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Post-Biafran war Peacebuilding project and renewed resistance in Nigeria's eastern region

Oluwatoyin Oluwaniyi
Department of History and International Studies
Redeemer's University Ede Osun State
Nigeria

Abstract

This article analyses the intersection of the Nigerian state post-Biafran peacebuilding project and the crisis of violent' nationalism' resistance in the 21st Century Southeastern region. With the end of the Baifran war in 1970, the Nigerian government, in a No Victor, No Vanquished move, kicked off a post-conflict peacebuilding strategy, which involved the 3Rs (Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction). But the recent crises pitting the state against post-Biafran groups that are re-igniting the secession of Biafran state from Nigeria, and the groups' incessant reference to the 'calumny' of the 3Rs, raise questions about the success of such peacebuilding strategy. Focusing on library search, this article analyses the nexus between the postwar peacebuilding strategy that Nigerian government implemented in the Southeastern region, the methods of implementation, the impact of the implemented 3Rs,which is characterised by the current resistance moves. This article concludes that Nigerian state's engagement with military retaliation will strengthen post-Biafran resistance. Therefore, efforts should be geared towards embracing full reconciliation that addresses genuine political, economic and social inclusion in the 'No victor, No vanquished' proclamation..

Keywords: Biafra War, Post-conflict Peacebuilding, Nigerian State, Southeastern Nigeria, Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), Secessionism.

Introduction

The recent emergence of Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), a neo-Biafran group, agitating for the secession of the Igbo people from the Nigerian federation, five decades after the Biafran war (Nigerian Civil War), raises questions about the complex challenges of post-war peacebuilding and means of ameliorating them. The Biafran war is perceived as the first major civil war in post-independent Africa and the only Cold War secessionist crisis that was debated seriously in terms of the substantive meaning of self-determination.[1] The war was fought between the Nigerian government and the secessionist

[1] James Mayall, "Sovereignty, Nationalism and Self-Determination," *Political Studies*, 47: 3 (1999), p482

state of 'the Independent Republic of Biafra' under the leadership of Lt. Col. Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu between6 July, 1967 and 15 January 1970.[2]

To Joseph, Taylor and Agbaje, the violence of 1967 was unavoidable because what existed in a pre-war era was a nation-state that was not domesticated or democratised. It remained an unfinished business with many rough edges, a record of failure in the direction of addressing matters arising from it being a colonial imposition sustained after independence by a largely undemocratic elite.[3] Adigun Agbaje further buttressed this argument by asserting that by 1967, the state was inherently wrecked by uncertainties, buffeted by strong undercurrents of fissiparous tendencies, more or less rudderless, lacking as it did the dosage of legitimacy and popular acceptance and visionary leadership required to stem the tide of war.[4]

At the end of the war in 1970, the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, made a proclamation of, 'No Victor, No Vanquished.' Most governments, globally, face the challenges of rebuilding the state in post-conflict era since the end of violent conflict does not automatically translate into peace. Usually, they find succour in employing post-conflict peacebuilding strategies to address such wars in ways that remove a relapse of the violence. States such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and the DRC, to mention but a few , implemented peacebuilding strategies such as Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, which are paramount to sustainable peace and development.[5]Similarly, the Nigerian government embraced the peacebuilding project, which was framed around reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reconstruction (3Rs) policies, as a way out of the doldrums. It was aimed at shaping the nature of the peace dividend, consolidate citizenship in an ethnically divided society, and reintegrate the *'Biafrans'* and other affected victims of the eastern region in a united Federal Republic of Nigeria.[6]

However, in recent times, there have been protests and violent militant activities of some groups agitating to secede from the Nigerian state, linking their objective to the failure of the government's 3Rs to redress pre-war exclusion of the eastern ethnic group within the Nigerian project, raising

[2] Eghosa E. Osaghae and Ebere Onwudiwe, 'General Introduction: The Relevance of the Nigerian Civil War,' Eghosa E. Osgahae, Ebere Onwudiwe and Rotimi T. Suberu (eds) The Nigerian Civil War and Its Aftermath (Ibadan: John Archers, 2002), p3
[3] Richard Joseph, S. Taylor and Adigun Agbaje, "Nigeria" W. A Joseph, M. Kesselman and J. Krieger (eds) Third World Politics at the Crossroads. (Lexington: M. A.: D. C. Heath, 1996), p272
[4] Richard Joseph, S. Taylor and Adigun Agbaje, "Nigeria", 1996,p 272; J. S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capitalism in the Third World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1988); Adigun Agbaje, "The War and the Nigerian State" 2002, p27
[5]Prosper Nzekani Zena, "Lessons and Limits of DDR in Africa"*Africa Security Brief* 24 (2013), pp1-2
[6]Paul Obi-Ani, *Post-Civil War Political and Economic Reconstruction of Igboland*, 1970-1983, (Enugu: Great AP Express Publishers, 2009)

questions of state legitimacy, protection of lives and property, and more disturbing, the success of the post-war 3Rs.

There are extant works on the Biafran War, the humanitarian dimension of the war, the impacts of the war on the economy and governance, and on the militant activities of MASSOB, IPOB and other militant groups in the south-eastern region.[7] Nevertheless, literature on the intersection of the Biafran war, the post-war peacebuilding approaches, and the current violent IPOB activities, is very scanty. Available literature on the intersection focuses on memorialisation and the peacebulding project and fail to elaborately examine the 3Rs and how each of them failed to address pertinent issues that could deter resuscitation of crisis.[8] Another study that highlights the linkage is done by Olakunle Ojeleye in The Politics of Post-War Demobilisation and Reintegration in Nigeria, published in 2010.[9] the study elaborates in detail, the politics of implementation of the 3Rs but shows no linkage to the current resistance in the Southeastern region. Thus there is the need to fill the gap in knowledge and further contribute to the peacebuilding discourse.

Focusing on library search,the first section is the Introduction and the second section conceptualises the peacebuilding framework, drawing out scholarly works on factors that engender success or failure of peacebuilding programmes in war-affected countries, and their effects for sustainable peace, and the implications for Nigeria's implementation of the post-war peacebuilding project. . The third section engages in a brief background to the civil war while the fourth section analyses the Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (3Rs) strategy and the rhetorics of implementation in the post-war era. Section five evaluates the kinds of resistance that have evolved in the region due to the failure of the peacebuilding project and consequences of the resistance to the peace and security of the region and the Nigerian state. Lastly is the conclusion and some anecdotes on the way forward.

Framing Peacebuilding in a Post-Conflict Milieu

The end of the Cold War heralded an era in which disenchanted groups had a free reign to mount violent opposition to legally constituted political authorities, issues that were silenced during the Cold War. The post-Cold War period witnessed a transformation of conflict in which civil wars assumed a

[7] Eghosa E. Osgahae, Ebere Onwudiwe and Rotimi T. Suberu (eds) *The Nigerian Civil War and Its Aftermath*; W. Wayne Nafziger, "The Economic Impact of the Nigerian Civil War," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10: 2 (July 1972) 223-245; Ike Okonta and Kate Meagher, "Legacies of Biafra: Violence, identity and Citizenship in Nigeria: Introduction", *African Development*, 34: 1 (2009): 1-7

[8] Benamin Maiangwa "Revisiting the Nigeria-Biafra War: The Intanibles of Post-War Reconciliation" *International Journal on World Peace*, 33: 4 (2016); Philip A. Olayoku, *Memorialisation Principles, Post-Civil War Reintegration and the Quest for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria*. Ibadan: IFRA-Nigeria (2017)

[9] Olukunle Ojeleye, *The Politics of Post-War Demobilisation and Reintegration in Nigeria*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010)

new intensity and are grounded in economic, ideological, racial and structural factors, which often overlap.[10] . Apparently, intense civil wars often leave state institutions destabilised, fragmented and in most cases, destroyed.[11] Thus, post-war societies are faced with various choices in addressing the causes and aftermath of war. The central tasks for ending conflict and beginning post-war reconstruction involves reestablishing legitimate state authority because the risks of conflict relapse are huge. Such post-war peacebuilding mechanisms include, but not limited to addressing the legacy of past injustices and atrocities, rebuilding broken relationships arising from conflict, establishing and guaranteeing public safety in every facet of life, and the need to for legitimate, effective political institution building, economic liberalisation, post-conflict justice and reconciliation, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters into society.[12] The right combinations of these mechanisms as well as their implementation determine whether a war-torn region or country recovers quickly and secures any available peace dividend, or whether it relapses and slides into a conflict trap. While peacebuilding has been successful in some climes, it remains a major challenge in other contexts.

Liberal peacebuilding perceives peacebuilding as constitutive of a global project of liberal governance advanced by international, regional, national and local actors in a multilateral approach to achieving peace. Peace-building thus requires a process of nonviolent social change toward equality.[13] It is broadly defined as 'structures which tends to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict' in the short-, medium- and long term in post-conflict societies.[14]Boutrous-Ghali (An Agenda for Peace, New York: United Nations, 1992) qualifies it very well he argues that peacebuilding is a process of identifying and supporting those structures which will enhance, strengthen as well as solidify peace, to avoid a reversion into conflict. While peacebuilding is not an attempt at eliminating conflict from society, it is about building an environment for negotiation, reconciliation, mutual understanding and compromise. Agents of post-conflict peacebuilding undertake a broad range of activities, which Johan Galtung refers to as self supporting structures that could stoop as well as prevent looming wars.[15] They span the security, political,

[10]Olukunle Ojeleye, 2016, Luc Van de Goor, Kumar Rupensighe and Paul Sciarone, *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*, (London: Macmillan, 1996)
[11]George Fredrick Willcoxon, "Peacebuilding, Political Order and Post-War Risks,"*A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science*, University of California, Berkeley, Summer, (2015): 2
[12] Godwin Onuoha, "The Politics of 'Hope' and 'Despair': Generational DImensions to Igbo Nationalism in Post-Civil War, Nigeria" *African Socioogical Review*, 18: 1, (2014), p3
[13] Ronald J. Fisher, "The Potential for Peacebuilding: Forging a Bridge from Peacekeeping to Peacemaking." *Peace and Change*. 18 (1993), p247-250
[14] Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali, An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping. Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement Adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on January 31,.(New York: UN, 1992), para. 21
[15]Johan Galtung *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding' in Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research, Vol. II* (Copehagen: Christian Elders, 1976), pp297-298

development, human rights, humanitarian and rule of law dimensions.[16] The activities include disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration, reconstruction, recovery, rehabilitation, resettlement, and repatriation to mention but a few. These activities are expected to remove the causes of war, provide alternatives to war, and facilitate the transformation of the system, and increase the resilience to deal with potential outbreaks of violent conflicts and its ability to sustain.[17]The ultimate aim is to Brinkmann and Oluwaniyi, transform the cause of the conflict from a situation of violence to laying the foundations of sustainable peace and development through more political and socio-economic equality, justice, fairness as well as security.[18] If it is successfully planned and implemented, Maiese perceives it as capable of facilitating harmony among parties to the conflict.[19] It is important to note that timing is imperative in the planning and application of peacebuilding activities as some activities will produce positive results very quickly while others will be noticeable in the future.[20]

Theoretically, post-war transformation represents a rare window of opportunity to rebuild failed state institutions and society and to avoid pitfalls of the past since it employs a multiplicity of interdependent elements and actions that contribute to constructive peace.[21]. In practice, rebuilding societies and states in post-war countries raises far more troubling questions than answers. Studies of civil conflict on the continent and post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes cannot be divorced from the socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and religious factors labelled as structural factors.[22] this perception has been reinforced by several scholars as a form of assertion.[23] More often than not, these sources of conflict tend to overlap, and are greatly influenced by the process of state creation, nationalism To Sesay et al, it could be as a result of the inability of previous political successions and reconfigurations in Africa, to bring about desired changes in

[16]NEPAD, *African Union's Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework, (*South Africa: New Partnership for Africa's Development Secretariat, Governance, Peace and Security programme, 2006).
[17]Michael Pugh "The Political Economy of Peacebuilding: A Critical Theory Perspective" *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 10: 2 (Autumn/Winter 2005), pp23-42
[18]Cornelia Brinkmann, *Steps for Peace Working Manual for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management*, (Kabul: German Development Service, 2006); Oluwatoyin O. Oluwaniyi, The Challenges of Reintegration in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: The Case of Nigeria's Niger Delta Region, Working Paper No.15. (New York: SSRC, 2018)
[19]Mitchelle Maise, *The Conflict Management Toolkit Approaches: The Conflict Management Program* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University, 2003)
[20]Cornelia Brinkmann, 2006
[21]John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. (Washington, DC:United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997)
[22]Raymond W. Copson, *African Wars and Prospects for Peace* (New York: Sharpe, 1994), p181
[23]Kumar Rupensighe, *Conflict Transformation* (London: Pluto Press, 1994);

the character of political leadership.[24]Some scholarly writings argue that a major challenge is that most countries perceive peacebuilding as a short term programme, spanning two to three years or focusing on the security aspect, which includes disarmament and demobilisation that is mostly, politically oriented and leaving out the long term reintegration.[25]such policy makers forget that though reintegration if difficult, it is critically important to stability and sustainable peace in the post-conflict period.[26] In some cases, disarmament and demobilisation are totally avoided while focus is centred on engaging in rushed reconciliation and reintegration as Nigeria's post-war peacebuilding measures were driven. Empirical data of Angola, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan to mention but a few, have demonstrated the weaknesses embedded in approaches limited to political aspects of the complex process of building sustainable peace rather than addressing the fundamental causes and conditions of the conflict, This process requires rebuilding of relationships, asserting communal responsibility and solidarity, and this is a departure from the liberal peace approaches to peacebuilding. Other factors mentioned in scholarly writings include lack of coherence and coordination of the programme[27]; the top-down approach, in places such as Congo, Iraq and South Sudan to mention but a few[28]; and the role of externally-driven post-conflict peacebuilding processes, which could attract unsustainable consequences and ignoring socio-cultural belief systems that shape the worldview of the internal actors. Definitions of what constitutes peacebuilding that fail to include localised initiatives are often a missed opportunity for sustainable peace.

Other writings have revealed how peacebuilding strategies fail to note how different societal structures, wartime experiences, and varying coping mechanisms of the population affect the dynamic of post-war reconstruction. Failure to redress all these weaknesses have at one time or the other, led to relapse or resuscitation of more violent conflicts in affected states.*** Stedman succintly sums the challenges of proper peacebuilding up by asserting that contemporary post-war reconstruction treats all civil wars as difficult to end, gives open-ended and unspecified implementation strategies, and fails to prioritize among the various tasks of the reconstruction.[29] The success of DDR is dependent on the extent to which ex-combatants are fully re-established in

[24]Amadu Sesay, "Introduction" Amadu Sesasy, Charles Ukeje, Osman Gbla and Olawale Ismail (eds) Post-war Reimes and State Reconstruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone, (Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2009), pp 1-3.
[25]Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Mathews, "Introduction", Taisier M. Ali and Robert O. Mathews (eds), *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp3-16
[26]UN, *Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development Rio Conference* (New York: The Staionery Ofice Agencies, 1993)
[27]Cedric de Coning, "The Coherence Dilemma in Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Systems" AJCR, 2008/3
[28] Severine Autessere, Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
[29]Stephen John Stedman, *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements, (New York: Lynne Rienner, 2002*), pp1-42

society and the extent to which victims of the war are transformed in post-war life, thus reating an environment for peace and development.

For countries that have had relative success, their success is largely due to an emphasis on inclusivity of stakeholders in conflict transformation. To Lauren Reese, in addition to increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of conflict transformation efforts, the prioritization of bottom-up strategies from peacebuilding seeks to challenge the top-down strategies.[30] This infers that whenever peacebuilding fails, the negatively affected groups feel excluded, suppressed and marginalised and could breed relative or sometimes, total deprivation, which could engender frustration and finally violence. In the case of Southeastern Nigeria, it could lead to secessionist efforts, and subsequently,another civil war arising from struggles over the Nigerian state ethno-nationalist character. It is within this context that the post-Biafran war peacebuilding strategy would be analysed and the implication of the success or failure of the strategy for the recent violent resistance in the region.

A Brief origin of the Civil War

To critically analyse the success or failure of the post-conflict peacebuilding measures, there is the need to put in proper perspective, the causes of the war, which are quite complex. However, there is consensus among scholars that the historical antecedents and factors that precipitated the Nigerian civil war lie in first, the construction of the Nigerian state by the British colonies (commonly referred to as 'the mistake of 1914'). The three regions, North, West and East, were brought together and more so, the Northern population as well as geography was higher than West and East combined. Kunle Amuwo argued that the constitutional arrangements that granted more legislative seats to the Northern region than the rest of the other regions combined in the central legislature contributed to the civil war. To him, 'the northern region was given the powerful position and its insistence on maintaining same as well as attempts by the other regions to challenge the status quo contributed immensely to the crisis that resulted in the civil war.[31] To Kirk-Greene, the failure of the Nigerian constitution at independence in 1960 to recognise the strong desires of the minorities and other communities for self-determination affected the balance of power at the centre. It was the deep-seated imbalance that adversely affected the First Republic through its life span.[32] Most African gained independence in this decade and also faced similar crises of the legacies of colonialism, including deepening ethnic divisions.

[30] Lauren Reese, "Peace from the Bottom Up: Strategies and Challenges of Local Ownership in Dialogue-Based Peacebuilding Initiatives" Johan Luka Gartner (ed) *Shifting Paradigms:Humanity in Action Senior Fellows on Policy and pluralism Across Borders*(Denmark: Humanity in Action, 2006)
[31] Kunle Amuwo, "Historical Roots of the Nigerian Civil War: An Explanation" S. Oyeweso (ed) Perspectives on the Nigerian Civil War (Lagos: OAP Publications, 1992)
[32]A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, "The Genesis of the Nigerian Civil War and the Theory of Fear", (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1975)

While these problems could not be ignored, other factors such as the emergency rule in the Western region in 1962, the census crisis of 1962-63, and the election crisis of 1964-65, set the foundation for the Biafran war.[33] The unrestrained conflicts culminated in the 'Majors Coup' led by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu on January 15 1966 on one hand and the deaths of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, the Premier of the Northern region, Ahmadu Bello, and several top military officers and government officials from the North on the other, and consequently, Rather than strengthen the Nigerian state, Osaghae pointed out how the head of state that emerged after the bloody coup, General Aguiyi Ironsi became the weak link that precipitated the Biafran or civil war of 1967 owing to his avid policies. Such policies include his failure to put the coup makers on trial, and the placement of Igbo officers in strategic commands.[34]For instance, out of twenty one officers promoted to the rank of Colonel, eighteen were Igbo, despite the SMC's advice. His policy action tilted towards primordial sentiments that usually strengthen deep seated ethnic division, especially in a multi-ethnic society.[35]it was therefore, not surprising that the Northern military and traditional rulers were suspicious of the Igbo clique of domination. To Kirk-Greene, the problem of Ironsi was not so much the structure that was to blame because he had good intentions of ending corruption, centralizing the regionally duplicated machinery of government and undertaking national planning but 'the rigid adherence to the regionalism at the critical time was inappropriate.[36]Asserting the former's argument, Eghosa Osaghae, argued that the Northern military did not perceive such moves as facilitating national unity but primordial sentiments.[37]

With the perception of being sidelined, the Norhtern military clique resulted to the killings of Igbo-speaking people and the destruction of their properties, and eventually assassinated Aguiyi Ironsi in a bloody counter coup on July 29, 1966[38]In a shunting of the military hierarchical queue Yakubu Gowon from the North central region emerged as the new military head of state, instead of Brigadier Ogundipe, the most senior military officer and from the Yoruba ethnic group, Lt. Col. Ejoor, an Edo, from the then mid-Western region, and followed by Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu, an Igbo who was the then Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria. Lt. Col Emeka Ojukwu perceived the obstruction as a deliberate attempt to obfuscate power from the Eastern region to the North. As a result, Ojukwu refused to recognise Gowon, thus deepening the national crisis.[39] The ethnic imbroglio that filtered into the military effectively contribute to the fall of Nigeria's first Republic and the collapse of its federal system of

[33]A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, 1975
[34] Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*,(Hurst & Company: London, 1998), p55
[35]A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, 1975
[36] Stanley Diamond, "Who Killed Biafra?"*Dialectical Anthropology*, 31: 1/3, (2007), p350
[37] Eghosa E. Osaghae, 1998, p55
[38] Alaba Ogunsanwo, Selected Essays on Politic ad International Relations (Lagos: Concept Publications, 2015)
[39] Obaro Ikime, "The Nigerian Civil War and the National Question: A Historical Analysis", Eghosa E. Osaghae et al (eds) pp53-73

government.[40]Similarly, Oyeweso remarked that the July coup 'hastened the march to the civil wars in two respects. …second the coup destroyed the nationalistic image of the Nigerian army as officers of different ethnic groups could no longer serve within the same unit. No doubt many igbos saw the July coup as a malevolent design meant to annihilate them.'[41]

These circumstances led to the Biafran claim to independence, which was led by Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu. On May 30, 1967, Ojukwu proclaimed the Republic of Biafra, a move that was popularly supported in the Eastern region after it became glaring that the security of their lives and property could not be guaranteed by the central government. Efforts by the Aburi Accord of Ghana in January 1967, failed to pacify Ojukwu. It ended in a 3-year full scale civil war, which is described as the only Cold War secessionist conflict to call into question the exercise, nature and limits of the right to self-determination, and the ambiguity and contested nature of sovereignty in post-colonial Africa.[42]It is also perceived as the first major war in Africa in which all the weaponry and techniques of modern warfare-armoured tanks, air raids, bombings, marine commando, were employed, and the first post-colonial war humanitarian crisis. The Biafran war was a turning point for international humanitarian assistance with the deaths of 1.3 million either as a result of starvation or killing .[43] But while some scholars perceive international intervention as being influenced by the crisis, colonial politics and oil interests, other scholars perceive the humanitarian actions as prolonging and worsening humanitarian crisis of people.[44]

Nevertheless, the civil war ended on 12 January 1970 with the collapse and surrender of Biafra. [45] The whole war was extremely costly to the Igbos politically, economically and socially. Apart from the fact, the clamour for a Biafran state was not successful, the war was fought in the Eastern region territory. This infers that there were huge losses in human and economic resources, which increased feelings of injustice, alienation and a strong potential for retribution in the aftermath of the war. Enduring post-war peace depends on the extent of post-war reconciliation and the power of the state to address structural grievances. . It was therefore, not surprising that the Head of State made a generous proclamation of*'No Victor, No Vanquished.*' Flowing from the Proclamation was the peacebuilding policy of Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction (RRR) aimed to consolidate the newly re-acquired Nigerian unity.

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[40] Godwin Onuoha, p5
[41] Siyan Oyeweo, "The Ojukwu Factor in the Outbrek of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), S. Oyeweso (ed), 1992.
[42] Eghosa Osaghae, 2002, p9; Godwin Onuoha, No 19, (June 2018), p1
[43]Lasse Heerten, "Introduction" Lasse Heerten (ed), The Biafran War and Postcolonial Humanitarianism: Spectacles of Suffering. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2017) 1-22
[44]Ike Okonta and Kate Meagher, "Legacies of Biafra: Violence, Identity and Citizenship in Nigeria" Africa Development, XXXIV,: 1, (2009), 1-7; Smilie, 1995: 104
[45]Ike Okonta and Kate Meagher, 2009, 1-7

Post-Civil War Peacebuilding and the Policy of Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction (3Rs)

It is instructive to note that there was no peacebuilding or post-war settlement policy prior to the Biafran civil war. Therefore, the 3Rs was the first policy put in place by the federal government to reduce the negative impact of the war. In a national broadcast titled, the Dawn of National Reconciliation, the former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon declared;

> …We have at various times repeated our desire for reconciliation in full equality once the secessionist regime abandoned secession…I solemnly repeat our guarantees of a general amnesty for those misled into rebellion…We also guarantee the right of every Nigerian to reside and work wherever he chooses in the Federation….There is no question of second class citizenship in Nigeria…All energies will now be bent to the task of reintegration and reconciliation….the task of reconciliation is truly began.

The statement reflected the leadership's willingness to initiate a policy that would compensate losers and victims and embrace the Biafran group into the Nigerian state. In short, it was a form of amnesty to the secessionists, which ensured that the widespread fear of post-war genocide, in relation to the pre-war and war pogroms, did not occur. It was expected to give the impression that Nigeria emerged from the war as a united nation. But unlike the practice in other post conflict countries' policies, the 3Rs constituted a deviation from the popular DDR. As noted by Ojeleye, the federal government settled for the 3Rs due to first, lack of funding to implement disarmament and demobilisation policies, in spite of the increase in oil revenues at the end of the Biafran war.[46] Second, there was the difficulty in identifying a Biafran combatant from a Biafran civilian.[47]

For the reconciliation aspect, some scholars argue that the federal government recalled the Igbos who fled to other parts of the country, to return to their homes and property. The affected people were rehabilitated through the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, such as shelter, local markets, bridges, clinics, schools, telecommunications, electricity, and other vital infrastructure and services, damaged or neglected during the war.[48]In addition, public servants were reintegrated into the federal service. After reinstatement, the absorbed staff were given three weeks casual leave to enable them find their relations and settle down comfortably. Those affected civil servants got 'mercy pays' as salary advance to assist them settle down. Also, there was an open policy to readmit most of their military officers and men back into the Federal Army/Armed forces.

[46] Chukwuma Osakwe and Bem Audu, 2015, p264
[47]Ojeleye, 2010, p,76
[48] Chukwuma Osakwe and Bem Audu, 2015, p265

For those with landed properties, the governmentinstituted Abandoned Properties Implementation Committee (APIC) to look into the cases of abandoned properties prior to and during the war. The institution was expected to assist in returning properties across Nigeria such as buildings and their rents to the returning Igbos as part of the government reconciliatory moves.[49]

It is important to note that in the course of the war in 1968, the federal government established the National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) through the promulgation of Decree 41, with the main aim of coordinating post-war food relief efforts, compensating those whose property had been destroyed or damaged by the conflict, resettling and assisting fleeing populations, and undertaking reconstruction projects.[50]

John de Jorre, in his study, *The Brothers' War*, describes the Biafran war as the only war of its magnitude in history , perpetrated with so much viciousness and bitterness, but where no reprisals, trials or executions occurred.[51]Though de Jorre's claim may be right based on the aforementioned, the implementation of the 3Rs reveals ruptures that reinforced the 'vanquished status' of the Igbo group. The gaps are analysed below.

The defeat of Biafran group on the battlefield and the cessation of hostilities through the military might of the federal forces consequently reflected in the formulation and implementation of the post-war reintegration and demobilization efforts of the Gowon government. In the first case, there was no negotiated settlement because victory was one-sided and this affected the peacebuilding policy of the government in evading disarmament and demobilisation for ex-Biafran soldiers.[52] Second, there was no deliberate policy to disarm and demobilise ex-Biafran combatants, even then, there was the disarmament as well as remobilisation of federal government's military personnel. This omission is antithetical to post-conflict security and peace. Though some federal soldiers cross-carpeted to the Biafran side during the war, most of the Biafran fighters were civilians-turned war soldiers. They had no formal military training but were hurriedly armed to participate in the war against the federal government. Thus, it was only necessary to disarm and deconstruct their military-oriented minds. As an alternative, ex-Biafran soldiers were disbanded and ordered via the 'Firearms and Prohibition' Order, which absolutely prohibited the possession of firearms in the Rivers, Central Eastern and South-Eastern states, to return all firearms within 14 days. Failure to return the weapons would render defaulters to a fine of £300 or imprisonment for two years, or both upon conviction.[53]

[49]Ojeleye, 2010, p77-78
[50] Pat Uche Okpoko, 'Three Decades after Biafra: A Critique of the Reconciliation Policy" Toyin Falola (ed), *Nigeria in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2002), p486
[51] John de St Jorre, *The Brothers' War: Biafra and Nigeria* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972)
[52]Ojeleye, 2010, p110
[53]Ojeleye, 2010,

Implementing the Order was highly problematic because the use of weapons transcended the three areas. It should have included Midwest and parts of Western region. There was no specific committee responsible for making and implementing the policy on the disarmament of Biafran soldiers; there was no coordination of the Order. The security of the people returning the weapons was not guaranteed; there was no inventory list, detailing the total number of collected weapons., therefore, making it impossible to know the number of weapons turned in and by whom in order to prepare for their demobilisation.[54] For those that dropped their weapons, they returned to the pre-war life without any form of demobilisation. The implication is that majority of disbanded Biafran soldiers who did not return their weapons and were not also demobilised, constituted serious threats to the security of the state, especially for child soldiers that participated in the war with adult Biafran soldiers. Moreso, only a few out of the total number of soldiers that cross-carpeted from the federal army to the Biafran army were reintegrated into the Nigerian army.
Analysing the reconciliation of the Biafran group, Bloomfield et al assert that reconciliation is an overarching process which includes the search for truth, justice forgiveness and healing to mention but a few.[55] In other words, it endears mutual acknowledgement of past wrongs and the changing of destructive attitudes into constructive relationships towards achieving sustainable peace. Lederach makes it clear that it is the point at which parties to violent conflict recognises turning points and possibilities that are rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence.[56] The post-Biafran war reconciliation measures failed to understand the dynamics of violence, the consequences of conflict and the need to embrace justice and forgiveness in its couched oral phrase, 'no victor, no vanquished.' The failure is the outcome of the state's inability to properly disarm and demobilise the ex-Biafran soldiers.

To Godwin Onuoha, the manner of reconciliation advanced by the Nigerian state was aimed at eliminating group differences as if there was none, and shoring up a sense of inter-ethnic cohesion. As such it constituted a veritable new grand narrative that superceded other narratives and gave the impression that Nigeria emerged from the war as a stronger and more united nation.[57]In reality, the narrative was false as the Igbos who fought on the Biafran side were totally alienated from the peacebuilding talks and implementation.

The government-instituted Abandoned Properties Implementation Committee (APIC) ended not favouring the Biafran people. After the war, most owners of properties could not reclaim them . Rather, their properties were sold at ridiculously low prices. The government's decision to adopt the 'Twenty Pound Policy' (despite the huge Biafran currency amounts some indigenes deposited

[54]Ojeleye, 2010
[55]David Bloomfield, T. Barnes, and L. Huyse, Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: A Handbook Series (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2003), p11-20
[56]John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
[57] Godwin Onuoha, 2011, p9

to the Central Bank of Nigeria) and the Banking Obligation (Eastern States) Decree of 1970 further eroded the promise of reconciliation and left them financially handicapped and unsure about their future. Mbakwe regarded the whole exercise as a national conspiracy to make the Igbo pay a war levy or reparation for the loss of war.[58]

The irony of '*no victor, no vanquished,*' has been further proven in Olutayo Adesina's study, "Abandoned Properties: Re-engaging a Post Nigerian Civil War Narrative" To him, "the government made the reclaiming of properties difficult, first, as those whose landed property was leased to them and expired, found it difficult to renew them. Second, abandoned properties were categorised into four groups. First, those whose legal ownership was established beyond reasonable doubt and were returned to the owners, second, those for which the original owners could not provide documents to establish lawful ownership but were put in a distributable pool. Third, those whose ownership, were lawfully established but were acquired and put in the distributable pool by the government, and fourth, those whose ownership was established but which were compulsorily acquired for public purposes."[59] This categorization bred serious trauma and frustration on affected persons.

Furthermore, reconciliation suffered implementation when the Public Officers (Special Provisions) Decree No. 46 of 1970 was promulgated. For instance, the decree prevented senior Igbo civil servants and public corporation personnel from being reabsorbed on the grounds that they supported Biafra's war efforts. They were either dismissed or compulsorily retired from the armed forces, prisons and police compared to personnel from other ethnic extractions. Military officers, who fought on the Biafran side were either not absorbed into the Nigerian military again or entitled to either pension or gratuities. Some of the senior officers were Philip Effiong, Hilary Njoku and Emeka Ojukwu, leader of the Biafran group. Some re-absorbed senior officers lost seniority for the period they served in the Biafran military and had to serve a four-year probation and in conducting their full absorption, the Nigerian Army only recognised the ranks held before the war started. . Some officers remained in detention, and some junior officers (below the rank of major) were reabsorbed and put on probation without promotion for a period of four years.[60] To further undermine the reconciliation process, over 5,000 police officers who fought on Biafran side, were only granted general amnesty in 2003 during President Olusegun Obasanjo era. The funds to pay them off were approved in 2007, 37

[58]David Mark Panel on the Abandoned Properties (Ojukwu: Biafra and the Abandoned Properties' Question-Charles Ugwuanyi
[59]Olutayo Adesina, "Abandoned Properties: Re-engaging a Post-Nigerian Civil War Narrative" Paper Presented at the *West African Transitional Justice Distinguished Personality Lecture*, (2021)
[60] Paul Obi-Ani, 1998, 474-475

years after the war had ended, but they were paid, only in 2017, when some of them had died waiting for their compensation.[61]

It was therefore, not surprising that all other objectives failed because they did not translate into positive outcomes as it birthed a forced peace and not a sustainable one. For instance, there was the Indigenisation Decree that led to a change in the Nigerian currency. But the government refused to accept the Biafran currency in exchange for the new Nigerian currency. This policy altered the Igbos' spending capacity who could not gain access to economic empowerment. The lack of economic opportunities on the affected labour force resulted in higher rates of unemployment for them.[62] They had to source alternative means to survival.

The reconstruction programme was formulated and embedded in the Second National Development Plan (SNDP) (1970-1974). To Ibeanu et al, although reconstruction of war damaged facilities was critical in rebuilding the region, the implementation was absurd. The federal government's focus was broadly on Nigerian economy, thus neglecting the urgent needs of the Eastern region in the post-war period. Even then the budget reserved for the reconstruction of the war affected areas, was not fully released over the claims of lack of money in spite of the 1973-74 boom in oil revenue to directly fund reconstruction projects. In the words of Chief Iwuanyanwu, 'the Igbo reconstructed their environment after the war when they could not find assistance from the appropriate quarters. They had to engage in self help within the communities and also rehabilitated themselves by turning to menial jobs and trade for survival after the war.'[63] Lack of infrastructural development is still very evident in the region.

The informal business was characterised by informal manufacturing and long-distance trading networks relying on operation outside state structures,[64] which culminated in intensified perception of political and economic marginalisation, fostered a sense of neglect and exacerbated the challenges of Nigeria's reconciliation with the Igbo.[65] Thus the indigenization policy marginalised the Igbos contrary to the spirit of reconciliation. In the implementation of the 3Rs, the lives of women and children affected by the war,

[61] BBC, "Nigeria: Biafra Police from 1967 War Go Begin Get Pension," BBC News, Pidgin, 19 October 2017," https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-41676179.amp (13 July 2020)
[62]Wayne Nafziiger, "The Economic Impact of Nigeria Civil War" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10: 2 (July 1972), 223-245; Moses M. Duruji, "Social Inequity, Democratic Transition and the Igbo Nationalism Resurgence in Nigeria," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 3: 1 (2009)58-59
[63]Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, cited in Isaac Olawale Albert, "the myth, reality and challenges of Nigeria's reconciliation with Ndigbo, Eghosa, 2002 p310
[64] Kate Meagher, "The Informalization of Belonging: Igbo Informal Enterprise and National Cohesion from Below", Africa Development 34, no. 1 (2009), 31-46.
[65] Kate Meagher, 2009, pp31-46; Brad Simpson, "The Biafran Secession and the limits of Self-Determination," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16: 2-3 (2014), p348

were not considered at all. In fact, most scholars have denounced the claims of reconciliation in the post-war era. To Achebe,[66] 'Igbos were not and continue not to be reintegrated into Nigeria.' More so, the reintegration programme of the government also undermined the co-optation of children, especially, under-age soldiers[67] While he may be ethnically sentimental to the cause, other non-indigene scholars have faulted the programme. For instance, Onwuka Njoku submits that the efforts towards the implementation of the 'Rebuilding, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation' policy were 'half-hearted, superficial and double-edged. They scratched the thin veneer of layers of a huge problem.[68].

Linking the failed post-conflict peacebuilding policies and the recent resistance in Nigeria's Southeatsern region, James O'Connell points out that these apparent anti-Igbo policies and actions in Nigeria make many Igbo people remain secessionists at heart even though they accepted the Biafra defeat.[69] To Benjamin Maiagnwa, the agitation of IPOB are indicative of the trauma and grievances of some people belonging to the Igbo ethnic group, owing to their perceived or real marginalization and repression of the wounds of the Nigeria-Biafra war. The manner in which the Nigerian state 'fought' the war and its post-war reconciliation policies have been deemed anti-Igbo by groups. The agitations for autonomy by some Igbo youths is an indication that the memory of the Biafran trauma is alive and present in many sections of Igbo society.[70] This is what Vamik Volkan refers to as the 'trans generational transmission of trauma'[71]. Groups and individuals can become deeply ethnocentric and violent if they perceive a grave sense of collective injustice due to unaddressed "legacies of violence, which not only hurt but are passed on through the generations."Corroborating this argument, Gabrielle Schwab right notes that it is impossible to completely silence trauma, and that 'silence intended to cover up a traumatic event or history only leads to its unconscious transmission that spans generations.[72] In such cases, aggrieved persons form a milieu to show that their subjective historical hurt is 'bigger than others' hurts.[73] To Ike Okonta, the Igbo leadership still view the Abandoned Property Law as an unjust policy "that the Nigerian government must heal if the Igbo are to put the civil war fully behind them.[74]

[66] Chinua Achebe, *There was a Country* (London: Penguin Books, 2012) p 233
[67] Chukwuma C. C. Osakwe and Bem Audu, 2015, 268
[68]Onwuka N. Njoku, in his foreword, in Obi-Ani's (2009)
[69]James O'Connell "The Ending of he Nigerian Civil War: Victory, Defeat and the Changing of Coalitions" Roy Licklider (ed), *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) 189-203
[70]Benjamin Maiagnwa 2016
[71]Vamik Volkan, "Large-Group-Psychology in Its Own : Large Group Identity and Peace making," *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 10: 3 (2013), p218
[72]Gabrielle Schwab, *Hunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p79
[73]Ojeleye, 2010
[74]Ike Okonta, "Biafra of the mind: MASSOB and the Mobilization of History", *Journal of Genocidal Research*, 16 (2-3) (2014) 355-378

This section has revealed that the 3Rs failed to address the trauma of the war. As a result, most Igbo have been left with a deep sense of injustice. Nigeria's post-civil war peacebuilding project has several outcomes that are not conducive to peace, but rather have reinforced and reignited the conflict. To Akinwale, 'the monstrous misconception of the state, its institutions and its functionaries makes them fail to understand that they are accountable to the citizens to whom the power of sovereignty belongs.[75] The inability or failure to address group issues in post-war peacebuilding, usually creates template for resurgence of pre-war crisis and resistance from the affected group. Furthering the post-conflict peacebuilding failure argument, are the grievances that led to the war as well as the grievances arising from how the war was fought and the post-war recurrent precarious balance between a relatively viable central state, which is guaranteed largely by black gold revenue and fragmentation at the margins fueled by deepening feelings of exclusion on both class and communal grounds, and inter-ethnic crises, especially between the Northern and Eastern region and characterised by violence.[76] Thus the failure of the 3Rs has precipitated the resurgence of Igbo nationalism by groups like IPOB and MASSOB. The kinds of resistance and implications of the resistance is analysed.

Forms and Consequences of Resistance in Nigeria's Eastern Region

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic society that relies extensively on primordial sentiments to actualise political objectives. While Ukiwo's perceives primary ethnic allegiances as a product of violent forms of statecraft[77] Kaplan's debate unveils how crisis in Africa is the outcome of inherent fragility of multi-ethnic states.[78] The ongoing resistance, which is an outcome of the failed 3Rs is not new and it can be categorised into two forms, both peaceful and violent resistance.

The origin of resistance in the aftermath of the Biafran war can be traced to the formation of the Ohanaeze Ndi Igbo in 1976, Aka Ikenga, and Alaigbo Development Foundation (ADF) to mention but a few, by the conservative bourgeoisie in the region as a form of mainstream-inclusivism to achieve peace and development in the region. Their interest is limited to the protection and promotion of the Igbo petty bourgeois in Nigerian politics and not really to query the sloppiness of the peacebuilding project. They rely on dialogue and the need to promote amity instead of enmity. They comprise war veterans and older generations who have bitter memories of the war, and advocates greater political, economic and social inclusion of the Igbo as the most effective way of addressing the perceived victimization of the Igbo group.[79]

[75]Akeem Akinwale, 2017
[76]Okechukwu Ibeanu, Nwachukwu Ori and Chijioke K. Iwuamadi, *Biafra Separatism: Causes, Consequences and Remedies*, (Enugu: Institute for Innovations in Development, 2016), p8
[77]Ukoha Ukiwo, "Violence, Identity Mobilization and the Reimagining of Biafra" *Africa Development* XXXIV: 1 (2009), PP9-30
[78]Richard D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy" *Atlantic Monthly* 273: 2 (1994), pp44-76
[79]Nwangwu, 2020, p12

But with the consistent marginalisation of the ethnic group within Nigerian politics, the second generation of resistant group emerged. The group is championed by incipient but radical wing of the Igbo petty bourgeois class in alignment with the underclass who dominate the various youth-led ethno-nationalist organisations. Some of these groups include the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), which started in 1999 and led by Chief Ralph Uwazuruike.[80]In the heat of severe state repressions on MASSOB, several neo-Biafran groups began to break into factions. Subsequently, Other groups such as the Biafra Youth Congress (BYC), MASSOB International, Biafran Liberation Council BLC, Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) (2012), the Coalition of Biafra Liberation Groups (COBLIG), an umbrella body comprising Seven Igbo liberation groups in Nigeria and two in diaspora, and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) were established., among others.[81] IPOB, which is led by Nnamdi Kanu, has emerged as a prominent force of Igbo nationalism, propagating imagery to illicit a strong sense of Igbo identity.[82] They represent the confrontational and radical wing of the Igbo nationalist movement. They are similar to other groups such as the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in the Niger Delta, Oodua Peope's Congress (OPC) in the West, .and the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in the North.

This group's ideology is quite different from the conservative ideology of the elites. To this group, a sovereign, independent state of Biafra is the only solution to the victimization of the Igbos. To achieve this goal, the youth are mobilised in different parts of Southeast to engage in various forms of violence. Coincidentally, identity-based conflicts thrive on easy combatant recruitment, mostly from the lower classes of the population along generational lines, which remain a key marker of these identities with radical youth movements. Memories of negative political and social occurrences configure youth culture through critically shared experiences during a child's formative years as the Biafran war has shown.[83] As some scholars have argued, shared memories passed across generations are critical to forging collective identities, and as such, youth mobilization is critical to the rise of nationalist movements.[84] The young easterners are the targets of a pro-Biafra message to bring the wounds of the war back into the public space.[85]Ukiwo and Nwajiaku, perceive their actions as a symbol of subaltern politics or what some scholars refer to as separatism, because their actions are not espoused by Igbo elites.[86]

[80]Godwin Onuoha, 2014, pp12
[81] Onuoha, 2014, p15
[82] Godwin Onuoha, "Contesting the Space: The 'New Biafra' and Ethno-Territorial Separation in South-Eastern Nigeria," Nationalism and Ethnic Politics 17: 4 (December 2011), p412
[83] Karl Manheim, "The Problems of Generations, " in Paul Kecskemeti (ed), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*,(New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952)
[84] Benedict Anderson, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1991)
[85] Daniel Smith "Corruption Complaints, Inequality and Ethnic Grievances in Post-Biafra Nigeria." *Third World Quarterly* 35: 5 (2014), p791
[86]Ukiwo and Nwajiaku

The pro-Biafrans apply various signs and symbols, and narratives of the past and a particular version of Igbo history as vehicles for establishing their claim to self-determination and exercising power, while outrightly rejecting the official commemorations relating to the civil war, such as the Armed Forces Remembrance Day and other monuments. They include the use of commemorations, anniversaries, flags, and Biafran artifacts to articulate alternative versions of Igbo identity.[87]Members hoist these materials with outright political messages in the public to transform public areas, streets, and major roads in the region into a public space.[88] Boycotts of important programmes is another instrument of violence. Since 2021, 'sit-at-home' order on Mondays has been a common phenomenon. People who contradict the boycotts and sit-at-home order are harassed and sometimes, killed to show commitment to those values. The objective is to further sensitize the federal government of their willingness to leave the Nigerian state that has not benefitted them positively.

The consequences of the radical approach have been enormous on the lives and security of innocent people in the region and the Nigerian state. Between August 2015 and early 2022, a series of protests, marches and gatherings by supporters of IPOB seeking the disengagement from the Nigerian project, the creation of a Biafran State, and the State release of Nnamdi Kanu, culminated in serious violence and the deaths of large number of pro-Biafra activists, elites and security agencies. Moreover, the unexpected acts of violence and clashes between the group and the security agencies, and the 'sit-at-home order affect economic activities where they occur. This is owing to the fact that when such events occur, residents are barred from leaving their homes to fend for their livelihoods. In most cases, the innocent civilians are caught up in the violence, especially for those who faltered on the sit-at-home order.

In addition, the war has worsened regional and national security, and unfortunately, the capacity of the security agencies to handle them is very low. In 2017 and 2019 respectively, the federal government introduced the 'Operation Phyton Dance" (Egwu Eke I, II, and III) in the South Eastern states and used it to curtail movement mostly of the youth in Abia State. It was a show of force to deal with criminality and insecurity in the Southeast. The use of force against the pro-Biafrans further pushed them to pursue other violent means to actualise their self-determination strategy.[89]Between 2020 and December 2021, there were huge clashes between federal soldiers and IPOB, which led to the deaths of several prominent Igbo in the region, IPOB supporters, burning of several police stations and extra-judicial killings of security agents, including police officers.[90]Despite the repressive response of

[87] Unuoha, 2014, p19.
[88] Unuoha, 2014, p20
[89] Emmanuel Ugwu, "When the Python Danced in Abia", September 17, 2017, https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/09/17/when-the-python-danced-in-abia/ (Accessed 28 August 2020)
[90] James Eze, "Two SSS Operatives, '21' IPOB Members Killed in Violent Clash," August 23, 2020, https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/410415-two-sss-operatives-21-ipob-

the Nigerian state to the agitations of neo-Biafran groups, the leaderships of these groups continue to favour a confrontational approach to Igbo nationalism due largely to wider considerations for their material conditions.
Lastly, the radical approach raises pertinent questions over Nigeria's political stability and democratic consolidation.[91] To Ibeanu et al, the persistence of the agitation for Biafra could become a rallying point for groups questioning the Nigerian project. Pro-Biafran struggles could produce a snowball effect-motivating group after group to demand for greater autonomy or separation just as some elements of the Yoruba ethnic groups are also clamouring for the Oduduwa nation.

Conclusion

The war ended in 1970 but the effects of failed post-war peacebuilding are far from over. The Nigeria-Biafra war raises complex challenges facing peacebuilding in Africa. The challenges, which transcend the post-war settlement, invariably, have enormous consequences for lasting post-conflict peace as shown by the emergence of pro-Biafran separatists in the Southeastern region. Apart from threatening the fragile democratic governance, the pro-Biafran crises have worsened the intractable violence that has enveloped the Nigerian state, coupled with the Boko Haram terrorist crisis in the Northeast, the herders-farmers crisis in the North-central and Southwest, banditry crisis in the Northwest, and other insecurity issues. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state lacks the capability and capacity to tackle them headlong. There is a black hole in the peacebuilding process that has paralleled the pre-war years in the Southeast region.

The challenge for the Nigerian state in a post-Biafran war is to locate the quest for peacebuilding within a larger historical framework that addresses the injustice, exploitation and marginalization to which it is responding. Examples of South Sudan and Sudan should drive home strong lessons to the Nigerian state that even when countries secede, it does not translate to peaceful environment, especially in an area where deep-seated issues of resources are highly contested between and among ethnically-divided groups, infrastructural development is lacking, and the struggle for power has become a zero-sum game among the groups. Thus political stability needs to be deeply and holistically entrenched to allow harmonious and peaceful co-existence regardless of the resources in place.

While it may be too late to engage in disarmament and demobilisation of Biafran soldiers and others affected by the war, reconciliation is never too late. It will engender economic revitalisation, employment opportunities and real reconciliation. as the true road map to sustainable peace and security in the southeast in particular and Nigeria as a whole.

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members-killed-in-violent-clash.htm (Accessed 2 September 2020); Samuel Akpan, "FG: IPOB Attacked 164 Police Stations, Killed 175 Security Operatives," *The Cable*, 22 October (2021)
[91]Okechukwu Ibeanu et al, 2016, p29

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Social development of the region is critical at this point in brokering lasting peace. As Zartman argues, state crises can be stopped and the degenerative process can be reversed by rebuilding institutions and restoring the social fabric of the society. To this end, there is the need for context-specific, multilayer and multi-track processes of third party intervention and cooperation between local actors. Peacebuilding should be driven by actors at the grassroots level, to complement the performance of the official top-down processes of governments because they bear the brunt of war, and thus have the sustainable ways of achieving peace. It involves mobilisation, sensitization and networking of conflict stakeholders rather than labeling them as rebels, terrorists and criminals.

Moreover, the issue of Abandoned properties and other related issues to the 3Rs must be reframed and several questions within the context of the National Question, such as whether it is possible for any property to be abandoned, must be answered. There needs to be a holistic strategy that will reconcile the pre-war, war and post-war issues because they constitute major threats to Nigeria's unity project. Such reconciliation will require properly coordinated approach towards genuine acknowledgement of and apology for past wrongdoing, memorialization of victims of the war, and concrete reconstruction and reintegration.