

Security Report

April 2022

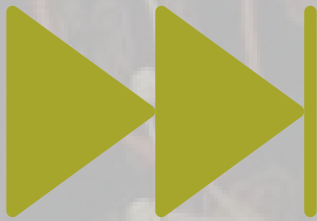


Armed Violence in South-east Nigeria

The South-East of Nigeria

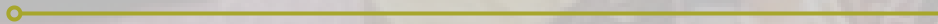
Is most notable for the Biafra war when under the leadership of late Lt Col Odumegwu Ojukwu in a struggle for self determination the republic of Biafra was declared in July 1967. Its geographical boundaries were poorly defined and highly disputed even by ethninc, cultural and political groups within the region, it included the 5 states that currently make up the region (anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) and spilled over into parts of the Niger Delta states (Bayelsa,Delta, Rivers, Cross-rivers).

The Niger delta was already highlighted as the source of crude for the blossoming oil trade, therefore the Federal government did not tolerate this talks of secession and launched one of the most brutal civil wars of the 20th century with over 3 million dead by the end of the war.



Fast forward 55 years and agitations for secession have returned with a fervor like never before, in part fueled by the propaganda machine which is led by a self styled Biafran leader in the person of Nnamdi Kanu and funded mainly by donations from the ibo diaspora.

For many years Kanu spewed hateful rhetoric over online radio stations, condemning the Nigerian state and its politicians, making claims of selective marginalisation and exploitation by the mainly northern elite. Skewing the judgement of the greater populace by appealing to their pride in self and superior business etiquette that comes natural to the ibos, all the while failing to point out that a market is firstly an agreed space(Nigeria), with traders(ibos) and buyers(Nigerians).



Sadly the situation has come to a head in the last one year and every security report points to a worsening of the situation on the ground. Below is a timeline of some of the crucial events that have led to the extreme deterioration of the security situation in the southeast

Nnamdi Kanu is arrested in Abuja with charges ranging from treason to inciting violence filed against him, he is granted bail but flees the country in disregard of the bail conditions

He openly continues his treasonous propaganda and canvasses on the international stage for the right of Biafra to see-recognition.

He is arrested with the aid of Interpol in Kenya over an international arrest warrant issued by the NPF. he is subsequently extradited to Nigeria and detained by the DSS.

While awaiting trial, Biafra supporters, elder ibo statesmen and community leaders, begin to cry foulplay and canvass for his unconditional release, a request denied by the president, saying "the law must follow its due course".

ESN declares itself as a breakaway faction of IPOB with their pronounced aim being to protect the people of Biafra from insecurity and prevent the exploitation of Ibo lands by the central government

Attacks on security formations (police personnel at checkpoints or on patrol, police stations, military and paramilitary personnel) experience a slight uptick

The Nigeria corrections Service high security prison in Imos state is attacked with several personnel killed and several hundreds of hardenend inmates freed and recruited

Uptick in the frequency of indiscriminate kidnappings with many of the targets being community leaders such as Obis, Chiefs, Catholic priests etc. looting and destruction of property are routine during kidnap operations and sadly, many of the kidnap victims were subsequently killed.



Attacks

On Police stations with many officers killed and firearms and ammunition stolen become a routine occurrence across the the 5 states of the region

ESN vows to cripple government activities within the region, declare illegal sit-at-home order, every Monday. No school, no transport, banks, markets, offices etc to be closed.

There was recent attack was on an INEC station where amatuer video footage shows the security guard was killed, and citizens queuing to pick their voters cards were harassed and injured. An indication that these groups seriously intend to utilise insecurity and violence to destabilise voting in the South east during the upcoming national elections.

Most recently in early May, a couple of soldiers were captured and beheaded by self-acclaimed unknown gunmen (UGM) in Imo state. Reports indicate the couple were headed for their wedding.

SECURITY

Observations






Our analysis of the reports indicate that many members of these armed groups are hardened criminals who escaped from Prison or from detention in police stations that were attacked and razed.

That police stations, checkpoints and patrols are carefully profiled for vulnerability and attacked as a source of weapons and ammunitions for their growing army.

That there is no centralised control structure of these armed gun men, therefore no clear agenda other than self gain and a reign of terror. That the number of armed fighters amassed by ESN and IPOB is already several thousands strong.

There are also a lot of empathisers for the independence struggle, however the insecurity is fast degrading whatever initial broad support they may have had.

Recommendations.

-  The trial of Nnamdi Kanu be speedily and professionally conducted in a transparent manner that meets international standards.
-  That Police, Prison and Military formations within the region be better equipped, manned and fortified, while maintaining a stance of maximum alertness in order to deter or even fend off possible attacks.
-  That the issue of the Biafra war be revisited rather than the failed attempts to erase it from national memory by the national government.
-  An enquiry into the killings and claims of genocide
-  An apology for the wrongs done

Discussions on reparation be considered.

Strategic military operations using latest information gathering and technological skills available to identify the bush hideouts and city cells of these gunmen be immediately instated while the group is still at this developing stage, lest the errors of BH repeat itself where the potential threat of the group was abysmally managed in its infancy stage, thus leading to this protracted war in the Northeast still ongoing today.

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