
**IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AS A RESPONSE TO THE
ACTIVITIES OF IPOB IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

A peep into Nigerian history reveals that the country has been a center for ethnic conflict and violence since her independence. This work studied the ethnic conflict between IPOB and Nigerian government in the South eastern region, which has lingered for a very long time now without solution. The study used Relative Deprivation Theory which holds that decisions to participate in violent collective action are made by individuals/group out of a sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction, when a group's expectations are realized by long-term repression by the authority that ought to listen to their demand, the group may respond with political violence and aggressiveness. It was discovered that the reason for this persistent conflict is because of the application of force and western model of conflict resolution by the Nigerian government. Since the present method used by the Government failed to achieve its desired aim, this work proposed a solution. There exist in Africa, many Indigenous Philosophy for conflict

resolution which has been tested over the years and used to resolve African conflict, and since the conflict exist in eastern part of Nigeria, Igwebuiké African philosophy for peace and conflict resolution should be used to restore peace in the region. This is preferred because people's culture has a great role to play in the methods of resolving their conflicts. It a community-based method that brings the conflicting parties together to dialogue and reach a satisfying agreement. Conclusively, the study believes that if the basic furthers of Igwebuiké African Philosophy of Peace and Conflict Resolution is adopted, the IPOB agitation in the South east will be a history.

Keywords: Igwebuiké, Philosophy, IPOB, South-East, Response, Activities, African, Nigerian Government.

Introduction

Africa is both multi-ethnic and multi-religious continent. Each ethnic group has its own culture, religion, and value system that sets it apart from the others. The social interactions between the diverse groups have been marked by conflict, mistrust, aggressiveness, and co-operation. A trip around the African continent discovers that numerous local, national, and regional conflicts have taken place there in the past and still do today. African nations have disintegrated as a result of these battles. Infrastructure has been destroyed; there have been human fatalities, poor outcomes for health and education services, and environmental harm. Despite the international community's involvement in aiding African nations in

conflict resolution throughout the years, not much has achieved. This history informs the argument in this piece that it is necessary to research African worldviews in order to determine how indigenous categories could support or complement efforts to resolve conflicts in Africa.

Nigeria as one of African countries has experienced multiple conflicts after her independence. The multi-cultural makeup of the Nigerian state appears to have given rise to a number of insurgencies, rebellions, and popular uprisings that have evolved into a number of ethnic militias like the O'dua People Congress (OPC), militants in the Niger Delta, Boko Haram fighters, and Biafran agitators. These militia groups' development has exacerbated the violence of hatred towards different races and religions. Every region in Nigeria, dating back in time, has had its own share of militant organizations that have opposed the government for a variety of reasons. These conflicts have led to the slowdown of the country's growth and development. One of these multiple conflicts from her independence till now is the secession of eastern region from the country to form a country of their own called Biafra.

This conflict is as old as the country, manifesting itself in different faces and in different names; from Biafra secession group of 1967 to Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) of 1999 and presently Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) of 2012. The conflict has persisted

because of the wrong application of conflict resolution by the Federal government. The government in various attempts to resolve the conflict has utilized the army, police force and court rulings, a strange and foreign method of conflict resolution, which instead of solving the problem compounds it making it to drag for years. However, there exist in Africa, many Indigenous Philosophy for conflict resolution which has been tested over the years and used to resolve African conflict, and since the conflict exist in eastern part of Nigeria, Igwebuiké African philosophy for peace and conflict resolution should be used to restore peace in the region. This is because people's culture has a great role to play in the methods of resolving their conflicts. This paper researches on how Igwebuiké African Philosophy can be a useful tool in dealing with the problem of IPOB agitators in the Eastern Nigeria.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) was first developed by Walter Garrison Runciman in 1966 to explain attitude of social inequality in twentieth- century England. It basically asserts that decisions to participate in violent collective action are made by individuals out of a sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction. This idea holds that when a group's expectations are realized by long-term repression or being treated as a second-class citizen, the group may respond with political violence and aggressiveness. It observes that they are relatively underprivileged compared to other groups in an unfair

social order, which serves as their motivation for engaging in political violence. Absolute deprivation, which occurs when a group is deprived of even the most fundamental essentials for living by the state or a social structure, should be compared with relative deprivation. Aggression and political violence can also result from this condition.

According to Gurr (1968), relative deprivation occurs when individuals or groups subjectively believe that they are unfairly disadvantaged relative to others who are thought to possess similar qualities and deserve comparable rewards to their reference groups. According to Walter (1999) in Ikedinma (2018), subjective sensations of deprivation are more likely to occur when group differences are small enough to allow for straightforward comparisons rather than when there are caste-like distinctions. In order to understand radical politics, the formation of social movements, industrial disputes, and the vast majority of crime and deviant behavior that do occur, it has been suggested that relative deprivation-related discontent is to be blamed. Resistant groups may operate with a specific cause or goal depending on the socio-political environment.

These groups, however, share a number of characteristics, such as making their interests known to the public to draw support for their causes, publicizing the existence of their groups, attacking or destabilizing authorities who might disagree with them and, when

necessary, using resistance, and, most frequently, inciting the authorities targeted to repress their targets. These motives begin with a sense of deprivation, which must be viewed as a crucial component in the quest for a cause and effect relationship. Events have demonstrated that organizations turn to terrorism again when they think all other options, such as economic protests, public appeals, and organized combat, have been exhausted. This feeling of estrangement exacerbated the tensions and violent situations with IPOB agitators in South East Nigeria. These marginalized groups feel alienated by the established authority's deprivation of their privileged opportunities. Therefore, they engage in violent resistance in an effort to undermine and destabilize the administration.

The Rise And Activities Of The Indigenous People Of Biafra (IPOB)

With the dawn of independence in 1960, Nigerian nation was faced with the challenge of raising a newborn nation, but regrettably it was quickly faced with a series of challenges, ranging from political crises to ethno-religious killings, military coup d'états, and finally the civil war that was caused by minority secession, Biafra. This Biafran secession group came from the Eastern region of the country, which fought hard to disintegrate themselves from the whole country but was suppressed and reintegrated back to the nation. Since then, this south eastern region has

been struggling to liberate themselves from what they perceived as marginalization. Many different groups agitating for this freedom has emerged, while some were crushed by the Federal government, others persisted and are making news waves in the nation (if not in the world). One of which is, The Indigenous People of Biafra (popularly known as IPOB), an organization presently promoting Biafra's secession from Nigeria.

Jacob, Nwobi and Igboji (2020) asserts that the group (IPOB), which is led by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and his deputy Uche Okafor-Mefor, seeks to use a referendum to establish an independent state for the residents of the former Eastern Region. Despite the fact that IPOB was founded in 2012, its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, became well-known through his Radio Biafra broadcasts in 2009. He appeals for the freedom of the Biafran people from this radio station in London while also denouncing the policies of the Nigerian government.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist group in Nigeria that seeks to continue the struggle for an independent Biafran nation. The founder, Mazi Nnamdi Okwu Kanu was born in Umuahia, Abia State, on September 25, 1967, a political activist of British-Nigerian citizen. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu made the decision to use the new forms of communication, including social media and online radio, to recruit millions of pro-Biafra independence activists, supporters, and sympathizers to his Biafran

cause out of concern that the dream for the independence of Biafra would not be realized through MASSOB. In 2009, when Chief Ralph Uwazuruike, the founder of MASSOB re-established Radio Biafra in the United Kingdom, he made Nnamdi Kanu his radio director; later Kanu was said to have been dismissed from MASSOB because of accusations of supporting violence. The Radio Biafra called for an independent state for the Igbo people and broadcast to Nigeria from London. Because of how symbolic the name Radio Biafra is, using it as a communication tool was a wise choice. Before taking over as Radio Biafra's director in 2009, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu was relatively unknown figure. The name Mazi Kanu became popular through his Radio Biafra broadcast.

IPOB is a self-actualization and tenacity-based Igbo patriotic ideology. The five (5) states that make up Igbo tribe are all members of IPOB, and the organization also has considerable support from Igbos in the diaspora and foreigners. Members have also expanded to some neighboring states in Nigeria. IPOB raises awareness of the Igbo tribe's existence and acknowledgement. Aro and Ani (2017) asserted that, the Igbo people as we have them today were united into the framework of what is currently known as Nigeria in 1914. Igbo sovereignty was constrained and frequently frustrated during the integration process by the sovereignty of the British colonial power. Achebe (2012) has this to say about Igbos;

The origin of the national resentment of the Igbo is as old as Nigeria and quite as complicated. But it can be summarized thus, the Igbo culture, being receptive to change, individualistic, and highly competitive, gave the Igbo man an unquestioned advantage over his compatriots in securing credentials for advancement in Nigeria colonial society. Unlike the Hausa/Fulani, he was unhindered by a wary religion, and unlike the Yoruba, he was unhampered by traditional hierarchies (P. 74).

The Igbo towns competed among themselves for certain kinds of social achievement, like the building of schools, Churches, markets, post offices, pipe borne water projects, roads, etc . There were a number of other factors that spurred the Igbos to educational, economic, and political success. “The population density in Igbo land created a 'land hunger'-a pressure on their low-fertility, laterite-laden soil for cultivation, housing, and other purposes, factors that led ultimately to migration to other parts of the nation (Achebe 2012, p.75).”

However, Igbo intellectuals took the lead in the creation of political parties as the practice of colonization lost favor. Harnischfeger (2011) opines that, the first national party, which was the National Council of Nigerians and Cameroons (NCNC), was founded in 1944 and led by journalist and future

president Nnamdi Azikiwe . Aro et al described Azikiwe as a man of Igbo descent, who was received as a distinctly Igbo figure as opposed to a Pan Africanist or a Nigerian nationalist (2017). Thus, the activities of the NCNC represented the emergence of organized Igbo nationalism a means through which Igbo political interests could be achieved. Due to the fact that the civil war resulted in the destruction of the eastern region and the death of millions of Biafrans either through military engagements, acts of ethnic cleansing, or starvation, the nationalist movement for the creation of a Biafran state did not reemerge in full-force until 1999. In 1999, Chief Ralph Uwazuruike an Igbo political elite formed MASSOB to revitalize Igbo nationalist sentiments based on conceptions of continued injustices against Igbo people. The contemporary reanimation of Igbo nationalism also references the killing of Igbo people by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria as a result for the reinstitution of the social movement. Thus, IPOB is the continuation of the struggle for the self-determination, preservation and revival, development of the Igbo people.

To achieve this, IPOB believes that they can use civil disobedience to force their demands for the freedom of the Biafran people. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu has said in numerous air broadcasts that Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jnr. have had an effect on him and that Biafra will become a reality if their kind of civil disobedience is adopted. In an interview granted to

Newsweek, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu stated his belief in the teachings of Martin Luther King Jnr. and Mahatma Gandhi, he says, “I hope that what we are looking for can be accomplished peacefully. I am an advocate of passive resistance. He continued, Gandhi and Martin tried it to very good effects, so why should it not work in our case?” One example of this non-violence resistance is the planned boycott of 2019 presidential election by IPOB, an expression of their resentment of Nigeria and what it represents. Although, this position was widely criticized by local Nigerian politicians who argued to the contrary, that led to him lifting the boycott on the eve of the election. This position Onyeji (2019) described as “signed, sealed and delivered.” Another non-violence resistance method used by Kanu and IPOB is the sit-at-home on Mondays and some other special days in the eastern region.

In light of the Monday Sit-at-Home Order, literature on IPOB is more on describing IPOB as an organization as well as on the comments made by people in media publications. Scholars like Ekpo and Agorye described “IPOB as a secessionist movement based in southeast Nigeria with the aim of restoring the defunct Biafra, albeit through peaceful means (2019, p.5).” He maintained that the objectives of the organization are to facilitate and advocate the Igbo's right to self-determination. Nwaiwu (2016) and Okafor (2017) traced the formation of the group to the historical and cultural origin of Igbo, so as to seek the secession of Biafran Nation from Nigeria.

IPOB criticized the Nigerian federal government for its lack of investment, political alienation, unequal resource distribution, racial marginalization, and a significant military presence as well as extrajudicial killings in the country's South-Eastern, South-Central, and some of its North-Central regions (Mahr, Oluwatosin Adeshokan, Krista, 2019). The organization rose to prominence in the mid-2010s and is now the largest Biafran independence organization by membership. In recent years, it has gained significant media attention for becoming a frequent target of political crackdowns by the Nigerian government. It also has numerous sites and communication channels serving as the only trusted social apparatus educating and inculcating firsthand information and news to its members.

Prior to the 19 October 2015 arrest of its leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by the Department of State Services (DSS) of Nigeria, IPOB along with other pro-Biafran organizations, had been organizing peaceful demonstrations around the nation. As their mobilization intensified, his arrest encouraged IPOB sympathizers to increase their popularity. Since then, there have been other rallies and police battles; according to Maya, on December 2, 2015, a protest in Onitsha, Anambra state, resulted in the deaths of nine protesters and two police officers (2016). In Aba, Onitsha, Enugu, and Umuahia, a number of additional protesters reportedly died at the hands of police. The alleged political marginalization of the Igbo people and

the ongoing trauma caused by the Nigerian civil war are blamed for the uptick in protests. Nnamdi Kanu and other jailed Biafran activists are being urged to be released right away. Their top priority is having the government set a date for an independence referendum. Conor thinks that the fundamental reason for their protests is that they want the opportunity to vote for independence (2015). Most importantly they want an independence referendum to have a date set by the government. Speaking about this, the editor of pro-Biafran media outlet 'Voice of Biafra' Nnabuike Nnadede stated that the Igbo people suffer from a lack of resources and investment from the Nigerian government, thus the need to break-off and develop their land.

The Nigerian government has tried numerous methods all to no avail to suppress them due to how tenacious and brave this group is. First, on September 18, 2017, the Federal High Court in Abuja declared the IPOB to be a terrorist group. The IPOB battled against this ban and unsuccessfully attempted to have the court's ruling revised in 2018. The Nigerian Terrorism Act continues to list them as a terrorist organization, all efforts by IPOB and their supporters to change this proscription failed. Second, in order to disperse IPOB protesters, the Nigerian government used harsh and excessive police force. Ibeanu, Iwuamadi and Nkwachukwu, claims that this police violence has been going-on since 2014 first targeting MASSOB and, now IPOB after its creation (2016). In 2008, MASSOB alleged that the government

had murdered 2,020 of its members without due process. According to a report published by Dutch Amnesty International in 2019, numerous IPOB protesters were killed between May 29 and 30, 2016, as a result of a government effort to stop IPOB members from moving from Nkpor Motor Park to a rally in Anambra State. In response, the Nigerian army asserts that five people were killed rather than fifty because they were acting in self-defense. Despite pressure from Amnesty International, the Nigerian government has not looked into these killings. Human rights organizations have been documenting extrajudicial deaths in Biafra. Maya confirmed that about 400 people were arrested, accused, or jailed without a fair hearing between August 2015 and February 2016 and that 170 unarmed citizens were killed during that time (2016).

Since April 25, 2017, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, has refused to show up in court to defend himself against the allegations brought up by the federal government. He had previously been held without charge for more than a year before he was charged with criminal conspiracy, affiliation with an unlawful group, and intimidation on November 8, 2016. After multiple protests, including the World Igbo Summit Group in April 2017, the judge decided to release him on bail due to health issues that required better medical care than could be offered in a jail environment. With the condition that he must not conduct interviews, meet in gatherings of more than 10 people, plan or participate in protests or social gatherings. After a planned attack

by the Nigerian Air Force and Army on Kanu's hometown of Umuahia in September 2017, Kanu disappeared. He later gave reason for his disappearance during a Radio Biafra broadcast stating that President Muhammadu Buhari ordered the military to kill him at his residence (Onyeji, 2019). Despite clear evidence of the terrible attack, the Nigerian military disputes the existence of such raid (Mahre et al, 2019).

While Mazi Kanu was on self-exile, IPOB members back home continued the struggle for Biafran nation. It was during this time that the IPOB established the Eastern Security Network (ESN) as their paramilitary arm to defend Biafran territory. The Nigerian government sent the army after they were formed to fish out ESN members and their camps. In 22 January 2021, a military conflict broke out in the city of [Orlu](#), Imo State [Nigeria](#), when the [Nigerian Army](#) moved to crush this [paramilitary](#) wing of IPOB. Eight buildings were burnt and one person was killed in the ensuing clashes. Security forces re-invaded the area three days later, clashing with the ESN and killing at least five people before being repulsed by the ESN. Four Nigerian soldiers were killed in the clash. The conflict escalated after the ESN managed to repulse the initial push by the Nigerian Army, but IPOB ended the initial crisis by unilaterally withdrawing the ESN from Orlu. Daly and Fury (2020) recounted that, after a few weeks of quiet, Nigeria launched a military offense in the area to destroy the ESN.

Around this time, armed men raided an Owerri prison, allowing about 1,800 prisoners to escape. The Nigerian government charged IPOB with being involved in the prison break, but they refuted the charge, claiming innocent. According to Jowett, “the Nigerian Army 34 Artillery Brigade launched an offense to discover ESN camps surrounding Orlu and Orsu at some time in mid-February. By sending military helicopters to the city, the Nigerian Army further fortified Orlu (2016, p. 18).” On February 18, hostilities resumed as the Nigerian Army and the ESN engaged in gunfire in a forest outside of Orlu while the Nigerian Air Force carried out airstrikes nearby. Nigerian forces captured an ESN base in the village of Udah outside Orsu on 21 February. The Nigerian Army 82 division also arrested 20 suspected IPOB members and confiscated their weapons (Bortolotti, 2004). The same day as hostilities were renewed, IPOB said that the military deployment has declared a war against the Igbos and accused the Nigerian government of planning a final solution to the Biafran request. The group declared that Nigeria had crossed the line of no return and that Igbos now had no choice but defend themselves. The next day, IPOB declared that the “second Nigeria/Biafra war” had begun, and that unlike in the 1967–1970 Nigeria Civil War, Biafra would win (Daly et al, 2020).

Governors from the southeast announced the creation of Ebube Agu, a security network that supports the government, in mid-April. The Ebube-Agu was rejected by IPOB saying that ESN is already doing the work

Ebube-Agu was formed for. They also claim that Ebube Agu's real goal is to oppose the ESN. The ESN/Ebube Agu controversy persisted until December 2021, when the Federal Government eventually gave the five governors of south eastern Nigeria the responsibility of putting the Ebube Agu security network in place. Once more, IPOB sternly criticized this security group, stating that groups like this had failed to stop bandits in the past and that the new force was still fighting to stifle the ESN.

On 24 April, the top ESN commander known as Ikonso was killed when the Nigerian Army allegedly raided an ESN camp in Imo State. As their intelligence indicated that he was assassinated in the house of Governor Hope Uzodinma, IPOB held him responsible for his death. At this time, Ahmad Gumi, an Islamic preacher, said that bandits only kidnapped students for ransom while IPOB was responsible for the death of northerners. In response, IPOB leader Kanu emphasized that the ESN's main goal was to stop "Fulani jihadists" from engaging in banditry and charged Gumi with acting as a "mouthpiece for bandits and terrorists" (Opejobi, 2021).

As the conflict continued, the court revoked Kanu's bail, and trial judge Binta Nyako demanded that he be taken into custody right away because his treasonable offence would still be prosecuted without him. The search for Mazi Nnamdi Kanu continued until June 29, 2021, when Mazi Nnamdi Kanu was re-arrested by

Interpol in Kenya or another location, extradited to Nigeria, and handed over to Nigerian authority. He was subsequently charged to court again and remanded in the custody of the DSS. On 9 August, IPOB supporters began a stay-at-home protest with the intention of putting pressure on the government to release Kanu. IPOB initially declared the holiday for Mondays but later extended it to everyday Mazi Kanu appears in court. At first, sit-at-home was declared to honour millions of lives lost during the Nigerian civil war. **Okonkwo** attested to this saying;

When IPOB first introduced the sit-at-home order; the idea was to show that most people in the South-East support their quest for an independent nation of Biafra. It started as a once-a-year event, partly to remember those who died in the Nigeria-Biafra War. In the beginning, so many people in the region did not mind sacrificing a day to remember the dead. It soon transformed into a tool for achieving other goals... (2022).

Despite orders by the government to ignore IPOB's calls for the action, a majority in several settlements across southeastern Nigeria complied with the lockdown. On the said day of sit-at-home, IPOB members burnt at least three buses whose companies/drivers refused to take part in the protest. Kanu's trial began in Abuja in October 2021, with him pleading non-guilty of the 15-count charges levied

against him by the Federal Government. After this trial, a new “sit-at-home” strike began southeastern Nigeria, shutting down most services and businesses there. Around this same time, Ekpa (a disciple of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu) declared himself IPOB leader saying that IPOB would no longer take orders from Kanu, as he could not lead the group from prison. However, a large section of IPOB disagreed with Ekpa's decision. The crisis in the Southeast is on, even as Mazi Nnamdi Kanu continued to appear in court from prison. In the course of the insurgency, IPOB militants were charged with war crimes like killing civilians, including children. The conflict has continued without any end in view increasing the rate of fatalities and insecurity in the region.

Igwebuike African Categories Of Conflict Resolution

Igwebuike African Philosophy is a brain child of Prof. Kanu, Ikechukwu Anthony, a renowned scholar in the area of African Traditional Religion and African Philosophy. A lecturer of Tansian University, Umuaya, Anambra State, Nigeria. According to him, “Igwebuike is an Igbo word; one of the major dialects in Africa (Kanu 2017, p.6).” Igwebuike is a word in Igbo language, which means “number is strength” or “number is power.” In other words, Igwebuike suggests that people are powerful or form formidable force when they come together in solidarity and complementarity. Kanu asserts that Igwebuike puts the African community life into perspective (2017). A reminder that

we are all related to each other. There is a link between human persons. Seen from this angle, there should be no conflict amongst us. Africans should work with the common goal of building and maintaining peace and harmony in the community. They should know that they all have a common responsibility towards each other. Igwebuiké is a principle that is at the heart of African thought, and in fact, the modality of being in African ontology. It is taken from the Igbo language. It is a composite word made up of three dimensions (Kanu, 2015). The three words according to Kanu involves: “Igwe” is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. “Bu” is a verb, which means is. “Ike” is another verb, which means strength or power (2016). Its English equivalents are 'complementarity', 'solidarity' and 'harmony'. The preferred concept, however according to Kanu, is 'complementarity' (2017). Furthermore, Kanu assert that;

As an indigenous African philosophy, Igwebuiké gives an understanding of the human person as a being who is in relation with the other in the world. It establishes that there exists a common link between human persons and that it is through this relationship that every other human person realizes himself or herself. Igwebuiké is the capacity in Igbo-African ontology for the expression of complementarity, solidarity, compassion, reciprocity, dignity and harmony for the

purpose of building and maintaining community. It celebrates in a deep cultural and philosophical modality our relatedness, our interconnectedness, our common humanity, our common responsibility towards each other and for each other (2017, p.6).

Thus, Igwebuike looks for the common good of all, a principle of peace and harmonious living in traditional Igbo society which portrays the “community image” of an African society. As an indigenous method of resolving disputes, Igwebuike uses a community-based strategy. It is a product of the wisdom of traditional African conflict resolution methods, which are based on the customs and traditions of the African people that have evolved over a long period of time. It is wholly based on culture and emphasizes the central role that culture has in people's lives and behavior. The procedure is more like to healing, in which participants offer their good energy with the express objective of restoring the energy flow within people, families, and communities in order to restore social peace (Kanu, 2017). This perspective underpins Igwebuike's perception of the self in relation to the other which is guided by an inner principle of equity, inter-social collaboration, caring for the other's wellbeing, mutual support and recognition of the other's humanity.

Igwebuike philosophy views conflict as a squabble that touches on the harmony of reality rather than a fight between two people or two groups. This explains why the African method always includes a spiritual

component for mending strained relationship with God, other deities, ancestors, family and neighbors. In a way, rituals that connect people to their history, their present, and their future are used to accomplish this. As a result, Igwebuike aims to reach a compromise for the reconciliation of both sides and the restoration of balance or harmony of reality, rather than only justifying one and condemning the other. This is the reason why Ibeanu describes peace as that which makes justice possible (2014). For Kanu,

Igwebuike understands peace within the context of good health, well-being, order and freshness. From this understanding, poverty, insecurity, unemployment, waywardness, communal clashes, religious crisis, and other mysterious and human-made misfortunes are considered to be the opposite or negation of peace (2017, pp. 8-9).

However, conflict as a natural phenomenon occurs when one starts to view the other person's interests, wants, values, and requirements as irreconcilable with their own, with no room for discussion, dialogue or compromise. As Kanu (2017) observed, expression of negative emotions such as fear, jealousy, resentment, bitterness, despair, wrath, and hopelessness comes next. If this is unchecked, it moves from perception via emotion to action; the point at which a person does an action to communicate their feelings. This is the situation with the crisis between the Federal government and IPOB agitators in the South eastern

Nigeria which has lingered for long. Finding no solution or head way forward with the government method of resolving it, we now turn to Igwebuiké African Philosophy for a lasting solution.

Igwebuiké Philosophy: A Response To Government-Ipob Conflict

In Nigeria, the response of the Federal government to every agitation has always been the same; the use of force. They believe strongly in the saying that the only language Nigerians understand is the military language which oppress and suppress every protest. This is the case with IPOB agitators in the south eastern region. The intention is to label the agitators as troublemakers and dispatch law enforcement to employ force to calm their agitations. Often times, this has resulted in fatalities, heightening racial tensions in the process, which in turn supports or fuels separatist agitations. The Nigerian government should know that conflict in African culture is not viewed as a problem between the disputants but as a problem of the entire community. Because in Africa whatever affects an individual affects the whole community. This is verified looking at the solutions the Federal government has applied to solve the problem in Southeast.

The deployment of soldiers to the South east is one example of how the government occasionally resorts to using force to handle the issue of unlawful armed militia group. When a disagreement arises, the government often uses force as a reaction. Such

deployments fall short in addressing the underlying causes of conflict, and it is highly unusual for them to include any efforts to help the opposing sides come to a peace agreement. Despite their best efforts, the Police have not been able to adequately respond to disputes at various phases. The widespread availability of weapons in the country has frequently left them helpless. As a result of their inability to ensure security, the country has become militarized. Many societies are becoming increasingly militarized. Speaking about military censorship, Musa opines that armed guards in public spaces like schools and government buildings, armed checkpoints along roads, and curfews are all examples of militarization (2014).

In trying to fish out members of IPOB and destroy their camp, Nigerian army, Air force and Police force have destroyed properties and livelihoods of the people. So the community feels the impact even more than the IPOB members. According to the Centre for Democracy and Development in West Africa (CDD), military activities by the government in 2016 made the IPOB issue worse (2022). The use of western model of conflict resolution by the Federal government has caused more harm than good; it is fueling rather than extinguishing the fire of conflict in Eastern Nigeria. CDD (2022) cited a report by PREMIUM TIMES of April 3, 2022, which exposed widespread extrajudicial killings carried out by the Nigerian security between 2015 and 2016. Amnesty International claimed that Nigeria's security forces, which were led by the military, had

engaged in a “chilling campaign of extrajudicial executions and brutality” that had killed at least 150 peaceful pro-Biafra protestors (Jidefor, 2017).

The current administration's approach to dealing with the Biafra separatist movement, which mostly relies on the police and army, hasn't been very successful in resolving the problem. A clear instance of Nigerian Government use of force and unsympathetic method of solving the problem in southeast is seen in the statement of the current Inspector General of Police (IGP), Alkali Usman, during the start of the so-called 'Operation Restore Peace' in Enugu's Okpara Square, instructing police officers in the South-East to flout the rules of engagement when dealing with Biafra secessionist organization (Usman, 2021). The IGP mentions a number of things in his talk to the Police Mobile Force and Special Tactical Squad of the Force in Enugu saying:

Don't mind the media shout; do the job I command you. If anyone accuses you of human rights violation, the report will come to my table and you know what I will do. So, take the battle to them wherever they are and kill them all. Don't wait for an order. What other order are you waiting for when Mr. President had ordered you to shoot anybody carrying (an) AK-47 rifle? So, don't sit and wait for them to come; take (the) attack to them and don't lose your arms to criminals (Usman, [2021](#), online).

On September 18 2017, IPOB was labeled a terrorist

organization by the Federal High Court in Abuja. IPOB battled this ban and sought to have the court's decision revised all to no avail. Despite the fact that their plan ultimately failed, they still remain on the list of terrorist organizations in Nigeria under the Terrorist Act. This Nigerian government formal designation of IPOB as a terrorist organization closes the door of any official peace talks with the group. Political and traditional leaders from the South-east have asked for Mazi Kanu's release in an effort to quell the bloodshed in the region, which was rejected by President Muhammadu Buhari, insisting that Mazi Kanu's trial should proceed as scheduled. In order to address the region's developmental challenges, the research encourages the Federal Government of Nigeria to adopt a new strategy in dealing with the situation, and this study proposes Igwebuike African Philosophy of peace and conflict resolution.

Igwebuike African Philosophy of peace and conflict resolution is a conflict resolution for the African people. It attempts to reconsider the traditional model of conflict resolution going to the root of the conflict and restoring peace. For peace to reign in an African community, such as South eastern Nigeria, there is need to incorporate the Igwebuike peace processes that will heal the wounds and hurts that the IPOB agitators and government solution has caused the people. The western approach to conflict resolution employed by Nigerian government has led to abysmal failure, but Igwebuike African Philosophy suggests a

way to achieve peace and resolution in an effort to re-examine the conventional approach. African traditional healing methods that treat the hurts and wounds that violent conflict causes must be included if peace is to last. Here, Igwebuiké is preferred because it works towards a situation that acknowledges a mutually beneficial condition rather than just condemning one and exalting the other (Kanu, 2017).

Igwebuiké proposes co-operation of everyone for the common good which will lead to peace within the community. Golwa (2013) avers that African traditional methods of conflict resolution are aimed at ensuring the full integration of the parties involved into the society. This is the reason why the end product of Igwebuiké African traditional method of conflict resolution is to satisfy the conflicting parties, resulting in win-win outcome and fully re-integrating them back into the community. So, Igwebuiké African Philosophy will help the government/IPOB conflict to come to a round table, to discuss and reach an acceptable agreement rather than the force used by the western method and re-integrating the IPOB agitators into the society. As the sixth basic features of Igwebuiké African Philosophy stated, to resolve a conflict of this magnitude, the issue of restorative justice must never be neglected (Kanu, 2017). Igwebuiké African Philosophy of peace and conflict resolution emphasis on this aspect of justice, providing opportunity for those harmed and those who are harmed. It brings the party in conflict so as to address the issues in conflict

and proffer permanent solution.

Conclusion

Obviously, the crisis in the South east can be traced back to the Biafran struggle for independence of 1967. The continuous marginalization and underdevelopment of the region has triggered the wanton destruction of lives and properties. President Muhammadu Buhari's choice to employ force rather than negotiate with the IPOB agitators has further deepened Nigerian security problem. Since this style of resolving conflict has yielded no good fruit, there should be a new strategy in combating the issues of IPOB in the South eastern Nigeria and this work proposes that Igwebuiké African Philosophy remains the best method to the solution of IPOB insurgency in the South eastern Nigeria. It is believed that the end result of Igwebuiké African Philosophy is the restoration of peace and harmony in the society, thereby bringing satisfaction to the parties in conflict. Decisions reached at the end of the process remains a mutual agreement, favorable to everyone rather than the use of force and intimidation employed by the western method.

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