

Ethnic Cleavages, Marginalization And Human Rights Deprivations As Precursors Of Self-Determination Conflicts In South-Eastern Nigeria: A Logical Approach

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Abstract

South-eastern Nigeria is used as the focal point of analysis as this article explores the connections between conflicts, identity/ethnic divisions, and human rights in Nigeria. It traces the evolution of ethnic relations in Nigeria with specific interest in marginalisation and suppression/oppression and their link with separatist tendencies and conflict. The method here is to identify relevant global human rights instruments and assess their role in the outbreak of conflicts and their potency in resolving such conflicts. Thus, the study utilized logical inquiry via a literature review and ex post facto data gathering techniques and trend analysis to arrive at inferences. Results of the data analysis reveal that ethnic cleavages, marginalisation and violation of political rights and rights of self-determination are precursors of conflicts in South-eastern Nigeria between 1965 and 2020. Among others, this paper recommends the establishment of human rights panel and the adaptation of international human rights regime in Nigeria for the Southeast, as solutions to the conflicts.

Keywords: Ethnic Cleavages, Marginalization, Human Rights, Conflict, South-eastern Nigeria

Introduction

Experiences of unguarded state atrocities against citizens at the time of the Second World War led to the development of the international human rights system which established fundamental values of freedom and principles of equality in state-citizens' relations (Eze, 2019). The principles of human rights generally established individuals' survival and human values over state interests (Dworkin, 1984). They are principles and rules designed to protect the individual

from unwarranted state interferences and hence, a rule of law applicable to all States, independent of disparities in degrees of civilization, ideology and culture (Orji, 2001). Governments have two fundamental responsibilities to the law: to uphold *pacta sunt servanda*, or the pact on the faithful performance of international obligations, and to take ownership of transgressions of those pacts. Also, any domestic law that "conflicts with a peremptory, imperative *jus cogens* or higher norm of general international law from which no deviation is authorized and which only a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character can amend" is prohibited (Orji, 2001, p. 88). Nevertheless, public order or national security seems to be the only factor that requires the state's proportional interference without consideration of human rights provisions (UN Charter, 1948).

When Nigeria attained independence on 1st October 1960, it accented to and domesticated the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in the various versions of her constitutional reforms and amendments. These rights are consequently regarded as supreme, and neither the executive nor the legislature may overrule them unless the constitution is altered by a decree. The UDHR made provisions for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people and specifically provided for people's legal entitlement to self-determination.

Self-determination has increasingly emerged as a critical issue in Nigeria's political history and literature as a phenomenon that threatens its sovereignty and unity, and is unabating due to ethnicity and tribal politics. Ethnicity refers to the act of sharing and being influenced by a common ancestry, history or culture among a group or sub-groups of people that are differentiated from others by their common geographic origin, family patterns, language, values, cultural norms and food culture among others. The seed of ethnicity or ethnic cleavages and tribal politics that generated self-determination movements across Nigeria was sown in the process of nationalists struggle for an independent Nigeria. Political leaders from one or more ethnic groups with greater political, economic or social influence took advantage of their elevated positions to marginalize or discriminate against some other political leaders. This led to the mobilisation of supporters using ethnic affinities in their desire for justice and equity, and a consequent repression of struggles that polarized Nigerian politics along ethnic lines and interests.

The journey to Nigeria's independence began with popular agitation for political inclusion by the indigenous elites under the auspices of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1922. This led to the emergence of the Clifford's Constitution of 1922 and to the first election in colonial Nigeria the same year as well as the formation of more political parties later (Uwaifo, 2016). The NYM, though not an ethnic movement, was based at Lagos, in the western part of Nigeria, and later transmogrified into a national party known as National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) led by Sir Hebert Macaulay in 1944 while the Action Group (AG) emerged in 1947 as a party to serve the interest of the Yoruba of western Nigeria. These political parties, supported by the Eastern and Western Regions, began to agitate for independence, as opposed to the earlier demand for inclusion in the colonial administration, while the North was indifferent and comfortable with the colonial administration until 1951

when they formed the Northern People's Congress (NPC). The emergence of AG in the west to pursue Yoruba interest where the NCNC – a none tribal oriented party – was already dominant created ethnic consciousness and cleavages among the Yoruba and Igbo members of the NCNC. This led to the overnight cross-carpeting of Yoruba members of parliament, from the NCNC to the AG, to avert the ascendancy of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo, as the Premier of the Western Region. Dr. Azikiwe quickly returned to the Eastern Region where the same NCNC appointed him as the Premier. Chief Awolowo became that of the Western Region while Sir Ahamdu Bello became the Premier of the Northern Region. The Eastern and Western Regions attained self-rule in 1957 while the North preferred to wait till 1959. So, by 1960 when the country achieved independence with a Northerner as the head of government, there were three ethno-centric interests contending for dominance and control of power and resources with the associated mutual fears and suspicions (Eteng, 2004).

In addition to the census crisis of 1962/3 and the planting of surrogates to destabilise the unity and dominance of other ethnic parties in their various domains, particularly in the Western Region, the North resorted to various political strategies to consolidate its dominance, to the exclusion of others. Besides, the region was accused of unduly influencing the political process through series of constitutional reforms (in 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999) and creation of states and local governments in order to perpetuate its domination of the structures of governance and appropriation of national wealth. These led to agitations and crises such as the election crisis of 1964 in the Western Region, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970 and the emergence of different agitations for autonomy and self-determination (Amaechi & Muoh, 2017; Osadolor, 1998; Osaghae, 2001; Ukiwo, 2005). Stemming from this situation, numerous ethnic militias from different ethnic backgrounds emerged to fight for self-determination. These include the Pan-Yoruba Oduduwa Peoples' Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Yoruba Liberation Command (YOLICOM), the Agbekoya, Network for Yoruba Alliance (NEYA), the Nigeria Indigenous Nationalities Alliance for Self-Determination (NINAS) and the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) (Amaechi, 2007; Akinrefon, 2020; Adibe, 2017).

The successive regimes in the country adopted several strategies to repress the various ethnic agitations against the status quo. Consequently, instead of abating, different groups and movements for self-determination have continued to emerge. This is more so in the south-eastern region of the country which had earlier gone through a horrific civil war with the federal government from 1967 to 1970. In all these, the Federal government's response resulted to monumental killings, heightened farmers-herders conflict, attacks on towns and villages and security personnel and introduction of weekly sit-at-home with brutal consequences for the violators.

Research Questions

Consequent upon the above background, this paper seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a connection between the frequency of ethnic divisions and agitations in Nigeria, particularly in the Southeast, and human rights violations?
2. Does the advent of conflicts in South-eastern Nigeria have anything to do with problems associated with human rights aberrations?

Methods and Materials

This paper employed logical inquiry using a review of the literature and ex post facto methods of data collection. Due to the abundance of literature, discussions and criticism on the subjects of human rights, Nigerian politics and conflicts, particularly in South-eastern Nigeria, the methodology involved engaging in a thorough literature review. The main sources of information include books, journals, workshop and lecture papers, government publications and documents from libraries (both private and public).

Data was analysed using trend analysis whose method is to describe the principles of human rights and compare events leading to their violation and consequent conflicts, and the nature of conflict management approaches adopted by the federal government in the Southeast and their outcomes using common sense. It established the relevant variables, their empirical indices and then the linkages and causal interactions between the variable indices during a specific time period. This enabled the paper to extrapolate the relationships that existed between the human rights principles, the emergence of ethnic cleavages/conflicts and the observed crises and their management in the Southeast. Through this, answers to the research questions were derived.

Data Analysis and Findings

Human rights violation and the prevalence of ethnic cleavages in Nigeria particularly the South-eastern region

This section seeks to explore the relationship between violation of human rights principles and the development of ethnic cleavages in Nigeria by outlining the principles, Nigerian's adherence or non-adherence to them, and identifying the consequent primary reactions of ethnic nationalities to such actions. These are presented in table i below:

Table i: Human rights and ethnic cleavages in Nigeria

s/n	Principles of HR	State behaviour	Ethnic Reaction
1	<p>Equality & Non-discrimination:</p> <p>➤ All individuals are equal and no one should suffer discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, age, language, religion, etc.</p>	<p>✓ Manipulation of 1962/63 census by the government in favour of the north</p> <p>✓ Rigging and imposition of northern preferred candidates on western Nigeria during 1964 general election</p>	<p>❖ Revolt and protests against northern inter-ference and imposition of candidates on western Nigeria, which led to arson and ferocious violence in 1964</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People must be protected from the denial or violation of their rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Awolowo’s arrest, detention and charge for treason ✓ The northern led federal military government smuggled in the principle of Land Mass as a measure for sharing resources using fiat in 1990 because its land mass is twice that of the south ✓ Introduced land and minerals ownership and use law, which empower northern controlled federal government to administer lands and mineral deposits across Nigerian territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Execution of military coup d’état on 15th January 1966 against the northern dominated national government led by Tafawa Balewa, and a counter-coup in July 1966 ❖ Emergence of Biafra – an Igbo Republic - and the beginning of Nigeria-Biafra civil war of 1967 – 1970 ❖ Agitation for resource autonomy and control by various ethnic nationalities, particularly the Niger Delta region
2	<p>Prohibition of genocide, slavery, and torture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protection of civilian lives ➤ Treatment of sick and wounded combatants and non-combatants during wars ➤ Protection of prisoners and prisoners of wars ➤ Condemnation and punishment of human rights violators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unexplainable and un-investigated attacks and killing of civilians in markets and villages by the military and police ✓ Absolute govt. indifference to massive human rights violation being committed by its organs ✓ Harassment of motorists and extortion by security personnel at checkpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EndSARS protests and killing of many protesters and police personnel ❖ Burning of many police stations, surveillance & operation vehicles
3	<p>Participation and Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Right to participate in and access to information relating to governance ➤ Right to participate in the political and development processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unlawful disqualification of candidates, imposition of candidates, and election rigging ✓ Declaration of false election results and the use of the judiciary to sustain the falsehood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emergence of unknown gunmen, AMOTEKUN, Eastern Security Network (ESN), and other security networks in western, Eastern, and Middle belt regions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Exclusion of certain tribes from the corridors of power ✓ Abuse of the federal character principle and concentration of Hausa/Fulani in all sectors of governance and economy ✓ Neglect or abandonment of the development of the east or the Igbo after the civil war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Formation and arming of local vigilantes, and increased farmers-herders' conflicts ❖ Attacks on police stations, military and police convoys, patrol teams, and killing of personnel
4	<p>Accountability and Rule of Law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ States must comply with the legal norms and standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Impunity of security forces, torture, and extrajudicial killings such as the killing of Tunde Oladepo on 26/2/1998, Kudirat Abiola on 4/6/1996; & attempts to kill Lt. Gen. Oladipo Diya on 13/12/1997 and Senator Abraham Adesanya on January 14, 1997 ✓ Abuse of the Constitution, arbitrary arrest of innocent citizens, indefinite detentions without charges or trials ✓ Destruction of people's property, shops, and burning of their houses by security forces ✓ Denying prisoners & detainees, whether political or criminal, access to visitors, food, clothes and other assistance such as medicines ✓ Government disregards court orders in all cases of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Formation of NADECO – a predominantly Yoruba opposition and resistance group

		detention of high-profile political, ethnic, or human rights activists with impunity	
5	<p>Human Dignity and Freedom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protection of the fundamental conditions of respect ➤ The right to freedom of expression and press ➤ The right to peaceful assembly and association, and ➤ The right to freedom from discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Harassment, arbitrary and prolonged detention or even arbitrary execution of government critics such as Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, Dele Giwa, Fela Ransom Kuti ✓ Unbridled curtailment of freedom of the press ✓ Indiscriminate detention of journalists and human rights activists from western & eastern Nigeria such as Ogaga Ifowodo, Chima Ubani, Bar. Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, Onome Osifo-Whiskey, etc. ✓ Unjustifiable torture of detainees by security agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emergence of liberation movements such as Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta ❖ Emergence of struggles for regional autonomy and regional independence or separatist agitation, ❖ Civil liberty activisms, demonstrations ❖ Establishment of oppositions and alliances along ethnic identities

Sources: Adejuwon, 2009; Eze, 2019; Francis, LaPin & Rossiasco, 2011; Afeno, 2014; Hamzat, 2013; Nzarga, 2014; Serrano & Zacharias, 2014; Zamfir, 2016; Ojo, 2010; Dada, 2012 etc.

It can, therefore, be concluded from table i that the use of federal governmental structures to manipulate the Constitution, legal processes and governance to perpetuate the dominance of a section of the country and the marginalisation of the other sections sustained the foundations of ethnic cleavages and perennial crisis of state legitimacy in Nigeria (Maier, 2000; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Soyinka 1997). Osaghae & Suberu (2005, p. 9 - 10) summed up the relationship between the violation or abuse of human rights and the emergence of ethnic cleavages and conflicts in Nigeria in the following words,

The system produces and sustains a hierarchical, unequal, and ranked system of citizenship that has provoked violent conflicts all over the country, and goes to the very heart of the ‘ National Question’ . . . they have deep historical roots in pre-colonial patterns of inter-group relations, and the discriminatory practices and ethnic inequalities entrenched by both the colonial

regime and continued by post-independence administrations.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Lewis and Bratton (2000) observed that 48.2% of Nigerians identify themselves ethnically and almost two-thirds of the populace regarded themselves to be members of specific ethnic, regional, and religious groups, as opposed to being simply Nigerians. In other words, Nigerians tended to congregate more naturally around kin- and kindred-based cultural solidarities wherever they found themselves. Consequently, it is not ideal to argue that Nigeria's diversity was responsible for ethnic cleavages during the period covered by this study. It is noteworthy that most diverse countries of the world such as Switzerland, Belgium, Malaysia and Tanzania do not experience such cleavages, conflicts and instability. Available literature identified marginalisation and manipulation of governmental structures and processes against other ethnic nationalities and the extent to which different identities and interests overlap as the cause of ethnic cleavages and conflicts in countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and largely Sri Lanka (Posner 2004; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Weingast, 1997).

Human rights questions and the emergence of conflicts in South-eastern Nigeria

Osaghae and Suberu (2005, p. 23) provided a useful guide to the exploration of evidences concerning the emergence of conflicts in South-eastern Nigeria when they observed that,

Nigeria presents a complex of individual as well as crisscrossing and recursive identities of which the ethnic, religious, regional, and sub-ethnic (communal) are the most salient and the main bases for violent conflicts in the country. This is both from the point of view of the identities most commonly assumed by citizens especially for political purposes and the identities often implicated in day-to-day contestations over citizenship as well as competitions and conflicts over resources and privileges.

The regionalisation of post-independence politics in Nigeria, Northern dominance at the centre and the alleged falsification of the 1963 census figures led to suppression of people who challenged the scenario (Okeke, Nduba, & Akam, 2019; Ademoyega, 1981). In 1963, Chief Awolowo and his group – which also included Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Lateef Jakande – were detained, accused of committing a felony related to treason and sentenced to prison. This paved way for federal government's interferences in the Western Region during the 1964 general elections a move that generated crisis that ushered in the first military coup on January 15, 1966.

The biased perception of the coup in the northern part of the country laid the foundation for human rights violations and conflicts in southeast Nigeria (Okafor, 1999). During the coup, frontline northern politicians and their allies such as: the Prime Minister, Sir Tafawa Balewa;

the Sarduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello; Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, the Premier of the Western Region who was installed by the North; and Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, the federal Minister of Finance were killed. No politician of Igbo extraction was killed, probably because none occupied political position at the federal level during the coup. This engendered: tribal sentiments against the Igbo which led to the July 1967 counter coup and the massacre of Igbo military officers and civilians in the north; the unsuccessful Aburi Accord; declaration of Republic of Biafra by the Igbo; and the subsequent civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. Although the war ended with the declaration and adoption of the “ No Victor No Vanquished” slogan, it generated and formalised structural imbalances that were highly skewed against the Igbo of the Southeast (Alabi-Isiama, 2013).

Since the end of the war, no Igbo man or woman has been given serious consideration for strategic positions in the military, police or any of the other national security agencies. Those that emerged through ranking were immediately retired within six months of holding such offices. Most of them ended up in the classrooms, teaching or instructing young recruits. For almost five years into President Buhari’s ongoing regime, no Igbo man has been appointed as a member of the National Security Council. This has continued to be perceived as a pure policy of exclusion and marginalization against the Igbo of the southeast.

At the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, the property of the Igbo scattered across other ethnic nationalities in Calabar, Port Harcourt, Lagos, Kaduna, Jos, Kano, and Ibadan such as houses and factories were either seized or outrightly confiscated by either the federal government or states and local authorities on whose territories the properties were situated. Besides, the federal government systematically initiated and established the structure of disenfranchisement of the Igbo through state and local government creations (Eme-Uche & Okonkwo, 2020; Forsyth, 2015). Even up to the present (2020), among the six geo-political zones of the country, North-West has seven states. Others have six states each except the South-East with only five states. This tended to place the South-East perpetually on the minority seat in the National Assembly and in a disadvantaged position in national revenue allocation, employment and promotion of federal civil servants and students admission quota. For instance, candidates of Igbo extraction that applied for admission into academic institutions were usually denied admission, even with their high test scores, while those from the other sections of the country, or other supposedly educationally-disadvantaged states, with lower grades were considered. All efforts and pressure to correct the imbalances were resisted and suppressed.

Anger, frustration, and protests against these marginalisation and exclusion led to the re-emergence of agitation for Southeast autonomy since 1999 under the auspices of the Movement for the Actualization of the State of Biafra (MASSOB) (Ojukwu, Nwaorgu, & Thompson, 2016; Adibe, 2017). Disagreement among MASSOB leaders led to its fractionalisation and the emergence of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) (Alumona et al., 2017) as well as different forms of agitation and the attendant violent state repressive strategies to neutralise the agitations and which culminated in the proscription of IPOB in 2017 (Ejeh et al., 2020). The federal government introduced violent repression of demonstrators and incarceration of

innocent Igbo youths through phased joint security operations such as Operation Python Dance. The agitation which began as unarmed demonstrations and rallies degenerated into the formation, 2020, of a militant armed group known as Eastern Security Network (ESN) that has been battling both security forces and other perceived enemies.

Furthermore, the IPOB established a radio broadcasting outfit the Radio Biafra that enabled the group to sensitize not only the Igbo but also other indigenous ethnic nationalities on the mode and forms of their domination, repression, and marginalisation by the federal government (Jannamike, 2019; Ige, 2019). The success of the programme orchestrated the arrest and incarceration of the IPOB leader and operator of Radio Biafra - Mazi Nnamdi Kanu - on 19 October 2015. This triggered high rate of protests, riots, and police clashes with members of IPOB which resulted to hundreds of deaths and injury of many persons, mostly youths. Since then, Southeast became home to violent conflicts between the Igbo agitation groups and government's security forces.

Discussion

This research makes two streams of findings. First, it was found out that ethnic cleavages, which has fundamentally undermined Nigeria's match to nationhood, emerged as an instrument for, and product of, the North's ascendancy to positions of power and authority at the federal level. The Hausa/Fulani political elites employed it to unify the North and safeguard their support in the never-ending quest to control the country while the Yoruba employed same as an instrument to neutralize and terminate the support for an Igbo man in the Western Region of the country. Apparently, anything that threatened the security of both agenda in a united Nigeria significantly led to conflict.

This explains the co-relation between the 1962/63 census crisis that laid the foundation of Northern dominance, the 1964 Western Region's electoral crisis where the Yoruba stakeholders rose against Hausa/Fulani intrusion and imposition of their surrogate, and the 1967-1970 civil war that exhibited the collaboration of the north and west to undermine perceived Igbo prominence in Nigeria. It, therefore, followed that the Igbo race began to face repression, oppression, and marginalisation in the hands of the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba ethnic nationalities in a manner that hindered anybody from the Igbo ethnic group from ascending to command positions across the three organs of governance and security forces in Nigeria. Furthermore, attempts by the Southern ethnic nationalities to resist federal government's policies and actions which favoured mostly the North generated conflicts in Nigeria.

Second, the Hausa/Fulani-led federal government in collaboration with the Yoruba nation incapacitated the Igbo of the Southeast from ascending to prominence. Their methods include marginalisation, discrimination, suppression, and genocidal policies, and these re-invigorated the separatist spirit for the establishment of the Republic of Biafra after 50 years of the civil war. The federal government's deliberate denial of the rights of the Igbo of the southeast to self-determination, violation of their rights to human dignity and freedom in the attempt to suppress the re-emerging agitation, and flagrant violation of the constitution/rule of the law, led to the emergence of armed resistance and conflicts in the southeast. Many of these armed

groups emerged to challenge the champions of Igbo annihilation and occupation agenda of the federal government, and to challenge and attack the security forces that were providing security and safe passage to the marauding perpetrators. In all, and to a great extent, innocent citizens were the primary victims of these antagonising situations. Southeast Nigeria became submerged in the pool of blood of its indigenes, as people were killed almost on daily basis under any guise and houses, vehicles, and shops were continually burnt. Therefore, it is innocuous to aver that violation of human rights provisions by the state was responsible for the emergence and sustenance of self determination conflicts across Southeast Nigeria during the period covered by this study.

This finding corroborates earlier observations by Chukwudi, et al. (2019) and Obasi (2017) that President Muhammadu Buhari's response to IPOB activities fermented conflicts in the region. Precisely, Ejimakor (2018) blames military operations and their aftermaths for the rising instability in governance and socio-economic activities in the Southeast. Studies by Adam & Ocheni (2016), Adangor (2017), and Shehu, Othman & Osman (2017) revealed the same result and, invariably, support the view that federal government's violation of international human rights convention in its responses to agitations in the Southeast generated resistance, conflicts, killing of innocent people, destruction of property and undermined public service activities.

Summary and Conclusion

The intervention of the federal government of Nigeria in the political crises of 1962 to 1965 in the Western Region of the country was perceived by the Yoruba as an attempt by the North to infiltrate, plant surrogates and dominate the region and this led to the use of tribal sentiments and violent resistances by the Southwestern political leaders to prevent such. Inadvertently, this led to monumental crises that degenerated into the first military coup which was wrongly perceived by the North as an Igbo coup. A counter coup and consequent Igbo pogrom in the North led to the emergence of separatist feelings and agitations among the Igbo of the South-eastern region that culminated to the 1967-1970 civil war.

The agitation re-emerged when Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 due to the alleged and/or perceived marginalisation of the Igbo of the Southeast in the federal equation. Initially, the agitation began as a mass demonstration involving unarmed youths against anti-Igbo policies. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state responded with such unbridled brutality that led to the killing, incarceration and imprisonment of many of the Igbo demonstrators. Many were arrested in their houses and were never seen again while others were detained indefinitely without charges. In the process, the leader of IPOB, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, was equally arrested leading to the militarization of the struggle with consequential shoot-at-sight order from the federal government. Increased pressure from the security forces and the attempts by the agitators to defend themselves led to spiral killings and assassination of hundreds of innocent civilians, IPOB members and security agents as well as arsons and material losses that were unquantifiable. Thus, the state violation of human rights in Southeast Nigeria led to protests, resistances and intractable conflicts in the region. The ugly situation exerted significant negative impacts on the economy as it undermined government revenues greatly. Many

businesses relocated out of the Southeast and social activities, public services, educational programmes at all levels and the transportation system were significantly undermined.

Recommendations

Considering the level of killings and destructions going on in south-eastern Nigeria and the associated distortion of governance and development, this paper recommends the following:

1. The United Nations Human Rights Commission, in conjunction with the federal government of Nigeria, should consider the establishment of a human rights violation panel for the southeast region of Nigeria in order to adequately address the issues that triggered anger and resistance among the people.
2. The principle and right of self-determination, together with inherent freedom of speech and association, should be made to prevail in south-eastern Nigeria.
3. The federal government of Nigeria should establish a reconciliation committee that will pursue a political solution to conflicts in the region.
4. The Federal Character Principle adopted by Nigeria to eliminate marginalization tendencies should be sincerely applied to rectify the present skewed ethnic representations at the federal level.

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