

# The State and Separatist Agitations in Nigeria: An Analysis of The Dynamics of The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

Mezie-Okoye, Charles Chukwurah, Ph.D.

*Department of Sociology/Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.*

**Abstract:** Consequently, this study examined the connection between the separatist actions of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their effects on the continuing existence of the Nigerian state. It also studied how the IPOB's use of provocative language exacerbated ethnic tensions and how the amount of government persecution hindered the IPOB's separatist objectives in Nigeria. Documentary methodology was employed in the study, and secondary sources and content analysis were allegedly used to collect data. The frustration-aggression theory offered an adequate theoretical foundation for this study's analysis. This study indicates that the IPOB's use of provocative language exacerbated ethnic tensions, namely between the Igbo and Hausa tribes. In addition, it was seen that state persecution had minimal impact on their separatist movement and goals. According to the findings of the study, the periodic separatist agitations in Nigeria are the result of the Nigerian government's insensitivity and failure to provide inclusive and effective leadership. In order to reduce the central government's excessive concentration of power and responsibilities, the research suggests, among other things, the devolution of authority from the federal government to the component states. In addition, the Nigerian government should initiate a reorientation campaign that promotes a culture of patriotism, responsible leadership, and transparency in government among the public. Based on these findings, the report recommends, among other things, that the Nigerian government eschew the use of force in favour of conversation and other diplomatic strategies.

**Keywords:** Biafra, colonial rule, ethnicity, failed leadership, IPOB, Separatist agitations.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The history of Nigeria is replete with obstacles stemming from unsolved national concerns pertaining to sensitive national issues such as group marginalisation, income allocation, politicisation of religion, ethnic militancy, terrorism, and corruption. In the South-East, the rise of organisations claiming self-determination and political independence, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is one of the principal expressions of some of these unsolved issues (Adangor, 2017).

According to Awofeso (2017), separatist agitations and secessionist movements are not wholly new to Nigerian political arena; they have always been a part of Nigerian politics, but their current dimension is not unrelated to the national question. In other words, they continued to act as a forum for agitators to vent their unhappiness with the Nigerian

government and to seek proper political accommodation (Alumona, Azom & Iloh, 2017).

Fundamentally, the terms "separatist agitation" and "separatism" can be used to refer to a variety of different concepts, ranging from a demand by a unit of a federal state for greater regional autonomy or a loosening of the centre's political control to the outright secession of a federating unit in the form of a declaration of its own political independence. In other words, the term 'separatism' is typically used in its restricted meaning to refer to agitation by a separate political unit within a state for more decentralisation of authority by the central government in order to provide the subnational unit greater autonomy in certain activities. Ibeanu, Orji, and Iwuamdi (2016) took a stand on the discourse and conceptualised separatist agitation as interactions between collective victimisation and the inclusion of a particular group within a broader entity.

The politics of imbalance and incompetent leadership at all levels of government and administration in Nigeria have failed to eliminate the country's persistent socio-political and economic imbalances. The politics of imbalance in the country's political, social, economic, and cooperative governance in the management, sharing, and distribution of the country's common wealth is a major cause of widespread insecurity, anger, fear, suspicion, and feelings of agitation, exclusion, and isolation among and among the country's diverse ethnic nationalities. This disparity arises from the fact that a single area in Nigeria appears to have the upper hand in most appointments and other matters.

The nation is undoubtedly more polarised than ever before, despite the fact that the dreadful prediction outlined above has not come true. Multiple ethnocultural and militant groups, such as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), the Niger Delta Avengers, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, the Northern Elders Forum, the Arewa Youths Consultative Forum, etc., are beating increasingly loud drums of separatism, which are irrepressible signs of the Federation of Nigeria's fractured leadership. The leadership of IPOB instructed all Igbos to "sit at home" on May 30, 2017, in remembrance of the Ndigbo died in the Nigeria/Biafra Civil War. This was received with unsettling success throughout the

majority of Igbo-dominated states in South-Eastern Nigeria, suggesting that the Biafra spirit is still alive even after the Igbos lost the Nigeria/Biafra Civil War (Mamah, 2017).

The Biafra movement was the result of government leadership failure, which resulted in years of social neglect and economic and political isolation of the Nigerian people, particularly those from the South East of the country. Again, tremendous underdevelopment and protracted young unemployment have impacted the political structure and personality of the Nigerian state. This delayed economic growth and exacerbated poverty, hunger, insecurity, and instability as a result of Boko Haram (Olomjobi, 2015).

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The frustration–aggression hypothesis, sometimes known as the frustration–aggression–displacement theory, is a theory of aggressiveness introduced in 1939 by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears, and refined further by Neal Miller in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. (Wikipedia). Frustration is the irritation and annoyance one feels when something prevents them from achieving a goal. In the previous scenario, the malfunctioning printer prevents you from meeting your deadline for submitting your research paper. You throw your backpack to the ground in exasperation and proceed to repeatedly kick it. This is an instance of frustration becoming aggressive. Aggression is a hostile behaviour or attitude toward a person or thing that is typically prompted by frustration. When an objective is obstructed, people frequently become frustrated. If we are extremely enraged at the source of our frustration, we may act aggressively. According to the frustration-aggression theory, frustration frequently results in violent behaviour. In 1939, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower, and Sears suggested this idea.

Sigmund Freud's and the Yale Group's Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis is being examined. Almost no valid research is undertaken without a theoretical framework in the present day. However, the essence of theory is to explain, generalise, predict, and control. Bhattacharjee (2012) identifies these theories as explanations of natural or social behaviour or events; a system of constructs (concepts) and propositions (relationships between those constructs) that present a logical, systematic, and coherent explanation of a phenomenon of interest, subject to certain assumptions and boundary conditions. In this regard, the research supported the frustration-aggression theory. Dollard, Miller, and Mowrer formulated the thesis/theory in 1939; Berkowitz and Yates later supported and popularised it (1962). The theory's main premises are:

- Always, the presence of violent behaviour suggests the presence of frustration.
- Individuals believe that unfavourable attitudes arise when a group of people lacks opportunity to satisfy their needs, particularly their most fundamental wants.

- It also states that if a state does not meet the demands or grievances of specific religious, ethnic, or even political groups, this might build to resentment, which could finally escalate into violence.
- In other words, the violent activities of some groups inside a government may be an outward manifestation of irritation that has accumulated over time due to the government's inability to address problems or accusations of unjust treatment.

Conventionally, the advent of political underestimating within the Igbo ethnic group and the resulting influence of IPOB dissident development in Nigeria are better explained in light of the frustrated aggressiveness hypothesis. This method disentangles the growth of IPOB rebels and illustrates how political marginalisation along ethnic lines leads to the pursuit of secession. Similarly, the absence of equality in President Muhammadu Buhari's political structures has fuelled the emergence of IPOB dissidents in Nigeria. Accepting that proactive actions are required to thoroughly address political underestimation concerns, the state must consider proactive measures. The idea urges clarity as to whether the policies and actions of the Nigerian government have contributed to the nonconformist unrest in Nigeria caused by IPOB. IPOB members are agitating because they are frustrated and out of this frustration, anger and aggression ensued. This is what is playing out.

#### *The Origin and Evolution of Separatist Agitation in Nigeria: The case of IPOB*

1967 to 1970, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu declared Biafra to be an autonomous multi-ethnic republic comprised of, among others, the Igbo, Ijaw, Efik, and Ibibio peoples. The federal administration battled hard to retain the Federal Republic of Nigeria and opposed Biafra's independence (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Biafra: Secessionist State, Nigeria"). The three-year-long Nigerian civil war was precipitated by tensions between Biafra and the federal authority. On the side of Biafra, an estimated one to three and a half million civilians perished as a result of malnutrition and death. The 1970 armistice signed by the now-defunct OAU resulted to the surrender of the Biafran army (Akuchu, 1977).

On January 22, 2021, in the city of Orlu, Nigeria, the Nigerian Army moved to smash the Eastern Security Network, a paramilitary arm of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (BBC, January 25, 2021). The conflict erupted when the ESN successfully resisted an early onslaught by the Nigerian Army (Sahara Reports, January 27, 2021), however the initial issue was addressed when IPOB unilaterally withdrew the Eastern Security Network (ESN) from Orlu. After a few weeks of relative peace, Nigeria started a military attack in the region with the goal of destroying the ESN. On the previous day, February 19, 2021, IPOB proclaimed a state of war between Nigeria and Biafra (Sahara Reports, February 19, 2021). Three weeks later, another separatist organisation declared the creation of a Biafran provisional government, which IPOB

eventually recognised (The Cable, March 14, 2021). Biafran separatists have formed ties with separatist organisations in Nigeria and Cameroon since then. Despite these improvements, separatists say that their terrorist actions are primarily focused on defending local communities from armed herders and robbers, rather than battling the Nigerian government. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the 2021 IPOB, was apprehended by Interpol in late June and handed over to Nigerian police. It is this arrest and the detention of the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu that has escalated the separatist agitation to date. IPOB group believe that their leader has not done anything to warrant the incarceration he is suffering from now. You cannot beat a child and forced such from crying. Such a child has the right to cry because of the beating. IPOB feels that this entity called Nigeria is not treating the Igbos well, and wants to opt out.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist organisation in Nigeria that seeks to re-establish the Republic of Biafra, which seceded from Nigeria prior to the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) but ultimately re-joined Nigeria following its military defeat. Since 2021, IPOB and other Biafran separatist organisations have been engaged in a low-level guerrilla war against the Nigerian government in south-eastern Nigeria. Nnamdi Kanu, a British Nigerian political activist noted for his backing of the present Biafran independence struggle, created the organisation in 2012 (BBC News, 2017-05-05, retrieved 2019-05-13). The Nigerian government designated it a terrorist organisation in 2017 under the Nigerian Terrorism Act. The United Kingdom began refusing refuge to IPOB members who committed human rights violations in May 2022, despite the fact that IPOB had not been recognised as a terrorist organisation (UK Channel Television).

IPOB has criticised the federal government of Nigeria for inadequate investments, political alienation, unequal resource distribution, ethnic marginalisation, and significant military presence and extrajudicial murders in the South-Eastern, South-Central, and sections of the North-Central areas of the country (Mahr, 2019; & Gaffey, 2015). The organisation grew to popularity towards the middle of the 2010s and is currently the largest Biafran independence organisation in terms of membership. In recent years, it has earned considerable media attention for being a regular target of Nigerian government political repression. It also has various websites and communication channels that serve as the sole dependable social infrastructure educating and inculcating first-hand information and news to its members (Amnesty International, 24 November 2016. (Retrieved June 5, 2020).

There have been many other pro-Biafran groups that have come into existence. The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) began gaining attention in the early 2000s, along with the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) which rose to the spotlight in 2012. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) emerged in 2012 as well after these other groups (Bybee, November 9, 2017).

IPOB arose to continue the movement that MASSOB had championed. MASSOB was founded by its national head Ralph Uwazuruike in 1999. However, the organisation was severely undermined by claimed official repression and leadership disputes inside the group. MASSOB accused Uwazuruike of collaborating with "mainstream Nigerian politics" rather than advancing the Biafra cause (The Nation Newspaper, 2015). These confrontations led to the emergence of a new group known as BZM. At a protest held on November 5, 2012 in the Enugu region, the Nigerian government detained Benjamin Igwe Onwuka, the head of the BZM, along with a large number of organisation members for treason. Due to the arrests and prosecutions of a large number of the organization's leaders, BZM's operations were curtailed back. Both of these pro-Biafran organisations contributed to the birth of IPOB, which continues to advocate for the same reasons (Ibeanu, Orji, Iwuamadi, Okechukwu, Nkwachukwu, & Chijioke, 2016).

Nnamdi Kanu is the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra. He is a dual citizen of the United Kingdom and Nigeria. After gaining notoriety through his 2009-founded broadcasts on Radio Biafra, he started IPOB. This London-based radio station transmitted messages calling for the "liberation of Biafrans" and criticising the Nigerian government's corruption. As a previously unknown character, the radio show catalysed Kanu's ascent to prominence (BBC News, 2017-05-05. Retrieved 2019-05-13). The Nation Journal (November 30, 2015; retrieved on May 13, 2019).



Source: Vanguardngr.com

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many Igbo and Niger Delta communities in south-eastern Nigeria have felt marginalised by the Nigerian government since the 1990s. Historically anti-Biafran populations, such as the Ijaw, began to question their allegiance to Nigeria as a result of the brutal conflict in the Niger Delta. This, together with youth unhappiness due to high unemployment, contributed to the rebirth of Biafran nationalism in the Southeast. Unlike the majority of local political figures, militant Biafran nationalists affiliated with the separatist group IPOB (Independent People of Biafra) did not distance

themselves from separatism (BBC, Jan 26, 2021; & Daily Post, Jan 28, 2021). MASSOB (Sahara Reporters, 28 January 2021), the Biafra Nations League (BNL) (formerly known as the Biafra Nations Youth League/BNYL), and the Biafran National Guard were among the radical Biafran organisations (BNG).

Prior to the current craziness of so-called unidentified gunmen targeting police and correctional institutions in Imo State, the state's citizens had always enjoyed peace. The state and its residents were regarded as among the most peaceful, where travellers and individuals from other war-torn countries might find peace.

As a result of the global decrease in oil prices, tensions have risen in the southeast, whose economy is mainly dependent on oil exports. Despite polls indicating that Biafran independence would be unpopular in the southeast by 2020, IPOB had built a substantial following for their cause (Daily Post, Jan. 28, 2021). Non-IPOB organisations advocated independence, such as the Niger Delta People's Salvation Force led by "warlord" Asari-Dokubo. Within the Biafran separatist movement, Kanu was accused of anti-Semitism against non-Jews. The head of IPOB claims to be Jewish and that Judaism is the Igbo people's traditional religion (The Nation, February 2, 2021).

The events in Biafra have overshadowed other separatist organisations, creating the misleading impression that Biafra is the only separatist threat to the nation. The existence of separatist organisations in nearly every area of Nigeria demonstrates that the country's nationhood is still threatened. Separatism can take several forms among the Yoruba, ranging from outright demands for the Oduduwa Republic to pleas for a Sovereign National Conference to determine if the federating parts of the country still choose to be unified and on what terms.

In addition to calling for a Niger Delta Republic, activists in the region seek "resource control," which has separatist overtones. In essence, there is a tremendous level of alienation and unhappiness among the many areas of the Nigerian federation, a condition that has worsened mistrust and fueled separatist ambitions. Since no referendum has ever been held in any of the regions supporting independence, it is hard to tell whether the leaders of the different separatist groups truly reflect the sentiments of the people in those regions or whether the agitations are only a cover for other agendas (Adibe, 2017). President Buhari is mostly responsible for this newfound vitality. Furthermore, the president and the APC have made the separatists of the nation feel worse, not better (Aribisala, 2015).

According to Okoye, restrictions on interstate transportation are the most pressing concern now. Fulani young guys pass through our manned security checkpoints at all hours of the day and night, despite the interstate travel restrictions implemented during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns. They have occupied numerous settlements and farmlands in the

region and travel in big buses and trucks. Despite some concerns that they pose a threat to national security, the federal government has remained silent, he added. Forest in the Southern Nigeria are occupied by these Fulani young men, kidnapping and killing unabated and the federal government is keeping sealed lips.

The Fulani oligarchy has separated them, and the centre can no longer hold. Initially, these individuals advocated for a reorganisation of the nation, but it now looks that everyone is just interested in their own pursuits. Without the atrocities performed in these Nigerian regions, especially the south-east, the Soviet Union would have collapsed. The Soviet Union spawned the numerous nations that exist today.

In August of 2020, Nigerian security forces attacked an IPOB rally in Enugu, resulting in the deaths of 21 unarmed IPOB members and two police officers. Both sides said that they fired the first shot (Punch, Feb 18, 2021). After the incident, IPOB swore retribution and advised members to begin practising self-defence (Vanguard, Feb 18, 2021). At least two Nigerian soldiers were slain in battles with unknown gunmen in Enugu. However, IPOB denied involvement, adding, "We are unarmed and have no intention of acquiring firearms" (Sahara Reporters, Feb 18, 2021). Kanu announced the formation of the ESN to safeguard Igbos from Fulani raids on December 12, 2020. Two weeks later, the Nigerian government deployed the military to identify ESN camps because it would not sanction the creation of an unlicensed paramilitary group on its territory (Ali, 30 November 2015).

The Orlu Crisis began in the Nigerian city of Orlu on January 22, 2021, when the Nigerian Army moved to destroy the Eastern Security Network (ESN), a paramilitary wing of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (Vanguard, Jan 25, 2021). The conflict worsened after the ESN successfully withstood an early Nigerian Army assault (Sahara Reporters, Jan 22, 2021). Nonetheless, the basic problem was remedied when IPOB unilaterally retracted the ESN from Orlu. After a few weeks of relative peace, Nigeria started a military effort to eradicate the ESN in the region. On February 19, 2021, IPOB proclaimed that Nigeria and Biafra were at war as of the previous day (Vanguard, Jan. 27, 2021). Three weeks later, a second separatist organisation declared the creation of a Biafran provisional government, which IPOB eventually acknowledged (Sahara Reporters, Jan. 25, 2021). Since then, Biafran separatists have forged agreements with Nigerian and Cameroonian separatist organisations. Despite these developments, separatists insist that their militant actions are primarily focused on defending local communities from armed herders and robbers, as opposed to battling the Nigerian government. Interpol arrested IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu in late June and turned him over to the Nigerian police. The remainder of Nnamdi Kanu's imprisonment is now history. The government's failure to offer basic social amenities, economic incentives, and chances for the progress and betterment of all Nigerians is primarily to blame for the 2017 Biafra movement. "The government's failure to address

post-war issues such as proper rehabilitation, re-integration, and re-construction of the Igbo and community has increased doubts and suspicion in the minds and hearts of the Igbo extraction on the Nigerian project," writes Chinua Achebe in his most recent book, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*.

President Buhari's threat of treating Biafra separatist agitators in the language they understand has evoked horrific memories of the civil war. President Buhari's threat of treating Biafra separatist agitators in the language they understand evoked the horrific memories of the civil war, which was characterised by a high level of starvation, deaths and physical destruction.

Biafra movement emerged as a result of government leadership failure, which led to years of social neglect, economic isolation, and political isolation for Nigerians, particularly those in the country's south-east. Massive underdevelopment and persistent youth unemployment once again altered Nigeria's political structure and composition and hampered the country's economic development, resulting in an upsurge in Boko Haram-related poverty, hunger, insecurity, and instability (Daily Post, Jan. 28, 2021).

Unquestionably, the Igbo, one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups, have been treated unfairly. Despite being one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria, they have been recognised as a minority ethnic group since the civil war 45 years ago. No Igbo has ever been declared fit to govern the nation. South East Ndigbo is the only area in the United States with five states. In every other zone, at least six exist. In reality, there are about twice as many local administrations in the North-East as in the South-East. Consequently, despite the fact that many South-Eastern states produce oil, the Ndigbo receive the least cash from it compared to other regions.

According to Uwaifo (2019), the Biafra rebellion was triggered by the treatment of the Igbo people by the Buhari government. Particularly with regard to political appointments, his administration has violated constitutional standards of federal character and fair representation of all ethnic groups in order to create unity, justice, and a sense of belonging within the Nigerian enterprise. Therefore, disobeying this fundamental rule will result in nationwide political upheaval and instability. I think with Uwaifo that the marginalisation of the Igbo people by the Buhari administration has contributed to the current regional turmoil, especially in the South East.

The current security situation in the South East is frightening and requires immediate response. With the high incidence of senseless deaths and mayhem in the Eastern Area, it appears that Ndigbo's enemies have finally succeeded in turning the hitherto peaceful region into a battlefield. The militarization of the region and the attribution of blame to IPOB prior to inquiry and arrest are other instances of injustice. It is ludicrous to repeatedly accuse "unknown gunmen." It creates the appearance that the Federal Government led by Buhari and its South East partners are lying about the situation in the area.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a mix of four data gathering techniques. First, statistics were gathered by a comprehensive study of current literature. The review included a mapping and evaluation of the pertinent literature that addresses issues pertinent to the study's primary themes. Thanks to the literature review, we were able to identify knowledge gaps that needed to be addressed, clarify the research issue, establish a conceptual framework, and describe the research methodology. The desk review investigated the broader literature on Nigerian politics and society, including those directly related to the Biafran conflict, as well as the theoretical literature on civil war outbreak and conclusion, and post-war peace building. In addition to documentary sources, figures were gathered via a survey of 152 respondents, who were selected to represent the many elements of society, including Biafra supporters, community leaders, community members, and professionals. Aba, Orlu, Awka, Enugu, Mbano, Nsukka, Owerri, Okigwe, Onitsha, and Umuahia were among the fourteen South East sites surveyed (twenty copies of the questionnaire were sent by email to some Biafra supporters residing in London and Liverpool). These locations were chosen based on a media-derived appraisal of the unrest's severity. The survey's principal instrument was a 35-item questionnaire. Respondents' viewpoints on the causes of recurrent agitation for Biafra, the victimisation of the Igbo, the consequences of the recurring agitation for Biafra, and the management of the agitation were acquired using a questionnaire. The returned questionnaire was analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS). According to a predetermined interrogation schedule, ten key informants, including IPOB and Biafra sympathisers, academics, security officers, and media professionals, were questioned. The ideas and perspectives gathered from these interviews helped to the creation and refutation of the study's hypotheses. The final source of data for the study was a content analysis of media reports. This requires extracting relevant information from stories published in three daily newspapers (*The Sun*, *Vanguard*, and *Guardian*) between January 2012 and June 2021. The selection of these three publications was based on their accessibility, national reach, and relative dependability. The content analysis data allows for the mapping of events involving Biafra supporters by location and time. It also provided a plethora of material on the activities of Biafra supporters, the growth of pro-Biafra movements through time, and the government's responses to Biafran agitation over the time period. Potential respondents were dissuaded from agreeing to interviews by the pervasive fear of persecution against Biafran sympathisers and the general distrust of security personnel. As a result of events such as the May 30, 2016 attacks on Biafra supporters in Onitsha, many agitation leaders have gone underground, making it more difficult to reach them. When potential interviewees eventually consented to participate, the interviews were often postponed to ensure their safety. Consequently, field research was severely

delayed, rendering it difficult to meet deadlines. In conclusion, the sensitive nature of the research made it unappealing to many people, particularly women. Attempts to get the perspectives of women, particularly those whose relatives and acquaintances are involved in the dispute, failed. About eight percent of the respondents were female.

#### *IPOB's Sit-at-Home Order and Businesses in the South-East*

In August, it will have been one year since IPOB issued the directive to increase pressure on the Nigerian government to release its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who is currently on trial for treason and terrorism before the Federal High Court in Abuja. Initially, IPOB declared the vacation for Mondays, but then expanded it to include all court appearances by Mr. Kanu. Since then, the south-east has turned into a ghost town, with all businesses closed on certain days and every Monday, while residents remain at home out of fear of an assault.

Contravening shopkeepers and commuters have been targeted by armed thugs around the region. On such days, they have set fire to goods worth millions of naira that were to be sold or transported. Four masked gunmen released a video on April 21 claiming responsibility for implementing the postponed stay-at-home order on Monday. Only the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu can stop the Monday sit-in, the group's spokesperson declared in the video. The Nigerian government has blamed IPOB for the tragic attacks, although IPOB has repeatedly denied involvement. The separatist organisation is in the vanguard in the effort to establish Biafra as an independent state in the South-East and portions of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria.

The negative repercussions of the Indigenous People of Biafra's repeated stay-at-home commands are becoming more and more concerning. Every resident in the South-East is experiencing negative effects in the economic, social, and educational sectors, among others. Monday stay-at-home is another issue that people find challenging to grasp. IPOB and others have failed to answer the question, "Who is suffering from Monday's stay-at-home policy?" Since the bulk of its citizens are businesses and women, the Southeast is struggling. Daily, both the primary market in Onitsha and the market in Aba are dropping. Traders from Onitsha's primary market are already warehousing their goods in warehouses in Asaba, and Asaba will soon replace Onitsha as the principal market for West African merchants. Ikot-Ekpene is likewise attempting to render Aba and the surrounding area obsolete as the capital of Abia State.

Goodluck Ibem and Kanice Igwe, the group's president and secretary general, declared in a statement, "These fatalities and others that have happened over the past several years are proof that the military is on a clandestine mission to eliminate Igbo youths in the southeast." The killing of unarmed agitators and the shielding of robbers and Boko Haram terrorists are unmistakable indications that the Nigerian military has designated the annihilation of the Ndigbo. The truth must be revealed.

Terrible suffering afflicts the population of the region. Even worse, these disasters are brought upon the populace by their own kin. The party that initiated this, the IPOB, has stated that Monday sit-ins will no longer occur, but harm has already been done.

Numerous families have lost family members due to this careless behaviour. This appears to be pushed by the IPOB organisation. Even the mainstream IPOB is not helping the situation by calling for sit-ins every time Nnamdi Kanu's case is discussed in court. Unknown is whether or not this conduct will help the case. Igbos feel that IPOB's directive to shut down the South East area will exacerbate an already terrible situation. Consequently, they urge IPOB to find another, less damaging approach to aid them while the fighting continues.

The former national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo, has urged the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, to drop its plan to shut down the South East every Monday (2021, August 25, Vanguard Newspaper). The greatest market in the subregion of West Africa, the Onitsha Main Market, is falling daily. The famed Aria-aria market of Aba, Abia State, together with traders, will do business in Asaba. This week, from May 16 to May 18, 2022, Nnamdi Kanu has been ordered to remain at home owing to his court appearance. Who is losing, and what has sitting at home accomplished for Nnamdi Kanu's release? Some residents of Anambra State assert that the Indigenous People of Biafra's directive to remain at home harms the economy of Eastern Nigeria and impoverishes its inhabitants.

Monday, Ngozi Nwaude, a community leader in Enugwu-Ukwu, Njikoka Local Government Area in Awka, the state capital, asked the group's leaders to develop an effective social mobilisation plan. She added that by using fear and intimidation to enforce the sit-at-home order, IPOB had become the enemy of a large portion of the local community. She added that by using fear and intimidation to enforce the sit-at-home order, IPOB had become the enemy of a large portion of the local community. <https://saharareporters.com/2022/01/17/ipob-sit-home-order-making-us-poor-anambra-residents-say>

Okwesilieze Nwodo, a former governor of Enugu State, advised IPOB to find alternate means of demonstrating their support for their leader, such as showing up in large numbers whenever he appeared in court. Instead of shutting the zone, he pushed individuals to mount massive and aggressive social media campaigns to demand his release. The senior Abia monarch, Eze Kalu Kalu Ogbu, Enachioken Abiriba, who is the traditional ruler of the Abiriba Ancient Kingdom, cautioned that the proposed action would exacerbate Ndigbo's economic difficulties.

"We are slowly perishing." The trend of staying at home is killing our business. Mr. Ndu, a father of three, noted that some of us cannot eat unless we attend this market. Mr. Ndu sells technology things on the market. According to him, the sit-at-home policy's five-day workweek has resulted in

extended periods of unsold merchandise. "Every time I'm inactive, I lose about N200,000," he lamented. Kasie Ezebinagu, a market leader in Enugu State's Ogbete Main Market, utilised bank loans to run his stockfish business. However, the previous time he took out a loan, he did not earn enough to repay it.

Mr. Ezebinagu, the chief security officer of the market, told PREMIUM TIMES, "I used to earn 80 percent of the bank loan from sales, but now I can only get 40 percent." He expressed his anguish by shaking his head and said, "Every day we are falling." The economy has deteriorated. Those whose enterprises have collapsed may one day resort to armed self-defence. He projected that the rate of instability and crime would double.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

Former governor of Enugu State (January 1992 – November 1993) Okwesilieze Nwodo suggested to IPOB to find alternative measures of exhibiting their support for their leader, such as appearing in court in large numbers whenever he appeared. Instead of closing the zone, he encouraged people to launch enormous and aggressive social media campaigns demanding his release. Eze Kalu Kalu Ogbu, the senior Abia monarch and traditional ruler of the Abiriba Ancient Kingdom, cautioned that the intended move will exacerbate Ndigbo's economic issues.

We are progressively dying out. The tendency of staying at home is destroying our company. Mr. Ndu, a father of three, remarked that some of us cannot eat if we do not visit this market. Mr. Ndu is a marketer of technological items. According to him, the five-day workweek mandated by the sit-at-home policy has led to lengthy periods of unsold products. "I lose almost N200,000 each time I'm idle," he bemoaned. Kasie Ezebinagu, a market leader in Enugu State's Ogbete Main Market, financed his stockfish company using bank loans. However, the last time he borrowed money, he did not earn enough to pay it back.

Mr. Ezebinagu, the market's top security officer, told PREMIUM TIMES, "I used to get 80 percent of the bank loan from sales, but now I am only able to receive 40 percent." He communicated his agony by shaking his head and said, "Every day we are falling." The economy has worsened. Those whose businesses have failed may resort to armed self-defence one day. He predicted that the rate of insecurity and crime would increase by double.

Nonetheless, residents in the south eastern United States feel politically and economically excluded, and the government's strong position does not assist the situation. The then Eastern Region declared independence the Republic of Biafra, triggering a three-year civil war that was cruel and expensive. The nation confronts a separatist threat once more. Importantly, movement for an independent Biafra state has resurfaced in the southeast, and President Muhammadu Buhari's violent reaction to the agitation has been

counterproductive, inflaming passions and bolstering separatist sentiments.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the conclusions of this study, Nigeria will continue to experience instability unless the federal government intervenes since separatist violence has escalated. Nigeria musters the political will to address the plethora of perplexing obstacles. As a result, the research implies that transferring authority from the federal government to the component states is a viable strategy for combatting separatism. Deterioration of Regional administrations, according to Adangor (2017), will ensure stronger regional development. The majority of separatist movements are motivated by a desire for autonomy. The hegemony of the central authority is expanding, and the ethnic groups are battling fiercely for control of the land.

In addition to the topic of power devolution, the foundation of the multiple separatist movements is the question of power sharing among the different regional and ethnic elite sections, as well as access to federal infrastructure and privileges. As a result, it would be good to institutionalise or codify the present traditional system of power sharing and rotation of the presidency between the north and the south as a temporary solution until the country's democracy grows and the trust of Nigerians increases. The Federal Character Commission (FCC) was founded in 1996 to promote equity in the distribution of employment opportunities and socioeconomic amenities among the nation's regions. Enhancing the FCC will aid in establishing intergroup trust.

Furthermore, even if Nigeria restructures the system through the devolution of authority, agitations would persist if the leadership does not reorganise Nigerians' mentalities. Restructuring how people think will restore their patriotism, which will build national unity and encourage individuals to be purposeful, do their duties, and avoid corruption.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Achebe C (1983). *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- [2] Adangor, Z. (2017). "Separatist agitations and the search for political stability in Nigeria", *Danish Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution*, 3(1), pp.4-11.
- [3] Adibe, J. (2017) *Biafran Separatist Agitations in Nigeria: Causes, Trajectories, Scenarios and the Way Forward*. West Africa Insight, Vol.5, No.1.
- [4] Ake, C., (1996). *Democracy and development in Africa*. Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution.
- [5] Akuchu, G. E. (1977). "Peaceful Settlement of Disputes: Unsolved Problem for the OAU (A Case Study of the Nigeria-Biafra Conflict)". *Africa Today*, 24 (4): 39– 58. [JSTOR 4185729](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4185729)
- [6] Alumona, I. M., Azam, S. N., & Iloh, E. C. (2017). *The Nigerian State and the Resurgence of Separatist Agitations: The Case of Biafra*. Retrieved from: <https://www.africaportal.org/17/12/2019>.
- [7] Aribisala, Femi (2015). *Root Causes of Biafra Struggle*, Vanguard Newspaper, December 1, 2015.
- [8] Austin Ogwuda, "Treason: Trial of Biafra Group Members Begins Today," Vanguard, 19 March 2015, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/03/treason-trial-of-biafra-group-members-be-gins-today/>

- [9] Awofeso, 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*, 2(7), pp.37-42
- [10] Berkowitz, L. (1962). "Frustration-aggression hypothesis: Examination and reformulation", *Psychological Bulletin*, 106(1), 59
- [11] Bhattcherjee, A. (2012). *Social science research: Principles, methods and practices*. USA: Global Tex Project
- [12] Bybee, Ashley (2017, November 9). "[The Indigenous People of Biafra: Another Stab at Biafran Independence](#)" (PDF). Institute for Defence Analysis. 17: 1 – 5.
- [13] Cai, Nebe, and Muhammad Bello (27 January 2021). "Nigerian military reshuffle belies serious security concerns". DW. Retrieved 12 March 2021.
- [14] Campbell, Colin (1987, March 29). *Starvation Was the Policy*. The New York Times. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 17 April 2021.
- [15] Chris Oji, "Pro-Biafran Group Leaders Remanded in Prison after declaring Independence," *The Nation*, 6 November 2012, <http://thenationonline.net/pro-biafran-group-leaders-remanded-in-prison-after-declaring-independence/>.
- [16] Daly, Samuel Fury Childs (2020). "A Nation on Paper: Making a State in the Republic of Biafra". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 62 (4): 868–894. doi:10.1017/S0010417520000316. S2CID 224852757.
- [17] Dollard, J., Miller, N.E., Doob, L. W., Mowrer, O. H. & Sears, R. R. (1939). *Frustration- aggression*. New Haven: Yale Press.
- [18] Emerson, R. (1960). *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1960) 222.
- [19] John Wale Odunsi (2017, September 15). *Biafra National Guard blasts Buhari, charges Igbos to fight Nigerian Army*". Daily Post. Retrieved 24 August 2021.
- [20] Lenin, V. I (nd). *The socialist revolution and the right of nations to self-determination*. Collected Works, Vol. 22.
- [21] Mahr, Oluwatosin Adeshokan, Krista (30 April 2019). "[The dream of Biafra lives on in underground Nigerian radio broadcasts](#)". *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved 2019-05-13.
- [22] Mamah, E. "Enugu Police Warn IPOB against sit-at-home-order"" *Vanguard* (May 24, 2017) <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/enugupolice-warn-ipob-against-sit-at-home-order>> accessed June 01, 2017.
- [23] Maia, G. (2006). *Representing Poverty and Attacking Representations: Perspectives on Poverty from Social Anthropology*, *Journal of Development Studies* 42:7.
- [24] Mannir Dan Ali (30 November 2015). "Letter from Africa: Should new calls for Biafra Nigerians?". BBC. Retrieved 12 March 2021.
- [25] Mark, K.C., Obi, C.B., and Chibuzo, O.P. (2022). *The ills of IPOB sit at home and its Implication on the Economy of the South-East Geo-Political zone of Nigeria*.
- [26] Okonta, I. (2008). *When citizens revolt: Nigerian elites, big oil and Ogoni struggle for self- determination*. Trenton: African world Press.
- [27] Olomjobi, Y. (2015). *Frontiers of Jihad, Radical Islam in Africa*, Safari Books Ltd.
- [28] Plotnicov, Leonard (1971). "An Early Nigerian Civil Disturbance: The 1945 Hausa-Ibo Riot in Jos". *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 9 (2): 305. doi:10.1017/S0022278X00024976. ISSN 0022-278X. JSTOR 159448.
- [29] Ogwuda, A. "Treason: Trial of Biafra Group Members Begins Today," *Vanguard*, 19 "Nigeria – Independent Nigeria". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved 22 January 2020
- [30] Okodili Ndidi, "MASSOB Expels Uwazuruike, Picks New Leadership," *The Nation*, 30 November 2015, <http://thenationonline.net/massob-expels-uwazuruike-picks-new-leadership/>.
- [31] Oliver Lyttelton and Viscount Chandos, *The Memoir of Lord Chandos (The Bodley Head, London 1962)* 409.
- [32] Orji, I. Ema (2001). "Issues on ethnicity and governance in Nigeria: A universal human Right perspectives". *Fordham International Law Journal*. 25 (2 2001 Article 4).
- [33] Orji, I Iwuamadi, Okechukwu, Nkwachukwu, Chijioko (2016). "Biafra Separatism: Causes, Consequences and Remedies". *Institute for Innovations in Development*: 1–71 – via Research Gate.
- [34] Osaretin, Uwaifo Samuel (2019). *Biafra Agitation and Politics of Imbalance in Nigeria*. *Journal of Civil Legal Sci* 2019 8: 265, Vol 8(2). DOI: 10.4172/2169-0170.1000265
- [35] (2017, February 14). *ICE Case Studies: The Biafran War*. American University: ICE Case Studies. American University. 1997. Retrieved 6 November 2016. "Igbo | people". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved 11 May 2020. (2021, March 14). *Nobody can stop us* — Asari Dokubo declares Biafra government. *The Cable*. Accessed 15 March 2021.
- [36] Nnamdi Kanu react (2021, January 26). *Orlu killing: Imo State Eastern Security Network (ESN) crisis kills four soldiers – Police*. BBC. Accessed 26 January 2021.
- [37] BBC News Africa, "Biafran leader Nnamdi Kanu—The man behind Nigeria's separatists" (5 May, 2017) <http://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica-397931857> >accessed June 20, 2017.
- [38] (May 2000 May 29). *Guardian Newspaper*
- [39] (2021, January 25). *Sahara Reporters*.
- [40] (2021, February 18). *Sahara Reporters*
- [41] (2021, August 25, *Vanguard News*). *How Monday sit-at-home is affecting South-East economy*.
- [42] "[We Didn't Designate IPOB As Terrorist Organisation – UK | Channels Television](#)". [www.channelstv.com](http://www.channelstv.com)
- [43] [The man behind Nigeria's new separatist movement](#)". *BBC News*. 2017-05-05. Retrieved 2019-05-13.
- [44] 2021, June 10, *Buhari and the IPOB insurgency*, By Majeed Dahiru, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/466958-buhari-and-the-ipob-insurgency-by-majeed-dahiru.html>
- [45] *Vanguard Newspaper*, 2021, January 27.
- [46] *Vanguard Newspaper*, 2021, January 25.
- [47] *Sahara Reporters*, 2021, January 22.
- [48] *Sahara Reporters*, 2021, February 18
- [49] *The Nation Journal*, 2015, November 30.
- [50] *Daily Post*, 2021, January 28.
- [51] *The Cable*, 2021, March 14..