

SEPARATIST AGITATIONS AND HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA, 2021-2023

Omiunu, Funmilayo I.¹ & Ezirim, Gerald Ekene²

¹Department of Political Science, Gregory University, Uturu

²Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria
o.funmi@gregoryuniversityuturu.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigeria's socio-political landscape has been marked by widespread violent conflicts and ethnic tensions, with the South-East region being a hotspot for separatist agitations. This study examined separatist agitations and human security in south-east Nigeria from 2021 to 2023. Specifically, the study aimed at ascertaining how the activities of the IPOB separatist group has undermined personal livelihood in Southeast Nigeria from 2021 to 2023. The study employed an ex-post facto research design and mixed methods of data collection, relying on qualitative descriptive analysis. Primary data were generated through unstructured interviews and personal observations. Secondary data were collected from documentary sources. This study adopted the human security theory as its theoretical framework. The findings indicate that the IPOB separatist group's activities, notably their quest for the release of Nnamdi Kanu, have adversely affected personal livelihoods in southeast Nigeria. Moreover, persistent clashes between the Eastern Security Network and state security forces, including the police and Nigerian Army, have contributed to a surge in extrajudicial killings in the region. Based on these findings, this study recommends urgent dialogue among stakeholders, including the Nigerian government, community leaders, and IPOB representatives, to address grievances and seek peaceful resolutions. In light of the profound mistrust between the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and state security forces, it is imperative to empower local communities to spearhead conflict-resolution initiatives and address underlying grievances.

Keywords: Separatist Agitations, Human security, personal livelihood, IPOB, ESN

Introduction

One of the most pressing social challenges in Nigeria, widely regarded as the most populous nation in Africa, is the pervasive occurrence of violent conflicts and aggression. These violent conflicts have become endemic in Nigeria, significantly shaping its national character. All regions and geopolitical zones in Nigeria have, at different times, experienced substantial losses of human and material resources due to ethnic group conflicts (Odoma, 2014). Separatist agitations remain a persistent and significant issue in Nigeria's political history, contributing to underdevelopment, economic stagnation, and hindered democratization due to factors such as colonization, loss of political independence, resource control struggles, and ethnic and religious discord. These forces, including colonialism, religion, ethnicity, and corruption, pose significant

threats to the personal security of citizens in many African countries, including Nigeria (Igwe, 2024).

The aspiration for an independent Igbo nation date back to Nigeria's early independence period, culminating in the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) after Odumegwu Ojukwu declared the former Eastern Region independent as the “Republic of Biafra.” Although Biafra was defeated, the ethno-religious and political issues that triggered the war were not addressed, exacerbating tensions and accusations of genocide against the Nigerian forces. This perceived marginalization continues to drive agitation in the Southeast, exemplified by the resurgence of secessionism by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), which was declared a terrorist organization by the Nigerian government on January 18, 2017 (Ugwu, 2022).

Established in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) emerged in response to the grievances of South-eastern Nigerians, with the primary objective of advocating for the secession and independence of Biafra. Kanu's repeated arrests and detentions intensified the group's radicalization, exemplified by actions such as the sit-at-home directive issued in August 2021 to demand his release. IPOB traces its roots to the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), which was founded in 1999 by Chief Ralph Uwazurike (Abba, Ani, Ayatse & Agullah, 2023).

This study focuses on 2021-2023 because it marks the most critical phase of IPOB's activities. Nnamdi Kanu's arrest and extradition in June 2021 triggered intensified protests, the strict enforcement of sit-at-home orders, and the rise of the Eastern Security Network, which escalated agitation into armed resistance. These years also recorded the heaviest socio-economic and livelihood disruptions, making the period analytically relevant for examining how separatist agitations undermine human security in Southeast Nigeria (Nwanike, 2022 and Adebajo, 2023). The selected period offers a sharper and more relevant basis for analyzing the research question, as it represents the phase when separatist agitations most severely intersected with human security challenges in the Southeast.

According to data from the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) as at 2023, the security situation in Nigeria's Southeast revealed a troubling shift (Gavin, 2023). Between 2012 and 2021, press reports consistently identified the Southeast as the country's safest region. However, the establishment of IPOB's armed wing, the Eastern Security Network in 2020, marked a sharp escalation in violence and casualties. Once celebrated as Nigeria's most peaceful region, the Southeast has now fallen to third place in the national security ranking, overtaken by the Southwest and South-South (Adebajo, 2023).

Reports from the Nigerian media have emphasized the severity of the situation, with over 287 reported deaths in the southeast between January and May 2022 alone (Human Rights Watch, 2023). In July 2021, IPOB's imposition of a weekly lockdown known as 'sit-at-home', which usually holds on Mondays further exacerbated these tensions (Nwanike, 2022). The lockdown was imposed by the group with the intention that Nnamdi Kanu, who has been arrested on treason and terrorism charges, would be released unconditionally. However, despite the IPOB's subsequent withdrawal of the directive in December 2021, factions within the group, led by

individuals like Simon Ekpa, based in Finland, continued to enforce the order, resulting in further disruptions and violence (Barnett, 2023).

Following the proscription of IPOB as a “terrorist organization” by a federal court order in 2017, which was later retracted in 2023 by the Global Terrorism Index (Busari, 2023), violent clashes between the separatist group and security forces intensified, resulting in significant casualties, predominantly among the IPOB members. The South-east agitations, first identified as the Orlu crisis, quickly turned the region into a flashpoint of clashes between security forces and ESN fighters. Nduba (2020) and Ojo (2023) all agree that the federal government's actions towards insecurity, particularly in the South Eastern area, have been incredibly inadequate in ensuring human security.

We appreciate the above scholarly inputs that have analysed the political consequences, economic implications, and security measures of these agitations. However, this study investigates separatist agitations and human security in southeast Nigeria from 2021-2023 with the specific aim of interrogating the research question: How do the activities of the IPOB separatist group in seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu undermine the personal livelihoods of citizens in southeast Nigeria from 2021 to 2023.

Literature Review

To effectively initiate this review, it is essential to clarify the concepts of separatist agitations and human security. Extensive efforts have been dedicated to analyzing the perspectives of other scholars to bolster the study's objectives. Thus, the study further thematically reviewed literature related to the IPOB separatist group's activities in seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu and personal livelihood in Southeast Nigeria.

▪ **Separatist agitation:**

The concept of separatist agitation refers to the condition in which an ethnic group endeavors or threatens to achieve separation from an existing state. This phenomenon is marked by a desire for self-determination and autonomy, often driven by feelings of marginalization, discrimination, and cultural or linguistic differences (Udeh, Edeh, Obiagu, Madu & Agwu, 2023). According to Onuoha and Okafor (2020), it occurs when individuals or groups, typically united by language, culture, or shared historical backgrounds, vigorously demand self-actualization or independence because of perceived political and economic exclusion, marginalization, and repression.

▪ **Human Security:**

Human Development Report of 1994 opine that Human security focuses on the protection of individuals' lives, livelihoods, and dignity from threats such as violence, food insecurity, and loss of employment. This study highlights the close connection between human security and personal livelihood, emphasizing that the ability to secure basic necessities and sustain one's means of living is directly influenced by a sense of safety and stability. Accordingly, Gierszewski (2018)

defines human security as an aspect of personal security that protects one's life, health, and well-being from threats such as violence, crime, and conflict.

▪ **Activities of IPOB separatist group and personal livelihood in South-east Nigeria**

In southeastern Nigeria, the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have become increasingly widespread, particularly in their efforts to secure the release of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu, which has significant implications for the region (Ekechukwu, Nwogu, Ugwukwu & Emerho, 2022). The establishment of the Eastern Security Network (forem) by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in 2020 heightened tensions within Nigeria, particularly in the Southeast region, as the government perceived it as an armed secessionist entity.

Nwangwu (2023) observed that the inception of the ESN marked a significant shift in the IPOB's separatist strategy, transitioning from a non-violent approach to an armed struggle. According to him, the ESN was formed to safeguard the South-East and South-South regions of Nigeria, particularly the erstwhile Eastern Region, from incidents of banditry and assaults by suspected armed Fulani herdsmen. However, Nkasi (2021) highlighted that following the launch of the ESN, there was a notable escalation in attacks against Nigerian security personnel by IPOB members; the Southeast experienced a 59 percent surge in attacks and a 344 percent increase in fatalities. In response, the government adopted its customary approach of combating violence with force, indiscriminately labeling individuals in the Southeast, whether affiliated with IPOB or not, with the same brush, despite the group's denial of such accusations.

Orjinmo (2021), Nwangwu (2023) and Ojo (2023) all assert that the apprehension and legal proceedings against key leaders of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), notably Nnamdi Kanu, on charges of treason and incitement, have profoundly disrupted the organization's leadership structure and operational capabilities. They argue that these arrests precipitated internal turmoil within both the organization and its armed wing, resulting in a series of setbacks. These setbacks, attributed to IPOB's activities, pose a threat not only to economic progress but also to various sectors of the economy, the South Eastern region, and the broader Nigerian nation.

The socio-economic repercussions of IPOB's endeavors, spanning protests, strikes, and civil disobedience campaigns, have been far-reaching in the southeastern region. These actions have disrupted commercial activities, obstructed transportation networks, and undermined economic productivity, leading to job losses and financial hardships among the local population. Moreover, the instability and uncertainty stemming from IPOB's agitation have deterred investment and impeded economic advancement in the region (Adisa & Gbadamosi, 2019).

Ekechukwu et al. (2022) and Owoeye, Ezeanya & Obiegbunam (2022) examined the impacts of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) activities, particularly the Monday sit-at-home order, aimed at securing the release of Nnamdi Kanu, and its effects on the political economy of Nigeria's South-east region. According to Owoeye et al. (2022), IPOB activities have negatively affected various socio-political and economic aspects of the South-East region, particularly in

commercial activities, market operations, transportation, the educational system, the banking sector, and government institutions. Ekechukwu *et al.* (2022) opined that IPOB's sit-at-home orders in the South-east have had significant adverse socio-economic consequences, including economic devastation, deterrence of foreign investments, heightened insecurity, increased unemployment, underdevelopment, decreased economic activities, declining education standards, and elevated mortality rates.

Similarly, Okoye (2021, para .5.) on *Vanguard* (Online) reported that:

... The prevailing situation of the shutdown of the Southeast every Monday continues to inflict collateral damage on the economy of the Southeast States. The hoi polloi, who eke their daily livelihoods by hawking sachet beverages, vegetables, fruits, and others, bear the brunt of the weekly shutdown of the Southeast. Since the commencement of the observation of the sit-at-home order on Mondays, a majority of Igbo people, whose survival depends on their daily earnings, have gone to bed with empty stomachs on countless nights because they had no money with which to buy food.

However, Udo (2022) argues that IPOB's initiation of the sit-at-home order was aimed at raising awareness and exerting pressure for the release of Nnamdi Kanu. Ezewudo, Ukwuoma & Uroko, (2022) also assert that the concept of a sit-at-home serves as a means to challenge the government's authority and demand an end to marginalization, underscoring the necessity for dialogue and a referendum to address these underlying issues. In fact, IPOB's clear objective is to restore the independent state of Biafra, which was suppressed during the 1967-1970 Biafra-Nigeria Civil War. Periodically, due to the power imbalance at the national level and the perceived underrepresentation of Igbo citizens compared to other major tribes, particularly the Hausa, these recurring conflicts and unrest have arisen in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the agitation for the release of Nnamdi Kanu and IPOB activities have been associated with broader issues such as corruption and marginalization in the region (Ugbudu, 2020). According to Okoye (2021), politicians of Igbo descent may exploit the IPOB's call for statehood in their bid for the presidential seat in Nigeria's general elections, as evidenced in the 2023 elections. Historically, the Igbo community has felt marginalized in national politics, with limited representation in key government positions and policymaking processes. This sense of exclusion fuels grievances and garners support for movements like IPOB, which advocates for increased autonomy and recognition of Igbo interests.

The IPOB separatist group's activities aimed at securing the release of Nnamdi Kanu have been associated with political instability. Sahara reporters reported that the release of Nnamdi Kanu was stalled by the South-east politics of Imo. They claimed to Tinubu that his release might affect the election in Imo which was scheduled for November 11, 2023 (Sahara Reporters, 2023). Put another way, there were concerns raised about the potential release of Kanu, with apprehensions that it could lead to political unrest. Supporting these assertions, Ikporukpo and Rufus (2023) contend that the activities of the IPOB have had a considerable impact on the security situation in the Eastern region of Nigeria, with broader implications for the stability of the nation. They argue that IPOB's activities have contributed to the emergence of unknown gunmen in the region, exacerbating security challenges.

Furthermore, the implications of IPOB's activities in the southeast have been observed in the realm of food security and hunger in Nigeria. Otache, Chinelo, Funmilayo and Victor (2022) identified IPOB's actions as contributing to hunger, a significant issue in the country. The economic instability and insecurity generated by IPOB activities can undermine personal livelihoods, particularly among vulnerable populations reliant on agriculture and informal trade for their income. Farmers encounter difficulties in accessing their farms due to roadblocks or security concerns, leading to decreased agricultural productivity and food scarcity (Obasi, 2020).

After reviewing the pertinent literature on the activities of the IPOB separatist group in seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu and personal livelihood in South-East Nigeria, existing studies have primarily focused on how the sit-at-home order has affected the economy of the Nigerian state without adequately addressing how it has led to a disruption of personal livelihood, particularly in the informal sector, and how it has contributed to low income due to the disruption of economic activities, increased psychological stress, and social stigmatization. Additionally, the literature could not demonstrate how the increased number of extrajudicial killings in southeast Nigeria between 2021 and 2023 could have been linked to the ongoing clashes between the Eastern Security Network and state security forces. This study aims to close these research gaps.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The study employed an ex-post facto research design and mixed methods of data collection, relying on qualitative descriptive analysis. Data were obtained through primary sources, including unstructured interviews and personal observations, and secondary sources using the documentary method.

Specifically, unstructured interviews were conducted as open-ended conversations to elicit detailed narratives rather than predetermined responses. Eleven (11) respondents were purposively and deliberately selected because of their direct or professional exposure to IPOB's activities and their implications for livelihoods. This size was determined using the principle of purposive selection combined with data saturation. They comprised four academic colleagues, five market men and women, and two security personnel with firsthand knowledge of security operations in the region. The academic colleagues were chosen on the basis of their expertise in political science and security studies, Market men and women were included because they represent a group whose livelihoods were most directly disrupted by sit-at-home orders, market closures, and transport restrictions; Security personnel were interviewed because of their operational experience and their perspective on the clashes between IPOB and state forces.

The sample was not intended to represent the entire Southeast population, which would not be feasible for this qualitative design. Rather, the purposive selection followed the principle of data saturation i.e. discussions/interviews continued until responses became repetitive and no new themes were emerging. In this way, the study prioritized depth of understanding over breadth of coverage, which is consistent with qualitative methodology. In addition, the researcher made

personal observations of livelihood disruptions, particularly those linked to the sit-at-home orders, protests, demonstrations, and recurrent clashes between IPOB agitators and state security forces.

While the primary data were limited to eleven purposively selected respondents, this was complemented with secondary data drawn from books, journal articles, government records, and reports from organizations such as Amnesty International and the Council on Foreign Relations. These sources provided broader regional coverage of IPOB's activities and their effects across the five states of the Southeast. This integration ensured that, although the interviews were limited in number, their insights were validated and expanded through documented evidence, thereby enhancing the credibility and regional relevance of the findings.

▪ ***Theoretical framework and application:***

This study is anchored on the Human Security Theory, which represents a paradigmatic shift from state-centered to people-centered approaches to security. The theory was first articulated by Mahbub ul Haq in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, with the intellectual contributions of Amartya Sen. It arose out of the post-Cold War context, when the end of bipolar rivalry opened space for a broader understanding of security that went beyond military power and territorial integrity (UNDP, 1994; Koundouri & Dellis, 2021).

The UNDP (1994) defined human security as encompassing “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression, as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.” It stressed four distinctive characteristics: that human security is universal in its relevance, interdependent across domains, prevention-focused rather than reactionary, and people-centered rather than state-centered. From these foundations, the report identified seven categories of human security:

1. Economic Security - assured basic income, employment, and social safety nets
2. Food Security - physical and economic access to basic nutrition
3. Health Security - access to healthcare and protection from disease
4. Environmental Security - protection from environmental degradation and natural disasters
5. Personal Security - protection from physical violence, abuse, and human rights violations
6. Community Security - preservation of cultural identity and protection from ethnic conflict
7. Political Security - protection from state repression and human rights abuses

To apply this theory, the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), particularly in seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu, have undermined the everyday lives of citizens in the South-east region. IPOB's sit-at-home orders, market closures, and road blockades have crippled daily trading, disrupted transportation, and reduced incomes for market women, transport

operators, and informal workers, thereby violating economic security and food security by threatening access to livelihoods and nutrition (Adibe, 2017). The clashes between IPOB members and state security forces, extrajudicial killings, and incidents of arson and abductions have gravely compromised personal security, instilling fear and uncertainty in communities. The prolonged unrest has also strained community security, as ethnic identity is politicized and communities face stigmatization and fragmentation. The state's heavy-handed response has simultaneously weakened political security, reinforcing perceptions of marginalization and repression among Southeastern citizens. In addition, protests and shutdowns have indirectly undermined environmental security by triggering displacements that strain local resources.

As Koundouri and Dellis (2021) emphasize, the human security framework is most effective when it interrogates root causes rather than superficial symptoms. The persistence of IPOB agitation despite coercive repression highlights the failure to address deeper governance and developmental deficits in the region, such as political exclusion, infrastructural neglect, and economic marginalization. The application of Human Security Theory to this study therefore demonstrates that IPOB's agitation is not only a political struggle but also a profound human security crisis. This theoretical framework offers a more detailed lens, as it situates the IPOB crisis within the broader continuum of threats to survival, livelihoods, and well-being.

Discussion and Analysis

There has been much discussion and scrutiny surrounding the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), especially in relation to their demands for the release of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu. This is especially true when considering the potential effects these actions may have on the personal livelihoods of individuals residing in the South Eastern region of Nigeria. There are several indicators from which these discussions stem and which this section intends to examine. First, IPOB's methods of protest, which often include roadblocks and sit-at-homes, have led to disruptions of economic activities and means of livelihood, especially in the informal sector, such as commerce and transportation, in major cities like Onitsha, Enugu, and Aba. These disruptions not only inconvenience residents but also impede the flow of goods and services, affecting businesses and livelihoods dependent on these activities.

In addition, the Nigerian government's handling of IPOB's agitation has been marked by oppressive measures, including military deployments and crackdowns on protesters, which have resulted in low-income levels, disruption of economic activities, and human rights abuses that pose a challenge to personal livelihood in the region. Finally, IPOB activities have wider social and psychological repercussions. Communities have become more divided as a result of the polarization of viewpoints within them; some people are in favor of the IPOB's cause, while others are against it. This has strained social cohesion and may have long-term effects on the region's peace and stability.

The following subsections explain our indicators supporting the discussion and Analysis.

▪ **Mandatory sit-at home order and disruption of personal livelihood especially in the informal sector**

On December 2, 2015, major cities in Anambra State, particularly Onitsha, along with parts of Aba, Umuahia, and Enugu States, experienced a surge in protests, riots, and clashes with police. These incidents have resulted in numerous deaths and injuries among citizens (Ozibo & Okorie, 2022). Although Kanu was eventually released, his re-arrest in Kenya and extradition to Nigeria in June 2021 intensified the push for Biafran independence. This renewed quest for autonomy was marked by various activities, often with detrimental effects on the broader economies. One notable strategy was the sit-at-home order, initially declared in August 2021 (Ugwu, 2022).

In August 2021, IPOB instituted a sit-at-home order every Monday across the South-East to pressure the Nigerian government into releasing their detained leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who was on trial for alleged terrorism at the Federal High Court in Abuja. Initially, these orders were scheduled for every Monday but were later adjusted to align with Kanu's court appearances (Ozibo & Okorie, 2022). The enforcement of these directives by IPOB has had significant repercussions on the personal livelihoods of citizens in the region. Despite IPOB officially calling off the orders, many residents continued to observe them out of fear of reprisals from armed groups enforcing the mandate, resulting in prolonged disruptions that lasted over two years in some areas. Additionally, the sit-at-home orders had a ripple effect on all geopolitical zones in Nigeria, as movements into the South Eastern states from other regions were restricted on the designated days (Ugwu, 2023).

Ugwu (2022, para 5&6) reported to premium times:

IPOB initially declared the holiday for Mondays but later extended it to every day Mr. Kanu appears in court. Since then, the South-east has become a ghost region with all businesses shut down on such days and every Monday as residents stay at home, mainly out of fear of attack. Gunmen have been attacking traders and commuters across the region who flout the order. They have killed many people and set ablaze goods worth millions of naira for being sold or transported on such days.

According to Ozibo and Okorie (2022), the frequent imposition of the sit-at-home order has become a significant burden on the residents of the South Eastern region of Nigeria, severely impacting their daily lives and causing considerable economic regression. This order has adversely affected various sectors, including the economic, social, and educational spheres of South Eastern Nigeria. Supporting this assertion, Ugwu (2022) highlights that businesses across the South-east are suffering due to the relentless lockdowns. With citizens being denied access to necessary services on lockdown days, such as medical facilities and vaccinations, this might potentially lead to a rise in mortality and health problems. State governments encountered difficulties in trying to stop these illegal directives, and some called for Kanu's release to put an end to the disturbances.

Mondays are taken seriously by Igbo business people because, as the first business day of the week, it is calculated that what happens on that day would set the trend of

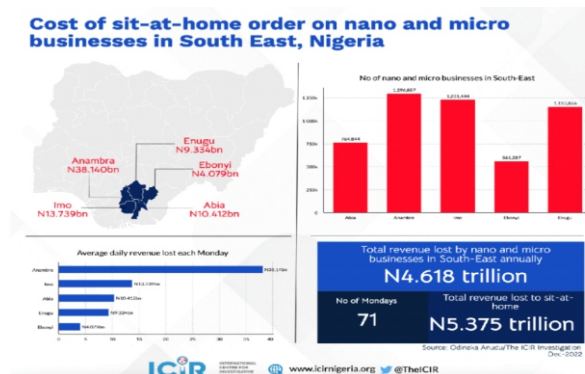
business activity for the rest of the week. Most Igbo business people look forward to doing good business on Mondays, since well-known commercial centers such as Onitsha, Aba, Enugu, Owerri, Abakaliki and Nnewi, among others, see an inflow of traders from other areas of the country. As a result, the entire Igbo country was shocked when IPOB proclaimed the first Monday sit-in on 9th August, 2021 (Osita et. al, 2022, p,3).

Furthermore, Nzeadibe et al. (2022) underscored the broader implications, noting that Nigeria's informal economy, which contributes 65% of the country's GDP and employs over 90% of the workforce, is particularly hard hit. As Amana and Okpoko (2023) note, the repercussions of these lockdowns extend far beyond immediate economic losses, affecting the overall stability and productivity of the region

Most people from the south-east survive on buying and selling of goods and services, their wealth is said to come from the market place. Now, at every sit-at-home order, the market places are closed restricting people from going out in pursuit of their daily bread and going about their businesses because no one sells nor comes out to buy as there are threats to life failure to adhere to the order. The sit at home orders also gives room for hoodlums to perpetrate their acts of stealing, burning people's products and so on (Amana and Okpoko 2023, p.284).

The implementation of sit-at-home orders has had a profound impact on the livelihoods of informal workers in South-east Nigeria, particularly those reliant on daily earnings from activities conducted outside the home, such as street vendors, petty traders, artisans, and transporters. Investigations revealed a divided sentiment among individuals regarding the sit-at-home exercise. While some view it as a means to advocate for freedom, others express concern about its economic implications and the disruption of daily life. The enforcement of these orders has resulted in attacks by gunmen, instilling a climate of fear and uncertainty and disrupting business operations on Mondays. This environment of insecurity further compounds the challenges faced by informal workers, exacerbating their financial hardships and undermining their ability to sustain themselves and their families (Anudu, 2023).

Figure 1: Cost of sit at home order on small business in South-east, Nigeria as at 2023.



Source: Anudu, 2023

The figure above shows an estimated annual loss of N4.618 trillion (\$10.495 billion) for micro and nano businesses in the region due to sit-at-home orders highlighting the significant economic repercussions (Anudu, 2023).

According to Egbejule, (2021) both formal and informal businesses in South Eastern Nigeria are experiencing significant losses due to stay-at-home orders imposed by separatist groups in the region. He emphasized the economic impact on Onitsha, a major commercial hub heavily reliant on market activities. The city, known for hosting one of West Africa's largest outdoor markets, sustains a thriving manufacturing industry centered in nearby Nnewi. Despite IPOB's claim to have rescinded the sit-at-home orders, reports indicate continued enforcement, with shops forcibly closed and goods confiscated or destroyed. Many individuals still adhere to these orders, apprehensive of potential reprisals from the group, despite its denial of involvement in violent activities.

A respondent in his conversation with the researcher complained that “Mondays are my days to unwind at home because of the sit-at-home. Most of us have a daily job to support ourselves. When you're at home resting three or four days a week, how are you going to survive? Not the relaxation you choose for yourself, but the rest that was forced upon you.

A trader reporting to Sun newspaper as cited in Eze, Agwu & Agbodo, (2021, para. 10) lamented,

We are losing customers and businesses are declining. Monday is the first working day of the week. People set goals and hopefully look forward to achieving them. But currently, our hopes are being dashed every Monday. It is terrible. Something needs to be done urgently too.

The sit-at-home orders have placed significant financial burdens on workers such as drivers operating in commercial hubs. One respondent from Abia state lamented how these orders have severely impacted his income, making it challenging for him to meet vehicle payments and provide for his family. According to a report from *Daily Times* (2021), the Chairman of Abia State Drivers' Welfare, Henry Okezie, emphasized the detrimental effects of the IPOB sit-at-home order on the transport sector in the South-east of Nigeria.

Owoeye et al. (2022) confirmed a series of violent incidents in Nigeria's South-east region attributed to the IPOB sit-at-home order. They reported an incident in Enugu where hoodlums attacked a bus distributing bread around the Old Orie Emene Market. The bus, loaded with loaves of bread, was looted and set ablaze by the attackers. Eze et al. (2021) estimated the cost of each Monday sit-at-home at approximately 8 billion Naira, with various business owners, traders, and chambers of commerce still calculating their losses. This underscores the widespread impact across all sectors of the South-east region's economy due to the IPOB sit-at-home order.

From the foregoing, evidence suggests that the mandatory sit-at-home orders have significantly disrupted personal livelihoods, particularly in the informal sector.

- **Oppressive and incessant Clashes with Security forces and low level of income**

The Nigerian state continues to resort to repressive measures as its primary response to citizen protests and mobilization against governance inadequacies. The recent shift of IPOB from largely non-violent political mobilization and civil disobedience to armed separatist activities in Nigeria can be attributed to the state's escalating use of coercive tactics against the movement (Nwangwu, 2023). Despite their inclination towards confrontation over conciliation, the separatist groups, including the IPOB, generally project a non-violent stance. However, this confrontational stance has been associated with a decline in the economic fortunes of the region. An estimate by Anudu (2023) suggests significant financial losses for the South-east, particularly impacting micro and nano enterprises, resulting in an annual revenue loss of approximately N4.618 trillion (\$10.495 billion).

Before the establishment of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in December 2020, neo-Biafra separatist movements primarily employed tactics such as threatening armed struggle, boycotting major national events like censuses, elections, and national identity card schemes, and advocating for a referendum (Nwangwu, 2023). As of September 2017, during the Nigerian military's Operation Python Dance II deployment, Maazi Nnamdi Kanu, among other statements, indicated that the IPOB leadership was reconsidering the feasibility of continuing the separatist struggle through non-violent means (Ujumadu, 2017). Despite IPOB's claims of pursuing a non-violent approach, its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), has been accused of perpetrating violence against police officers and civilians. Incidents of violence have occurred during sit-at-home actions, although IPOB denies organizing or sanctioning such violence. IPOB attributes the violence to unaffiliated elements. Regardless of IPOB's involvement in these acts, the Nigerian government has a history of taking harsh measures against IPOB (Iyora, 2021).

According to Onuoha and Ojewale (2022), the escalation of violence in Nigeria's south-east and the government's failure to adequately protect lives and property are having far-reaching consequences across various sectors, including socio-economic development. The violence is particularly detrimental to the livelihoods of individuals engaged in the informal economy, exacerbating their already precarious situations. The majority of jobs and economic activity in the region are provided by the informal sector (Nzeadibe et al., 2022).

In August, local media outlet reported incidents of commercial vehicles being set on fire, resulting in the deaths of at least seven individuals in Imo and Anambra states during the protests (Okoye, 2021). On 6 September, a truck transporting mattress from Onitsha, Anambra state, to Orlu, Imo state, was set ablaze, while a trailer carrying motorcycle spare parts was destroyed in Nsukka, Enugu state, as reported by local media (Ikem, 2022). Additionally, evidence provided by Amnesty International (2021) and reported by Vanguard in 2021, paints a disturbing picture of the excessive and ruthless use of force by Nigerian security forces in Imo, Anambra, and Abia states. Nigeria's government has responded with a heavy hand to killings and violence widely attributed to the armed group calling itself Eastern Security Network (ESN), the armed wing of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a pro-Biafra movement.

The ongoing clashes between the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and security forces in Nigeria's South-east region have led to substantial economic losses, with estimates indicating daily losses in the billions of Naira. The relentless and oppressive nature of these clashes has severely disrupted economic activities in the region, consequently contributing to a decline in income for its residents (Egbejule, 2021).

Table 1 shows the timeline of clashes and fatalities that occurred in 2021.

| Date | Event | Fatality |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan 8 th | Onueke Police Station in Ezza South Local Government Area was attacked | Three police officers were killed |
| February 23 | Unknown gunmen attacked a police station in Aba, Abia State | Two police officers were killed |
| February 24 | A patrol vehicle was torched in Ekwulobia in Anambra State | One police officer was killed |
| February 24 | Gunmen attacked Abayi police station in Osisioma Ngwa, Abia State | A police officer was killed while arms and ammunition were looted and the station was set ablaze |
| February 25 | The Divisional Police headquarters Aboh Mbaise, Imo State was attacked. | A police officer was wounded |
| February 26 | Gunmen torched a police station in Imo State | Unknown |
| March 9 | Gunmen attacked a police station in Imo State | Several vehicles were set on fire. |
| March 20 | Unknown gunmen attacked the Divisional Police headquarters at Isiala Mbano, Imo State | Unknown |
| March 24 | Professor Charles Soludo was attacked at a town hall meeting in Isuofia, Aguata, Anambra State | Three police officers were killed while Anambra State Commissioner for Public Utilities, Engr. Emeka Ezenwanne was abducted. |
| March 30 | Commander of the Quick Intervention Unit, CSP Ben Ajide was attacked | The CSP and two others were killed. |

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 6 | Unknown gunmen set light to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NLDEA) office in Amaekpu, Ohafia, Abia State. | Unknown |
| May 9 | Unknown gunmen attack a police station in Trademore estate in Ubani, Abia State | Unknown |
| May 17 | Unknown gunmen attacked the Ubakala divisional police station in Umuahia, Abia State | Two police officers were killed |
| July 21 | Gunmen attacked a police checkpoint in Enugu State | 6 police officers were killed, police station was torched and firearms stolen |

Source: Akinyetun, Ebonine & Ambrose (2023).

Shedding more light on the significant economic losses in Nigeria's South-east region, Igbinadolor, (2022) assert that these losses can be attributed to several factors, including the loss of one working day per week, job losses resulting from business owners' cutbacks in response to reduced working hours, and missed opportunities. Additionally, the unstable business environment has led to the loss of clients and customers who seek alternatives, further exacerbating the economic impact. Moreover, there has been an increase in the cost of service delivery due to additional logistical costs.

The proliferation of multiple security groups has potentially exacerbated security uncertainties. The Nigerian government's opposition to the Eastern Security Network (ESN) has included consistent military operations, yet the violence continues unabated (Amnesty International, 2021). Protests often disrupt entire days and have a spillover effect, causing residents to lose side jobs and secondary businesses due to reduced working hours and time, making it difficult to sustain employment or business operations (Anudu, 2023).

The former President Buhari administration's dismissive attitude towards the impact on Igbo businesses and the regional economy is evident in the findings. When researchers asked interviewees if they had heard of any palliatives or economic boosters to cushion the effects of the violence on small businesses, none reported any such support. According to Iyora (2021), businesses in the South-east generate between N5.46 billion to N31.39 billion daily. With approximately five working days lost each month from October 2020 (over a span of 24 months), the total number of lost working days amounts to around 120 days in two years. Consequently, the region has lost earnings of between N655.38 billion and N3.77 trillion solely from sit-at-home days.

▪ **Protest and demonstrations and heightened psychological stress and social stigmatization.**

The protests and demonstrations in south-east, Nigeria, particularly those involving the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), can significantly heighten psychological stress and lead to social stigmatization among affected individuals and communities according to Rodríguez & White, (2023). The frequent violent clashes between the ESN and state security forces have profound psychological impacts on the local population. Documented cases reveal that exposure to this violence has resulted in trauma, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among both protesters and bystanders. Research indicates that exposure to conflict and violence increases levels of stress, anxiety, and trauma among civilians (Rodríguez & White, 2023).

Social stigma associated with participation in protests or being perceived as a supporter of the ESN can lead to social isolation, feelings of shame, and guilt. The psychological impact varies; stressors such as exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and disruption of daily routines contribute to anxiety, fear, and helplessness. IPOB's sit-at-home orders, which disrupt daily activities, exacerbate economic hardship and uncertainty, further undermining mental well-being (Ni *et al.*, 2020).

Ni *et al.* (2020) also observed that the prevalence of major depression increased by 7% following major protests, regardless of personal involvement, indicating a community-wide spillover effect. Risk factors for poorer mental health included female gender, lower socioeconomic status, exposure to violence, interpersonal conflicts, frequent social media use, and lower resilience and social support. Even non-violent protests are associated with adverse mental health outcomes such as PTSD and depression, with violence during protests exacerbating symptoms of these conditions (Rodríguez & White, 2023).

The pervasive atmosphere of fear and insecurity, compounded by the unpredictability of protests and potential for violence, contributes to chronic stress. Constant fear of violence or retribution from either state or separatist groups places significant psychological strain on individuals. Many Igbo people are concerned about IPOB's confrontational tactics and the risk of escalating conflict in Igboland. While some sympathize with IPOB's goals and desire a negotiated resolution to Igbo marginalization, others reject the group's militant rhetoric. Public demonstrations in cities like Aba, Umuahia, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, and Abakaliki, often involving IPOB members in uniform and waving Biafran flags, have heightened tensions despite police efforts to disperse these gatherings (Obi-Ani, 2022).

Iyora (2021) notes that the inability to commence work at the beginning of the week can have psychological repercussions. Individuals associated with or perceived to be sympathetic to IPOB/ESN often face social stigmatization, being labeled as troublemakers, rebels, or enemies of the state, which can lead to marginalization within their communities. Personal observations indicate that the stigma surrounding these protests significantly impacts mental health. The fear of being labeled as an ESN supporter or being associated with violence can result in feelings of shame, guilt, and social isolation, exacerbating the psychological distress of those involved or perceived to be involved in the protests (Amnesty International, 2020).

State security forces often respond to IPOB/ESN activities with heavy-handed tactics, which can lead to the perception of these groups and their supporters as criminals or terrorists. This state-sanctioned narrative reinforces social stigmatization and justifies discriminatory practices against those associated with the separatist movement. Negative public perception can manifest in everyday discrimination and prejudice, further alienating affected individuals and intensifying their sense of social exclusion (Major & O'Brien, 2005).

Conclusion

This study examined separatist agitations and Human security in South-east Nigeria from 2021 to 2023. The IPOB's activities on personal livelihoods of citizens in south-east Nigeria was a critical question that this study attempted to address through an extensive review of literature and analysis of both primary and secondary data sources. The South-east Nigerian people's daily lives have been severely impacted by the separatist group IPOB's activities, especially those aimed at freeing its leader, Nnamdi Kanu. The insecurity, poverty and unemployment have increased as a result of this disruption to the socioeconomic fabric of the area. Therefore, this study found that the activities of the IPOB separatist group in seeking the release of Nnamdi Kanu has undermined personal livelihood in South-east Nigeria from 2021-2023.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. There is a pressing need for stakeholders, including the Nigerian government, community leaders, and IPOB representatives, to engage in constructive and inclusive dialogue aimed at addressing grievances and finding peaceful resolutions.
2. That given the entrenched distrust between the IPOB separatist group and state security services, there is a need to empower and support local communities to take the lead in resolving conflicts and addressing grievances. Additionally, to guarantee the preservation of human rights and rebuild community confidence in law enforcement through reforming the security sector. Furthermore, oversight and accountability systems must exist to stop power abuses and guarantee that those who carry out extrajudicial killings are held responsible for their actions through open investigations and court cases.

References

- Abba, U. E., Ani, J.O., Ayatse, F. K. & Agullah, A. O. (2023). Implications of Sit-At-Home Order Strategy for Self-Determination Struggle of IPOB on Socio-Economic Development of the South-east Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 9(2), 1-20.
- Adebajo, K. (2023). The Curious Case of the 'Unknown Gunmen' And IPOB's Internet Propaganda. *HumAngle*. <https://humanglemedia.com/the-curious-case-of-the-unknown-gunmen-and-ipobs-internet-propaganda/>
- Adibe, J. (2017). Separatist agitations in Nigeria: Causes and trajectories. *Brookings*. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/separatist-agitations-in-nigeria-causes-and-trajectories/>
- Adisa, T. and Gbadamosi, G. (2019). Regional crises and corruption: the eclipse of the quality of working life in Nigeria. *Employee Relations*, 41(3), 571-591. <https://doi.org/10.1108/er-02-2018-0043>
- Akinyetun, T.S., Ebonine, V.C., Ambrose I.O. (2023). Unknown gunmen and insecurity in Nigeria: Dancing on the brink of state fragility. *Security and Defence Quarterly*, 42(2), 16-34. <https://doi.org/10.35467/sdq/163462>.
- Amana, D. E. & Okpoko, C. C. (2023). Economic effects of IPOB sit-at-home order in South-East, Nigeria: Insights from Nigerian newspaper reports. *IMSU Journal of Communication Studies*, 7(1), 282-293. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-88499-4>
- Amnesty International. (2020). Nigeria: End Unlawful Killings and Brutality by Nigerian Security Forces. *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/nigeria-end-unlawful-killings-and-brutality-by-nigerian-security-forces/>
- Amnesty International. (2021). *Nigeria: At least 115 people killed by security forces in four months in country's South-East*. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/nigeria-at-least-115-people-killed-by-security-forces-in-four-months-in-countrys-SOUTH-EAST/>
- Anudu, O. (2023). *South-east Nigeria pays heavy price – for Monday sit-at-home exercise*. The ICIR. <https://www.icirnigeria.org/south-east-nigeria-pays-heavy-price-for-monday-sit-at-home-exercise-part-1/>
- Barnett, J. (2023, May 18th). *Understanding the “Unknown Gunmen” Who Attacked a US Convoy in Nigeria*. Hudson Institute. <https://www.hudson.org/terrorism/understanding-unknown-gunmen-who-attacked-us-convoy-nigeria>
- Busari, B. (2023, March 27). Global Terrorism Index retracts IPOB as terrorist organization. *Vanguard news*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/global-terrorism-index-retracts-ipob-as-terrorist-organisation/>

- Egbejule, E. (2021, November 22). Small businesses bear the brunt of Nigerian separatist lockdowns. *Aljazeera News*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/11/22/small-businesses-bear-the-brunt-of-nigerian-separatist-lockdowns>
- Ekechukwu, V., Nwogu, J., Ugwukwu, V., & Emerho, G. (2022). Socio-economic implications of IPOB's sit-at-home order in South-east, Nigeria: A preliminary qualitative investigation. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 20(2), 78-90.
<https://doi.org/10.36108/njsa/2202.02.0260>
- Eze, M., Agwu, C. & Agbodo, J. (2021). Sit-at-home: South-east loses N50bn in 4 weeks. *The Sun News Online*. <https://sunnewsonline.com/sit-at-home-south-east-loses-n50bn-in-4-weeks/>
- Ezewudo, U., Ukwuoma, I., & Uroko, F. (2022). Beyond religion and ethnicity: Sit-at-home and freedom agitations among the Igbo in South Eastern Nigeria. *Mahabbah Journal of Religion and Education*, 3(2), 165-185. <https://doi.org/10.47135/mahabbah.v3i2.52>
- Gavin, M. (2023). Nigeria security tracker. *Council on foreign relations*.
<https://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483>
- Gierszewski, J. (2018). Personal security within The Human Security Paradigm. *Security Dimension: International and national studies*. 23, 51-66. <https://doi.org/10.24356/SD/23/2>
- Human rights watch (2023). Nigeria: events of 2022.
<https://www.hrw.org/worldreport/2023/country-chapters/nigeria>
- Igbinadolor, N. (2022). *South-east bleeds N4trn in 2years over insecurity, sit-at-home protests*. Business Day.
<https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/south-east-bleeds-n4trn-in-2years-over-insecurity-sit-at-home-protests/>
- Igwe, P. A. (2024). Nigerian identity crisis: what's behind the growing insecurity and separatism? *African Identities*, 00(00), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2023.2299367>
- Ikem, F. (2022, June 6). Sit-at-home again: Hoodlums set trailer ablaze in Nsukka. *The Sun*.
<https://thesun.ng/sit-at-home-again-hoodlums-set-trailer-ablaze-in-nsukka/>
- Ikporukpo, I., & Rufus, A. (2023). Emerging secessionist threats in Nigeria: A focus on the activities of IPOB and unknown gunmen in eastern Nigeria. *Research Journal of Humanities, Legal Studies & International Development*, 5(3).
<https://doi.org/10.48028/iiprds/rjhlsid.v5.i1.03>
- Iyora, F. (2021, December, 2nd). *Biafran separatist sit-at-home protests hit local economy*. African Business. <https://african.business/2021/12/trade-investment/biafran-separatists-sit-at-home-protests-impact-local-economy>
- Koundouri, P., & Dellis, K. (2021). Human security: Concepts and measurement. *Cadmus*

Journal, 5(1), 100–117.

- Major, B., & O'Brien, L. T. (2005). The social psychology of stigma. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 56, 393-421.
- Nduba, O. J. (2020). The crisis of nationalism and ethnic agitations in Nigeria: An analysis of the Indigenous People of Biafra. *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research (IJAPR)*, 4(4), 4-13.
- Ni, M.Y., Kim Y., McDowell I., Wong S., Qiu H., Wong IO., Galea S., Leung, GM. (2020). Mental health during and after protests, riots and revolutions: A systematic review. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 54(3), 232–243. doi.org/10.1177/0004867419899165
- Nkasi, W. (2021). Nnamdi Kanu's Trial Turns Up Pressure on Nigerian Government. Council on foreign relations. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/nnamdi-kanus-trial-turns-pressure-nigerian-government/>
- Nwanike, S. (2022). Secessionist Movement in Nigeria, 1999–2021. Global History Dialogues. <https://globalhistorydialogues.org/projects/secessionist-movement-in-nigeria-1999-2021/>
- Nwangwu, C. (2023). Neo-Biafra separatist agitations, state repression and insecurity in South-East, Nigeria. *Society*, 60, 40-53. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-022-00782-0>
- Nzeadibe, C., Ezeibe, C., Nnamani, K.E., Anazonwu, N.P., Osadebe, N., Anichebe, O., Mbah, P., (2022, February 28th). Nigeria's pandemic lockdown measures were hard on informal workers. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/nigerias-pandemic-lockdown-measures-were-hard-on-informal-workers-177466>
- Obasi, I. (2020). Disruptive impact of civil unrest on agricultural productivity in Nigeria: Evidence from the South-east region. *African Development Review*, 32(3), 289-305.
- Obi-ani, N. A. (2022, January 26). Between Violent Separatist Agitation and Political Reforms? The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Crisis of Post-War Nigerian Federalism. The Immanent frame. <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2022/01/26/between-violent-separatist-agitation-and-political-reforms-the-indigenous-people-of-biafra-ipob-and-the-crisis-of-post-war-nigerian-federalism/>
- Odoma, S.N. (2014). Social inequalities and conflicts among security operatives in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 3(4), 202-209.
- Ojo, J. S. (2023). Transforming pacifists into warmongers? Separatist movement, state repression, and the politics of framing terrorism in Nigeria: Evidence from IPOB and Yoruba Nation's Freedom Frontiers. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361610.2023.2189867>
- Okoye, C.U. (2021, September). South-east sit-at-home: which way to go?. Vanguard Nigeria. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/09/south-east-sit-at-home-which-way-to-go/amp/>

- Onuoha F.C. & Okafor J.C. (2020). State violence, separatist agitations, and population displacement in Cameroon: Factors Breeding Separatist Agitations in Cameroon. In: M.S. Boskovic (eds.), *Globalization and its impact on violence against vulnerable groups*. (165-193). <https://www.igi-global.com/book/globalization-its-impact-violence-against/222501>
- Onuoha, F. & Ojewale, O. (2022, 3rd May). Violence in Nigeria's south-east demands a holistic response. Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/violence-in-nigerias-south-east-demands-a-holistic-response>
- Orjinmo, N. (2021, 3rd July). *Nnamdi Kanu's arrest leaves Nigeria's Ipob separatists in disarray*. BBC news. Retrieved 7th may, 2023 from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57693863>
- Osita, F. C., Anoke, A. F., Eze, S. U. (2022). Mandatory Sit-at-home Order by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Economic Activities in South-east, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*. 6(7),1-12.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.51505/ijebmr.2022.6701>
- Otache, M., Chinelo, A., Funmilayo, B., & Victor, A. (2022). Food sustainability in a post COVID-19 era: The Nigeria perspective. *Sustainability in Food and Agriculture*, 3(1), 46-51.
<https://doi.org/10.26480/sfna.01.2022.46.51>
- Owoeye, D. I., Ezeanya, V. E., & Obiegbunam, N. G. (2022). Separatists' strategy: Appraising the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home order on political economy (socio-political and economic activities) of the South-east region of Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 8(1), 93-108.
- Ozibo, B. D., & Okorie, G. C. (2022). Sit-at-home order and economic growth of south-eastern Nigeria. *GOUni Journal of Faculty of Management and Social Sciences*, 10(1), 189-201.
- Rodríguez, N., & White, D. (2023). An analysis of protesting activity and trauma through mathematical and statistical models. *Crime Science*, 12(17), 1-20.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40163-023-00197-0>
- Sahara Reporters. (2023, October 13). *Tinubu's Plan to Release IPOB Leader, Nnamdi Kanu Stalled by South-East Nigerian Politics, Imo Gov Poll*.
<https://saharareporters.com/2023/10/13/exclusive-tinubus-plan-release-ipob-leader-nnamdi-kanu-stalled-south-east-nigerian>
- Udeh, C.O., Edeh, H. C., Obiagu, U.C., Madu, C.P. & Agwu, S.C. (2023). Separatist agitations in Nigeria: A critical analysis of national integration under Buhari Administration. *The African Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1821889x-bja10029>
- Udo, D. (2022). Leadership failure and insecurity in Nigeria: A study of the IPOB phenomenon in South-east geopolitical zone, 2020-2022. *Open Journal of Social Science and*

Humanities, 3(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.52417/ojssh.v3i2.399>

Ugbudu, M. (2020). Corruption, social justice and political instability in Nigeria. *Journal of Global Economics and Business*, 1(1), 68-87. <https://doi.org/10.31039/jgeb.v1i1.85>

Ujumadu, V. (2017, September 10th). Operation Python Dance a Jihad on Biafra land – IPOB. *Vanguard News*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/09/operation-python-dance-jihad-biafra-land-ipob/>

Ugwu, C. (2022, May 17th). Special report: How IPOB's sit-at-home order is destroying businesses in Nigeria's South-east. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/530317-special-report-how-ipobs-sit-at-home-order-is-destroying-businesses-in-nigerias-south-east.html?tztc=1>

Ugwu, C. (2023, August, 19th). How IPOB-linked violence worsens food security in Imo. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/616715-how-ipob-linked-violence-worsens-food-security-in-imo.html?tztc=1>

United Nations Development Programme. (1994). *Human development report 1994: New dimensions of human security*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Vanguard. (2021, August 6th). *Secessionist Agitation: 115 civilians, 21 police officers killed in South-east — Amnesty International*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/secessionist-agitation-115-civilians-21-police-officers-killed-in-south-east-amnesty-intl/am>