UNITED WE FALL, DIVIDED WE STAND: RESUSCITATION OF THE BIAFRA STATE SECESSION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION CONUNDRUM

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Abstract
Internal threat to Nigeria’s territorial integrity is not new to the state but the dimension in recent times has taken the state by surprise especially when the state just survived a supposedly inevitable civil war threat after the famous 2015 general elections. The new drum for secession spearheaded by a faction of the Movement for the Actualization of the State of Biafra (MASSOB) - Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has taken a new dimension from earlier agitations especially after the inauguration and formation of backroom staff of the new dispensation in May, 2015. The grievances of these group is that they have been politically, socio-economically and culturally marginalized in the Nigerian project, hence led to nationwide protests not only within Nigeria but outside the country. Whether politically, ideologically or consciously motivated, the government of Nigeria seem unprepared for this and the aggressive method by which government forces and the group is going about it after the detention and continuous detention of their leader after granted bail also calls for serious attention. It is on this basis that this paper is borne. This paper sets out to examine the history of the Igbos, their status and agitation for self-determination as well as the response of the Federal government over time. It concludes that while the choice of self-determination is inalienable, such group must follow due process rather than a means for seeking attention, personal aggrandizement or political subversion and for the federal government, issues as these can only be resolved through dialogue and an all-inclusive policies.

Keywords: Nigeria, Biafra, united, national question
Introduction
In a society with heterogeneous nationalities and cultures, it is inevitable for such societies to struggle for scarce resources thereby leading to conflict as these resources may mar or make such society. In a case of three dominant ethnic groups: Hausa-Fulani, Igbo (Ibo) and Yoruba, this explains the Nigerian conundrum. Though with a federal structure which was until 1914 a diffusedly independent groups which occasionally related with one another is a peripheral state with over 250 ethnic nationalities speaking more than 400 languages (Egbe, 2004) and about 190 million people, resource allocation has always been centralized thereby causing frustration, aggression and hunger for the control of the centre. This hunger for the centre has also been one of the causes of its political instability, incessant military interregnum and ethnic tensions. The quest for power especially from the three dominant ethnic group downplaying the other minority groups have necessitated the national question debate. This debate arises as to whether the entity, Nigeria should continue to hold as one or return back to its pre-colonial enclaves. The post-colonial state has witnessed some debates as to solving the question varying from whether federalism; power sharing; resource control; regionalism among others can truly solve the aching and habitual national question. The answer or suggestions is not what this paper intends to offer rather, this paper intend to examine the issues that warranted the recent agitation for the state of Biafra and the legality of such actions as well as the way forward. This has raised further questions such as: why not during the time of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan? Is it politically motivated? Do the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have the right to self-determination? What present state would make up the supposedly agitated state of Biafra? Will it still be the state (Eastern Nigeria-Biafra) declared by Ojukwu during the Nigerian Civil War? And finally, are the Igbos truly marginalized?

The Igbos (Ibos): origins and the search for an identity
In Nigeria, there are three major ethnic groups, the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Of these groups, the Igbo have had the most complicated sense of history as regards their root and this has posed a problem to historians and non-historians (Nwaezeigwe, ny). Afigbo furthered that it is difficult to reconstruct the history of a preliterate and acephalous people as those who try fall victim to either wild romanticism or sterile skepticism (Afigbo, 1980), warranting the different accounts of origins. One of such accounts is that they originate from areas further north—possibly from the Niger confluence; another has it that the Igbos originates from other groups such as the Edos, Yorubas, Igala, among others based on linguistic similarities and the final has it that the Igbos are a dissent from the Jews—the lost tribe of Israel or Egypt (Afigbo, 1980:73). Be that as it may, the first account remains the most
accepted as it links the Igbos with the Nri tradition, though some Igbo writers have themselves claimed Hebrew or Egyptian origin.

Isichei is of the opinion that the first human inhabitants of Igboland must have come from areas further north—possibly from the Niger confluence and that men must have been living in Igboland for at least five thousand years, since the dawn of human history. She owned that Igbo diverged from other related languages, such as Edo and Yoruba, perhaps four thousand years ago as there are evidences that the people of Nsukka made pottery 4,500 years ago similar to those made in recent times (Isichei, 1974). Though an Igbo creation myth narrates that in a void land without waters and human, God (Chukwu) created the first human family comprising of; Eze Nri, his wife, sons and daughters but there was no food so Chukwu gave them yam. Later the next morning they were hungry again and they prayed to Chukwu and he asked Eze Nri to call Awka blacksmith to blow the void land until it turned land and also sacrifice his first son and daughter before planting the seed which explains the Igbos’ predominantly farming nature as well as their belief in god, and iron making (Onahidi, 1958). It is believed that the Nri and Aro civilizations spread to practically all corners of the land but only the Aros made contact with most of the various other Igbo-speaking people on a permanent and extensive basis. A scholar, Okwudiba Nnoli wrote:

Many times the various Igbo pre-colonial politics did not make any contact whatsoever before colonization, and were even in certain cases oblivious of the existence of one another. In fact, the Igbo-speaking people were self-consciously divided into Olu and the Igbo peoples. Even today, the Olu are very reluctant, except sometimes in urban centres, to refer themselves as Igbo. Therefore, among certain neighbouring peoples, there was a definite distinction between Olu and Igbo, while n what is today known as Igboland there was no history of common pre-colonial consciousness and identity. Certainly there were no wars fought together by the Igbo as collectively. Such wars usually marked the boundaries of mutual identification and group identity. Only a rudimentary common consciousness based on a myth of common descent existed among some pre-colonial linguistic groups. For example, the Yoruba traced descent from Oduduwa, and the Edo from the younger son of Ogiso. The Hausa/Fulani have the myth of Bayajidda (Igbokwe, 1995).

It is this dialectical relationship arisen from the identity question that informs the Igbo nationalism. No wonder Isichei reiterated that the Igbo villager’s view of external reality was a sharp dichotomy, ‘them and us’ as the people of Owerri felt superior as warriors to the neighbouring Isu who were traders. This again informs why the Olu (riverain) and the Igbo (inland) share dissimilar views (Isichei, 19). As Professor Green in Isichei puts it in the 1930s, “An educated Mbieri man...said
that the people of his district would not till recently have called the people of Onitsha Ibo" (Ibid). This concept of Igbo identity is also mirrored in proverbs, such as *Igbo enwegh eze*, the Igbo have no king (in contradistinction to the riverain Kingdoms), or saying, found in the Owerri area (but not among the northern or riverain Igbo) *N’anIgbo nine n’eli ahube’ em iha deka nkea* (I have never seen such a thing in the land of the yam-eating Igbo) (Ibid., 20). No wonder Ojukwu argued that the decentralized and individualistic structure of the Igbo to a large extent, influence and determine the society’s framework of government and politics (Ojukwu, 2009b).

The Igbo and the search for a common identity

The search for a common identity is another predicament of the Igbo race. There is a notion that a sense of pan-Igbo identity came only when its people left Igboland-an experience first imposed by the slave trade as Isichei quoted William Balfour Baikie on the conceptualization of themselves that ‘In Igbo each person hails...from the particular district where he was born, but when away from home, all are Igbos”(Isichei, 20). It is this search for a common identity and platform that after amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate as Nigeria, this group converged to form an Organisation fashioned as an instrument of their development and unity. This led to the formation of the Ibo Federal Union in 1944 to engender solidarity among and promote Igbo progress through supporting European education, among others. It is reported that the Union was formed at the instance of Sir Francis Akanu Ibiam and a couple of other Igbo elites who moved for the establishment of a federation of all the small Igbo village and clan unions (Ojukwu, 2012).

As an amalgamation of existing local social unions, it later changed its name to Igbo State Union in 1948 and became one of the largest groups in the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) as Nnamdi Azikwe, an Igbo himself, served as both the president of the NCNC and the president of the Igbo State Union from 1948 to 1952 (Falola and Heaton, 2008). As Coleman puts it, “…education is the only real agent that will give birth to the dying embers of the Igbo national zeal...it will be the means to free the Igbos from the throes of both mental and moral thralldom and I see no better place to start work of reunion than Lagos” (Coleman, 1958; Ojukwu, 2012). However, after Azikwe’s first tenure in office as the president of Igbo State Union, he declined to continue to lead the union due to pressure from the members of the NCNC. Chief Z. C. Obi, a businessman from Port Harcourt took over from Azikwe and resisted attempts to politicize the Union for fear of losing his control of the union but with the military incursion in 1966, all unions were proscribed for fear of working against the unity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Again during the first coup of January 1966 and subsequent counter-coup which eventually acted as one of the precursors to the Nigerian Civil War, the unity of the Igbos was put to test. Some of the reasons for the Nigerian Civil War were structural imbalance of the federation, national question, the idea of Igbo domination, the first coup plotters not being penalized, the Igbo massacre across the country,(Alabi-Asama, 2013; Ezeani, 2013) the failure of the Aburi Accord and finally the balkanization of the federation into twelve parts by Lt Col Yakubu Gowon. Prior to the war, the first coup was perceived by the Northern Oligarchs especially in the Nigerian Army as an
Igbo plot or coup and the utterances and articles from the media displaying pictures of the fallen Sardauna and triumphant Nzeogwu connoting Igbo hegemony did not salvage the situation, rather it rooted-out the anger among the Northerners. By May 1967 it was obvious that most easterners preferred secession to any other form of association with the rest of the Nigerian federation, hence, a republic of Biafra was proclaimed where all Igbos were commanded to return home (Biafra) as their security could no longer be guaranteed under the former as Igbos across the country yielded to the clarion call under the able leadership of Col Odumegwu Ojukwu. To him:

The concept, Biafra, was a line drawn for a persecuted people to have a beacon of hope, a line drawn so that a fleeing people can at least hope that once they cross it, they have arrived at a goal, a line drawn so that a hated and persecuted people can at least know that once they reach there, they would have succor (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989)

The war with its eventualities left millions dead and wounds in the hearts of those who witnessed the war. However, the aftermath of the war marked another phase in Igbo history as they battled for reintegration in the larger society. In 1976, at ‘The meeting of Igbo Elders and Chiefs,’ a need for an organisation to serve as a platform through which the Igbo people could articulate their collective views on issues of national importance with its spectrum to include all adult of Igbo origin was formed. This was called the Ohanaeze Ndigbo socio-cultural organisaton with late Francis Akanu Ibiam as the maiden chairman and late Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe as the only patron it ever had (Ojukwu, 2012:92). According to Professor Ben Nwabueze:

I was the youngest member and perhaps the least qualified for inclusion in such an August company, although I had even then by no means undistinguished record as a fighter for the Igbo cause which dates back to the University of Lagos crisis in 1965. We owe it to our leaders, most of whom are now lamentably dead, not to let their creation die, but rather to nurture it to greater stature than they left it (Nwabueze in Ojukwu, 2012:92)

And even in the post-civil-war era, the Ohanaeze Ndigbo remained at the forefront of fighting the Igbo cause, though not without its challenges. As Nwabueze captured the Ohanaeze he inherited from the 1980s to early 2000:

When I took over Ohanaeze in 1984 (as the Executive Secretary), it was like a sinking boat, nobody wanted to recognise it as the authentic organ and umbrella Organisation for Ndigbo. It took a lot of selfless and dedicated effort, perseverance, sacrifices, the running about from place to place to resuscitate, rekindle interest and support, to dispel prejudices and grievances and to allay apprehension. Today, the body is recognised as the
main mouthpiece of Ndigbo, the symbol of Igbo identity [emphasis mine]. That puts in a nutshell what we have been able to do from a point where nobody accepted it to this point of general acceptability and recognition (Ibid)

Though, that one single Igbo State Union of the 60s has given way to multiple associations in Igboland such as Mpoko Igbo, Eastern Mandate Union, The Union, Oha-Na-Eze, Concerned Igbos, Aka Ikenga, Njiko Igbo and a host of others (Igbokwe, 10), the Ohaneze Ndigbo despite its internal acrimony remain the rallying point of the Igbos despite the proliferation and supremacy battle of different emerging groups.

The Igbos, indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) and the resuscitation for a Biafran State

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, the Igbos have continually craved for a just society where every ethnic groups can compete favourably for political power and where economic resources is equitably distributed through non-violence. Though other splinter groups, radical, pseudo-radical and non-radical have emerged including but not limited to; The Igbo Concerned Citizens, Igbo Elders’ Forum, Igbo Renaissance Movement, MASSOB, BZM (Biafra Zionist Movement), IPOB among others. In the fifth republic, precisely on the 26 August, 2004, Ralph Uwazuruike’s MASSOB formed in 1999 called on the Igbo both in the Southeast and the cities across the country to shut down their businesses of which was a success (The News Magazine, 2005 in Ojukwu, 2009b:189) and subsequently in May 2005, it embarked on demonstrations in Canada, France, Germany and Italy and also established a radio station in the US for the purposes of reaching out to Igbos in the diaspora and attracting international attentions (TELL, 2004 in Ojukwu, 2009b) Nonetheless, the apex Igbo socio-cultural group – Ohanaeze Ndigbo, and many Igbo elite discountenanced the approach the MASSOB group adopts to tackle the Igbo question in the Nigerian project, although identified with the reasons behind the formation of the group. In the words of late Dim Odumegwu Ojukwu, “there are certain things Ralph Uwazuruike wants to do. At nearly 67, I don’t think that is the best way to do things. I personally have evolved over the years, and increasingly, I go back to the Biafra of the soul, of the mind (but Uwazuruike) is an Igbo man and he has courage, per-haps more than many others who claim to be Igbo leaders.”(TELL, 2001 in Ojukwu, 2009b:189) Uwazuruike was however arrested by the State Security Service (SSS) on 25 October, 2005 and later charged along six others with treason on Wednesday 9 November, 2005 but later released on bail in November 2007 but finally discharged and acquitted with 280 members in the Goodluck Jonathan administration in 2011 (Isiguzo, 2011:1; Adibe, 2011)

Also, The Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) founded by a United Kingdom-based lawyer, Benjamin Onwuka who hails from Bende local government area of Abia state in 2010 with affiliations with Igbos in Diasporas, United Kingdom, United States and South Africa in which it claimed that it sent its application to the UN for an observer status for the Republic of Biafra on 6th August 2012 with reference BZM/OS/REPUBLIC OF BIAFRA claimed that the security of lives and property, practice of religion and freedom of Association of the Biafra
People are no longer guaranteed in the entity called Nigeria, hence the call for an independent state on 5th November 2012. He however put the threat to action on 8th March, 2014 when the Biafra flag was hoisted at the government house, Enugu state until the group was chased by the Nigerian Police. He claimed that with the hoisting of the flag, Biafra had been resurrected and no force of arm could hinder the aspiration as the states that will make up Biafra were Benue, Kogi, Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi, Anambra, Enugu, Imo Abia and Southern Ondo (Edike, 2014) and again made attempt to seize Enugu State Broadcasting Station (ESBS) in order to declare the state of Biafra in June, 2014 but he was subsequently apprehended by security operatives who had been on his trail after having placed a five million naira bounty on him since 2012. He was arrested with twelve others in a duel where one police sergeant was killed, another police officer injured while one died on the side of the BZM and had since been in detention (Uzodima, 2014).

As one of the world’s most deeply divided countries, the challenges of nation building birthed by the diverse ethnic and religious disseverance remain problematic especially in terms of power sharing and resource allocation. This informs the initial hoax as to the rumored Muslim-Muslim ticket of the All Progressive Congress candidate, Muhammadu Buhari prior to the 2015 general elections. Though, power sharing was considered at the formative years of formation of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), it was subsequently, though slowly ignored and the party even boasted at a time of ruling the country for 60 years especially in the seventh republic (2011-2015) where the Jonathan presidency apart from intensely provoking intense contempt and widespread opposition in the north for allegedly concentrating key appointments among elites from the South-south and South-East but successfully masterminding a civil and internal coup claiming the party’s sole candidacy, a feat in the country’s democratic history which was supposedly to return to the north after the precocious demise of President Umaru Yaradua (Suberu, 2015). This resentment influenced the alliance between key political parties in the North, South-West and a few from the South East having felt betrayed and neglected in the scheme of things, hence resulted in the overwhelming victory of the APC presidential candidate in the North and South-West (INEC, 2015).

With the inauguration of Buhari and his first assignment of forming his backroom cabinet, some groups began to question his lopsided appointment as sentimental, anti-Igbo and an islamization process despite his popular aphorism in his inaugural speech that ...he belonged to everybody and for nobody (Buhari, 2015a). Subsequently after his inauguration, he began a shuttle diplomacy to restore the lost prestige of the country, delaying the appointment of his ministers after more than five months of inauguration, non-declaration of his assets among others, some groups began to lose patience by questioning his integrity (one of his selling points), seriousness and ability to steer the country aright. This coincided with the period when the use of suicide bombers by the insurgents amplified, dwindling economy as a result of the falling oil price, naira capitulation, insecurity, non-payment of salaries by some states, general strife -all these being the cardinal focus of his campaign
promises hence informed the accusations lashed at the presidency especially from some quarters believed by pundits to be the South-East especially when waves of anti-Buhari campaign by a strange radio station, Radio Biafra came on airwaves for a separate and independent state of Biafra.

IPOB and the resuscitation for a Biafran State

The recent claims are that the present administration have hounded and short-changed the Igbos in the scheme of things causing disharmony hence the call for a divided Nigeria. This is informed by the incessant hardship, lack of holistic development in the socio-economic landscape of Nigeria, lack of youth employment, corruption in high offices and economic regression. This recent agitations are from the IPOB led by Nnamdi Kanu, a British-Nigerian. The IPOB is a splinter group from the MASSOB, taking on a more propagandist approach for the actualization of Biafra. Though it claimed to have existed since 2012 by a group of people from the South-South and South-east regions of the country in London, nothing was heard from them until the inauguration of President Buhari. The agitators believe that the post-civil war slogan of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction which intends to integrate and reintegrate the returning Biafrans is still a chimera and the recent administration of Buhari rather than take off from where Goodluck Jonathan stopped, is set out to marginalize and oppress them (Igbos). These reasons have always been the justification for the Igbo cause since the 1970s. For instance the Wednesday 11 January 1995 National Constitutional Conference delegates from the Igbo-speaking areas of Nigeria raised an alarm that the persecution of Igbos had reached an epidemic proportion (Igbokwe, 29). This is similar to Emeka Ojukwu’s position on Igbos and national reintegration that as a people and that they have the right to aspire to the country’s highest position and the speed to reintegration is slow but can be bettered so as to promote mutual benefit to all Nigerians (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 179)

The IPOB, with the radio media being its main tool is alleged to have addressed the Federal Republic of Nigeria as a zoo and president Buhari as terrorist, evil and a pedophile in some of its radio messages. However in a video message while addressing some Igbos in Diaspora at the World Igbo Congress in the US, Kanu was seen soliciting for weapons from the audience and boasted that the Biafran passports and sovereign status has been recognised by some powerful countries. He further said that he was going to Nigeria to regroup and on a particular date, “something will happen” which he urged the audience to look out for. During the discussion, someone queried their reason for war since the government of Nigeria had not stopped the federal allocation to the Eastern states. However, he debunked this and said the only language the Nigerian state understood was war and he was ready for them (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fPOPEH-0Y). Though efforts were intensified to jamming the pirate radio station, Radio Biafra 104.FM and arrest Kanu, the director of the Radio station and IPOB. At a time, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) reported to have jammed the pirate radio station, Kanu aired that:

NBC lied to their master and gullible baboons and monkeys jumping up and down. Radion Biafra is live
in Biafraland. They cannot even ban our local station; do they even know we also transmit via satellite and online as well? Have you seen why we call Nigerians baboons and monkeys, its because they are incapable of reasoning. No baboon even the so-called terrorist in Chief Buhari, were able to ask NBC which platform they jammed. Nigerian stupidity is appalling (PM News, 2015)

On 16 October, 2015, Kanu was apprehended in a hotel in Lagos and whisked to Abuja where he was at first tried at a magistrate court before the Federal Government begged the court to step down and headed for the High court where fresh charges were filed. Though he was granted bail by the judge on 19 October but the FG denied him on the basis that he may jump bail rather it filed fresh charges of treasonable felony against him on 23 November, which inadvertently evoked peaceful protests and other forms of agitations by his followers and supporters within and outside Nigeria including the lock-down of the Niger Bridge which led to confrontations with the Nigeria armed and civil forces. In protest of his continued detention at one of his trials, he argued that he was sure that the court will not be fair to him and this forced the Chief Justice to re-assign the case to another judge who again denied him bail even as he, Kanu changed his legal team. This issue necessitated the World Igbo Congress, Texas branch in a sponsored advert of a newspaper to call on the Federal Government to toe a fair path by respecting previous court’s decision that granted Kanu bail, though it condemned any act of militancy or war against the Nigerian state by any group or groups in the quest for self-determination (Vanguard, 15 December, 2015). Aside the international appeasements, other stakeholders have followed suit, the Ohaneze Ndigbo not excluded. The validity of the claims of marginalization is still opened for debate as Buhari in his first presidential media chat in December, 2015 puts it:

....And the one you are calling Kanu, do you know he had two passports-one Nigerian, one British- and he came into the country without any? Do you know he brought equipment into this country and was broadcasting Radio Biafra? Which kind of government do you think would harbor that kind of person? There is a treasonable felony suit against him and I hope the court will listen to the case …They say they are marginalized but they have not defined the extent of marginalization. Who is marginalizing them? Where? Do you know? (Buhari, 2015b).

Recently, the unbridled invasion, killing and destruction of properties of some communities across some southern states in Nigeria by some armed Fulani herdsmen may have reinforced the Igbo agitation and predicaments as the Federal Government reacted to these acts a bit late together with the controversial zoning of the erstwhile ruling party (PDP) of Igbos as Vice-president when the post of presidency is long over-due. But whether the question raised by President Buhari is in the affirmative or otherwise, does the IPOB leader have the legal right
Self-determination, international legal framework for secession and Nigeria’s conundrum

Self-determination implies the right of a particular group of people to determine for themselves how and by whom they wish to be governed. Though little known for much of human history, it remains very complex and vague as to who is entitled to claim this right—a group, a people or a nation—and what exactly the right confers. It however became officially sanctioned after 1945 but only applied to existing states, not to peoples or national groups (Carley, 1996) until in the 1960s; UN Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial peoples, when the term came to denote decolonization, it however applied to territories and not to peoples. Nevertheless, the 1970s, there was a paradigm shift in which it combined ideas of minority rights and decolonization, conferring the rights to independent statehood on every distinctive ethnic group. The prevailing force of the principle of territorial integrity was exemplified by the adherence to the principle of ‘uti possidetis’ during the decolonization process (that is, the retaining of colonial borders in the birth of independent nations). This conflict has been resolved in practice by defining the notion of ‘people’ entitled to self-determination as persons living in a particular geographic area within a nation-state rather than persons sharing a common culture or language.

In essence, all people reserve the right to seek self-determination to address a lack of proper representation or oppression from any given government. There is tension between the concept of self-determination and that of territorial integrity. Though, international law does not grant sub-state entities a general right to secede from their parent state, not does it prohibit secession, exceptions to this supposed neutrality arise from the international legal principles of territorial integrity and self-determination as it is a very technical and complex legal parlance. For instance, some scholars argue that territorial integrity merely safeguards the inviolability of international borders but does not regulate an internal affair such as secession. James Crawford cited in Roethke, 2011 claimed that territorial integrity prohibit secession because secession dismembers the territory of the state Be that as it may, definition of the “peoples” with collective rights to self-determination is unclear as in the case of Quebec. In language reverberated by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Declaration asserts that, “all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”(UN Resolution; Roethke, 39)

The UN has guaranteed all indigenous groups the right to self-determination as enshrined in A/RES/61/295 through the majority of its member voting in favour, 4 against and 11 including Nigeria being a member of the UN abstaining from the adoption of vote (Vanguard, 15 December 2015). Also, the Nigeria’s Constitution is clear in Chapter One: section 1(1): that, “this Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal republic of Nigeria” as well as 2(1) that, “Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be
known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” (FRN, 1999) In same vain, late Emeka Ojukwu acknowledging the final settling of the rising sun (Biafra) wrote:

….It is today an attitude of mind rather than a territorial entity and within that attitude of mind exist seeds that will save this country for posterity All over Nigeria there is Biafra but that Biafra today is ‘the Biafra of the Nigerians and not the Biafrans of the Igbo’s; the Biafra of the mind not Biafra of the fields (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 177)

State recognition and self-determination are twin legal concepts but the application of international law cannot be divorced from the realm of international politics and state interests. Legal recognition will take place only when it is politically acceptable to the international community (and especially to the world’s most powerful states), regardless of whether or when the entity displays the legally defined attributes of a state. Today, having helped states and peoples across Africa and around the world to attain independence and self-determination just like in cases of Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Western Sahara (Thompson and Onifade, 2015) among others, the Nigerian state is caught in the same web and this remains the quandary of the Nigerian state even as the secessionist believe that the country is better when divided and weaker while united.

Conclusion
There is no doubt that the Igbo question is an integral part of the unresolved national question. However, director of Radio Biafra/ IPOB claimed that he has registered IPOB with the UN. Since territory among others is one of the condiments to self-determination, what boundary does IPOB intend to lay claim since all the former Eastern region as he claims are not non-Biafras, and not all Igbo make up the defunct Eastern region,—a definition that follows the interpretation of a scholar who maintains that cultural affinities manifest in shared linguistic, religious, racial, or other markers [...] (and) enable one community to distinguish itself from others (Francis, 1976). As cited by Rotimi Suberu in Olayode that an ethnic group is regarded generally as a social collectivity, whose members not only share such objective characteristics as language, core-territory, ancestral myths, culture, religion and/or political organization, but also has some subjective consciousness or perception of common descent or identity (Olayode,ny). From the foregoing, if IPOB really wants to fight a just cause, then a referendum must first be sought to discuss issue of boundary/territory before questions of whether to or not to remain part of Nigeria could arise. This was done in the case of Southern Cameroon while with Nigeria in the 1950s.

Among the oil producing states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Ondo, Abia, Imo, Edo, Cross river, Anambra and recently Lagos, only three are core Igbo states (Abia, Imo and Anambra) which are landlocked. Though Kanu claimed that the Biafra Republic comprised of Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Imo, Anambra, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states as well as the Igbanke part of Edo State; Igalá part of Kogi state and Idoma/Igede part of Edo state (Asomoju, 2005). On the contrary, some governors, militants and
youth leaders of some of these states have publicly denied being part of the new agitation, as the fate of Kanu who entered a country of birth without any of the passports he possesses as claimed by the government remains a warning for the Nigerian state; not just for the volatility of its immigration laws, but for the resuscitation of the issues that led to the civil war in the first place and resuscitation of insurgents and marauding herdsmen in recent times which can be watered by granting some concessions such as constitutional autonomy (Smith, 2009), dialogue with the groups/stakeholders so as to understand their frustrations and predicaments, practicing true federalism and above all, stimulating an all-inclusive policies. As for the IPOB and other emerging or similar groups, it must be noted that self-determination is an inalienable right enshrined in not only the African Charter but also in the UN charter but this must be done in accordance with the laws of the land and international best practices through the use of referendum and elections by civilized people and nations just as it was done recently between United Kingdom and Scotland and never violence or war. With incessant inter-ethnic tensions looming into anarchy or self-defense by affected states, the federal government must be able to dialogue with these disgruntled groups as violence can never be used to solve violence. As the late Ojukwu puts succinctly:

Any form of war is a regrettable incident, because nobody likes blood-letting. One would certainly wish there were no more wars in all parts of the world, because no war in history has ever solved the problem it set out to solve. Eventually, and not from the battle-field. It is only those who have not been involved in a war, that will always push war as the first solution to any problem. War does not solve, it cowers but the problem remains (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 178).

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