



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Nigeria: Separatist groups in the South-East

Version 3.0

March 2022

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into 2 parts: (1) an assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note - that is information in the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw - by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- a person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- that the general humanitarian situation is so severe that there are substantial grounds for believing that there is a real risk of serious harm because conditions amount to inhuman or degrading treatment as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iii\) of the Immigration Rules](#) / Article 3 of the [European Convention on Human Rights \(ECHR\)](#)
- that the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- a person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- a person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- a claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- if a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2013. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate and balanced, which is compared and contrasted where appropriate so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture is provided of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote. Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

Feedback

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 16 March 2022

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by state actors because the person is a member or supporter of, or perceived to belong to, a group that supports a separate state of 'Biafra'.

1.2 Points to note

1.2.1 'Biafra' was the name used by former Eastern Region of Nigeria when it unilaterally declared independence from Nigeria in 1967. This action led to the Nigerian Civil War, which concluded in 1970. 'Biafra' is not a legally recognised area but is often invoked by those members of the Igbo people who support secession from Nigeria. The states in Nigeria with a majority Igbo population are Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu and Anambra forming the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

1.2.2 Open source material referenced in this note refers to 'Biafra' rather than the south-east geopolitical zone. For consistency and clarity, this note will also use the term 'Biafra'. although it is important to note that the UK government's consistent policy to respect the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and use of the term 'Biafra' in this note, does not in any way imply any shift in that policy.

1.2.3 There are reported to be several groups aiming for the secession of 'Biafra'. This Country Policy and Information Note (CPIN) focuses on the 2 main groups, which are:

- the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' (MASSOB)
- Indigenous People of 'Biafra' (IPOB)

1.2.4 Where a claim is refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Nigeria is listed as a designated state in respect of men only.

1.2.5 For information on certification, see the instruction on [Certification of protection and human rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas

should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

Official – sensitive: Start of section

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Official – sensitive: End of section

2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 IPOB is proscribed as a terrorist group by the Nigerian government, and members of the group and its paramilitary wing – the Eastern Security Network (created in December 2020) – have reportedly committed human rights violations in Nigeria (see [Indigenous People of 'Biafra' \(IPOB\)](#) and various media articles in [Activities](#) and [Clashes between state and IPOB](#))
- 2.2.2 MASSOB has been banned, but is not a proscribed terrorist group in Nigeria. It too has reportedly been involved in violent clashes with the authorities (see [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra'](#)).
- 2.2.3 If a person has been involved with IPOB (and/or an affiliated group), MASSOB or any other 'Biafran' group that incites or uses violence to achieve its aims, decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses under the Refugee Convention is applicable. Persons who commit human rights violations must not be granted asylum.
- 2.2.4 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.2.5 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: End of section

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2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 A person's actual or imputed political opinion.
- 2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the particular person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their actual or imputed convention reason.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

a. Political context

- 2.4.1 'Biafra' is a loosely defined area in the south-east of Nigeria that roughly corresponds to the states of Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, Enugu and Anambra. The area is inhabited principally by Igbo (Ibo) people who are one of the country's 3 largest ethnic groups (see ['Biafra' background](#)).
- 2.4.2 In the mid-1960s, newly independent Nigeria was affected by economic and political instability and ethnic friction. A number of violent clashes occurred,

including in September 1966, when some sources estimate that between 10,000 and 30,000 Igbo were killed in northern Nigeria. Attempts to resolve tensions failed and in May 1967 Eastern Nigeria unilaterally declared its independence from Nigeria as the Republic of 'Biafra', triggering a civil war in which an estimated one to three million people died. 'Biafran' rebels were eventually overwhelmed by and surrendered to the federal government forces in January 1970 (see ['Biafra' background](#)).

- 2.4.3 Since the 1990s new 'Biafra' separatist movements have been established, reportedly driven by a perceived sense of unfair treatment and marginalisation. While several groups have formed with the goal of achieving 'Biafran' secession, the 2 main groups are: (i) the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' (MASSOB); and (ii) the Indigenous People of 'Biafra' (IPOB) (see [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' \(MASSOB\) leadership](#) and [Indigenous People of 'Biafra' \(IPOB\)](#)).
- 2.4.4 While during the early 2000s MASSOB was the foremost 'Biafran' group, in recent years reports suggest it has become divided splitting into several smaller groups and has become less active. IPOB grew out of MASSOB between 2012 and 2014 and has a presence outside of Nigeria, including the UK, Germany and elsewhere. There is limited information in the sources consulted on the organisational structure or membership procedures for either IPOB or MASSOB. There are also reported to be a number of other 'Biafran' groups but these do not seem to have a significant presence in Nigeria (see [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' \(MASSOB\) leadership](#) and [Indigenous People of 'Biafra' \(IPOB\)](#)).
- 2.4.5 Although both MASSOB and IPOB have advocated for peaceful change they have also used rhetoric that may encourage violence and, in some instances, used violence directly against the state and its agents. In recent years, IPOB appears to have become the publicly dominant 'Biafran' separatist group (see [Overview of groups, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' \(MASSOB\)](#) and [Separatist groups outside of Nigeria](#)).
- 2.4.6 For further information on insecurity in Nigeria see country policy information notes (CPINs) [Actors of protection](#), [Internal relocation](#) and [Islamist extremist groups in North East Nigeria](#).

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b. MASSOB

- 2.4.7 In May 2013 former President Goodluck Jonathan identified MASSOB as one of the 3 'extremist groups threatening the national security'. In 2015 pro-'Biafra' marches were banned in some southern states. However, sources are inconsistent about the legal status of MASSOB – whether it was simply banned or was proscribed as a terrorist organisation. DFAT concluded in December 2020 that MASSOB is not a banned organisation and continues to conduct public activities (see [Overview of groups](#) and [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of 'Biafra' \(MASSOB\) leadership](#)).
- 2.4.8 MASSOB, since its formation in the late 1990s, has clashed with the security forces. Some sources report that numerous individuals have been killed,

wounded and arrested during these clashes – usually during demonstrations. Over a hundred arrests were made in September 2018, at least 10 in 2019; and, in July 2020, members of MASSOB were reportedly arrested following clashes with police (see [Overview of groups](#) and [Treatment of MASSOB](#)).

- 2.4.9 A person is unlikely to be of interest to the authorities simply for expressing support for the group. However, the risk of arrest and violence increases during pro-‘Biafra’ demonstrations or gatherings, given that the organisation is reported to be banned. Any risk of persecution may depend on the roles of persons involved, their profile and activities for the group, and previous arrests by the state.

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c. IPOB

- 2.4.10 In September 2017, IPOB was proscribed as a terrorist organisation in Nigeria (see [Overview of groups](#) and [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of ‘Biafra’ \(MASSOB\) leadership](#)).
- 2.4.11 Through its online platform, ‘Radio Biafra’, and other social media, IPOB have increasingly used inflammatory rhetoric to encourage secessionist aspirations and resistance to the authorities, including violence (see [Overview of groups](#), [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of ‘Biafra’ \(MASSOB\)](#) and [Separatist groups outside of Nigeria](#)).
- 2.4.12 Sources reported that the security forces have arrested hundreds of IPOB supporters at different events, particularly between 2015 and 2017 and including during raids on homes of IPOB leaders. Since 2015, IPOB has also claimed that the security forces have used excessive force, including killing and injuring hundreds of its supporters (see [Indigenous People of ‘Biafra’: Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#) and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).
- 2.4.13 Several sources also reported clashes between IPOB and the authorities during 2018 and 2019. Further clashes and violence occurred between security forces and IPOB in August 2020 in the city of Enugu, and in October 2020 during confrontations in Rivers State. In November 2020, there were reports that security forces carried out operations against IPOB in the Oyigbo area of Rivers State. However, these reports were denied by state Governor Nyesom Wike. These incidents resulted in the arrests and deaths of IPOB supporters as well as security force personnel (see [Indigenous People of ‘Biafra’: Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#) and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).
- 2.4.14 In December 2020, IPOB is reported to have set up the Eastern Security Network (ESN), a para-military force (see [Overview of groups](#), [Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of ‘Biafra’ \(MASSOB\)](#) and [Separatist groups outside of Nigeria](#)).
- 2.4.15 In February 2021, the Nigerian military launched land and air operations against ESN operatives (see [Aims](#), [Activities](#), [Indigenous People of ‘Biafra’: Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#) and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).
- 2.4.16 Clashes between IPOB and the authorities continued into 2021. The group were involved in attacks reported to have taken place in April 2021 in Imo

State where a police headquarters was destroyed and over 1,800 prisoners were reported to have escaped from a prison, although IPOB denied involvement in the attacks. In May 2021, clashes between state security forces and IPOB resulted in the deaths of both members of IPOB/ESN and the security forces. Sources also reported in June 2021 that the Nigerian Army had stated that IPOB/ESN had killed 128 military and police, 15 Civil Defence officers and 31 community policing members as well as over 100 people for not supporting IPOB. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, denied this claim. Clashes between state security forces and IPOB/ESN continued throughout the second half of 2021 into 2022. Media sources reported the deaths of 11 security forces in June 2021, with a further 22 deaths between October and December 2021 inclusive (see [Aims](#), [Activities](#), [Indigenous People of 'Biafra': Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#) and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).

- 2.4.17 The government's 'Operation Restore Peace', intended to restore stability in the region, was launched in May 2021. On 15 May 2021, 9 suspected IPOB members were arrested in Delta State along with the seizure of weapons, followed by 5 suspected members arrested in Imo State on the same day in connection with the killing of a police sergeant (see [Aims](#), [Activities](#), [Indigenous People of 'Biafra': Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#) and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).
- 2.4.18 Following an attack on police stations by IPOB members in Rivers State in October 2020, the governor offered a reward for information that could lead to the arrest and prosecution of the IPOB state leader, Stanley Mgbere. Kanu publicly issued a N100m (c. [£170-175,000](#)) bounty on the governor in response. CPIT could find no further information in the sources consulted that Mr Mgbere had been located and arrested. In November 2020, 2 unnamed suspected senior IPOB leaders were reportedly arrested in Rivers State (see [Clashes between state and IPOB](#) and [Bibliography](#)).
- 2.4.19 As well as arrests of IPOB supporters/armed activists, a number of IPOB senior members have been arrested including the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu, who was originally jailed in 2015 for 2 years and then subsequently released on bail. Following a clash with soldiers at his home in Abia state in 2017, Kanu fled Nigeria whilst on bail facing charges of terrorism and incitement. In June 2021 the Nigerian government announced he had been arrested in a third country and returned. Kanu remains in custody in Nigeria and is subject to ongoing legal proceedings (see [Arrest and detention](#)).
- 2.4.20 While there are reports that some IPOB supporters and leaders arrested have been charged with treason, sources do not indicate whether these cases have led to prosecutions and convictions for treason or other crimes. Sources claim that some of those arrested have been held without charge and incommunicado, but do not provide specific information about the length or treatment of members or supporters of IPOB in detention (see [Clashes between state and secessionist groups](#), and [Treatment of IPOB](#)).
- 2.4.21 IPOB is a proscribed terrorist organisation in Nigeria and has been implicated in inciting and acts of violence against the state and other actors. The government has a legitimate interest in pursuing and arresting persons who are, or are suspected of being, involved with or supporting the group. In

general, IPOB supporters or members who are fleeing prosecution or punishment for a criminal offence, including human rights violations, are not likely to be refugees.

- 2.4.22 However, prosecution may amount to persecution if it involves victimisation in its application by the authorities. For example, if it is the vehicle or excuse for persecution or if only certain groups are prosecuted for a particular offence and the consequences of that discrimination are sufficiently severe. Punishment which is cruel, inhuman or degrading (including punishment which is out of all proportion to the offence committed) may also amount to persecution (see the section on prosecution in the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing credibility and refugee status](#)).
- 2.4.23 Where a person is able to demonstrate that because of their links to IPOB they are likely to face prosecution or punishment which is disproportionate to the crime committed or discriminatory; or faces detention in degrading or inhuman conditions or torture then such treatment is likely to amount to persecution (see country policy and information note, [Actors of protection](#) and [Country Background Note](#) for more information about the criminal justice system, including detention conditions).
- 2.4.24 Each case will need to be carefully considered on its facts, taking into account the individual's behaviour and actions, previous state interest and conduct of family members.
- 2.4.25 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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d. Sur place activity

- 2.4.26 Pro-'Biafra' organisations exhibit a varied online presence in the form of websites, radio broadcasts and social media (see ['Biafran' separatists/supporters in the UK](#)). However, the size of the support within a large and established diaspora living in the UK is not clear (see [Size and composition of separatist groups in the diaspora](#)).
- 2.4.27 From the sources consulted, pro-'Biafra' protests have been held in the UK. However, there is no evidence in the sources consulted that there is significant ongoing pro-'Biafran' activity in the UK (see [Sur place activities of separatist groups](#)).
- 2.4.28 Open source material suggests that the Nigerian government may monitor groups it considers a threat in Nigeria and that it may have blocked websites advocating 'Biafran' independence. However, there is no specific information in the sources consulted indicating that the Nigerian government monitors the activities of members of the Nigerian diaspora in the UK, including supporters of 'Biafran' separatist groups (see [Separatist groups outside of Nigeria](#) and [Bibliography](#)).
- 2.4.29 Decision makers must consider each case on its facts, taking into account:
- the legal status, profile, size, and organisation of the group/organisation to which the person belongs and its activities

- whether a person in the UK would wish to continue their activism if returned to Nigeria (if not, why not)
- whether the group/organisation has a presence in Nigeria as well as outside of the country and any evidence that it is being monitored by the government
- the person's profile and political activities (including those online) and relevant documentary or other evidence
- the profile and activities of family members
- past treatment of the person
- evidence that their activities in the UK may have come to the attention of the Nigerian security agencies.

2.4.30 Decision makers will also need to take into account whether the person supports and is active on behalf of IPOB, which is a proscribed group in Nigeria, and whether they fear prosecution rather than persecution.

2.4.31 The onus is on the person to demonstrate that they are of interest to the government because of their profile and activities and are at risk of serious harm or persecution.

2.4.32 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, they are unlikely to be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.

2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, it is unlikely a person will be able to relocate to escape that risk.

2.6.2 For further guidance on internal relocation see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 16 March 2022

3. 'Biafra' background

3.1 Geography and demography

3.1.1 The map below produced by Africa Centre for Strategic Studies shows the South East states of Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Abia and Imo. The hot spots labelled the [Orlu crisis](#) show the areas where security forces and Eastern Security Network have clashed in 2021 (see [Clashes between state and IPOB](#)).



1

3.1.2 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated: 'Biafra is a region in South East Nigeria... populated predominately by people of the Igbo ethnicity...'²

3.1.3 The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) country information report of December 2020 stated:

¹ ACforSC, '[Nigeria's diverse security threats](#)', 30 March 2021

² IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

'Nigeria is... grouped into six geopolitical zones: North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East [which according to DFAT's map of Nigeria encompasses Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states] and South...

'The Igbo people are the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria, constituting 15 per cent of the population. They originate from southeastern Nigeria and live in large numbers in the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The Igbo speak a number of Igbo dialects. They are predominantly Christian.'³

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3.2 Civil war and secession

3.2.1 The Encyclopaedia Britannica provided a short history of the secessionist state of 'Biafra' which:

'... unilaterally declared its independence from Nigeria in May 1967. It constituted the former Eastern Region of Nigeria and was inhabited principally by Igbo (Ibo) people. Biafra ceased to exist as an independent state in January 1970.

'In the mid-1960s economic and political instability and ethnic friction characterized Nigerian public life. In the mostly Hausa north, resentment against the more prosperous, educated Igbo minority erupted into violence. In September 1966, some 10,000 to 30,000 Igbo people were massacred in the Northern Region, and perhaps 1,000,000 fled as refugees to the Igbo-dominated east. Non-Igbos were then expelled from the Eastern Region.

'Attempts by representatives of all regions to come to an agreement were unsuccessful. On May 30, 1967, the head of the Eastern Region, Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Odumegwu Ojukwu, with the authorization of a consultative assembly, declared the region a sovereign and independent republic under the name of Biafra. General Yakubu Gowon, the leader of the federal government, refused to recognize Biafra's secession. In the hostilities that broke out the following July, Biafran troops were at first successful, but soon the numerically superior federal forces began to press Biafra's boundaries inward from the south, west, and north. Biafra shrank to one-tenth its original area in the course of the war. By 1968 it had lost its seaports and become landlocked; supplies could be brought in only by air. Starvation and disease followed; estimates of mortality during the war generally range from 500,000 to 3,000,000.

'The Organization of African Unity, the papacy, and others tried to reconcile the combatants. Most countries continued to recognize Gowon's regime as the government of all Nigeria, and the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union supplied it with arms. On the other hand, international sympathy for the plight of starving Biafran children brought airlifts of food and medicine from many countries. Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Tanzania, and Zambia recognized Biafra as an independent state, and France sent Biafra weapons.

'Biafran forces were finally routed in a series of engagements in late December 1969 and early January 1970. Ojukwu fled to Côte d'Ivoire, and

³ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 2.38 & 3.7 - 3.8), updated 3 December 2020

the remaining Biafran officers surrendered to the federal government on January 15, 1970. Biafra, on the point of total collapse, thereupon ceased to exist.⁴

- 3.2.2 A 2017 publication on the 'Biafran' famine, *The Handbook of Famine, Starvation, and Nutrient Deprivation* stated:

'Following ethnic, economic, and religious tensions, the republic of Biafra unilaterally declared independence from the rest of Nigeria in 1967. This action triggered the Nigerian civil war in which the inflow of food and supplies to Biafra was blocked. The result was extensive famine, regarded as one of the great nutritional disasters of modern times. During the two-and-a-half years of armed conflict, an estimated one to three million people died, most of them from starvation.'⁵

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Section 4 updated: 16 March 2022

4. Political landscape

4.1 Background

For further information on the political situation and system in Nigeria see [Nigeria: Country Background Note](#).

- 4.1.1 An African Arguments article from May 2017 provided background information:

'Separatists contend that since the Biafra War, the Igbo, one of the country's three major ethnic groups, have been marginalised. They note that no Igbo has been elected to lead the country since Nnamdi Azikiwe's ceremonial presidency in the 1960s or to be vice president since Alex Ekwueme (1979 to 1983).

'This persisted even under military rule. The only Igbo head of state in this period, Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi, was killed after only seven months.

'Administrative structures decreed by northern-led military governments have also undermined the region. Of the country's six geo-political zones, all but the south east contain either six or seven states. The south east has just five, while it accounts for only 96 of Nigeria's 774 local governments. Representation in government and the flow of federal resources are based on those administrative units.

'Today, the south east, like much of the country, suffers deficient and dilapidated infrastructure and widespread youth unemployment. But many believe this is structural. They point out that as federal revenue allocation is based on number of states and local governments, the south east receives the least of all zones.'⁶

- 4.1.2 A BBC news article from July 2017 reported that Igbo leaders at a specially convened meeting in Enugu city had pledged their loyalty and 'full support' to

⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica, inc, '[Biafra – secessionist state, Nigeria](#)', 4 March 2015

⁵ Norman M, '[Handbook of Famine, Starvation, and Nutrient Deprivation](#)', 20 February 2017

⁶ African Arguments, '[Nigeria: How to solve a problem like Biafra](#)', 29 May 2017

a 'united Nigeria', rejecting calls for a Biafran state to be created in the south-east, whilst appealing that the state be 'restructured' to achieve "a just and equitable society. The Igbo leaders involvement has been seen by some as an attempt to de-escalate tensions between rival communities in Nigeria⁷.

- 4.1.3 An expert comment by Sola Tayo, a BBC journalist, and Fidelis Mbah, journalist, published on the Chatham House website in November 2017:

'The new campaign for Biafran independence is largely championed by young people who were born after the civil war, with no memory of the suffering it caused.

'The first sign of reviving the call for Biafra emerged in 1999 – shortly after the end of Nigeria's period of military rule – in the form of an organisation called MASSOB, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra. The group was led by Ralph Uwazuruike, who had several brushes with security agencies, and was arrested and imprisoned on charges of treason.

'IPOB came to prominence at the centre of the latest wave of Igbo nationalism following the arrival in office of Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari. The tone of the new president towards the people of the southeast was perceived as at best dismissive, and at times hostile. He was accused of favouring his northern constituents, notably in terms of senior government appointments. The president has yet to visit the southeast. With anti-Abuja sentiment growing in the southeast, IPOB seized the opportunity to reactivate the demand for secession.

'IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu was at the forefront of these demands. A British-Nigerian political activist, Nnamdi Kanu is the director of London-based Radio Biafra, a broadcast outfit set up to propagate the demands of secessionists. He had been recruited by MASSOB leader Uwazuruike to run Radio Biafra in London. The pair fell out and Kanu later re-emerged as IPOB leader. The station broadcasts daily programmes in English and the Igbo language, including anti-Nigeria and pro-Biafra propaganda.'⁸

- 4.1.4 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated: 'Sources state people in the South East feel marginalized due to the Nigerian military presence... or to the lack of government investment in the region...'⁹

- 4.1.5 A Deutsche Welle article of 14 January 2020, noting that people in the 'Biafra' region feel marginalised, considered the perception versus the reality:

'But the statistics paint a different picture: In the 2015 national development index for example — the latest available edition — the geopolitical eastern and southern parts of the country are further ahead in terms of education, gender equality and poverty reduction compared to the north.

'[Eghosa] Osaghae [professor of comparative politics at the University of Ibadan] says this is often where perception and reality drift apart: "Many

⁷ BBC News, '[Nigeria's Igbo leaders reject call for Biafra state](#)', 3 July 2017

⁸ CH, '[Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria](#)', 9 November 2017

⁹ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

people from the southeast do not know the north at all. In their opinion, the north still gets the lion's share of the resources."

'The main point of contention — as it was before the war — is the oil which comes from the southeast.'¹⁰

4.1.6 The US State Department Human Rights Practices Report 2021 (USSD Human Rights report 2020) covering events in 2020 stated: 'The law prohibits ethnic discrimination by the government, but most ethnic groups claimed marginalization in terms of government revenue allocation, political representation, or both.'¹¹

4.1.7 Bertelsmann Stiftung in an April 2020 country report, covering events between 2017 and 2019, stated: 'In the Igbo heartland, a wave of renewed nationalism in the spirit of a sovereign Biafra has subsided somewhat thanks to the fact that its main proponent, Nnamdi Kanu, allegedly fled to Israel, a claim that the Israeli government denies.'¹²

4.1.8 The DFAT report of December 2020 stated:

'Despite ... moves to encourage greater national unity, there has never been a national reckoning or dialogue in relation to the issues that led to the Biafra conflict, which is not officially commemorated. According to observers, many in the southeast report feeling ongoing resentment at the lack of action to resolve issues emanating from the conflict and from their perceived ongoing marginalisation in national life. Such feelings have reportedly grown stronger in the years since President Buhari came to power, with many of his major political and military appointments tending to favour individuals from the north. As a result, in recent years there has been a noticeable resurgence of calls from the southeast for greater self-determination in the form of an independent Biafran state.'¹³

4.1.9 The DFAT report of December 2020 also stated:

'There are no legal provisions targeting the Igbo population in Nigeria and the Igbo, like all Nigerians, are able to move freely within Nigeria. Many Igbo have migrated to other areas of Nigeria, including northern states. Like other non-indigenous communities, Igbo residing in these areas have occasionally faced discrimination from locals... DFAT is not aware of any other significant cases in which Igbo have been specifically targeted for violence or exclusion due to their ethnicity.

'...Senior Igbo figures have claimed successive Nigerian governments, including the Buhari administration, have subsequently excluded Igbo from senior political, military and civil service positions. A number of political organisations continue to advocate for an independent Biafran state and have occasionally clashed with security authorities.'¹⁴

4.1.10 DFAT concluded: '... Igbo are not specifically targeted for discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity throughout Nigeria. Like other non-indigenous

¹⁰ DW, '[The Long Shadow of Biafra Lingers over Nigeria](#)', 14 January 2020

¹¹ USSD, 2020 Human Rights Report, [Nigeria](#) (Section 6), 30 March 2021

¹² Bertelsmann Stiftung: [BTI 2020 Country Report Nigeria](#) (p6), 29 April 2020

¹³ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.47), updated 3 December 2020

¹⁴ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.8-3.10), updated 3 December 2020

communities, Igbo residing outside of their traditional homeland may face localised discrimination.’¹⁵

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4.2 Unitary state and public order

4.2.1 The Constitution of Nigeria explains in Chapter 1, part I that ‘Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.’ It also provides various provisions for public order and public safety (Chapter 1, part II) and establishment of political parties (Chapter VI, part III)¹⁶.

4.2.2 [The country policy and information note on actors of protection](#) provide background information on the role and activities of the security forces, as well the criminal justice system more generally including detention centres and conditions.

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Section 5 updated: 16 March 2022

5. Separatist groups

5.1 Overview of groups

5.1.1 An expert comment by Sola Tayo, a BBC journalist, and Fidelis Mbah, a journalist, published on the Chatham House website in November 2017 identified the 2 main groups aiming for secession as the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of ‘Biafra’ (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of ‘Biafra’ (IPOB). The same source stated, ‘There are several other pro-Biafra groups in the southeast but internal disputes have so far prevented them from presenting a unified front.’¹⁷

5.1.2 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated that it was announced in June 2017 that 7 pro-‘Biafran’ groups had agreed to collaborate under the leadership of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu as the ‘Biafran’ People National Council, and that a Nigerian Newspaper in May 2019 reported that at least a further 5 pro-‘Biafran’ groups had formed a coalition called ‘Biafra’ Liberation Movement (BPLM) see table below. IRBC commented that no further information on either umbrella group could be found¹⁸.

‘Biafran’ People National Council	‘Biafra’ Liberation Movement
IPOB	MASSOB
MASSOB	Eastern People Congress (EPC)
‘Biafran’ Revolutionary Organization (BRO)	Igbo Youth Cultural and Restoration Initiative (IYCRI)

¹⁵ DFAT, ‘[Country information report: Nigeria](#)’ (section 3.10), updated 3 December 2020

¹⁶ Nigeria government, [Constitution](#) (accessed via refworld), 1999

¹⁷ CH, ‘[Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria](#)’, 9 November 2017

¹⁸ IRBC, ‘[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)’, 28 June 2019

'Biafran' People National Council	'Biafra' Liberation Movement
Eastern People Congress (EPC)	Movement of 'Biafrans' in Nigeria (MOBIN)
Joint Revolutionary Council of 'Biafra' (JRCCB)	Customary Government of 'Biafra'(CGB)
'Biafra' Liberation Crusaders (BLC)	
Salvation People of 'Biafra'	

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5.1.3 The Nigerian newspaper, the National Daily news, website gave a list of groups reported to be involved with marking the 51st anniversary of the secession of the Eastern Region on 30 May 2018:

- 'Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB),
- 'Eastern Peoples Congress (EPC), Igbo Youth Cultural and Restoration Initiative (IYCRI),
- 'Bilie Human Rights Initiative (BHRI),
- 'Movement of Biafrans in Nigeria (MOBIN), Biafran National Liberation Council (BNLC),
- 'Biafran Revolutionary Organisation (BRO),
- 'Biafran Liberation Crusade (BLC),
- 'Joint Revolutionary Council of Biafra (JRCCB),
- 'Biafra Revolutionary Force (BRF), Customary Government of Biafra (CGB),
- 'Biafran Central Council (BCC)
- 'Biafran United Liberation Council (BULCO).'²⁰

5.1.4 The DFAT report of December 2020 stated:

'While there are a number of Biafran secessionist movements, the two most prominent are the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Both MASSOB and IPOB draw their support predominantly from the Igbo speaking southeast states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The differences between the two groups (and other Biafran secessionist movements) is unclear, and DFAT does not have any information on the membership procedures or organisational structure for either movement.'²¹

¹⁹ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

²⁰ National Daily, '[MASSOB dares military, insists to mark Biafra at 51](#)', 28 May 2018

²¹ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.48), updated 3 December 2020

- 5.1.5 Country information included in the EASO Country Guidance for Nigeria of October 2021, based on material in [EASO's COI reports](#), stated: ‘...Since August 2020 violence between IPOB and the Nigerian security forces has escalated. IPOB’s paramilitary wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) has engaged in armed clashes with Nigerian state forces... Both organisations claim to be non-violent and aim to reach secession through referendum. They mostly engage in awareness-raising activities, marches, and other gatherings. However, the leader of IPOB has reportedly endorsed violence as means for resuscitating Biafra.’²²
- 5.1.6 There is no further information in the sources consulted regarding the activities of smaller pro-‘Biafran’ groups in Nigeria or their interest to the Nigerian authorities (see [Bibliography](#)).

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Section 6 updated: 16 March 2022

6. Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of ‘Biafra’

6.1 Background

Official – sensitive: Start of section

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²² EASO, ‘Country Guidance: Nigeria’ (page 14 and 54), October 2021

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Official – sensitive: End of section

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6.2 Legal status

- 6.2.1 The BBC reported that MASSOB was banned in or around 2002²³. Country information included in the EASO Country Guidance stated: 'MASSOB was banned by the Nigeria authorities in 2001.'²⁴
- 6.2.2 Human Rights Watch in a 2005 report stated: 'Although there is no law proscribing MASSOB, the federal government has declared membership of the organization illegal on the grounds that they constitute a threat to the security and sovereignty of the nation.'²⁵
- 6.2.3 However, DFAT stated in its December 2020 report that '..., although authorities have threatened to proscribe MASSOB on several occasions, they have not actually done so and MASSOB has continued to conduct public activities.'²⁶

²³ BBC, '[Nigeria arrests Biafra separatist](#)', 27 October 2005

²⁴ EASO, '[Country Guidance: Nigeria](#)' (page 54), October 2021

²⁵ HRW, '["Rest in Pieces", Police Torture and Deaths in Custody in NGA](#)' (section VI), July 2005

²⁶ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.51), 3 December 2020

7. Treatment of MASSOB

7.1 Killings, discrimination, violence and harassment

- 7.1.1 The EASO Targeting of individuals report of November 2018 citing several media news sources stated: 'Over the years, police and security agencies have clashed hard with MASSOB members, arresting and killing many, during manifestations and rallies. The use of a Biafra flag or currency is considered unlawful and anyone caught in possession of such items will be arrested and can even be accused of sedition or treason.'²⁷
- 7.1.2 BBC monitoring reported via the Nigerian diaspora website Sahara Reporters that '...during preparations for the MASSOB 19th anniversary celebrations on 22 May 2019 at Upper Iweka, police opened fire on MASSOB members. Two were reported killed, 10 were arrested and 15 sustained bullet wounds. The regional administrator of the movement, Mr Amadi Ifeanyi (aka Ochiagha), said that they were "a non-violent organisation but that this incident would not stop them from struggling for a Biafran state."²⁸
- 7.1.3 The 2020 DFAT country information report Nigeria commented: '... There have also been recent reports of deaths, injuries and mass arrests of MASSOB members in the context of clashes with security forces during pro-Biafra demonstrations. In May 2019, two MASSOB members were reportedly killed and 15 wounded following clashes with police at a MASSOB anniversary event in Onitsha, Anambra state, while in the same period a MASSOB member was reportedly arrested and tortured at a police station in Mgbidi, Imo state. In September 2018, 125 MASSOB members were reportedly arrested, with some sustaining injuries, during a rally in Anambra state...' ²⁹
- 7.1.4 DFAT assessed 'Ordinary members of ..., MASSOB and other Biafran secessionist organisations who participate in political demonstrations or rallies face a moderate risk of being subjected to violence by state security forces.'³⁰

7.2 Arbitrary arrest and detention

- 7.2.1 BBC monitoring reported, via the Nigerian newspaper website the Guardian, in July 2020:
- 'The Imo State Police Command has arrested some members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in Owerri for allegedly attempting to murder and dispossess some police officers on duty of their service rifles.'

²⁷ EASO, '[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)' (page 82), November 2018

²⁸ BBC Monitoring, '[Nigerian separatists in violent confrontations...](#)', 23 May 2019, subscription only

²⁹ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.51), updated 3 December 2020

³⁰ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.52), updated 3 December 2020

'In a statement yesterday signed by the command's Public Relations Officer, Orlando Godson Ikeokwu, the police also accused members of the movement of inflicting machete wounds on some officers.

'Ikeokwu added that while some of the agitators were arrested, others took to their heels.

'The statement read in part: "On July 23, 2020, at about 20:15hrs, a group of persons claiming to be members of MASSOB in an attempt to snatch rifles, attacked some policemen on duty around New Owerri area and inflicted machete injuries on two of the policemen.

"Also today being July 24, 2020, a group of persons numbering about 100 claiming to be members of MASSOB, attacked a team of policemen attached to Orji Division along Owerri/Okigwe Road by the Orji Flyover.

"The hoodlums while trying to dispossess the policemen of their service rifles also inflicted machete wounds on them. However, the attack was successfully repelled with arrests made, while some others ran away with various degree of injuries."

...

'All efforts made to reach the leader of the group, Uchenna Madu, as at press time, yielded no fruit, as his phone was unreachable.

'But The Guardian learnt that the members of the movement were agitating for self-determination, among others.'³¹

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Section 8 updated: 16 March 2022

8. Indigenous People of 'Biafra' (IPOB)

8.1 Background

Official – sensitive: Start of section

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³¹ BBC Monitoring, '[Nigerian police arrest separatist group members in Imo State](#)', 25 July 2020, subscription only

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8.2 Proscription/legal status of IPOB

- 8.2.1 Country information included in the EASO Country Guidance stated: ‘In 2017, the Nigerian authorities declared IPOB a terrorist organisation.’³²
- 8.2.2 AfricaNews in January 2018 stated that, ‘A court in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, has upheld an earlier ruling that pro-secessionist group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is a terrorist group. The court presided over by Justice Abdul Kafarati ruled that the Attorney General of the Federation had used proper legal processes to apply for IPOB’s proscription in September 2017.’³³
- 8.2.3 The EASO Targeting of individuals report of November 2018 citing several media news sources stated:
‘After the crackdown [August 2015 and August 2016] in which the army killed and arrested an unknown number of IPOB members, the military, endorsed by the federal government, banned IPOB and declared it a terrorist organisation. This declaration was not supported by many Nigerians and international observers such as the EU and the US, as the Chatham House article noted. It was stated that “IPOB supporters are not known to be violent and that the protests have been largely peaceful”.’³⁴
- 8.2.4 Human Rights Watch in their World Report 2019, Nigeria: Events of 2018 stated: ‘In a letter to President Buhari in March, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) declared the government’s proscription of IPOB as a terrorist group and attacks against its members as prima facie violation of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights. In April, Nigeria’s sixth periodic report on the implementation of the charter was considered at the ACHPR’s 62nd Ordinary Session in Mauritania.’³⁵

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8.3 Aims

- 8.3.1 Amnesty International in their November 2016 report stated:
‘Thousands of people frequently tune in to the clandestine radio station Radio Biafra. The station broadcasts messages that may constitute incitement to violent acts against the Nigerian state. For example, on 31 August 2015, the day after the military killed two and injured 30 IPOB

³² EASO, ‘[Country Guidance: Nigeria](#)’ (page 54), October 2021

³³ African News, ‘[Biafra agitation: Nigeria court upholds IPOB terrorist label](#)’, 19 January 2018

³⁴ EASO, ‘[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)’ (page 83), November 2018

³⁵ HRW, ‘[World Report 2019, Nigeria: Events of 2018](#)’, 17 January 2019

members in Onitsha, the station aired a message that threatened violent retaliation against the military.

'In another example, an IPOB statement referred to President Buhari as "the Hitler of Nigeria." Radio Biafra has also accused the Nigerian security forces of committing "genocide".

'Similarly, some of Nnamdi Kanu's interviews and speeches may constitute incitement to violence. For example, he said in March 2014: "Our promise is very simple. If they fail to give us Biafra, Somalia will look like a paradise, compared to what happened there. It is a promise, it is a threat and also a pledge... we have had enough of this nonsense..." In an address to the World Igbo Congress on 5 September 2015, Nnamdi Kanu told the audience "we need guns and we need bullets".

'... As in other regions in Nigeria, there is a strong feeling of marginalization in the southeast. Most of the IPOB members and supporters Amnesty International interviewed said they felt excluded by the Federal government of Nigeria. They claimed that without an independent Biafran state, the people of southeast Nigeria would not be able to realize their socio-economic and political aspirations. Many of them are young and unemployed, and have vested their hopes and aspirations in an independent Biafran state. They view the group's leader as some kind of "redeemer" and follow him unquestioningly.'³⁶

8.3.2 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated:

'According to an interview with Agence France-Presse (AFP), Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, stated:

"The mission and the values of IPOB are very simple: to restore Biafra, to make sure Biafra comes by whatever means possible... We have chosen the track of peaceful agitation, non-violence, persuasion, logic, reason, argument. We are going to deploy all of that to make sure we get Biafra Our ultimate goal is freedom, referendum is the path we have chosen to take to get Biafra... There is no alternative." (AFP 31 May 2017, last ellipsis in original).'³⁷

8.3.3 A BBC monitoring biography timeline updated in June 2021 of Mr Nnamdi Kanu, leader of IPOB and director of the London-based Radio "Biafra", using a range of sources included the following points:

'28 January 2019 -The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) says it is on 16 February 2019 going to hold a referendum to ascertain the number of Nigerians who want a separate Biafra republic through a peaceful and democratic process. IPOB in a statement says: "Our leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu is currently meeting with IPOB high command in Europe to perfect plans for the referendum which will go side by side with the February 16 presidential poll"

'10 November 2019 - The leader of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra, [Nnamdi Kanu](#) says he is ready to face trials and defend Biafrans at

³⁶ AI, '[Nigeria: Bullets were raining everywhere](#)'(p8), 24 November 2016

³⁷ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

the International Criminal Court (ICC), against "genocidal" attacks by "killer herdsmen and bandits". Speaking on a live broadcast on Radio Biafra, he says: "Herdsmen will attack us, rape our women, destroy our farms and kill our farmers nobody will arrest them but when we try to defend ourselves, the government will come after us rolling out the tanks and using their helicopter gunboats. If defending our ancestral land against conquest by Fulani Janjaweed invaders will take me to The Hague, I am ready to go to The Hague"

'2 June 2021 [Kanu] Says none of the soldiers deployed to the south-east region will return alive. In a tweet, [response to President Buhari's tweet in June 2021, ('Many of those misbehaving today are too young to be aware of the destruction and loss of lives that occurred during the Nigerian Civil War. Those of us in the fields for 30 months, who went through the war, will treat them in the language they understand'³⁸)] he [Kanu] also uses derogatory words to describe some government officials. He says: "It's not for the living to respond to the dead but given the lack of reasoning prevalent in the #Zoo Nigeria, I wish to assure @GarShehu (Garba Shehu), the Jihadi midget @elrufai (Nasir El-Rufai) & that Fulani lapdog Femi Adesina that any army they send to #Biafraland will die there. None will return alive". Femi Adesina and Garba Shehu are both presidential aides while El-Rufai is the governor of Kaduna State.'

'5 June 2021 Twitter deletes his [Kanu's] "controversial and inciting" post threatening that Nigerian soldiers deployed to the country's south-east will be killed.

'14 August 2021 The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) suspends a weekly stay-at-home protest it launched on 9 August 2021 in the country's south-east over the detention of Nnamdi Kanu. In a statement, the group's spokesperson Emma Powerful says the sit-at-home will, in the meantime, be observed on the date of their Kanu's court appearances. He further says in case they have any reason or directive from the IPOB highest command that require them to reactivate the suspended weekly sit-at-home, then the leadership will not hesitate to lift the suspension and continue with the civil action.

'22 October 2021 Accused by the Nigerian government of using Radio Biafra to instigate violence in Lagos and other parts of the country during the October 2020 #EndSARS protest [slogan calling for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian police with a record of "abuses"]. Addressing the media in Abuja, Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, says: "The EndSARS protests of October 2020 played into the sinister plans of Nnamdi Kanu, whereby he seized the protests through subversive and inciting online broadcasts and actively commanded and directed attacks on security personnel and facilities". Abubakar Malami further claims that as a result of the broadcasts, members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) attacked and killed security personnel and burnt down police stations, correctional centres, Independent National Electoral

³⁸ BBC News, ['Muhammadu Buhari: Twitter deletes Nigerian leader's 'civil war' post'](#), 2 June 2021

Commission (INEC) offices, bus terminals, the Palace of Oba of Lagos, banks, hospitals, shopping malls and vehicles, amongst others³⁹

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8.4 Activities

8.4.1 Amnesty report in its 2016 report:

‘Despite these inflammatory statements [in an address to the World Igbo Congress on 5 September 2015, Nnamdi Kanu see [9.3.1](#)], all the IPOB protests in Nigeria that Amnesty International researched and documented for this report were largely peaceful. IPOB members and coordinators in Nigeria that Amnesty International interviewed claimed that the IPOB leadership has instructed its members to make their demands without the use of force. According to a leading IPOB member, the movement is only opposing “orchestrated violence against the people of Biafra” with words, and the inflammatory remarks were made in the context of self-defence. He further stated that “despite the mass killings by the Nigerian army and police, we have remained calm and focused in the face of the provocation.”⁴⁰

8.4.2 Lifos, the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket), noted in December 2017 on IPOB’s non-violence claim:

‘IPOB has occasionally resorted to violent rhetorics, not least through the transmissions of Radio Biafra. The occurrence of clashes between security forces and activists, some resulting in casualties on both sides, has also been reported during IPOB arrangements. Nevertheless, the movement appears to have aspired to a non-violent approach with the realisation of a secession through referendum. Apart from the Nigerian authorities’ view that IPOB has performed acts of violence that are to be considered as terrorism (see below), Lifos has not been able to identify information signaling that incidents of violence committed during IPOB manifestations have been endorsed by leaders of the movement.’⁴¹

8.4.3 The EASO ‘Targeting of individuals’ report of November 2018 citing several media news sources stated:

‘IPOB’s activities include “distribution of flyers, awareness-raising amongst the population, meetings, marches, and other gatherings (such as prayer meetings).” Like MASSOB, IPOB claims to be a nonviolent organisation – which the government contests.

‘However, IPOB’s leader Nnamdi Kanu has repeatedly expressed “inflammatory statements” about President Muhammadu Buhari (describing him as “terrorist-in-chief”), and the need to arm the movement: at the World Igbo Congress in 2015, he told the audience: “we need guns and we need bullets”. International Crisis Group also notes: “repudiating MASSOB’s pledge for non-violence, Kanu has strongly endorsed violence as an instrument for resuscitating Biafra.”

³⁹ BBC Monitoring, [‘Biography - Nnamdi Kanu’](#), updated 23 January 2022, subscription only.

⁴⁰ AI, [‘Nigeria: Bullets were raining everywhere’](#)(p8), 24 November 2016

⁴¹ Lifos: [Nigeria – Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)](#), 19 December 2017

'March 2016, MASSOB and IPOB issued a statement together that all Fulani herdsmen should retreat to northern Nigeria, as "their safety [could] no longer be guaranteed", because MASSOB and IPOB "can no longer tolerate the systematic killing of our people and invasion of our land in the name of cattle grazing".

'In April 2016, the Nigerian secret police accused IPOB of abducting and killing 5 Hausa-Fulani residents, whose bodies were found buried in a forest in Abia State together with 50 other unidentified bodies.

'The allegations were denied by MASSOB, stating that "IPOB and MASSOB are non-violent organizations".'⁴²

8.4.4 The same report stated: 'Several sources report support by IPOB for the NDA (Niger Delta Avengers) and vice versa. The NDA criticised President Buhari for the detention of Kanu in October 2015 and threatened to attack oil plants unless he was released.'⁴³

8.4.5 With regards to activities linked to IPOB the IRBC response stated:

'Various sources state Radio Biafra broadcasts from London (Amnesty International 24 Nov. 2016, 5; Tayo and Mbah 9 Nov. 2017; BBC 5 May 2017). However, a Los Angeles Times (LA Times) article published in April 2019 indicates the broadcasts are conducted live from an undisclosed location in Nigeria (LA Times 30 Apr. 2019). Tayo and Mbah state the daily broadcasts are in English and in Igbo (Tayo and Mbah 9 Nov. 2017). Sources further indicate broadcasts on IPOB's Radio Biafra are used to advocate for an independent Biafra (Turnbull Aug. 2017, 30; BBC 5 May 2017; LA Times 30 Apr. 2019). The LA Times article states that Radio Biafra is used by its main host, Emma Powerful, to organize protests, including a boycott of the 2019 election (LA Times 30 Apr. 2019). The same source further indicates that the broadcasts are illegal, and that activists report that people caught listening have been beaten or arrested (LA Times 30 Apr. 2019). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.'⁴⁴

8.4.6 Pulse, a Nigerian news website, reported in May 2018 that:

'The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has announced a sit-at-home order across the entire south east region as a mark of honour for the Nigerians who died in the Civil War decades ago, as well as victims of ongoing violence in the country.

'In a statement signed by the proscribed group, the south east, south and selected cities and states in Nigeria will witness a total lock-down. The statement named Lagos state, Southern Kaduna, Benue state, and other Middle Belt areas experiencing savage attacks, as locations where the sit-at-home will take place.

⁴² EASO, '[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)' (page 82-83), November 2018

⁴³ EASO, '[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)' (page 84), November 2018

⁴⁴ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

'It noted that the day will serve as a remembrance of the declaration of Biafran Republic in 1967 as well as the opportunity to mourn victims of the resulting war against the federal government that lasted three years.

'For the sit-at-home, the group declared a curfew, with no human or vehicular movement, in affected states between 6pm on Tuesday, May 29 and 6pm on Wednesday, May 30, 2018. Only ambulances and those responding to emergencies are allowed on the roads.'⁴⁵

- 8.4.7 The Nigerian Voice news website reported on 2 May 2019 of a similar call for a 'sit-at-home' made by IPOB in 2019:

'The Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, on Thursday, asked its members and people of the Benue, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Kogi and Kaduna States, to sit at home on May 30 [2019].

'IPOB explained that the order was in protest over killings by Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram activities in the affected states.

'The annual sit-at-home order is a move by the proscribed IPOB aimed at pushing for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra across the South-East. It is expecting that Igbo and those sympathetic to the struggle for Biafra on May 30 stay indoors.

'In a statement signed by its spokesperson, Emma Powerful, the secessionist group stated that there would be no vehicular movement both in South East and the Middle Belt region of the country on May 30.'⁴⁶

- 8.4.8 The Guardian – Nigeria reported on 30 May 2019 that: 'Enugu State residents Thursday partially observed the sit at home order by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to protest and mark its "holy day" in deference to those that have lost their lives to the struggle.'⁴⁷

- 8.4.9 BBC monitoring reported on 26 August 2020:

'A pro-secession radio station [Radio Biafra] has called on "Biafra" supporters to defend themselves against attacks by security forces.

'Radio Biafra made the call and invited listeners to comment on an attack against members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) by security forces on 23 August [in reference to clash between Nigerian security forces and members of IPOB in the city of Enugu on 23 August 2020 – see section [9.5](#)].'⁴⁸

- 8.4.10 The DFAT country information report of December 2020 stated: 'While the two groups [IPOB and MASSOB] (and other Biafran secessionist movements) have called for independence to occur through peaceful means, such as via referendum, central authorities have strongly rejected such calls, stating the country's unity is "not negotiable."⁴⁹

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⁴⁵ Pulse, '[Pro-Biafra group announces May 30 sit-at-home order...](#)', 25 May 2018

⁴⁶ TNV, '[Ipob Gives A Sit-at-home Order On 30th May 2019](#)', 2 May 2020

⁴⁷ The Guardian – Nigeria, '[Enugu residents partially comply with IPOB's...](#)', 30 May 2019

⁴⁸ BBC Monitoring, '[Nigerian radio urges 'Biafra' supporters...](#)', subscription only, 26 August 2020

⁴⁹ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.49), updated 3 December 2020

8.5 Clashes between state and IPOB

8.5.1 The information in this section focuses on events since 2019. For information about clashes prior to this, see Nigeria Watch

8.5.2 Today.ng reported in December 2019 that: 'The Police command in Anambra have confirmed the death of two police officers, allegedly attacked and shot by suspected members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) at Oraifite in Ekwusigo council area of the state.'⁵⁰

8.5.3 Pulse, a Nigerian news website, in October 2020 stated: 'A total of seven members of the group [IPOB] have now been killed since the #Endsars protest started in the state.

'Some [IPOB members](#) were reported to have engaged in a shoot-out with a joint security team comprising soldiers and police deployed to quell their activities at some flashpoints in the state.'⁵¹

8.5.4 Premium Times news website in October 2020 reported:

'The police in Rivers State have accused members of the pro-Biafra group, Indigenous People of Biafra, (IPOB), of hiding under the #EndSARS protests to kill three police officers in the state...

'Mr Mukan said IPOB invaded Oyigbo local government area on October 21, launched "senseless and mindless attacks on the area command, Oyigbo and Afam police stations, and burnt down the three stations."

'He said, "They also went to the adjoining Eberi-Omuma local government area, where they attacked the Umuebulu police station.

"In all the attacks, several vehicles were burnt and three policemen were hacked to death and burnt to ashes."

'Mr Mukan said the IPOB members also attempted to burn down Mile One police station the same day, but were repelled by the police.

'Four of the IPOB members were killed, while eight of them were arrested during the attack, Mr Mukan said.

'The police chief, who paraded the suspects before journalists, said 21 people have been arrested so far in the state.

'He began his address to reporters by saying that his heart was heavy because of the attacks on public and private property in the state. He, however, said there was "relative peace" in Oyigbo, which is still under curfew imposed by the Rivers State government.

'The Rivers State governor, [Nyesom Wike](#), on Friday declared one Stanley Mgbere, said to be a leader of IPOB in the state, wanted over the violence in Oyigbo.

'The governor announced a N50 million reward to anyone with information that could lead to the arrest and prosecution of Mr Mgbere.

'IPOB, which wants an independent Biafra country, has been proscribed by the Nigerian government which labels it a terrorist organisation. The group,

⁵⁰ Today.ng, '[Police confirm attack, killing of two officers...](#)', 3 December 2019

⁵¹ Pulse, '[9 feared dead as soldiers and IPOB members clash in Rivers](#)', 25 October 2020

however, says it wants to achieve its goal in a peaceful manner and through a referendum.⁵²

Janes noted that on '20 October 2020 – 'In Oyigbo, Rivers state, six soldiers were killed by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) militants in an unspecified attack. The report added that 50 unspecified weapons were stolen by the militants during the attack.'⁵³ Janes added that on '2 November 2020 - In Rivers State ... [IPOB] militants had allegedly been involved in an attack during which 10 security force personnel were killed in the town of Oyigbo in the same state in separate attacks on 20 October and on an unspecified earlier date.⁵⁴

8.5.5 BBC News in a November 2020 article reported:

'Nigerian security forces are carrying out extrajudicial killings in Oyigbo, say residents of the town in southern Rivers state.

'They accuse the army of carrying out revenge killings after authorities said three policemen and six soldiers were killed by members of a proscribed separatist group.

'Amnesty International also said it had received reports that "soldiers are allegedly invading homes" and that "some residents reported seeing dead bodies on the street, allegedly shot by soldiers" [[see Amnesty International Nigeria Facebook post of November 2020](#)].

'Monday Bakor, 36, told BBC Igbo that police officers shot dead his fiancée Queen Nwazuo on 22 October [2020] while they were both locking up their barbing salon...

'Police spokesman Nnamdi Omoni told the BBC that no report had been made of the incident.

'Mr Bakor said he could not do this because of a 24-hour curfew in the area and pointed out the closest police stations had been burnt down...

'Authorities say members of the Indigenous People of Biafra - Ipob, proscribed as a terrorist organisation in 2017 by Nigeria's federal government - targeted security operatives in Oyigbo as tensions spilled over following the #EndSars protests against police brutality in the country...

'Two police stations and a hospital in the area were burned on 21 October as widespread mayhem erupted after protesters against police brutality were shot at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos.

'Encouraged by their leader Nnamdi Kanu, Ipob members are accused of attacking security operatives in eastern Nigeria.

'Clashes with the army in Abia state spilled over into the neighbouring Oyigbo town in Rivers state.

'Ipob activists are accused of burning down three police stations in the area and killing three policemen, after one of them was killed during a protest at a police station in Oyigbo.

⁵² Premium Times, '[Police accuse IPOB members of killing three officers in Rivers](#)', 26 October 2020

⁵³ Janes, [website](#), subscription only, undated

⁵⁴ Janes, [website](#), subscription only, undated

'Rivers state Governor Nyesom Wike imposed a 24-hour curfew on 23 October in Oyigbo as the violence threatened to spiral out of control but said on Monday that soldiers had not been killing people in the area.

"It is not correct that soldiers are going from house to house to kill. When the Ipob killed the Army officers, they took their guns. It is normal for them [army] to recover those guns. In any case, there are consequences when soldiers are killed," Mr Wike said on Monday.

'The governor last month banned demonstrations in the state on the eve of a peaceful #EndSars protest but protesters defied him, marching to government house in the state capital, Port Harcourt, and forcing him out to address them.

'Demonstrations by Ipob were banned in the state. Mr Wike recently placed a bounty of 50 million naira (\$130,000; £100,000) on the head of the group's leader.

"This is clearly a terrorist group which existence, creed, mission and activities are strongly denounced even by the government and peoples of South-Eastern States of the country," he said.

'Army spokesman, Major Charles Ekeocha, also denied that soldiers were going door-to-door and killing people, telling a local radio station that there was an ongoing operation in Oyigbo but that soldiers were not targeting people.

"People have been spreading information based on their interests but when you investigate you find out it's not true," he told government-owned Radio Nigeria.⁵⁵

8.5.6 AllNews reported in October 2020: '... the leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) placed the N100 million bounty following Governor Wike's directives to security agencies to arrest anybody connected to the group.'⁵⁶

8.5.7 The Guardian Nigeria reporting on the same incident stated:

'Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, has declared that alleged killing of Igbo was a ploy to shift attention from activities of outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Oyigbo Council Area of the state.

'He described the allegation that he ordered the Nigerian Army to kill Igbo in Oyigbo, as a politically motivated falsehood. Governor Wike made the clarification on a live television programme in Port Harcourt yesterday, maintaining that he imposed curfew on Oyigbo to restore calm after IPOB members killed six soldiers, four policemen and destroyed all police stations and courts in the area.

'His words: "I know that this is not the first time IPOB has used Oyigbo as launching ground. Security agencies are aware of this, but IPOB added a new dimension to their activities this time.

⁵⁵ BBC News, '[Oyigbo clashes: "Nigerian security agents shot dead my fiancée"](#)', 3 November 2020

⁵⁶ Allnews, IPOB: '[Nnamdi Kanu Places N100 Million Bounty On Gov. Wike](#)', 27 October 2020

“They killed six Army Officers and burnt one, killed four police officers and destroyed all the police stations and court buildings. I imposed curfew to restore calm and I proscribed IPOB activities anywhere in the state.”

‘In the statement issued by his Special Assistant on Media, Kelvin Ebiri, the governor condemned IPOB for its effrontery to rename a local government in the state and hoist its flag in a public school in Komkom Town.

‘Wike stated that the state government did not regret its stance on IPOB, which he said, had been designated as a terrorist organisation by the Federal Government, adding that the South-East Governors have never supported IPOB and wondered why any governor of a Niger Delta should tolerate the group.

‘He said during a search of some residents in Oyigbo, security agencies uncovered shrines with IPOB flags and Nnamdi Kanu’s picture, maintaining that if IPOB members were allowed to operate in Oyigbo, they would soon overrun the state.’⁵⁷

8.5.8 In January 2021 and following clashes between security forces and members of ESN a curfew was imposed in Orlu town, Imo state from 6pm to 6am daily⁵⁸⁵⁹.

8.5.9 The Africa Centre for Strategic Studies stated in a March 2021 article: ‘Nigerian security forces and ESN [Eastern Security Network - a paramilitary force in the region] have clashed in a series of skirmishes in 2021 that have resulted in the deaths of several civilians in what has become known as the [Orlu crisis](#).’⁶⁰

8.5.10 Premium Times in a news article from 9 May 2021 and reporting on police officers killed stated:

‘At least [one police officer was killed](#) as suspected members of ESN in the early hours of Thursday invaded a police facility in Obiozara, Ohaozara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

‘The attackers were said to have invaded the station at about 3 a.m., and set ablaze the office of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and the administrative building...

‘Suspected members of the ESN on Thursday attacked a police facility in Imo State. However, [the attackers were repelled](#) and 11 of them were killed, according to an official account.

‘Army spokesperson Mohammed Yerima said the gunmen attacked the police area command in Orlu, Imo State, Thursday night.

‘They were repelled by the police officers present who were then joined by soldiers and other security operatives.

⁵⁷ The Guardian - Nigeria, ‘[Alleged killing of Igbo a distraction from IPOBS...](#)’, 3 November 2020

⁵⁸ Pulse, ‘[Imo Governor Uzodinma imposes curfew in Orlu zone following unrest](#)’, 25 January 2021

⁵⁹ Premium Times, ‘[Hours after shootings, Uzodinma declares curfew in 10 LGAs...](#)’, 26 January 2021

⁶⁰ ACforSC, ‘[Nigeria’s diverse security threats](#)’, 30 March 2021

'Mr Yerima said no security operative was killed in the attack while 11 of the gunmen were killed. He said seven vehicles and several arms and ammunition were also recovered from the attackers.'⁶¹

- 8.5.11 Nigeria Watch, which documents security incidents in the country, stated in its annual report for 2020: 'Violent clashes between the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and security operatives claimed 44 lives in 2020. The group was proscribed by the government in 2017 following clashes with security operatives and disruption of socio-economic activities in the Southeast and the South-South.'⁶²
- 8.5.12 The media organisation 'This Day' reported in June 2021 that the Nigerian Army had claimed that IPOB/ESN had killed 128 military police, 15 Civil Defence officers and 31 community policing members. The army also claimed that over 100 civilians had been killed for not supporting IPOB⁶³. Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, responded to the claim by the Nigerian Army, denying that IPOB/ESN were the gunmen responsible for a series of violence incidents across South-East Nigeria as reported by 'This Day' in June 2021⁶⁴.
- 8.5.13 [Nigeria Watch](#), according to its 'About us' page is a research project which has monitored lethal violence, conflicts, and human security in Nigeria since 2006 and is hosted by the [French Institute for Research in Africa](#)⁶⁵. Its website using a range of sources, mainly Nigerian media organisations, contains a database of violent events based on local media reporting. Search results using the word 'IPOB' and taking data from the description section, showed 87 incidents in 2021 resulting in 302 deaths of suspected IPOB/ESN members the police and civilians. The highest recorded months are shown below:
- May 2021 - 81 of those deaths occurred over 20 incidents during May 2021, of those 81 deaths 34 were state forces and 41 were suspected IPOB / ESN members, civilians accounted for 6 of the deaths.
 - June 2021 - 39 deaths were recorded of which 27 were suspected IPOB / ESN members, 11 were state forces and 1 was a civilian. The 10 most recent incidents are shown in more detail below.⁶⁶
 - August 2021 – 48 deaths recorded, 24 suspected IPOB / ESN, 8 were state forces and 12 were reported to be civilians.
 - October 2021 – 24 suspected IPOB / ESN, 6 state forces and 3 civilian.

The most recent incidents are shown in more detail below. Note that the number of deaths recorded do not always correspond to the deaths listed in the incident description⁶⁷.

⁶¹ Premium Times, '[16 Police officers killed in Nigeria last week](#)', 9 May 2021

⁶² Nigeria Watch, '[Tenth Report on Violence in Nigeria \(2020\)](#)', no date

⁶³ This Day, 'Army: [IPOB Killed 128 Military, Police Personnel](#)', 8 June 2021

⁶⁴ Nigerian Eye, '[IPOB, ESN not unknown gunmen – Nnamdi Kanu insists](#)', 9 June 2021

⁶⁵ Nigeria Watch, '[About us](#)', undated

⁶⁶ Nigeria Watch, '[database – IPOB](#)', results searched 24 January 2022

⁶⁷ Nigeria Watch, '[database – IPOB](#)', results searched 24 January 2022

Date	Incident description	State deaths	Suspected IPOB / ESN deaths	Civilian deaths
18/01/2022	Gunmen Kill 2, Enugu - : Gunmen attacked a meeting being held by members of Enugu South Local Government's chapter of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and killed its State Youth Leader, Mr. Kelvin Ezeoha and another member of the party.			2
17/01/2022	Army vs IPOB, Anambra - Some members of IPOB were gunned down by the Army during a clearance operation aimed at ridding the hoodlums. Troops also recovered several weapons and insignia. Due to the nature of the story, it is assumed that 10 people were killed.		10	
14/01/2022	Gunmen Attack, Imo - Gunmen attacked a police headquarters, killing an inspector and leaving another policeman who died from the injuries he sustained.	1		
10/01/2022	Gunmen Kill 2, Anambra - 2 people were shot dead in Ekwulobia by gunmen who were enforcing a sit-at-home.			2
10/01/2022	Gunmen Kill 2, Anambra - 5 people were shot dead in Uwani, by gunmen who were enforcing a sit-at home order.			2
03/01/2022	Police vs Gunmen, Imo - One person was killed and many others wounded as gunmen attacked the palace of Eze Imo, Dr. E. C. Okeke.			1
29/12/2021	Gunmen vs Ex-Customs Officer, Anambra - Some gunmen killed a retired Customs Officer identified as Mr. Nkemakonam Ume-Agudosi in his hometown.			1
29/12/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Anambra - Some gunmen killed a policeman and injured another in attack at on a health centre.	1		
25/12/2021	IPOB vs Policemen, Anambra - Three policemen en route to the Anambra International Airport killed by suspected members IPOB.	3		
18/12/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Anambra - Gunmen attacked a police checkpoint, killed two policemen, and burnt their patrol vehicle.	2		
17/12/2021	Gunmen vs Man, Anambra - Some unknown gunmen shot dead a young man in the early hours of the day.			1

Date	Incident description	State deaths	Suspected IPOB / ESN deaths	Civilian deaths
25/11/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Anambra - Gunmen killed two policemen and burnt their bodies.	2		
23/11/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Imo - A policeman was killed by some gunmen when they attacked and burnt a divisional police headquarters.	1		
04/11/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Anambra - 6 operatives of the Nigerian Police were gunned down by unidentified gunmen.	6		
29/10/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Anambra - 4 policemen were shot dead by unknown gunmen who stormed the political rally of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA).	4		
28/10/2021	Army vs BNG, Abia - Biafran National Guard gunman was killed by troops of Exercise Golden Dawn.		1	
24/10/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Ebonyi - A policeman and a hoodlum were killed when some gunmen tried to attack a police station.	1	2	
21/10/2021	Gunmen vs Police, Imo - A female police officer was shot dead by some unidentified gunmen.	1		
21/10/2021	Army vs IPOB , Abia - 5 members of IPOB were killed when IPOB members clashed with some soldiers.		5	
11/10/2021	Gunmen vs Man, Enugu - A security guard of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, shot dead by gunmen who were trying to enforce the sit-at-home order of IPOB.			1

8.5.14 The BBC monitoring timeline for IPOB updated to 23 January 2022 included the following incidents:

‘6 December 2019 - The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) claims responsibility for the attack on Nigeria's transport minister, [Rotimi Amaechi](#) in Madrid, Spain. In a statement, the group's spokesman Emma Powerful says: "Yes, IPOB beat Amaechi the transport minister based on the standing order given by our leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu to reprimand those politicians who think they have arrived"...

‘22 October 2020 - IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu dismisses an allegation that he ordered the destruction of properties belonging to the people of the South-West geopolitical zone. He says that his statement was twisted by his enemies to suit their purposes, and urged his followers and the entire Igbo to guard against any destruction in the ongoing #EndSARS protests across Nigeria...

‘13 December 2020 - The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) launches Eastern Security Network (ESN), a security outfit for the South-East and

South-South regions. IPOB spokesperson Emma Powerful says the establishment of ESN is due to the failure of governments of the two regions to set up regional security outfits like their counterparts in other regions despite the worsening insecurity in the country...

‘20 February 2021 - Several people are feared dead and property destroyed as members of the Eastern Security Network set up by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) clash with a combined team of police and army in Orlu in Imo state, south-east Nigeria.

‘20 February 2021 -The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) says the military raid of Orlu and Orsu Local Government Areas of Imo State on 18 February 2021 marked the beginning of the second Nigeria/Biafra war. This is after the military admitted launching of land and air operations against operatives of Eastern Security Network (ESN), a vigilante group protecting the eastern region's people against "terrorists and killer herdsman". In a statement, the IPOB spokesperson Emma Powerful says: "We wish to bring to the attention of the whole world that the Nigeria military has, at last, brought war to Biafra land. Supported by other security agencies, including police and the Department of State Services, they came with military jets, tanks and heavy war equipment against us. Yes, the second Nigeria/Biafra war has begun! It began on Thursday, 18 February 2021 at Orlu in Imo State, Biafra land"...

‘5 April 2021 - ...gunmen attacked Owerri Correctional Prison in Imo State and freed over 1,500 inmates. They also razed the Imo State Police Command headquarters including the vehicles parked in the premises.

‘5 April 2021 - The Inspector-General of Police, [Mohammed Adamu](#), says preliminary investigation has revealed that the attack on the Imo State police headquarters and a correctional facility was carried out by members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) which was established by the proscribed Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB). In a statement, he directs the commissioner of police in Imo to carry out holistic investigations into the incident with a view to fishing out the perpetrators and bringing them to justice. IPOB's leader, Nnamdi Kanu, had in December 2020 launched ESN to protect the people of South-East and South-South regions from militants allegedly trooping in from the North

‘5 April 2021 - The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) denies responsibility over attacks on police and correctional service headquarters in Imo State. In a statement, IPOB spokesperson Emma Powerful says the group was formed on the principle of peace and would not compromise its principles. He says: "The attention of IPOB has been drawn to the fallacious and fabricated reports that it is involved in the attack of prison and police headquarters in Imo. IPOB and Eastern Security Network (ESN) are known groups, not unknown gunmen. ESN is in the bush chasing terrorists and has no business with the said attacks"

‘24 April 2021 - The Nigeria police, army and intelligence services, in a joint operation storm the operational headquarters of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the military wing of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in Awomama, Oru East Local Government Area of Imo State, killing seven

members of the group. The group is said to be responsible for the attack on the Imo State police headquarters and the headquarters of the Nigerian Correctional Service on 5 April, 2021. Among those killed is Commander Ikonso, identified as the Vice President-designate of IPOB

‘24 April 2021 - IPOB confirms the killing of one of its commanders, warning that Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma will pay dearly. In a statement, IPOB's spokesperson Emma Powerful, says: "The killing of the heroic innocent Biafrans protecting our communities and towns from Fulani terrorists herdsmen masquerading as cattle herders in cold blood is very painful. The Supreme Court Administrator of Imo State Hope Uzodinma and all those who had a hand in this wickedness will pay dearly"

‘6 May 2021 - Nigerian army claims killing 11 members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) following an attempted attack on the police command in Imo state. In a statement, the army spokesman, Mohammed Yerima, says: "A gang of IPOB/ESN terrorists mounted in vehicles on Thursday, 6 May 2021, stormed Orlu town with intention to attack the compound housing the Area Command and Police Station in Orlu LGA of Imo State. The attackers were resisted by vigilant police personnel at the Area Command and were completely obliterated when a reinforcement team of the Nigerian Army and Nigerian Air Force arrived at the scene. Following the encounter, 11 IPOB/ESN terrorists were neutralised while four AK47, one G3 and one Pump Action Rifles as well as a Berretta Pistol, charms and assorted ammunitions were recovered"

‘12 May 2021 - Police in Delta State arrest nine suspected members of the Indigenous People of Biafra and recover 13 stolen police rifles. Parading the suspects in Asaba, the state capital, Hafiz Inuwa, the state commissioner of police, alleges that the men, who were arrested in April, were behind the numerous attacks on policemen in Asaba and environs.

‘15 May 2021 - Police in Imo State arrest five people suspected to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) over the alleged killing of Joseph Nwaka, a police sergeant.

‘27 May 2021 - The Nigerian army in conjunction with other security agencies raid an operational base of the Eastern Security Network, an armed arm of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), kill seven suspected members of the group. The raid was carried on the base located at Agbomchia Forest of Rivers State. In a statement, the army spokesman Mohammed Yerima says: "In the firefight that ensued during the clearance/raid operation, seven IPOB/ESN members were neutralized while five suspects arrested. Various items belonging to the criminals including arms and ammunition were also recovered by the security forces. The camp was promptly destroyed while suspects and corpses were handed over to the police for further actions"

‘27 May 2021 Police in south Nigeria's Imo State accuses the Indigenous People of Biafra and its security arm, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) of killing Ahmed Gulak, a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) party and a former political adviser to former President Goodluck Jonathan. Gulak was shot dead in Owerri, Imo State on 30 May 2021, while on his way

to Sam Mbakwe airport. Police in a statement say the killers were traced to their location within Imo where they were shot dead during a gun battle with security operatives. "The six hoodlums who carried out the killings and four other members of their gang were fatally injured. The assailants were identified as members of the proscribed IPOB and ESN"

'31 May 2021 IPOB denies any involvement in the killing of Ahmed Gulak, a former adviser to ex-President Goodluck Jonathan. The group, in a statement by its spokesperson, Emma Powerful says: "We state without equivocation that IPOB knows nothing about the said assassination. In the first place, what threat did the late Gulak constitute to our cause to warrant his elimination? We had nothing in common with him and could not have in any way killed him"

'6 June 2021 The Nigeria police say they have killed the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)/Eastern Security Network (ESN) commander Joseph Uka Nnachi aka Dragon alongside five of his members. They allege the commander was responsible for over 70 per cent of the killings carried out by ESN in the south-east. According to police, the six were killed during an attempted attack on Imo State police headquarters. The police allege that the other five suspects killed alongside Dragon were his key men"

'14 July 2021 Two Nigerian soldiers are killed as troops repel attack after operatives of the Indigenous People of Biafra's militant arm, Eastern Security Network (ESN), attacked its location at Iggah and Asaba checkpoint in Enugu State. In a statement, the army states that the troops had been deployed to checkmate the activities of gunmen at Adani community of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, on 13 July 2021 when they came under the attack of the ESN

'29 October 2021 - The Nigerian army kills four members of the Indigenous People of Biafra/Eastern Security Network (IPOB/ESN) in a "fierce" encounter at Idemili South local government area of Anambra State. A soldier also died in the crossfire. In a statement, the army spokesperson, Onyema Nwachukwu says arms and ammunition were recovered from the group during an encounter...

'29 November 2021 - The federal government condemns the murder of two police officers in Anambra State, stating that those who carried out the killings, videotaped them, and circulated the footage will be apprehended and brought to justice. In a statement, the minister of information, [Lai Mohammed](#), describes the killing as horrific and barbaric and accuses members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the armed wing of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) of executing the two officers in cold blood. He stresses that the targeting and killing of security agents, under any guise, is a direct attack on Nigeria and will not be tolerated. The officers were abducted on 27 November...⁶⁸

8.5.15 See also the following links to incidents where IPOB have denied involvement.

⁶⁸ BBC Monitoring, [IPOB Timeline](#), updated 23 January 2022, subscription only

- [Nigeria police chief sacked after jailbreak attack](#), African News, 6 April 2021
- [Gunmen Free More Than 1,800 Inmates in Attack on Nigerian Prison | World News US News](#), 6 April 2021
- [Mayhem in Anambra, Abia: 9 dead, Zone 13 Police Hq attacked \(vanguardngr.com\)](#), 20 April 2021

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Section 9 updated: 16 March 2022

9. Treatment of IPOB

9.1 State treatment: security presence in South East zone

- 9.1.1 An expert comment by Sola Tayo, a BBC journalist, and Fidelis Mbah, a journalist, published on the Chatham House website in November 2017 stated:

‘In September [2017] Nigeria’s military launched Operation Python Dance II, its second military exercise in South East Nigeria this year. It was carried out with the intention of quashing any calls for secession in a region with a long history of antagonism with the central Nigerian state...

‘... Python Dance II escalated into a violent confrontation in which supporters of secessionist group the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) claim some of their members were killed, and the home of the group’s leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was raided. Kanu has not been seen in public since the raid on his house.’⁶⁹

- 9.1.2 The report continued that:

‘Indeed, in the southeast, Operation Python Dance II seems to have emboldened rather than silenced IPOB supporters, through adding to the feeling of discrimination felt in the region and by making a martyr out of Kanu. And in any case, IPOB may be the most prominent, but it is not the only group advocating secession. MASSOB is also accused of violence by Nigeria’s government, and, like Kanu, Uwazuruike has previously been imprisoned, accused of treason and released. There are several other pro-Biafra groups in the southeast but internal disputes have so far prevented them from presenting a unified front.

‘The umbrella body of Igbo people, Ohaneze Ndigbo, has openly voiced its concerns and is calling for the government to address the grievances of the region. They may not all support IPOB’s rhetoric but are vehemently against labelling the group a terrorist organization, and condemn attacks against its members.

‘Kanu’s continued absence and violent confrontations risk igniting an insurrection that could destabilize Nigeria’s southeast. The federal government’s response and tactics employed by Nigeria’s military should be called into question as forces are stretched on many fronts. In addition to the Boko Haram crisis in the northeast, the military has also been deployed to combat a rise in kidnapping of civilians and violence in the oil producing

⁶⁹ CH, [‘Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria’](#), 9 November 2017

Niger Delta region. The proscribing of IPOB could in fact lead to a fully armed insurrection, plunging the country into deeper insecurity and sewing further division in this fragmented nation.’⁷⁰

- 9.1.3 The EASO report also included sources which commented on Operation Python Dance noting that ‘In March 2018, an article in the World Politics Review reports that, “since the launch of Operation Python Dance II, the southeast has effectively become a police state. Igbos who live elsewhere in the country and who returned for Christmas celebrations last year reported being detained and harassed for hours by Nigerian soldiers conducting stop-and-search operations.”’⁷¹
- 9.1.4 The USSD Human Rights report 2020 stated: ‘The government continued to turn to the armed forces to address internal security concerns, due to insufficient capacity and staffing of domestic law enforcement agencies. The constitution authorizes the use of the military to “[s]uppress insurrection and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order.” Armed forces were part of continuing joint security operations throughout the country.’⁷²
- 9.1.5 A report by ECP - Escola de Cultura de Pau, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and published by ReliefWeb from July 2020 noted: ‘...with regard to the situation in Biafra... Various local and international human rights organisations noted that during 2019, violent persecution of social actors and civilians suspected of being sympathizers of the independence movement [IPOB] (considered a terrorist movement by the Nigerian state) continued.’⁷³
- 9.1.6 Whilst not an area in the South East zone, Pulse, a Nigerian news website, published in October 2020 an article concerning Rivers State, an area where Igbo live:

‘Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers has signed an executive order to reinforce the ban on the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and its activities in the State.

‘He made this known in a statement by Mr Kelvin Ebiri, Special Assistant (Media) to the Governor.....

‘According to the statement... “the State government is opposed to the presence and activities of the legally-proscribed and anarchic IPOB and whatever it stands for in Rivers State... we have everything against the presence and activities of the legally-proscribed IPOB and whatever that group stands for in Rivers State,” the governor warned.

“This is clearly a terrorist group which existence, creed, mission and activities are strongly denounced even by the Government and peoples of South-Eastern States of the country.

“I have, therefore, signed the executive order to reinforce the total ban on IPOB and its activities in Rivers State or any part thereof and nothing will stop us from enforcing this ban in its entirety,” he said.

⁷⁰ CH, ‘[Calls for Biafran Independence Return to South East Nigeria](#)’, 9 November 2017

⁷¹ EASO, ‘[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)’ (page 83), November 2018

⁷² USSD, 2020 Human Rights Report, [Nigeria](#) (Section 1), 30 March 2021

⁷³ ECP, ‘[Alert 2020! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding](#)’, July 2020

'The statement also added that Wike also "directed security agencies and the Chairmen of Local Government Areas to fish out and resolutely deal with any [member of IPOB](#) found in any community following the executive order and other legal instruments".'⁷⁴

9.1.7 Africa Confidential, a current affairs journal, of April 2021 observed

'Since January [2021], Nigeria's armed forces have been raiding cities in the South East region, on a search for training camps of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the armed wing of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) secessionist group. When hundreds of soldiers stormed Orlu, 40 kilometres north of Imo state capital Owerri, on 21 January in Hilux trucks, their arrival triggered pandemonium.

'Local media reported four civilian casualties and that the soldiers were in town to retaliate after a couple of military personnel had been harassed in the area. In February, military helicopters were also seen patrolling the air above parts of Orlu.

'When the militia launched in December [2020], with the promise of addressing security issues in the region, it was accompanied by a strong caveat. A statement signed by IPOB spokesman Emma Powerful stressed that the ESN was not a security outfit gunning for secession in disguise. Its sole aim, the group said, is "to halt every criminal activity and terrorist attack on Biafraland", comparing itself to Amotekun, the regional vigilante group to protect farmers in the south-west, and Miyetti Allah, the umbrella organisation of herders...

'The ESN is capitalising on herder-farmer clashes, presenting itself as the defender of the farmers, and by extension, the "indigenes", a fissile concept in a federation which is meant to guarantee free movement to all citizens.

'IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu says ESN was launched in response to soldiers killing dozens of unarmed civilians in Oyigbo, Rivers State, last November [2020]. The government said it was a reprisal after three policemen and six soldiers had been killed by secessionist agitators. Governor Nyesom Wike placed a 50 million naira (£95,000) bounty on the head of the state's IPOB leader, Stanley Mgbere, in October [2020]. The ESN has been spreading propaganda including videos of armed men in red masks and berets on Facebook and other social media networks...

'Many in the south-east are sympathetic to the Biafran cause but will not back a group using violence to achieve it. However, they are unlikely to give information to security agencies that will lead to the arrest of supporters of the group.'⁷⁵

9.1.8 The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) featured on their website a blog post by John Campbell, a former Ambassador who is described on CFR's expert biography page as 'a senior fellow for Africa policy studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, DC'⁷⁶. The post from 18 May 2021 stated

⁷⁴ Pulse, '[Gov. Wike signs executive order proscribing IPOB in Rivers State](#)', 29 October 2020

⁷⁵ Africa Confidential, '[States rethink security](#)', 15 April 2021

⁷⁶ CFR, '[Expert Bio – John Campbell](#)', undated

'Following President Muhammadu Buhari's May 11 [2021] meeting with the military service chiefs and the inspector general of police, Nigerian military sources confirmed that some troops were being moved from Borno State, where they have been engaged with Boko Haram and other jihadis, to the South East, to counter "bandits" and the regional separatist organization, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), along with its security force, the Eastern Security Network (ESN). The army and police have sustained increased casualties in the South East, so aircraft—including combat helicopters—will be "deployed to conduct massive raids" on the hideouts of "criminals" from the IPOB and ESN. Another source suggested traditional rulers, community heads, and chiefs could be arrested to warn them against "conniving with the agitators." The police announced yesterday the launch of Operation Restore Peace to confront the IPOB and ESN.'⁷⁷

9.1.9 Punch, A Nigerian newspaper, in a May 2021 online article reported:

'The acting Inspector General of Police [IGP], Usman Baba, on Tuesday declared war on Biafra agitators and gunmen attacking and destroying police infrastructure in the South-East and South-South regions and ordered their extermination.

...

'In an address earlier, before declaring open the operation codenamed, Operation RT – Restore Peace, which was witnessed by governors of the South-East states and heads of other security agencies, Usman stated that the operation was for the stabilisation of the security order in the geopolitical zone.'⁷⁸

9.1.10 The CFR in a further post from May 2021 and commenting on Usman Baba's address stated:

'The Nigerian government has launched Operation Restore Peace, designed to destroy the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a separatist group in support of independence for the former breakaway Republic of Biafra, and its security wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN). According to Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP) Usman Baba, the security services are not to be constrained by human rights considerations...

'So, the IGP is not only giving the green light to human rights violations, but also promising his protection for those who commit them. In addition, he is threatening those who might hang back with the loss of pension benefits! Usman is implying that he has the full support of President Muhammadu Buhari.

'Other reporting⁷⁹ alleges that security services are conducting house-to-house searches in Ebonyi, Imo, and Rivers states, all with large Igbo populations. Local people are saying that the security services are rounding up young men and their family members and taking them away for questioning. IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu has dubbed the police initiative "Operation Massacre Biafrans."

⁷⁷ CFR, '[Nigerian Government Threatens to Use the Hammer in the South East](#)', 19 May 2021

⁷⁸ Punch, '[IGP declares war on Biafran agitators, criminal element](#)', 19 May 2021

⁷⁹ Sahara Reporters, '[Nigerian Army, Police Conduct House-To-House Raid For IPOB...](#)' 19 May 2021

‘Usman Baba is a northern Muslim from Yobe State—long a Boko Haram stronghold. He is a career police officer. There is nothing in his background that would suggest an understanding of southern and eastern grievances and fears of the "establishment of a Fulani Caliphate."

‘Operation Restore Peace and Baba’s rhetoric would seem tailor-made to feed the revived Biafra secessionist movement and general southern and Christian fears of a Fulani-Muslim onslaught against Christians. It should be anticipated that local people will fight back viciously and the security services—as directed by Usman Baba—will respond in kind. It is to be hoped that President Buhari will repudiate Baba’s rhetoric and methods, not least for the sake of the unity of Nigeria.’⁸⁰

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9.2 Break-up of/use of excessive force against demonstrations

9.2.1 The EASO ‘Targeting of individuals’ report of November 2018 citing several media news sources stated: ‘As MASSOB and IPOB have the same aim, are often taken together in media reports, and the authorities tend to react in the same way on rallies, demonstrations and members/supporters of both groups...’⁸¹

9.2.2 The International Centre for not-for-profit Law stated in a report updated in November 2020: ‘In 2015, in Rivers State in the south of the country, pro-Biafra marches were banned by the state governor. In the run-up to gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa State, also in the south, protests were similarly banned by the Nigeria Police. In January 2017, the police also broke up a protest in favor of US President Donald Trump by the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), which led to the death of a protestor.’⁸²

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9.3 Killings, discrimination, violence and harassment

9.3.1 The EASO Targeting of individuals report of November 2018 citing several media news sources stated:

‘The military Special Board, set up to investigate the events of 30 May 2016 [Remembrance day when at least 60 people were killed], did not find any wrongdoing by the army, reporting only on the arrest of 14 persons during the demonstrations on those days. In August 2017, after numerous protests and calls for investigation from both national and international organisations, the Governor of Anambra State apologised to IPOB members for the events of 30 May 2016.

‘Another major clash between the armed forces and the pro-Biafra activists occurred in October 2015 when the IPOB-leader Kanu was arrested on charges of treason and ethnic incitement. A wave of street protests and arrests followed. Kanu was released on 25 April 2017. However, on 22

⁸⁰ CFR, [‘Nigerian Initiative Against Separatists Looks Nasty’](#), 21 May 2021

⁸¹ EASO, [‘Nigeria: Targeting of individuals’](#) (page 84), November 2018

⁸² ICNL, [‘Civic Freedom Monitor: Nigeria’ \(section: Legal analysis - Enforcement\)](#), 5 October 2019

September 2017, soldiers attacked the house where Kanu was staying and killed 28 people in the surroundings. The government denied the claim.’⁸³

9.3.2 The EASO ‘Targeting of individuals’ report of November 2018 stated:

‘The Nigerian federal authorities consider IPOB’s activism as a threat to the national security, “even if the support for an independent Biafra does not appear to be strong, even not among the Igbo”, as Lifos [the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency - Migrationsverket] notes. The ban on IPOB in September 2017 implies that all activities were declared illegal; even possession of IPOB material can lead to arrest and prosecution. Several members have been charged with treason which is punishable with the death penalty in Nigeria.’⁸⁴

9.3.3 Agnes Callamard, United Nations Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions [SR] stated in a statement of September 2019 following a visit to Nigeria that:

‘... nation-wide and broader regional pressures applied against Nigeria’s diverse eco-political-economic systems are producing localised systems and country-wide patterns of violence, many of which are seemingly spinning out of control. They are claiming the lives of thousands and include, for instance, arbitrary killings in the context of: The repression of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)...

In yet other eco-political systems of violence, the security response is dangerously quasi-prospective, with individuals, communities and associations actively targeted for what they may have done decades ago, or for what they may do or may become, rather than for what they are doing or have done (e.g. members of the IMN, IPOB).’⁸⁵

9.3.4 Agnes Callamard also reported in September 2019 on killings and arrests:

‘Since 2015, members of IPOB have faced arbitrary arrests, torture and extrajudicial executions, predominantly in the context of demonstrations. Between 2015 and 2016, it is alleged that law enforcement officials killed at least 100 IPOB members in different events in Aba (Abia State), and Awka and Onitsha (Anambra State). On 29 and 30 May 2016, during a demonstration, the Nigerian military opened fire on IPOB members and bystanders in Onitsha. At least 60 persons were killed and over 70 injured, mainly shot in the back. The exact number of deaths remains unknown.

‘Between 12 and 14 September 2017, IPOB followers gathered at the family home of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu, in Afara-Ukwu (Abia State) to take part in a peaceful vigil. The military operation (as part of Python Dance II) carried out in the afternoon of 14 September 2017 is alleged to have resulted in the killing of 150 persons. The IPOB leader went in exile and some of its followers remain disappeared since then. No Nigerian soldiers were killed in the operation. Following this event, the Federal High Court in Abuja proscribed IPOB and designated it as a terrorist group.

⁸³ EASO, ‘[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)’ (page 54-55), November 2018

⁸⁴ EASO, ‘[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)’ (page 83), November 2018

⁸⁵ OHCHR, ‘[End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur...](#)’ (para 11 & 14), 2 September 2019

‘During my [Agnes Callamard, United Nations Special Rapporteur] visit, I met with several survivors of various security attacks and witness to killings. I have received a large number of allegations of killings by the Military Forces in 2017, 2018 and 2019...

‘On March 8, 2018, the African Commission [for Human Rights, ACHR] issued Provisional Measures, asking the Federal Government of Nigeria to rescind its decision branding IPOB and its members as terrorists as well as the proscription and “Not to take any further action so as to avoid irreparable damage to the Victim, IPOB and its members, pending the decision of the Commission on this Communication.”

‘I am not aware of any steps taken to implement the ACHR interim decision at the time of writing these preliminary observations.’⁸⁶

9.3.5 The SR’s same report stated that:

‘The Government has acknowledged in 2016 that “in the course of security operations against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria and recently in the context of countering militant and separatist groups like the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and the Niger Delta Avengers, the Nigerian Military have been accused of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrarily arrest and detention”. The report further states that all allegations of torture, extrajudicial killings and war crimes made against the Nigerian Military will be investigated.’⁸⁷

9.3.6 The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees – Germany reported, based on various sources, that that on 2 December 2019:

‘... police went to the home of lawyer Ifeanyi Ejiofor in Oraifite (federal state of Anambra). Ejiofor is representing the wanted leader of the banned pro-Biafra organisation IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu, in his trial. According to the police, they were investigating a case of abduction and intended to arrest suspects in Ejiofor’s house. According to IPOB, the police allegedly attacked the house, shooting at people who were inside. At least two police officers and two people in the house are believed to have been killed in the course of a violent altercation between IPOB supporters and the police. The police burned the house down. In connection with the outbreak of violence John Abang, chief of police in the federal state of Anambra, declared IPOB member Ejiofor and his supporters to be wanted persons. The whereabouts of Ejiofor, who was not at home during the clash, is since unknown.’⁸⁸

9.3.7 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) in a December 2019 regional overview noted: ‘Elsewhere in the country, the attempted arrest of an Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) lawyer sparked clashes between security forces and IPOB youth, causing the death of two officers and two IPOB supporters.’⁸⁹

9.3.8 The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) – Germany reported in August 2020 that:

⁸⁶ OHCHR, [‘End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur...’](#) (para 47-52), 2 September 2019

⁸⁷ OHCHR, [‘End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur...’](#) (para 74), 2 September 2019

⁸⁸ BAMF, [‘Nigeria: briefing notes’](#) (p6), 9 December 2019

⁸⁹ ACLED, [‘Regional Overview – Africa \(1 - 7 December 2019\)’](#) (p2), 10 December 2019

'On 23 August 2020 the police stormed the Community Secondary School (aka St Patrick Secondary School) in the city of Enugu (capital of the south-eastern state of the same name) in the Emene district. Members of the separatist organization Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) held a meeting there. The separatists allegedly resisted the attempt to arrest them and overpowered the police. More than a dozen patrol cars with officers of the police, the military, and the Department of State Services (DSS), the domestic intelligence service, had appeared to reinforce the security forces, reports said. Violent clashes then occurred on the school grounds and along the old Abakaliki Road between the school and the Catholic Church of St Joseph. The reports on the number of victims vary. On 23 August 2020, the IPOB spokesperson, Emma Powerful, announced that 21 IPOB members had been killed and 47 arrested in the course of the violent clashes. According to the police chief of the state of Enugu, the police arrested four IPOB members; four people were killed in the incident, he said. A DSS spokesperson informed that two DSS members had been killed.'⁹⁰

9.3.9 PM News reporting on the same incident noted:

'Ahmed Abdulrahman, the Police Commissioner in Enugu state has given an official account of the bloody clash between security agents and members of the Indigenous People of Biafra(IPOB). But it is not all the truth as IPOB offered a different version.

'The clash at Emene Community Secondary School in Enugu on Sunday led to many deaths. The police gave an official death toll of four. But IPOB claimed 20 of their members were killed. Abdurahman said his command also arrested five IPOB members.

'One of the arrested IPOB members, Ebube Agu told journalists that they were having a martial art training for self defence when they were attacked by the security agents. Agu said that they were not armed as claimed by the police.

'Abdulrahman, in his own account said trouble started when operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) went on a covert operation in Emene early Sunday morning. But they were overwhelmed and two of their officials allegedly abducted by IPOB members. Abdurahman said that the DSS operatives called in the police and the army for reinforcement. He noted that the police were able to rescue one of the DSS officials in a building where he was held hostage. The DSS later claimed it lost two of its men.

"However, four persons lost their lives; two were hacked to death with machetes and one passerby set ablaze.

"Many of the IPOB members also escaped with bullet wound and police have started tracing them," he said.

'Abdurrahman urged health facilities to treat anyone with bullet wounds but should report such cases to the police. In a statement, the DSS confirmed that said two of its men died during the clash. The service said a comprehensive investigation had commenced into the incident, according to its Public Relations Officer, Dr Peter Afunanya.

⁹⁰ BAMF, '[Nigeria: briefing notes](#)' (p5), 24 August 2020

“The DSS wishes to inform the public that its patrol team was, today (Sunday), attacked in Emene, Enugu State by members of the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra.

“The service lost two personnel in what was clearly an unprovoked violent attack launched by IPOB on the team.”⁹¹

9.3.10 The Guardian Nigeria reported in August 2020:

‘Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Nzuko Umunna, has charged Enugu State Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi to set up a judicial commission of inquiry to unravel the circumstances surrounding the killing of unarmed Igbo youths in the state by suspected security agents or face them in court.

‘Persons suspected to be state security officials allegedly opened fire on unarmed youths who were having physical exercise training in Emene and massacred them in cold blood on August 23, 2020.

‘Represented by its counsel, Edwin Anikwem, the group said the unprovoked attack and murder of innocent and unarmed indigenes of Enugu caused unrest within Enugu and environs, as the citizens live in fear...

‘Meanwhile, Good Conscience Forum (GCF) says the call by the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, on his members to attack security operatives is a “significant threat to peace and tranquility in Nigeria”. Kanu had reportedly told IPOB to retaliate further killing of its members by security operatives.

‘The group, in a statement signed by its National President, Dr. Edwin Ogbu, at the weekend, urged relevant authorities to take proactive action to avoid a breakdown in law and order.

‘Department of State Services (DSS) had said that two of its operatives were killed penultimate Sunday in a clash with IPOB members in Enugu State.

“The GCF is in receipt of the call by the leader of IPOB for its members to attack security operatives in South East Nigeria.

“We consequently condemn the call by Kanu in very strong terms, as Nigeria is a sovereign country governed by extant laws in the conduct of its affairs. We also condemn the recent clash between security operatives and IPOB members in Enugu that led to the death of two security operatives and life threatening injuries to scores of other innocent people,” he stated.

‘The group called on South East governors, stakeholders and parents to caution their children not to allow anyone to be recruited by IPOB.

“We urge members of the general public to assist security agencies in Nigeria by providing credible information that would lead to the arrest and subsequent prosecution of IPOB members for the threat to human lives and the unity of the country,” he added, calling on the government to probe the clash between IPOB and security operatives in Enugu that led to the loss of lives.⁹²

9.3.11 The 2020 DFAT country information report on Nigeria stated:

⁹¹ PM News, [‘Genesis of the bloody IPOB – Police, DSS clash in Enugu’](#) 24 August 2020

⁹² The Guardian, [‘Nzuko Umunna may sue Ugwuanyi over killing of Igbo youths’](#), 31 August 2020

'While the clampdown [Operation Python Dance] by security forces appeared to largely curtail IPOB's public activities, November 2020 saw a new outbreak of open conflict in the southeast of the country. Rivers state Governor Nyesom Wike has reportedly 'declared war' on the group following an attack on security forces which killed six soldiers and four police officers.'⁹³

- 9.3.12 The 2020 DFAT country information report Nigeria commented: 'The Special Rapporteur's report ... noted reports of extrajudicial killings by state forces in relation to other groups, including ... IPOB ... the latter primarily in the context of demonstrations.'⁹⁴

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9.4 Arrest and detention

- 9.4.1 Amnesty International in their 2016 report stated:

'The authorities initially allowed IPOB rallies to take place, but from September 2015 onwards the authorities have claimed that IPOB is a threat to the security of Nigeria, despite the fact that the IPOB protests and gatherings documented by Amnesty International were largely non-violent. Since the IPOB leader and Radio Biafra director Nnamdi Kanu was arrested on 14 October 2015, the meetings and demonstrations calling for his release have increased and so have the violations committed by the military.'

'The security forces have arrested hundreds pro-Biafra activists. In addition, DSS [Department of State Security,] has arrested eight IPOB coordinators; some at IPOB events and others at their homes. While some have been released, many others were charged with treason, which carries the death penalty under Nigeria law. Amnesty International was not able to confirm the exact number of people who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained in connection with the Biafra independence campaign in various parts of southeast Nigeria.

'Many of the people arrested after IPOB events have told Amnesty International that they were beaten or subjected to other forms of ill-treatment. Some were tortured in detention. In addition, there is a consistent pattern of the security forces denying injured victims medical treatment.'⁹⁵

- 9.4.2 The EASO Targeting of individuals report of November 2018 citing media news sources stated: 'On 18-19 May 2017, a group of women supporters of the IPOB reported being harassed, stripped and arrested by the Nigerian Army, during a rally in Abiriba, Abia State.'⁹⁶
- 9.4.3 Amnesty International reported that in May 2017 'a high court ordered the SSS [State Security Service] to release Bright Chimezie, a member of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Instead, the SSS included his name in another case. Bright Chimezie had not been brought to court by the end of

⁹³ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.49, 3.50, 3.52), updated 3 December 2020

⁹⁴ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 4.3), updated 3 December 2020

⁹⁵ AI, '[Nigeria: Bullets were raining everywhere](#)', (p5), 24 November 2016

⁹⁶ EASO, '[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)' (page 83), November 2018

the year [2017]; the SSS had held him in incommunicado detention for more than one year'.⁹⁷

9.4.4 The Nigerian newspaper Punch reported on its website in January 2018 that:

'The Nigerian Army said on Thursday that its troops on Operation Mesa have arrested 27 members of the Indigenous People of Biafra and recovered an AK-47 rifle from one of them, Oliver Onyebunachi, in Imo State.

'According to the military, the IPOB members, who were 23 men and four women, were apprehended by troops of 144 Battalion, 82 Division, on October 1 [2017].

'The army noted that the IPOB members had a spiritual leader, Pa Michael Madumere, a 56-year-old, who hailed from the Ideator South Local Government Area of Imo State.'⁹⁸

9.4.5 The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported in August 2018 that:

'A high court sitting in Owerri on Friday granted the unconditional release of 114 women alleged to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group.

'The women who were remanded on the orders of a magistrate's court in Owerri were arrested on Friday August 17 [2018] by the police for demanding to know the whereabouts of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. They were also held for unlawful assembly.

'NAN reports that the bail application filed by the lead counsel to the women, Ejiofor Uche was not opposed by the police.

'Theaddus Oke, prosecuting for the police, told NAN correspondent that the case had been referred to the state Ministry of Justice for advice.

'He said that the police had no say in whatever decision that was taken by the court.

'NAN recalls that the arrests sparked off widespread condemnation by residents of the state and sympathisers of IPOB.'⁹⁹

9.4.6 NAN also reported in November 2018 that:

'The Police said they would charge 33 members of the banned Indigenous People (IPOB) of Biafra with terrorism after they allegedly killed an inspector and set ablaze a police patrol vehicle.

'The men, whose identities were unveiled Sunday, were arrested in Nnewi, Anambra state, along with some insignias of IPOB and eight motorcycles.

'The police said they may also be charged with murder, attempted murder, rioting and malicious damage, upon the completion of their investigation.'¹⁰⁰

9.4.7 The EASO report also noted that 'Lifos [the COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency - Migrationsverket] analyses that "the vulnerability of

⁹⁷ AI, [Nigeria 2017/2018](#), February 2018

⁹⁸ Punch, '[Army arrests 27 IPOB members](#)', 4 October 2019

⁹⁹ NAN, '[Court frees 114 women demanding IPOB leaders Kanu whereabouts](#)', 24 August 2018

¹⁰⁰ NAN, '[Police to charge arrested IPOB members with terrorism](#)', 25 November 2018

arrested persons suspected of IPOB affiliation may have been enhanced following the government's decision to brand IPOB a terror organisation".¹⁰¹

9.4.8 Human Rights Watch in their World Report 2019, Nigeria: Events of 2018 stated: 'On August 17, 112 women were arrested and prosecuted in Owerri, Imo State, for protesting the disappearance of IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu. They were discharged and released by a court six days later.'¹⁰²

9.4.9 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRBC) response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated:

'According to sources, 51 people suspected of being IPOB members, were arrested in December 2018 as they "were reportedly setting for [a] Judaism service within the premises of the country home of the leader of [IPOB] Mazi Nnamdi Kanu" in Unuhia... or during a procession through the streets which started in the Afaraukwu community from which Kanu hails... Sources indicate they were demonstrating for an independent Jewish State ... and that they were arrested for "being in possession" of different emblems of the IPOB... Sources state they were arraigned at magistrate court for terrorism and treason but the court decided it lacked jurisdiction to hear the case and ordered the detainees into custody while the case is transferred... Counsel for the defendants was quoted as saying the prosecution's decision to arraign the respondents at a court lacking jurisdiction was illegal and unconstitutional, citing similar Supreme Court decisions... According to the Guardian, the detainees were granted bail on 8 January 2019....'¹⁰³

9.4.10 Amnesty International's Human Rights review of 2019 stated: 'Security forces have arbitrarily arrested at least 200 and killed at least 10 members and supporters of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) at different times during the year [2019].'¹⁰⁴

9.4.11 PM News, a Lagos based news outlet, reported in May 2019 that 140 members of IPOB were arrested in Nsukka, Enugu state. The arrests were confirmed by the Police public relations officer (PPRO). The group were arrested for organising an unlawful procession, displaying proscribed items and chanting inciting songs. The PPRO said that the suspects would be later be charged to court¹⁰⁵.

9.4.12 Reporting on the same incident, the IRBC response of June 2019, based on a range of sources, stated:

'A representative of the Enugu Police was quoted, by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), a state-run news agency (NAN n.d.), as stating that 140 IPOB members were arrested for "engaging in unlawful procession and display of prohibited items" in the Nsukka region of Enugu State on 22 May 2019 (NAN 23 May 2019). In contrast, the International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law (Intersociety), a Nigerian civil society and human rights group, as quoted in the *Sun*, stated that the 140 individuals were arrested at a military and police checkpoint while going to a funeral,

¹⁰¹ EASO, '[Nigeria: Targeting of individuals](#)' (page 84), November 2018

¹⁰² HRW, '[World Report 2019, Nigeria: Events of 2018](#)', 17 January 2019

¹⁰³ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

¹⁰⁴ Amnesty International, '[Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 - Nigeria](#)', 8 April 2020

¹⁰⁵ PM News, '[Police arrest 140 members of Biafra group in Nsukka](#)', 23 May 2019

"tortured," then arraigned in court on 23 May, where the court decided it does not have jurisdiction to hear the case and ordered them to prison (*The Sun* 6 June 2019). The same source further states that the detainees have not received a trial date as of two weeks after their arraignment (*The Sun* 6 June 2019). Similarly, the South-East Based Coalition of Human Rights & Democracy Organisations (SBCHROs), "a coalition of 22 rights and democracy groups operating in the Southeast part of Eastern Nigeria," quoted in News Express, a Nigerian online newspaper (News Express n.d.), indicates "Biafra insignias" including "flags and bangles" were found by the "Enugu State Joint Security Patrol teams" on some of the 140 people going to a funeral (News Express 26 May 2019). The same source indicates that all 140 individuals were arrested and charged with terrorism, and were sent to prison by the magistrate court until their case can be heard at the High Court (News Express 26 May 2019).¹⁰⁶

9.4.13 A 24 December 2019 report on the Nigerian news website Today.ng stated:

'Four persons, suspected to be members of the banned Indigenous People of Biafra have been arrested in Aba Market by Nigerian soldiers for selling a banned Biafran newspaper.

'The men were picked up under the Nigerian Army "Exercise Atilogwu Udo 1", now ongoing in the South eastern states and Cross River.

'Col. Aliyu Yusuf, Deputy Director, Public Relations of 82 Division of the Nigerian Army said on Tuesday in Enugu, the four vendors were arrested by troops of sector 2 in Abia on Nov. 19.

'He gave the names of the vendors as Sunday Elom, Martins Ogwuchukwu, Chineme Obiechifula and Innocent Mike.

'Yusuf did not indicate the name of the newspaper.

'But he said they have been handed over to the appropriate security agency for further action.'¹⁰⁷

9.4.14 The 2020 DFAT country information report Nigeria stated:

'In her September 2019 post-visit report, the UN Special Rapporteur ... noted a number of arrested IPOB members had allegedly been held incommunicado before being detained without charges; and there had not been any convictions of IPOB members since 2015 due to the discontinuance or dismissal of charges...¹⁰⁸

9.4.15 DFAT assessed that '... as members of a proscribed organisation, IPOB members face a risk of arrest that is likely to be higher for those in leadership positions.'¹⁰⁹

9.4.16 Africa Confidential also noted in the article of April 2021:

'In 28 March [2021], police claimed they had arrested 16 people on suspicion of being behind the killing of at least 34 security agents in the south-east. According to the police, the suspects confessed to being members of IPOB

¹⁰⁶ IRBC, '[Nigeria: The Indigenous People of Biafra \(IPOB\)...](#)', 28 June 2019

¹⁰⁷ Today.ng, '[IPOB members arrested for selling Biafra newspaper](#)', 24 December 2019

¹⁰⁸ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.49, 3.50, 3.52), updated 3 December 2020

¹⁰⁹ DFAT, '[Country information report: Nigeria](#)' (section 3.49, 3.50, 3.52), updated 3 December 2020

and the ESN. But security experts say the routine use of torture to extract confessions means such claims should be treated with scepticism.

‘Even if the claims are accurate, the arrest of a few ESN fighters will not stop what is a growing guerrilla campaign and clandestine collaboration between armed groups in the region and beyond. IPOB has been trying to expand its area of operations towards the Niger Delta, where it clashed with security forces last year.

‘IPOB created the ESN to oppose the practice of open grazing by herders in the region. The historic clashes between settled farmers and nomadic herders in the northern and middle belt states are spreading to the south-east and south-west, partly because of the shortage of grazing land...

‘Much of IPOB's support reflects communal solidarity on security rather than an upswing in favour of an independent state of Biafra. It tries to play on religious and regional loyalties and what it considers to be politically-biased security forces.’¹¹⁰

9.4.17 Premium Times reported on 29th June 2021:

‘The lead counsel to the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Ifeanyi Ejiofor, has said the arrest and arraignment of Nnamdi Kanu earlier Tuesday was without his knowledge.

“We have just confirmed through a correspondence from the Federal High Court Abuja about the arrest and the extradition of my Client- Mazi Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigerian State,” Mr Ejiofor said in a statement on Tuesday evening.

“He was brought before the Federal High Court No 2 Abuja today on an Eleven count charge, though without our knowledge,” the attorney added.

‘He said regardless of the offences or charge against his client, he is still presumed innocent of the allegation under the law.

‘Mr Kanu, who is being prosecuted on charges of treasonable felony, was re-arrested and returned to Nigeria on Sunday, the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, said earlier

‘According to the AGF, the IPOB leader was arrested through “collaborative efforts of Nigerian intelligence and security services.”

‘Although, Mr Kanu is believed to have fled to the United Kingdom, the AGF did not give the details of the exact place of his arrest and the diplomatic collaborations the operation must have involved...’¹¹¹

9.4.18 Sahara Reporters in a December 2021 article reported that IPOB had disclosed a list of the names of some people is said were being illegally detained by the state following arrests within the preceding seven months¹¹².

9.4.19 In January 2022 Premium Times reported the following with regard the arrest and trial of Mr Kanu:

¹¹⁰ Africa Confidential, [‘States rethink security’](#), 15 April 2021

¹¹¹ Premium Times, [‘IPOB's lawyer speaks on Nnamdi Kanu's arrest’](#), 29 June 2021

¹¹² Sahara Reporters, [‘IPOB Lists Names Of Young Innocent Men Allegedly...’](#), 30 December 2021

'The federal government filed an amended 15-count charge against him on Monday.

'Mr Kanu was accused of various offences, including treasonable felony and terrorism, offences he allegedly committed in the course of his separatist campaigns.

'He was initially scheduled to be re-arraigned before the court on Tuesday, but the judge, Binta Nyako, had to adjourn the case after the defence team complained about the late service of the amended charges on them.

'Mr Kanu pleaded not guilty to all 15 counts read to him on Wednesday.'¹¹³

9.4.20 The BBC monitoring timeline for IPOB updated to 23 January 2022 included the following:

'26 July 2021 - Some members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) are arrested by the police at the Federal High Court in Abuja where Nnamdi Kanu is standing trial. They were chanting slogans in support of Nnamdi Kanu, demanding his freedom...

'2 August 2021 - Police in Imo State arrest Boniface Okeke, an alleged financier of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its militant wing Eastern Security Network (ESN). At least 25 other people suspected to be members of IPOB are also arrested, including seven women. The police say the suspects are being held in connection with terrorism and attacks on security agencies and private individuals where several police stations were burnt down and a number of police officers killed.

'8 August 2021 - Police in Imo State arrest 29 suspected members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), for allegedly planning to attack the state ahead of the sit-at-home order by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, on 9 August 2021

'29 October 2021 - Police in Anambra State say they have arrested a suspected top commander of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)/Eastern Security Network (ESN), Udebuan Chubueze. According to police, a search was conducted in his houses at Ekwulobia and Nnewi where four AK-47, two automatic pump-action and ammunition were recovered. The suspect allegedly confesses to having led several attacks on police facilities, and that he was part of the group responsible for the killing of some policemen and personnel of the Nigerian navy.

'25 December 2021 - The Nigerian army in conjunction with other security agencies arrest Godwin Nnamdi, a suspected leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Eastern Security Network (ESN) in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

'17 January 2022 - The Federal Government of Nigeria files fresh terrorism charges against the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu. In the amended process it filed before the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, the government increased the counts in the initial charge it preferred against him. Kanu, who has been in detention since his alleged abduction from Kenya and repatriation to Nigeria, faced a seven-count

¹¹³ Premium Times, '[Kanu pleads not guilty to fresh charges...](#)', 19 January 2022

reasonable felony charge, will now enter his fresh plea to 15 amended charges...

'19 January 2022 - The leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu pleads not guilty to the fresh amended 15-count charge of treasonable felony filed against him by the federal government. The court adjourns till 16 February 2022 to hear the pending application.¹¹⁴

'16 February 2022 - The Federal High Court in Abuja fixes 8 April 2022 for ruling on a preliminary objection filed by Nnamdi Kanu, challenging the validity of the 15 amended charges filed against him by the federal government.¹¹⁵

9.4.21 With regard the arrest of Mr Kanu and comments made by his lawyers with regard his treatment BBC monitoring reported:

'26 July 2021 - The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) reacts to the failure of the Department of State Services (DSS) to produce its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, in court for the resumption of his trial. In a statement, IPOB spokesperson Emma Powerful says: "We are no longer comfortable with this development. We have enough grounds to suspect foul play. With the failure of DSS to produce our leader in court today without any cogent reason and coupled with the torture meted out to him since his abduction in Kenya, we are worried about the safety of our leader. The failure of DSS to produce our leader in court today is confirming our fear over the uncertainty concerning his health"

'7 September 2021 - Files a lawsuit against the Federal Government of Nigeria at the Abia State High Court, over what he describes as violations of his human rights. The federal government, Nigeria army, the Department of State Service (DSS), and the Nigerian police are respondents in the suit. He is urging the Abia State High Court to compel the respondents to pay him 5bn naira in damages as monetary compensation for the "physical, mental, emotional, psychological and other damages" suffered as a result of the alleged infringements on his fundamental rights.

'10 November 2021 - The Federal High Court in Abuja adjourns his trial to 19 January 2022. The adjournment comes after his team of lawyers, staged a walk out over the refusal of operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) to allow some of them access into the courtroom. Kanu decried the refusal of security agents to allow some members of his legal team, especially his lawyer from the US, Bruce Fein, to enter the courtroom

'6 December 2021 - Alleges that he is being denied food in the facility of the Department of State Service (DSS). In a statement, his brother Prince Kanu says: "Just visited the Alpha Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, at the Department of State Security Services Abuja. During my interaction with him, he told me that he has been denied food since yesterday. As if that wasn't enough, DSS had also denied him his medical report after taking his blood for more than 21 times. They have continuously disobeyed all the court orders"

¹¹⁴ BBC Monitoring, [IPOB Timeline](#), updated 23 January 2022, subscription only

¹¹⁵ BBC Monitoring, ['Biography - Nnamdi Kanu'](#), updated 21 February 2022, subscription only

‘17 January 2022 - The Federal Government of Nigeria amends the charges against him, raising the counts from seven to 15 ahead of the resumed hearing on 18 January 2022. His lawyer, Ifeanyi Ejiogor describes the new charges as a joke. In a statement, he says: "This is indeed a joke taken too far as the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is now scouting for an opportunity to truncate tomorrow's proceeding, knowing fully well that the smokescreen charge is dead on arrival. We wish to categorically point out with dismay, that this further amended charge is the worst kind of abuse of legal process that we have encountered in the history of legal practice - either in Nigeria or anywhere in the world".

‘19 January 2022 - The High Court in Abia State orders the federal government to pay the 1bn naira to the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, as compensation over the invasion of his father's house on 10 September 2017 by the military. Kanu's lawyer, Aloy Ejimakor, says in a tweet: "Mazi Nnamdi Kanu wins as Abia High Court rules that the federal government violated his fundamental rights. Orders the federal government to pay 1bn naira to him and issue a letter of apology to him."¹¹⁶

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9.5 Prosecutions and convictions

9.5.1 Agnes Callamard, United Nations Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions stated in a September 2019 report in a section titled ‘Arbitrary Killings of Members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)’ that:

‘ a number of those arrested are allegedly held incommunicado before being detained without charges. When charges are finally made, they include membership to a terrorist organisation, unlawful gathering and in some cases kidnapping.

‘It is alleged that not a single conviction against IPOB members has been secured since 2015, due to discontinuance or dismissal of charges. None of the killings of IPOB members have been investigated.’¹¹⁷

9.5.2 There is no further information about the outcome of arrests in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

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Section 10 updated: 16 March 2022

10. Separatist groups outside of Nigeria

10.1 Nigerian diaspora

10.1.1 The UK Office for National Statistics published figures to June 2021 estimates that 312,000 people (with a confidence interval (CI) of 31,000) that were born in Nigeria live in the UK. Additionally, the figures also show that

¹¹⁶ BBC Monitoring, [IPOB Timeline](#), updated 23 January 2022, subscription only

¹¹⁷ OHCHR, [‘End of visit statement of the Special Rapporteur...’](#) (para 49-50), 2 September 2019

there are estimated to be 178,000 (CI 23,000) people with Nigerian citizenship living in the UK¹¹⁸.

- 10.1.2 Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation UK (NIDO) have headquarters in London and Manchester. Their website stated that their aim is: 'to bring Nigerians living in the United Kingdom together and to identify those willing to offer their skills (Education, Information Technology, Health, Economic, science, Administration, Law, Political and Corporate Governance, Management etc.) to assist Nigeria's national development.'¹¹⁹ There is no indication from the sources consulted that this group have connections to IPOB.
- 10.1.3 The Nigerian in Diaspora monitoring group (NDMG) were reported to have called for Nigerians living abroad to distance themselves from Nnamdi Kanu and IPOB¹²⁰. At a press conference held in London in August 2019 a statement was made by the group's president which was critical of Kanu and IPOB members and their activities outside of Nigeria¹²¹. The president of the group condemned in particular the attack of a member of the National Assembly in Germany by reportedly members of IPOB^{122 123}.

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Official – sensitive: Start of section

10.2

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¹¹⁸ OfNS, '[Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality](#)', 25 November 2021

¹¹⁹ NIDO, '[About us](#)', undated

¹²⁰ Vanguard, '[Group to Nigerians in diaspora: Be wary of Kanu](#)', 29 August 2019

¹²¹ Vanguard, '[Group to Nigerians in diaspora: Be wary of Kanu](#)', 29 August 2019

¹²² Vanguard, '[Group to Nigerians in diaspora: Be wary of Kanu](#)', 29 August 2019

¹²³ Premium Times, '[Ekweremadu dragged, assaulted in Germany](#)', 17 August 2019

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The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: End of section

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10.3 Size and composition of separatist groups in the diaspora

10.3.1 CPIT was unable to find information about the number, size, aims and activities of pro-‘Biafran’ groups in the UK in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

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10.4 Sur place activities of separatist groups

10.4.1 April 2018 footage available on YouTube shows a group protesting in London where they are calling for a referendum on ‘Biafra’¹²⁴.

10.4.2 Premium Times reported on 17 August 2019 that: ‘Nigeria’s former [Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu](#), was on Saturday physically attacked by a mob while attending a cultural event in Germany. Mr Ekweremadu, who confirmed the attack in a statement, said the attackers were members of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB)...’¹²⁵

10.4.3 Premium Times an Abuja based Nigerian media organisation reported on its website on 6 December 2019 that IPOB had claimed responsibility for an attack on Nigeria’s transport minister, Rotimi Amaechi in Madrid by the Spanish branch of the group following an order by Nnamdi Kanu to “attack Nigerian leaders anywhere they are seen”.¹²⁶

10.4.4 Sahara Reporters in a June 2021 article reported ‘Nigerians of Igbo extraction residing in the United Kingdom have barricaded the Parliament House in London to protest against the alleged genocide in the South East region.

‘In a video shared on Friday morning, the Biafra protesters demanded an end to the killing of Igbo youths in Nigeria...

‘In the protest in London, protesters are seen with Biafra flags, polo shirts and wrist bands shouting ‘stop killing our children, stop the genocide.’¹²⁷

10.4.5 The Nigerian newspaper Punch reported on its website in September 2021: ‘Scores of female members of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra based in London have begun a three-day “mega rally” in the United Kingdom.

‘The women are calling for the release of the embattled IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, from the custody of the Department of State Service, according to a video posted by a Twitter user, @Emekannaoma.’¹²⁸

10.4.6 There is no further information in the sources consulted of recent recorded activities in the UK by IPOB or other groups supporting the creation of a ‘Biafran’ state (see [Bibliography](#)).

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¹²⁴ YouTube, ‘[Biafra Protest: Group Protests In London, Call For Referendum](#)’, 19 April 2018

¹²⁵ Premium Times, ‘[Ekweremadu dragged, assaulted in Germany](#)’, 17 August 2019

¹²⁶ Premium Times, ‘[IPOB claims responsibility for attack on Amaechi in Spain](#)’, 6 December 2019

¹²⁷ Sahara Reporters, ‘[Biafra Agitators Storm UK Parliament, London To Protest Against Alleged Genocide In South-East](#)’, 11 June 2021

¹²⁸ Punch, ‘[IPOB women protest in London, demand Kanu’s release](#)’, 30 September 2021

10.5 Monitoring of 'Biafra' groups in Nigeria and the UK

10.5.1 The Nigerian Nationality Security Agencies Act established the Nigerian intelligence services responsible detecting and preventing crimes against the state inside and outside of Nigeria (see [Country Policy and Information Note: Nigeria – Actors of Protection](#)). There is, however, no information in the sources consulted of the capability, presence and activities of the intelligence services in the UK (see [Bibliography](#)).

10.5.2 A Vanguard article from September 2016 reported on the alleged listing of a number of IPOB members in Nigeria and the diaspora as wanted by the Department of State Services (DSS) in Nigeria¹²⁹. The same allegations appeared in an article in the Nigerian news website Sun News online¹³⁰ however no further details regarding these allegations were found in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).

10.5.3 Premium Times, a Nigerian news outlet, stated in August 2017:

'President Muhammadu Buhari has been urged to prevail on the military to halt its ongoing monitoring of Nigerians on the Internet.

'The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, SERAP, was joined by another civic group, Concerned Nigerians, in a recent demand for the president to respect the freedom of Nigerians on all social media platforms...

'The admonition followed an announcement by Defence Headquarters that citizens are being monitored for "hate speech, anti-government and anti-security information" on social media.

'The defence spokesperson, John Enenche, who hinted at the operation in an interview with Channels Television this week did not elaborate on the type of speeches that military deemed as constituting "hate" or "anti-government."... But the administration's stance on did not go down well with many Nigerians, and rights groups have roundly criticised any attempts to curb freedom of expression.'¹³¹

10.5.4 Freedom House annual report on political rights and civil liberties in 2020 (Freedom in the World 2021) stated:

'Nigerians are generally free to engage in discussions on politics and other topics, though expression of critical views on political leaders or sensitive subjects like the military, religion, and ethnicity occasionally leads to arrests or violent reprisals.

'By 2018, the National Assembly passed a Digital Rights and Freedom Bill, which would expand freedom of expression online by regulating government surveillance and prohibiting the suspension of internet services [at the time of writing the bill had not become law in the sources consulted – see [Bibliography](#)]. The bill was sent to the president in 2019, but Buhari declined to sign it, stating that it covered too many technical subjects and did not address them extensively. A revised bill was under legislative consideration at the end of 2020.

¹²⁹ Vanguard, '[DSS list declaring our members wanted, shameful...](#)', 8 September 2016

¹³⁰ Sun News Online, '[Biafra: Our members on DSS wanted list - IPOB](#)', 9 September 2016

¹³¹ Premium Times, '[Stop military from tracking Nigerians groups tell Buhari](#)', 27 August 2017

‘Legislators considered bills on hate speech and on the dissemination of purportedly false statements in 2020. The false-statements bill would impose fines, a one-year prison sentence, or both against offenders, while the hate-speech bill would allow the death penalty for speech that is linked to the death of another person. NGOs including Amnesty International and the Nigerian Union of Journalists harshly criticized the false-statements bill in front of the Senate judiciary committee in March. Both bills remained under consideration at year’s end.’¹³²

10.5.5 The 2020 DFAT country information report on Nigeria stated: ‘Internet service providers sometimes block websites at the NCC’s [The Nigerian Communications Commission] request, particularly websites advocating Biafran independence.’¹³³

10.5.6 The BBC reported on 5 June 2021:

‘Nigeria will prosecute anyone found to have breached the country’s ban on the social media firm Twitter, a government spokesperson has told the BBC.

‘The government announced on Friday it was suspending Twitter’s operations in the country.

‘Mobile phone networks blocked access after being ordered to do so, but some users are getting around the ban.

‘The move comes after Twitter deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari for breaching the site’s rules.

‘Some users saw his post, which referred to Nigeria’s civil war four decades ago, as a veiled threat towards a secessionist movement in the south-east of the country

‘His government said on Saturday the tweet’s removal was “disappointing”, but not the only reason for the “temporary” suspension.’¹³⁴

10.5.7 Freedom House’s Freedom on the Net 2021, covering events in Nigeria between June 2020 and May 2021, based on a number of sources, observed:

‘In December 2020, an investigation by the Citizen Lab identified the Defence Intelligence Agency, Nigeria’s primary military intelligence agency, as a likely customer of the surveillance company Circles. The company—which is affiliated with the private Israeli firm NSO Group, known for its Pegasus spyware—provides services that allows customers to monitor calls, texts, and cell phone geolocation by exploiting weaknesses in mobile telecommunications infrastructure... Previously, a June 2016 Premium Times investigation found that politicians in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States had purchased spyware from Circles...

‘The Nigerian government blocked online content during the coverage period..

‘On June 5, 2021, after the coverage period, the Nigerian government ordered Twitter blocked on most major networks. Days earlier, the platform

¹³² Freedom House, [Freedom in the world 2021: Nigeria](#), 3 March 2021

¹³³ DFAT, ‘[Country information report: Nigeria](#)’ (section 3.70), updated 3 December 2020

¹³⁴ BBC News, ‘[Nigeria’s Twitter ban: Government orders prosecution of violators](#)’, 5 June 2021

had deleted a post from Buhari's account and suspended the account for 12 hours, stating that Buhari's post violated rules on abusive behavior; the post seemed to threaten violence against Biafran secessionists... The government subsequently threatened to prosecute Nigerians accessing Twitter through circumvention tools and ordered media organizations to stop using the platform...

'Earlier, in November 2017, it was revealed that service providers blocked 21 websites, including the popular Naij.com online news outlet, at the request of the NCC... Though the blocking order lacked transparency, many of the blocked sites promoted the independence of Biafra, the region that attempted to secede from Nigeria in 1967 and fought against the federal government in the 1967–70 Biafran War. Although access to Naij.com was eventually restored, at least nine websites remained inaccessible, but the others were accessible as of 2021.'¹³⁵

10.5.8 The FH report also noted, with regard to Nigeria and not on activities outside of the country, that

'The persistent arrests of users for their online activities under the 2015 Cybercrime Act has resulted in growing self-censorship, particularly among professional journalists who publish content online... This self-censorship worsened after recent reports that revealed the extent of the Nigerian security services' surveillance and interception powers. Security forces had access to journalists' private communications, and sometimes used that information to facilitate arrests...'¹³⁶

10.5.9 The FH report also noted, in the context of Nigeria not outside of the country:

'In October 2019, a Nigerian law enforcement agency disclosed that Nigerian security forces use software from Cellebrite and AccessDataGroup, two companies that provide technology to extract and forensically search data from electronic devices, including devices protected by strong encryption. Forensic search technology was reportedly used to search over 20 computers and phones seized from the Daily Trust when the paper's editors were arrested in January 2019 for their reporting on military operations in the northeast... Earlier news reports revealed government contracts with the Italian surveillance firm Hacking Team,... as well as the presence of a command-and-control server located within Nigeria...

'The government's intent to enhance its surveillance capabilities is reflected in federal budget allocations. Tens of millions of dollars have been set aside since 2018 for various surveillance projects... that apparently fall under the purview of the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and Department of State Security (DSS). These include tools for social media monitoring, and drones and other mobile surveillance tools... apparently capable of intercepting mobile phone traffic and collecting location data of mobile phone users... The 2021 Executive Budget Proposal once again included funding for surveillance equipment...

'Many online journalists have long suspected that they are being surveilled by the state. In February 2020, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

¹³⁵ FH, '[Freedom on the Net 2021](#)' (Nigeria), 21 September 2021

¹³⁶ FH, '[Freedom on the Net 2021](#)' (Nigeria), 21 September 2021

reported on the use of cell phone data by Nigerian security forces to arrest investigative journalists (see C6). Police used phone records to identify journalists' contacts, detained those contacts, and then pressured those individuals to gain access to journalists and arrest them...¹³⁷

10.5.10 The Guardian reported on the 13 January 2022:

'Nigeria has lifted [a ban on Twitter](#), restoring access to millions of users, seven months after it clamped down on the social media site in a row over Twitter's decision to delete a post by the president.

'The government said the company had agreed to its conditions on the management of unlawful content, to registering its operations in Nigeria and to a new tax arrangement.

“The FGN [federal government of Nigeria] lifts the suspension of the Twitter operations in Nigeria from midnight of 13 January 2022,” said a statement from Kashifu Inuwa Abdullahi, the director-general of Nigeria's National Information Technology Development Agency.¹³⁸

10.5.11 No further information was found in the sources consulted of the Nigerian authorities monitoring the online or physical activities of the diaspora in the UK (see [Bibliography](#)).

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¹³⁷ FH, “[Freedom on the Net 2021](#)” (Nigeria), 21 September 2021

¹³⁸ The Guardian, “[Nigeria lifts Twitter ban seven months after site deleted...](#)”, 13 January 2022

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- 'Biafra': background
 - 'Biafra' regions
 - 'Biafra' war and famine
- The Political landscape
 - Elections 2019 /Ruling party
 - Southeast/Igbo participation in political process
- Security situation in South-east Nigeria
- Separatist Groups
 - IPOB
 - MASSOB
 - Other separatist groups
 - Separatist/supporters actions
- State treatment of separatist groups
 - Legal context
 - Discrimination and harassment
 - Meetings and demonstrations
 - Arrest and detention

Prosecutions and convictions

- Treatment in detention
- Separatist groups outside of Nigeria
 - Size and composition of separatist groups in the Diaspora
 - Sur place activities of separatist groups
 - Monitoring by Nigerian Government in the UK
 - Treatment of returns
- Freedom of movement (covered by IFA CPIN)

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **17 March 2022**

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use only.

Official – sensitive: End of section

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment.

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