



RESEARCH ARTICLE

NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT AND SEPERATISTS AGITATION; IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY OF LIVES AND PROPERTIES IN THE SOUTH –EAST ZONE

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ABSTRACT

The quest to secure a peaceful atmosphere has consistently failed in a secularist and pluralist Nigeria following the phenomenal killings; kidnap for ransom, Boko-haram operations and so many other insurgencies, particularly, the operation of the separatist groups like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) activities in the country. The Nigeria state has since the inception of the first republic battled a myotomy of experience in her struggle for survival. Regional agitations for dominance and control of resource allocation have fueled conflicting interest amongst the different sister-regions and has promoted unsafe atmosphere for the citizens' habitation and peaceful coexistence with one another. This paper is an investigatory analysis of the reason behind civil unrest caused by the different non-state actors and their agitations for separation, unraveling the severe implications on the national peace and security of lives and properties. This paper adopted content analysis and qualitative data gathering as research methodology. The paper concludes that marginalization and the high level of corruption, nepotism, or cronyism and systematic human rights violations or repression on the people of South-East (Igbos) promoted separatist agitations in the South- East region. This paper recommends amongst others that South- East region state actors should engage separatist leaders and the government into dialogue for the negotiation of inclusive governance for mutually beneficial solutions.

Keywords: Separatist, agitations, security, lives, properties.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Nigeria has been faced with high level of security challenges that have threatened the lives and properties of every citizen in almost every region of the country starting from the North where there is Boko-Haram insurgencies, to the South-East zone which has suffered unknown gunmen attacks and the Biafra agitation that is seen on daily basis. This separatist group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria aims at restoring the defunct Republic of Biafra.

The Biafra agitation is a separatist movement which advocates for the secession of the oppressed South-eastern people in Nigeria who are called the Biafra people. This agitation for secession had started prior to the 1967-70 of the Nigeria/ Biafra civil war and the fight even after the war has continued till date. This is why the unstable government and high level of insecurity have overwhelmed the various regions of the country as could be seen today. Since then, other non-state actors like the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), herders and farmers (Armed gangs), bandits and kidnappers, Fulani herdsmen and farmers' clash, and the unknown gunmen in the east have consistently showered a profuse terrorist action in all the regions of the country. This phenomenon has however caused uproar within Nigeria, thus, holding the country to hostage and dictating human activities before the very weak government that lives at their mercy (Ononiwu, and Asonye, 2019).

In the South-East states, especially in Imo State, the situation is relatively not peaceful. This like the inhabitants in Orlu and other areas do not enjoy peaceful environment due to high level of security challenge and incessant killings; People in Owerri Municipal area of Imo state are not exempted from the same fear of the unforeseen eventualities that result to death of innocent citizens. For instance, there have been attacks on Owerri prison and INEC offices in recent times. There is also the Monday sit at home policy of the separatists which is still ongoing. Occasional clashes between the Separatist (IPOB) group and security forces which have resulted in



casualties and arrest (Nwonwu, 2023). This conflict has resulted in significant loss of lives and properties in most areas of the southeast zone. Having generated controversy and tension upon the Nigerian government, the group has been labeled a terrorist organization in their bid to achieve a republican self-government.

It is in the light of this background that this study sets out to investigate Nigerian government separatist agitation; implications on security of lives and properties in South-East.

2.0. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Conceptual Clarifications

2.1.1. Separatists' agitation

The concept of Separatist agitation is a victim of definitional pluralism. This assertion is based on the fact that countries that attempts to secede from one united entity most times have varying reasons- political, economic, and/ or a socio-cultural and other pressing reasons for such a secessionist action. However, Babatunde (2023) opines that separatist agitation is a condition where individuals or groups usually united by language, culture or common historical antecedents vehemently demands for the self-actualization or independence of their separate country because of perceived political and economic exclusion, marginalization and repression. Separatist agitations can equally be seen as movements or a campaign that is geared towards seeking the separation or secession of a particular region or group from an existing country or state in order to form an independent entity. These movements often emerge due to various political, social, economic or cultural factors and are driven by a desire for self-determination or autonomy. This has been found in different parts of the world with a historical and contemporary significance in several regions, especially in the south- eastern region of Nigeria (Nnachi, 2021).

In Nigeria, there are many separatist groups which at one time or the other have made the move to gain a self –independence. These separatist groups includes; The Niger- Delta group located in the southern part of Nigeria that has once experienced secessionist struggle that was driven by



various factors, including environmental degradation, economic marginalization and dispute over control of oil resources which finally plunged the country into having what is today called the Militant groups like; “the movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND)” and “the Niger-Delta Avengers (NDA)” Esho (2022). Again, there is also the struggle for the independence of Oduduwa Republic in the south-west region of the Nigeria. This struggle for self –independence is largely driven by the Yoruba ethnic group with the campaign for the independence of the Yoruba nation- citing historical, cultural and political reasons, and finally, the very popular indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) separatist group in the South-east region of Nigeria which emerged lately in the 1960s when the prominent leader of the south-eastern region predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group and led by Lt. colonel Ikemba Odumegwu Ojukwu, declared independence of the Republic of Biafra. This declaration led to the Nigeria/ Biafra civil war (1967-1970) that witnessed a significant loss of lives and properties in the country. Though the war ended, and Biafra was reintegrated into Nigeria, there have been periodic resurgences of the movement, particularly led by the Indigenous People of Biafra leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu (Okafor, 2017). Basically for the purpose of jurisdiction, this study will focus on the separatist agitation in the South-East and this can wholly be associated with the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

2.1.2. The Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB)

This is one of the separatist groups in Nigeria, which advocates for the secession of the predominantly south-eastern region of the country, known as Biafra land. The movement seeks to create an independent state for the Igbo people who have historically faced some level of socio-political and economic challenges within the Nigerian state (Amadi, 2022). According to Ejiofor (2023) The Indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist group in Nigeria that aims to restore the Republic of Biafra, a country which seceded from Nigeria prior to the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) and later rejoined after its defeat by the Nigerian military. Since 2021, IPOB and other separatist groups have been fighting a low-level guerilla conflict in the South-Eastern Nigeria against the Nigerian government.



2.1.4. Security of lives and properties

Security of lives and property can simply be explained as a state in which both personal safety and property of human beings are protected irrespective of gender, age, tribe, cultural heritage and religious affiliations, etc.

The concept of security of lives and property has never been a thing of debate as this is the fundamental and inalienable rights of every living being, inherent from creation. For instance, most religions, if not all, also believe in the sanctity or sacredness of human life. For example, the Book of Exodus 20:13 says authoritatively that: “Thou shall not kill”. To emphasize this Biblical injunction, the Book of Matthew 5:21 says: “Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time. Thou shall not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment”. While the Book of Romans 13:9 says inter alia that: “...Thou shall not kill...Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself”. To further demonstrate the importance attached to human life, the Book of Leviticus 24:21 says “... And he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death”. In the same vein, the Book of Deuteronomy 5:17 say most emphatically that: “Thou shall not kill”.

According to Babatunde and Odum (2023), the history of man as far back as the Stone Age details the importance attached to human life and how man in the days of yore struggled to secure their lives and properties. They lived in caves and set-up the primitive security system using rocks, branches and whatever they could to defend their lives and properties. They used arrows, spears and knives. In the following era known as Bronze Age, man used tools such as Bonze, Sword, Dagger and Knives to replace the stone weapons. In the Iron Age, man made significant changes and invented Javelin, Spear, Swords and Daggers. In the Industrial Age, man protected himself with more dangerous weapons such as security men armed with sophisticated weapons, electrical devices, cameras and communication gadgets. Indeed, the history of man has demonstrated beyond doubt that human beings have always exhibited the instinct to preserve their lives, homes, families and possessions,(Babatunde & Odum, 2023).



In Nigeria today, the concept of security of lives and properties have suffered a great deal and have been exchanged severally with insecurity. Insecurity according to Chris (2015) is defined as “the state of fear or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.” It refers to a lack of or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security. Nigeria in recent times has recorded unprecedented security challenges of lives and properties such as; Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs) attacks, militancy, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping for ransom, Fulani-Herders farmers clashes, cultism among other social vices. However, the unprecedented level of insecurity like the Boko Haram activities, banditry, kidnapping, Fulani-Herders-Farmers clashes was amongst what resulted in Ondo State issuance of quit notice to Fulanis in the State in 2019. This has made national security threat of lives and properties to be a major issue for the government and has prompted a huge allocation of the national budget to security.

In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on the criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, fundamental surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offenses, heightening of physical security measures around the country which aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media. Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high. In addition, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country (Igboanyaka, 2018). With the lingering security challenges and the inability of the security apparatus of the government to guarantee safety and security in the country, the question that borders everyone in Nigeria today is on the “how there can be security.” Is the security of lives and properties achievable? According to Amadi (2017) government at all levels has not done enough by not confronting frontally the situation head-on and dealing with it decisively. Others have argued that the situation has a



political undertone or inclination calculated to serve the interest of certain political gods, who have been dissatisfied and disgruntled about the political manifestations in the country

2.2. Theoretical Framework: The Frustration- Aggression Theory

This study is anchored on the Frustration-Aggression Theory propounded by John Dollard, (1939). The theory was developed for the explanation of violence and criminal behaviors in conjunction with social unrests and disturbances as a quest to achieve pressing needs from necessary authorities (Oduma and Akor, 2019).

In simple terms, the theorist explains that frustration and aggression arises when there is an unwanted interference between a goal and response which can lead to aggression. Based on the above position, aggression is a resultant outcome when attempts to achieve certain goals are blocked or impeded; resulting to frustration, when invariably could cause chaos from the frustrated group.

According to Igwe (2011), the inability to confront the source of impediment to achieving goals, subject aggrieved party to direct their frustration at innocent target. Every government is responsible for the provision of conducive social, economic and political environment upon which her citizens can successfully thrive. In practice, such environment is not easily found. For instance, on annual basis, higher institutions in Nigeria release thousands of graduates into the labour market only to be frustrated with little or no paid employment jobs (Oduma and Akor, 2019). Coupled with accumulated existing challenges, these graduates are faced with bleak futures leaving them with no other option than frustration. These experiences explain the reason behind series of civil unrests such as ethnic, religious, separatist agitations and communal conflicts often experienced since Nigeria returned to civil administration in 1999. In the context of the IPOB, they claimed to be frustrated of all sorts of social ill meted on them by the Nigerian government. Such social ill is majorly claimed to be marginalization of the Igbos in the social, political and economic stream of the country. On a general note, Faminu (2021) highlighted that between 2020 and 2021, more than 2,000 lives have been lost in Nigeria largely because of the activities of Boko Haram, Herdsmen, Niger-Delta militants, the Oduduwa groups, the recent



EndSARs protests and the on-going IPOB sit-at-home order enforced by the Eastern Security Network (ESN). These activities cannot be said to be unconnected with bottled up anger and frustrations.

The relevance of Frustration/Aggression theory to this study is not unconnected to the fact that the IPOB conceive the Nigerian government as the main clogging body to the actualization of the independence of Biafra. The IPOB claim to be frustrated with government administration in Nigeria, where they are deprived equal representation in various agencies and parastatals as well as the seat of presidency. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu was arrested and detained for his activity which is not far from frustration albeit; the Nigerian government deems his activities inimical to the peaceful co-existence of the nation. The efforts to get Nnamdi Kanu released proved abortive, hence more frustrations to the IPOB members. This gave birth to the sit-at-home orders being observed in the Southeastern part of Nigeria.

The series of social unrests experienced in Nigeria is as a result of bottled-up anger and frustration inherent in Nigeria. The alarming rate of poverty, police brutality, high level of insecurity, marginalization are some of the by-products frustrating the youths in the country's social, political and economic environment. Youths and the aged see Nigerian government as a failed administration, hence the loss of trust. Social unrest is a common occurrence at the slightest provocation in the country resulting to attack on social infrastructure, disruption in academic activities, unhealthy business environment for domestic and FDI and ultimately consistent decline in economic growth and education especially in the east and the nation at large.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive research design observing that it is qualitative and non-experimental. The majority of the data used came from secondary sources. The secondary and documentary sources consist of books, conference papers, journal articles, periodicals, official documents, monographic seminar papers and internet sources. Content analysis was used to analyze the data generated for the study.



4.0. DISCOURSES

4.1. Brief History of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Formation in Nigeria.

According to Esho (2022), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) was formed in 2012 by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu over perceived excessive wild and abuse of power by the Nigerian state which they deemed tyrannical and indirectly coercive on the Igbo nation. In the same vein, the IPOB was formed as a movement against corruption and marginalization of the Igbo nation (Okafor, 2017). Consequently, the quest for independence of the Biafra's (Igbos) from Nigerian government became evident and orchestrated by various activities they deem fit irrespective of their inimical effects on the entire economy.

One of the strategies adopted to gain their quest for freedom was several media attacks on the Nigerian government by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), hierarchy. In view of this, the Nigerian government deemed the series of attacks breaches to national peaceful coexistence (Ugwu, 2022). Consequently, on 19th of October 2015, Nnamdi Kanu was arrested through concerted efforts from security operatives, thereafter charged for sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. The arrest birthed a number of experiences across major cities in the Eastern part of Nigeria. For example, on the 2nd of December 2015 major cities in Anambra state especially in Onitsha, parts of Aba, Umuahia, and Enugu states recorded high rate of protests, riots, and police clashes. The experiences led to the death and injury of massive numbers of youths. Sequel to a number of agitations from members of the public, Nnamdi Kanu was later bailed (Emeruwa, 2021). Following series of events by the Nigerian security operatives such as the 'operation python dance' Nnamdi Kanu left Nigeria to the UK on the ground that his live was threatened (Ugwu, 2022). In the UK, he was using the media to attack the Nigerian government under the leadership of President Muhammad Buhari. The scenarios worsened, that in June 2021, Kanu was arrested by the Nigerian government in Kenya and brought back to the country (Emeruwa, 2021). He was re-arraigned on charges of treasonable felony over his agitation for the separatist Republic of Biafra. On July 30th, 2021, Emma Powerful, the then IPOB spokesperson



declared that every Monday starting from August 9, 2021 would be a sit-at-home, although the orders are annually observed prior to this time to remember those who lost their lives in the Nigeria-Biafra war (Esho, 2022). It is a form of protest that would continue till Nnamdi Kanu is released from the custody of the Department of State Security. Hence, from the forgoing it can be deduced that the intent of the maker of this order is to use it as a means of peaceful protest to release Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and secure the political freedom of the Indigenous people of Biafra. The frequency of the “sit-at-home order” has become a thorn in the flesh of the people as it affects their daily living and has triggered a backlash and retrogression to the economy of the eastern region of Nigeria. The effect of the order is felt in the economic, social, educational and every sector of the economy of Southeastern Nigeria.

.4.2. Insecurity and the various acclaimed groups undertaking the activities in Nigeria.

Nigeria is faced with an unprecedented wave of different, but overlapping security crises which from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies - almost every corner of the country has been hit by violence and crime. Some have linked the recent surge of insecurity to the staggering poverty across the country (Emezue 2019). Youth unemployment currently stands at 32.5% and the country is in the middle of one of the worst economic downturns.

According to Olisa (2017) Nigeria has been grappling with security challenges for over a decade, with the emergence of the Boko-Haram terror group and rising crime rates in the country. Nigeria’s security challenges began in 2009 with the emergence of the Boko-Haram terror group in the country’s northeast regions, and it has since spread across other regions. Besides Boko-Haram, which has been misusing religion for subversive activities, armed gangs, kidnappers, and separatist groups have exacerbated the security situation in the Western African country of over 200 million people. The conflict between cattle herders and farmers, the presence of the Shia Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) in central Nigeria, the Niger Delta Vigilante (NDA) and the



IPOB in the southeast, the Boko-Haram, or Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in the northeast all disrupt the peace in one of Africa's most populous countries. Despite several operations to prevent terror group attacks on civilians, kidnappings for ransom, and school attacks, the Nigerian government has yet to find a genuine solution to the country's security dilemma. The following groups have been reportedly publicized to have posed insecurity in Nigeria.

➤ **Boko Haram/ ISWAP**

Boko-Haram, which means "Western education is forbidden" in the local Hausa language, was founded in the Northeast Nigerian state of Borno in the early 2000s by Mohammed Yusuf. Mohammed Yusuf and his followers, who established religious education schools in Maiduguri, Borno state's capital, as an alternative to Western education, are called "Boko-Haram" by locals. The terror group tries to recruit illiterate youth in particular, offering poor youth high wages in exchange for joining the terror group. After Muhammed Yusuf died in police custody, Abubakar Shekau took over the terror group in 2009. Boko -Haram began to commit mass violence under Shekau's leadership, (Ekemado, 2014) As of 2015, members of Boko-Haram, which began operating in Nigeria's Adamawa and Yobe states after Borno, had shifted their attacks to neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Benin, Chad, and Niger.

The leadership crisis that erupted within Boko Haram in 2016 caused the group to split into two factions led by the founder's son, Abu Musab al-Barnawi, and Abu Babakar Shekau. Shekau now controls Boko Haram, while Barnawi established the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). Many people are still baffled as to how the group grew into a large militant organization. Boko-Haram has never revealed the number of its members because it lacks a clear organizational structure. In contrast, the Nigerian government recently announced that over 51,000 Boko-Haram and ISWAP members had surrendered due to food shortages. Despite the



claims that Islamist militant group Boko- Haram had been "technically" defeated, the immediate past President Buhari at a time had admitted that his government is failing to stop the insurgency, which began in the North-East.

Indeed, Boko-Haram is expanding into new areas and taking advantage of Nigeria's poverty and other security challenges to fuel its extremist ideologies. According to the United Nations data on Insurgency operation in Nigeria (2021), by the end of 2020, conflict with the group had led to the deaths of almost 350,000 people and forced millions from their homes. Boko-Haram launches deadly raids, in some cases hoisting its flag and imposing extremist rule on local people. It levies taxes on farms and the sale of agricultural products. The once booming international fish market in the Chad Basin is now completely controlled by the group.

➤ **Islamic Movement of Nigeria**

Operating in the central part of Nigeria, the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) created another security threat as the clashes broke out between Nigerian security forces and IMN members in 2014. Headquartered in the city of Zaria in Kaduna state, IMN operatives are also active in the country's Sokoto and Kano states.

According to Joseph (2017) the tension between the IMN and the Nigerian military began in 2014 with the Jerusalem march. After the security forces intervened in the Jerusalem march in Zaria, at least 35 people, including the three sons of the leader of the organization, Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaki, were killed. Events flared up again in Zaria after Shiites blocked the passage of the country's General Tukur Buratai's convoy in 2015. The operation, which targeted Zakzaki and his supporters, resulted in the killing of seven people, according to the military. But Human Rights Watch reported 300 deaths while the IMN claimed that at least 700 of its members were killed. In 2019, the government designated the IMN as an unconstitutional and illegal organization and prohibited all of its activities throughout the country (Amadi, 2014).



➤ **Niger Delta Vigilante**

In the oil-producing south, security challenges are nothing new. It is Nigeria's biggest foreign export earner, and militants in the Niger Delta have long agitated for a greater share of the profit. Adegoke & Oluwole (2018) argue the majority of the oil comes from their region and the environmental damage caused by its extraction has devastated communities and made it impossible for them to fish or farm.

For years, militants pressured the government by kidnapping oil workers and launching attacks on security personnel and oil infrastructure, like pipelines. To address this, ex-president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua launched a presidential amnesty programme in 2009, which saw the formal end of the Niger Delta militants. But armed cult groups still pose a security challenge in the region and industry officials have been warning that militancy is once again picking up.

The Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) armed militia group emerged in the Niger Delta region of the country's oil production area in 2016, coming to the fore with attacks on oil lines in the region. While Delta state is believed to be the NDV terror group's main base, it currently operates in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers states in southeast Nigeria. As a result of armed group attacks, oil production could only reach 1 million barrels in the year 2016, against the projected output of 2.2 million barrels. The Pirates, a branch of the terror group, attack oil ships from the Niger Delta region to the Gulf of Guinea and kidnap people for ransom.

➤ **The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)**

The idea of Biafra is not new. In 1967, regional leaders declared an independent state, which led to a brutal civil war and the death of over a million people. Millions were killed in the civil war that erupted in Nigeria (1967- 1970) when the people of Biafra revolted against the country,



demanding an independent state in the country's South. The Biafra Republic, which was established in 1967 in the states of Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Cross River, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Enugu, Anambra, Imo, and Abia in the country's South-East, came under Nigerian dominance at the end of the civil war (Achebe, 1999). The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a nationalist separatist group aiming to restore the Republic of Biafra, was founded in 2012 by Nigerian political activist Nnamdi Kanu, a British / Nigerian citizen. The government designated the IPOB as a terrorist organization in 2017, and the organization's leader, Kanu, was arrested. His arrest has been a major blow to the movement.

While Kanu is on trial for 15 different crimes, including terrorism and treason, members of the organization continue to carry out attacks in southern states. A separatist group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has been clashing with Nigeria's security agencies. IPOB wants a group of states in the south-east, mainly made up of people from the Igbo ethnic group, to break away and form the independent nation of Biafra. Supporters of Nnamdi Kanu's movement have been accused of launching deadly attacks on government offices, prisons and the homes of politicians and community leaders.

The immediate past President Buhari, while in office vowed to crush IPOB. At a time, he tweeted that "those misbehaving today would be dealt with in the language they will understand". The post was removed by Twitter for violating its rules after Mr. Buhari faced a backlash online. The incident led to the suspension of Twitter in Nigeria, though the presidential order was later withdrawn and the social media channel regained its existence in Nigeria.

Causes of separatist agitation; Implication for security of lives and properties of citizens in the south-east zone

No unit or region of any country would want to separate from the other if all things being equal, especially in the proper undertaking of the federal character principle of the nation. As pointed



out by Olubunmi and Ojo (2018) Nigeria from independence up to date has never taken any measure to ensure that the south –Eastern region of the country enjoys equity, fairness and justice in the share of political, economic and social concerns of the nation. The level of ethnic discrimination in all spheres of the national activities on the south-east region is quite unbearable.

Another grand cause of the separatist agitation and threat to security of lives and properties in the south-East zone could be vehemently ascribed to the unlawful detention of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) Maazi Nnamdi Kanu. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a nationalist separatist group aiming to restore the Republic of Biafra, was founded in 2012 by Nigerian political activist Nnamdi Kanu, a British / Nigerian citizen. The government designated the IPOB as a terrorist organization in 2017, and the organization's leader, Kanu, was arrested. His arrest has been a major blow to the movement. According to Emezue (2021), while Maazi Nnamdi Kanu is on trial for 15 different crimes, including terrorism and treason, members of the organization continue to carry out attacks in southern states. A separatist group called the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has been clashing with Nigeria's security agencies. IPOB wants a group of states in the south-east, mainly made up of people from the Igbo ethnic group, to break away and form the independent nation of Biafra. Supporters of Nnamdi Kanu's movement have been accused of launching deadly attacks on government offices, prisons and the homes of politicians and community leaders.

4.3. Effects of Separatist Agitation on Security of Lives and Properties in South-East Zone

Tribune online (2022) revealed that the enforcement of the order in the region has rendered the South-East as one of the most unsafe and insecure regions in Nigeria. Besides, law enforcement agents are being killed regularly and government properties burnt. Public examinations have been disrupted, with adverse effects on the education sector. According to Opara and Ajuzie



(2023) the Academic Calendar of schools has been so disrupted that schools are now battling with the pressure of meeting up with school calendar at a time. It was observed at a time that schools were having double admission in one year which they tagged academic section a & b at a time.

The school academic calendar in the zone has been disrupted because of security challenges and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) “sit-at-home-order” in the region. School calendar is designed to give the school a working action and direction of what to do at a particular time and resources to deploy for the actions. School calendar gives details of school activities for term and session. The school calendar discloses when to write continuous assessments, examinations and when to close for the term. The “sit-at-home order” in the region has affected school academic activities of many schools. Many schools both public and private are not going to school on Mondays due to enforcement of the sit-at-home order, which IPOB had directed in all the five states in the zone.

Ogunode & Ahanotu (2021) posits that continuous closure of schools by the state government in the Northern Nigeria whenever there is any attack on educational institutions within or close to the state is also responsible for unstable academic calendar of various educational institutions in the states especially, the secondary schools which are the most affected in the region. Educational institutions operates on planned academic calendar which specifies the academic session, terms and weeks that school will open for teaching and learning. Scheme of work and syllables are there to be covered within the school calendar. Theses academic calendar and programmes of educational institutions are poorly implemented due to closure of school which is unhealthy for the development of education because, teaching and learning and other academic activities are intermittently disrupted.

Ahanotu (2021) stressed on the Brain-drain effect of the sit-at-home order of the non-state actors when he pointed out that the “sit at home order” and its enforcement by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the south east Nigeria is causing massive movement of professional teachers and lecturers from the region. One of the press release by the group read in part, “We, the global



family of the Indigenous People of Biafra, ably led by the prophet of our time, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, wish to announce once again that this year's annual Biafra Remembrance Day and candle light procession will take place on Sunday night, 30th of May, while a sit-at-home and total lockdown takes place on Monday, 31st of May, 2021, and not May 30 as earlier announced. "Every person in Biafra land is therefore, advised to observe a sit-at-home order on Monday, May 31, 2021. That day is a sacred day in Biafra land in honor of the over five million Biafrans massacred by the wicked Nigeria forces during the civil war. "There will be a total lockdown all through Biafra land on that day as we remember all our fallen heroes and heroines, including agitators, who have paid the supreme price in the course of our struggle for independence since 1967 till date.

To the above effect, "All markets, filling stations, motor parks, airports, seaports, banks, schools, etc. as well as social activities in Biafra land are to be shut down on that day. Everyone is to remain indoors in Biafra land from 6am to 6pm on that day. The implication of this directive and other criminal activities by kidnappers and unknown gunmen is responsible for movement of people from the region and has posed security threat to lives and proprieties in the region. Many teachers and lecturers in private basic schools and higher institutions are relocating from the zone due to the high rate of insecurity challenges especially the sit at home order.

Tribune online (2022) confirmed that gunmen have attacked traders and commuters who flout the order across the region. They have killed scores of people and set goods being sold or transported ablaze. Many Igbos visiting home have been murdered in cold blood. Hotels, restaurants and related businesses have been invaded, looted and shut down. The group has held the entire region to ransom, with the governors apparently helpless. Uzoho (2023) stressed Funding of Education system as one of the negative effect of the non-state actor's action of sit-at-home order in the south-east in general. The sit at home order by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the states in the South East may also affect the funding of education especially the basic education in the region. The funding of education is linked to the revenue generated in each state in the region. When the revenue increases it will affect all sectors positively because



allocation to sectors in the economy will also increase too and when the revenue generated falls, it will affect the entire sector of the economy too. Every sector of the economy is tied to the total revenue of the states.

Premium Online (2022) submitted that Professor Chukwuma Soludo, Anambra State governor, said an estimated N19.6 billion is lost in Anambra alone during sit-at-home days. It seems that IPOB is committed to ruining the economy of the south-eastern region. Also, Prime business (2021) submitted that on September 15, 2021, Ebonyi State governor and chairman, South-East Governors' Forum, Engr. Dave Umahi, stated that the South-East cumulatively loses N10 billion for every sit-at-home Monday enforced by the Pro Biafra Movement.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

From all indications, marginalization, Perception of exclusion from power and inequality in resources allocation, and decision-making in the country, the unequal sharing of natural resources, revenue, or economic opportunities (Resource distribution) and the high level of corruption, nepotism, or cronyism and systematic human rights violations or repression on the people of South-East (Igbos) promoted separatist agitations which has led to the desire for greater self-governance or independence (Autonomy) of the South East region. This has resulted in occasional clashes between separatist groups and security forces leading to loss of lives on several occasions, promoted kidnappings, hostage-taking, and ransom demands and have caused mass protests, demonstrations, and rallies, vandalism, and public/private property destruction in the South –East states and the unfortunate displacement of civilians due to conflict, refugee crises, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the South-East zone. This has also promoted insecurity, political instability, civil unrest, stress, anxiety and disorder on the citizen's investments, business opportunities and decreased economic growth and development.

5.2. Recommendations

Chiadika et al (2025). Nigerian Government and Separatists Agitation; Implications on Security of Lives and Properties in the South –East Zone.



Based on the findings of this research work, the researcher has made the following recommendations;

1. South- East region state actors should engage separatist leaders and the government into dialogue for the negotiation of inclusive governance for mutually beneficial solutions.
2. There should be a true practice of federalism or decentralization to give the component regions more power and strength in governance.
3. Government at the federal level should also put in place a constitutional reform exercise to help in addressing grievances and ensure adequate representation of all the regions in the country.

Competing Interest

The author had declared that no conflicting interest existed regarding this paper.

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