even though there were already some cases of institutional discrimination against them in the job and housing markets. The APC-led Nigerian government is having conversations on prejudices and Igbophobia as a result of an increase in discrimination and the spread of hate speech by officials. Concerns over possible racism and discriminatory activities within the administration have increased in light of allegations of marginalization and underrepresentation of Igbo people in political and decision-making capacities. (The Free Press, Wikipedia, 2024)

They attacked Igbos here on the day of the 2023 gubernatorial election, threatening to kill us if we turned out to vote. During the altercation that day, one man was stabbed. We learned three days ago that the man passed away and that the thugs had gotten into mischief by hitting everybody they met on the street, particularly if they weren't Yoruba. Eyewitness report from Victoria Island trader Peter Eze.

#### **E. Socio-Economic Implication of Ipob Sit-At-Home**

The sit-at-home order commensurate important days in the history of Biafra struggle and shows solidarity with the IPOB leader; Nnamdi Kanu over his plight in the detention and the agitation for the independent state of Biafra. In line with this, a Thursday News agency of Nigeria correspondent (2021) opined that, though the sit at home order is considered illegal by various governments, it is a mechanism used by the IPOB group to draw attention to the plight of Kanu and possibly, influencing the outcomes of the court proceedings to his favour. Ogbonnaya et al. (2021) further added that this strategy is used by the IPOB group to seek the unconditional release of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu and further draw the attention of the world towards the plight of the South Eastern zone of Nigeria. Obilorelta 2024, the IPOB group as well as the IPOB sit-at-home came into being because, it is believed that the South-Eastern zone of Nigeria face a lot of marginalization in Nigeria. This marginalization varies from political alienation, inequitable resource distribution, extra-judicial killings and heavy military presence of military in the south east.

The IPOB sit-at-home order was adopted as a non-violent change strategy to protest the re-arrest of the IPOB leader; Nnamdi Okwu Kanu and also, agitate for the independent state of Biafra. This protest which started non-violently has taken a negative turn as it has been clouded with various forms of violence and threats of violence. While the incessant loss of life and property is worrisome, more worrisome is the socioeconomic inactivity of the South East and the fact that citizens in the zone live in constant fear especially, on Mondays or any other day that he will go to court. This order has created a niche for breeding other security problem that has made it unhealthy to do business in the south east. (Obilorelta 2024)

#### **F. Exclusion of the Igbos from Political Appointments in Nigeria**

The Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and majority of the Igbos have alleged systematic exclusion of the Igbos from critical positions in Nigeria by successive governments in Nigeria. In particular, the last administration of President Muhammadu Buhari's lopsided appointment in favor of his Fulani and Northern kinsmen has fuelled renewed agitation for self-determination in various parts of the country.

The marginalization of the Igbos is the result of a deliberate and systematic effort by successive governments in Nigeria to deny the Igbo their fair share of national resources; repress demand deny them access to all facets of Nigerian social life, particularly politics, and impede their progress.

Indeed, the situation became so unbearable that the Igbos had to appeal to the United Nation (UN) for direct involvement and to mount diplomatic pressure on President Buhari to resolve the issue of federal character in the allocation of public goods and jobs, particularly security chiefs. Due to the instability in the South East Region, Ezike remarked that it was crucial to rectify the uneven selections of security chiefs. He said, *"One day, without their knowledge, it can be decided to exterminate all Igbo people owing to a lack of representation."*

### **Reduction of Political Seats in the National Assembly**

Aside the systematic exclusion of the Igbos from critical appointments at the federal level, the Igbos have also not fared well in terms of political representation. It should be noted that allocation of political seats is based on the population of each state and region. Because of this, population census in Nigeria since independence has always been politicized to favour a particular region – the Northern region.

According to Mailafa (2021), Nigeriawas “headed towards the supremacy of one ethnic group and religion over the other,” and that Nigeria has fallen from grandeur, becoming the most terrified country and the capital of poverty in the world after India and Afghanistan. The country is going toward preferring one ethnic group and one religion over another. He also argued that President Buhari should be held responsible for the division, unfairness, and long-lasting instability of his government's finances.

According to BBC News 2014, the National Conference's main proposals were:

- Scrapping the current system of 774 local authorities - this is intended to save money and combat corruption. The state-level local system may be created.
- The establishment of 18 new states, distributed evenly across the nation. Additionally, it is proposed that states that want to combine may do so if certain requirements are satisfied.
- Revenue Allocation: suggests raising the percentage of the national revenue going to the states while decreasing the portion going to the federal government.
- Combination of the presidential and parliamentary systems of governance in a modified presidential system. The vice president should be chosen by the president from among the lawmakers.
- All governmental tiers should have a balanced distribution of power. The country's six geopolitical zones and the north and south should alternate hosting the presidency. The three senatorial districts in each state should alternate for the governorship as well.

### **G. Side Effect of Agitation**

It was because of the role of United Kingdom in kicking against the Aburi agreement and instigated war where about 3 million Biafrans died that is why many people from the South Eastern Nigeria condemned the idea of Federal Government of Nigeria participating in the burial ceremony of Queen Elizabeth II both within and in Diaspora. Many people of Igbo decent have not forgiven Britain for the way they have been manipulating northerners against the interest of the people of South Eastern Nigeria

Professor Uju Anya (2022), a resident of Nigeria in the United States, stated: "My earliest memories were from living in a war-torn area, and rebuilding still hasn't finished even today." She said, "The queen sent guns and bombs to kill us, and they slaughtered half of my family." She expressed what many Igbo people in southeast Nigeria felt. Three million Igbo people were slain in the Biafra genocide, which was actively supported by the British government in addition to providing political backing to those responsible. They granted it legitimacy and political protection.

Without success, a large number of people, including governors, lawmakers, religious leaders, traditional rulers, and business leaders, begged for Nnamdi Kanu's release. For dubious reasons, a large number of Igbo adolescents are incarcerated. The majority of Igbo people live in the South East, where they are tragically neglected in all respects because they are the sole geopolitical zone with only five states as opposed to other regions that have six states apiece. We have lost billions of dollars as a result of the circumstances. Additionally, it has lost us legislative representation and political appointments. We brought up these concerns at political conferences in 2005 and 2014, and all the well-meaning guys in attendance agreed that it was fair for the South East to have just five states. They suggested that a new state be established in the South East, but as of right now, nothing has changed. Vanguard Newspaper, September 20, 2023, quoted Orji Uzor Kalu, a former Governor and Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as saying that organized anti-Igbo massacres occurred in Kano in 1980, Maiduguri in 1982, Yola in 1984, Gombe in 1985, Kaduna in 1986, Bauchi in 1991, and Funtua in 1993 as a result of the bloody rain continuing to beat the Igbo people. Damboa in 2000, APO 6 in 2005, and Kano in 1994.

It is true that human pressure is preventing the Igbo from achieving the president of the Nigerian nation, but we can do so (Cable News, February 20, 2024). The Igbo have not escaped by accident or by an act of divinity. As an Igbo man, Peter Obi of the Labour Party should have won the 2023 presidential election, but a lot of backroom maneuvering prevented him from receiving the mandate.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

The issue of Biafra independence is an ideology because nothing can stop people fighting for separation especially now that the marginalization sadly continued. The federal government is not making any reasonable effort to amend the ugly situation. Kidnapping, imitation and extradition of agitators can never solve the problem. Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu started the agitation with 1967 to 1970 Nigeria Biafra Civil War. After the war the marginalization continued which made Raphael Uwazurike to emerge as an agitator. After him Mazi Nnamdi Kanu came and after he was betrayed in Kenya and detained in DSS detention instead of prison yard. Simon Ekpa Njoku the price Minister of Biafra Government in exile came up.

When Barracks Obama former president of United State of American visited Africa he noted that he can only visit members of new Africa exemplified by Respect for human right, rule of law and self determination he did not visit Nigeria even after visiting Ghana a close neighbour he noted that old African is characterized by weak social institutions given room by powerful men and women who are above the law.

One thing about Nnamdi Kalu according to Prof. Ango Abullahi a northern Nigerian is that you can hate him, you can ridicule or disagree with him, but once reality hits you will realize that the young man is right he noted also in new telegraph that Nigeria expired 10 years needs renegotiation and reformation

### **4.2 Recommendations**

According to Anderson (1983), the country is created because it implies a sense of community or horizontal comradeship between individuals who frequently do not know each other or have ever met. Despite their differences, they view themselves as part of the same collectivity and give it a shared past, present, and future. Anderson went on to describe this hypothetical society as being autonomous and constrained. According to Anderson, this idealized society nurtures a strong horizontal comradeship for which countless individuals have voluntarily given their lives.

The tiers of Government should have fiscal relationships that support the coordinated operations of the constituent parts. States should be permitted to manage their resources, or at the very least, the allocation formula should give the derivation principle the most weight. This would have general repercussions for the federation as well as two important ramifications for the component units. By doing this, states that create money would feel certain that they had control over the resources produced on their soil, eliminating a major danger to the federation's capacity and continued existence.

There must be a media outlet that always operates free from harassment, intimidation, frequent inquiries, summons arrests, and other forms of retaliation. The media, of course, continues to serve as the go-between between the government and the governed (daily, August 31, 2021). The division of powers is necessary. The judicial, legislative, and executive branches Strong institutions will result from rigorous commitment to the good governance principles, which will diminish strong individuals because they can only succeed in an environment with weak institutions.

The allocation of natural resources must be equitable. The only option to the secessionist movement is the question of reforming Nigeria. Although Nigeria's founding fathers supported federalism and regional administrations, it was the lengthy period of military dictatorship that led to a concentration of power in the nation. Marginalization, which will be addressed through restructuring, is what has sparked the movement for independence.

Based on the research finding, the following recommendations were made. They are;

The Nigeria state should ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources in the country so as to curb the perceived marginalization of the south eastern zone and the agitation for the independent state of Biafra. There is also a need for the Nigerian government to strengthen the security apparatus in south eastern zone so as to tackle the security threats in the zone.



There is need for the Nigerian government to have a dialogue with members of the IPOB group, listen to their grievance and settle it amicably with them. The IPOB leader; Nnamdi Kanu should also, be given quick but fair trial and possibly, granted unconditional release to curb the sit-at-home in the South East, Nigeria.

3. There is need for every zone to have control of their own resources so as to reduce the perceived marginalization of the various regions (Obiloretal 2024)

## REFERENCES

- Adaobi, T. N. (2024) *Remembering the Biafra War that many prefer to forget*. BBC News: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51094093>. Accessed on February 11th, 2024.
- Alexander, A. M. (1980) *The Nigerian Revolution and Biafra War*. Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980.
- Alumona, I, Azom, S. & Iloh, E. (2018) The Nigerian State and the Resurgence of Separatist Agitations: The Case of Biafra.
- Asadu, C. (2021) A Nation in Distress: Does Nigeria Need another National Conference
- Awofesso, O. (2017) Secessionist Movements and the National Question in Nigeria: A Revisit to the Quest for Political Restructuring. *Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research* (7), 35-55.
- British Broadcasting Corporation (2014) Main Recommendation from the National Conference
- Duruji, M.M (2010) Democracy and the Challenges of Ethnic-Nationalism Nigeria's from the Republic Interrogating Institutional Mechanism. *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development* 15(2):2-16.
- Ibeanu, O. O. & Iwuamadi, C. K (2016) Biafra Separation: Causes, Consequences and Remedies: Enugu: Institute for Innovation in Development.
- Tamuno, T.N. (1970) Separatist Agitation in Nigeria since 1914. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18 (6):563-584.
- Mustapha, A. R. (2005). Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Section in Nigerian. Queen Elizabeth House University of Oxford.
- Musa, Z., Umar, M. & Sadiq, V. (2018) Restructuring As means of Resolving Nigeria's Socio-Economic Challenges: An Empirical Analysis. *Nile Journal of Political Science*. 1(1):98-114.
- Owen, O. (2016) "The New Biafran: Historical Imagination and Structure as Conflict in Nigeria's separatist revival" A paper presented at College University of Oxford 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- Philip, E. (2000) Nigeria and Biafra: my Story. Nigeria: Business Forum Publishers.
- Vande, P. T. (2012) "Ethnicity and the Politics of State Creation in Nigeria". *European Scientific Journal* 8(6):33-55.
- Nsoedo Emmanuel E (2024) the Marginalization of the Igbo people in Nigeria Political and Economic sectors: what is the Way forward National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Abuja Nigeria
- Longlev Robert all About Relative Deprivation and Deprivation Theory Updated on August 03, 2021.
- Anti-Igbo Sentiment From Wikipedia the Free encyclopedia 2024
- Obilor, Osita-Njoku A & Awogu C (2024) Socio-Economic Implication of IPOB Sit-at-Home in south east, Nigeria Multidisciplinary research and Development journal vol 5. Issue 1 May 2024
- Kingsley, C. M., Chinenye, B. O. & Oham, P. C. (2022). The ills of IPOB sit at home and it's Implication on the Economy of the South-East Geo-Political zone of Nigeria. *IEEE-SEM*, 10 (4).

Njoku, L., Udeajah, G. &Nzor, E. (2021). IPOB Amends Sit-At-Home Order. *The Guardian (Online)*. Retrieved from [guardian.ng/news/ipob-amends-sitat-home-order/](https://guardian.ng/news/ipob-amends-sitat-home-order/) on 20th May, 2022.

Ogbonnaya, R. and Nwosu, U. and Ogbodo-Iwuagwu, P. (2021). IPOB: South-East has lost N50bn to Sit-At-Home Order- NACCIMA. *Independent Nigeria(Online)*. Retrieved from <https://independent.ng/ipob-southeast-has-lost-n50bn-to-sit-at-homeorder-naccima/> on 20th May, 2022.

## SUPPLEMENTARY FILE

### Data Analysis

The questions for both the interview and focus group discussion were raised from:

- (1) Marginalization of the Igbo people before the Nigerian Biafra war of 1967 to 1970
- (2) What is the position of Igbo people in present day Nigeria?
- (3) How can the problem be solved?
- (4) What is your take on the IPOB and the sit-at-home order in the South East on Monday or any day that IPOB leader Mazi Nnamdi Kalu will go to court?
- (5) The threat to extradite the prime minister of Biafra government in exile

The questions were both close ended and open ended. Open ended interview was included because it allows for a wide range of possible answers and encourage respondents to provide details personalized responses. Finally, thematic analyzing and reporting pattern with the data was used for analysis. Qualitative data were collected through observation, one to one interview, focus group discussion. The interview was done by talking to people, video record, data collection with people. To support analysis direct quotations from interview were quoted. Qualitative in-dept interviews with people who are key informants some members of IPOB people and some stakeholders.

The data were collected through focus group discussions, methods of observation, one to one interview. These were mostly on Mondays or any other day that the IPOB leader will go to courts in the interview and focus group discussion people did not hide their feeling about the marginalization and exclusion of the Igbo people and still they do not want the Igbo people to separate from Nigeria. Some people complained about the socio-economic consequences of the sit-at-home because it has brought economic hardship but others insist that the sit-at-home is justified because of the detention of the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu.

On the radical stand in the freedom fighting some people in the South East wanted dialogue and creating awareness to the entire world about the problem of the Igbo people while others mostly elderly people some of whom fought the Nigerian Biafra war of 1967 to1970 wanted restructure of Nigeria as it was before. It was the many years of the military government that brought lopsided federalism which has resulted in marginalization. The selection of members of the focus group discussion, interview and observation were mainly accidental because on the sit-at-home day's people gather at different silent places mostly in the evenings to discuss what happened to those who disobeyed the sit-at-home order. These was online group discussion with colleagues and other academics to see if there view was difference but unfortunate there is no significant difference in their view

Selection of respondents was based on availability