

IPOB SIT-AT-HOME ORDER AND INSECURITY IN THE SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: In recent years, the Southeast region of Nigeria has been plagued by insecurity. This has been attributed to various factors, including the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) sit-at-home order, which has exacerbated tensions in the region. This order, aimed at protesting against perceived discrimination and marginalization, has resulted in widespread disruption of daily activities leading to heightened insecurity in the region. This study therefore examined the effect of the IPOB sit-at-home order on the security situation in southeast Nigeria. The Marxist revolutionary theory was adopted as the study theoretical framework. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey research design. The sample size of the study was 969 which included men, women, youths, business owners, school administrators, government security agents and members of IPOB in southeast Nigeria. Structured questionnaire and Key Person Interview (KPI) were the data collection instruments. Data analysis was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while the content analysis method was adopted for qualitative data. It was found that IPOB sit-at-home order has to a considerable extent increased insecurity in southeast Nigeria. It was also found that increase in attacks on security personnel and fears in the minds of the people were more prominent during the sit-at-home order. Therefore, it was concluded that since IPOB sit-at-home order induced insecurity in southeast Nigeria, to reduce insecurity in the region, government, especially at the Federal level should initiate constructive dialogue with IPOB hierarchies on ways to reach a middle ground, chart a course for peace and reduce insecurity in the region.

Keywords: IPOB, Sit-at-home order, Insecurity, Biafra, Southeast Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria since its independence in 1960 till date has been enmeshed in debilitating struggle on how to coalesce the plethora of multi-ethnic nationalities into one indivisible and united entity. Successive governments have tried to forge national unity and consciousness among these diverse nationalities without really achieving much due to entrenched socio-economic cum political snags such as corruption, religion, ethnicity, inequality, resource control/management, native-settler debate and so on. Based on these negative contradictions, there seems to be a growing state of disunity, rancour, mistrust and resentment among Nigerians with some of these ethnic nationalities questioning and agitating their being foisted into an unholy union called Nigeria. As noted by Tamuno (1970) separatists' agitation in Nigeria dated back to British colonial era and could only be properly addressed in the context of poor leadership and the lack of an ideology with mass appeal. The resort to separatists' agitation by these ethnic nationalities has become the albatross of national unity and integration in Nigeria.

One of such separatist agitations from the south-eastern part of Nigeria which have gained both national and international attention is the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The group was founded by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu a British – Nigerian political activist in 2012 (Allison, 2017). IPOB agitation centres on the self-determination from the Nigerian State for the independence of the Republic of Biafra. The dawn of democratic rule in 1999 was embraced with hope and aspiration for equity, freedom, fairness, inclusion and participation by all involved in the Nigerian project. However, the IPOB has vociferously accused the Nigerian Federal government of deliberate scheme of marginalization, neglect and discrimination of the Igbo nation from politics, economy and other spheres of national development. Scholars like Duruji (2012) have noted that separatist agitation from Igbos' is not unconnected to the perception of inequality and injustice meted against them. However, Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamdi (2016) differently viewed separatist agitation in Southeast Nigeria as a result of collective victimization of the Igbos.

The Indigenous People of Biafra has adopted series of tactics to drive home their demands. The group embarked on massive grassroots mobilization of the Igbos especially the youth through its propaganda machinery- radio Biafra broadcast by Nnamdi Kanu from his London base. With funding from within and outside Nigeria, the group was able to print memorabilia and other Biafran evoking emblems such as T-shirts, hand fans, bracelets, face caps, among others (Adangor, 2018). One could say that Nnamdi Kanu's propaganda message gave him a cult followership and subsequently resulted in the Federal government of Nigeria's cracking down on the group. Despite the Federal governments' use of kinetic approach through its agencies like the police, army, department of state security services (DSS), IPOB has remained a formidable and violent separatist group in the southeast region.

Earlier on May 30, 2017, IPOB tested its influence in the Southeast Nigeria when it issued a 'sit-at-home order' to all Igbos to honour Biafrans slaughtered during the Nigeria – Biafran Civil War (Ukpe, 2021). However, proscription of the group as a terrorist organization by the Nigerian government and subsequent arrest of its leader Kanu changed the whole narrative and led to the popular sit-at-home order every Monday and days of court hearings of the detained leader. Thus, by the order which started on August 9, 2021, businesses, normal work and social activities in the zone are suspended (Nwafor, 2021).

The sit-at-home order has been obeyed largely out of fear of the violent enforcers likely to be acting on behalf of IPOB. Ostensibly, the sit-at-home protest is drawing attention to the plight of Kanu and entire agitation struggle. However, on the part of the various state governments in the region and security agencies, they have constantly underlined the illegality of the order and repeatedly have appealed to the people to go about their normal commercial and social activities. It is the fear of IPOB and other enforcement vigilantes that have kept people indoors and businesses closed on all such days for reasons of personal safety and security.

Specifically, the sit-at-home order has created an atmosphere of insecurity in the region. A once peaceful region appears to be gradually slipping into a war zone with lives and property lost during the enforcement of these orders. There have been violent confrontations between government security agents and IPOB's sit-at-home enforcers which has resulted in collateral damage on the people (Chukwudi, Gberebie, Abasilim & Imhonopi, 2019). It is instructive to note that even more recently IPOB is said to have lifted the Monday sit-at-home except days of Kanu's court hearing, other groups claiming to be IPOB have insisted on the sustenance of the sit-at-home while others are simply criminal elements cashing in on the situation.

Prior to the agitation for an independent Biafra Republic and the government's response to quell the struggle, the southeast region was quite a relatively peaceful zone. Unfortunately, the sit-at-home order by IPOB has significantly raised the tension and insecurity situation in the region. Ozazi (2022) has maintained that as Boko Haram and Bandits are running over parts of the north the unknown gunmen and IPOB are having a field day in the southeast with regular sit-at-homes and violent killings. It is on this note that this study investigated the effect of IPOB sit-at-home order on security situation in southeast Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and the increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity among men and women

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Marxist revolutionary theory was adopted as the theoretical framework due to its overarching relevance to the study. Marxism is both a social and political theory, which encompasses Marxist class conflict theory and Marxian economies. Marxism was first publicly formulated on 1848 in the pamphlet. The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Engels, which lay out the theory of class struggle and revolution (Brock, 2021). However, the Marxist revolutionary theory has been expounded further by scholars like Luxemburg (1908); Stalin (1953); Paust (1080); Suzuki (1976); Markovits (2009) in Alumona et. al. (2017).

The theory assumes that there is dialectical relationship between the resolution of the national question and the right of national self-determination; only the freedom to secede makes possible free and voluntary union, association, co-operation and in the long term, fusion between nations. Similarly, national liberation struggle of oppressed nations is seen as a democratic movement. Despite, the economic, cultural or "psychological" dimension of the problem, the question of self-determination "belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy" that is, to the realm of the right of political secession and the establishment of an independent nation - state (Lenin, in Alumona et.al. 2017).

Ake (1996) in his analysis of internal contradictions of nation-states, developed the term "horizontal relations". Thus, horizontal relations have to do with struggles for domination and subordination among constituent social forces (groups) in the emergent state. These relations find expression in renewal of primordial identities and solidarity, communal competition among subject communities for access to central power, especially competition among communities that were antagonistic prior to their common subjugation to the centralizing power, as well as demands for full or partial autonomy from the existing political system (Ake, 1996).

Rather than liberation and economic development the Nigeria State immediately after independence and civil war, has become the instrument of suppression, oppression and in fact intimidation. Those who are limited by the persistent structure, injustice have in many cases risen against it and that is why, the battle to control the state or have access to its resources has been particularly fierce and acute between contending political elites and the various social groups and communities in the country (Okonta, 2006).

The above theoretical insight demonstrates that political and economic marginalization and the attendant political insecurity occur when the central government fails to protect the citizens or provide them with the basic social infrastructure. The strength of the theory as an analytical tool lies in the fact that it provides both a conceptual and analytical framework that illuminates the linkages between the perception of relative deprivation and the resurgence of IPOB separatist agitations that have exacerbated insecurity in southeast Nigeria.

METHODS

The scope of this study is aimed at examining the effect of IPOB sit-at-home order on the security situation in southeast Nigeria. The study was conducted in southeast Nigeria. The South-East region is part of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria and the home of the Igbo-speaking people of Nigeria. The Southeast, was formerly known as Eastern Nigeria or simply, East, following the division of the country into three regions in the 1950s. In 1967, due to the creation of states, it was split into three states namely, East Central State (Anambra and Imo), South-Eastern (Cross Rivers) state and Rivers State under the Gowon' regime (1967-1975). Today, the region consists of the following states; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey. Cross-sectional surveys aim at collecting information on certain variables in a study population at one point in time with the assumption that there are very many similar elements in the population and one element could stand for the rest of the elements. The population of the study is 25,732,226; which is a 2021 projected population of southeast Nigeria using a 15-year parameter and adopting an arithmetic population projection formula. A total of 1111 participants were proposed as the study sample size. This was determined statistically using Taro Yamane formula. These included men, women, youths, business owners, school administrators, government security agents and members of IPOB in southeast Nigeria. However, only 969 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents. This represents the study sample size. For the qualitative data of this study, fifteen (15) Key Persons Interview (KPI) was conducted among community leaders; women leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders, town union leaders, business men and security agents in southeast Nigeria. The researcher conducted Key Persons Interview (KPI) in order to get a holistic knowledge about the issue under study.

The multi-stage sampling method was adopted for this study. Firstly, the total sampling method was used to select all five (5) Southeast states for the survey. This is for inclusive representation of all the States in Southeast Nigeria. Secondly, a proportionate random sampling method was used to allocate the actual number of respondents to each state. This is for proportionate representation of the population of each state in the sample size. Thirdly, a purposive sampling technique was used to select one Local Government Area (LGA) from each of the states in Southeast Nigeria. This enabled the researcher to select those LGAs that have experienced frequent attacks. Thus, a total of five (5) LGAs were selected for this study (Umuahia North, Onitsha North, Abakiliki, Enugu East and Orlu LGAs). Finally, a convenient sampling method was used to select the actual respondents. This enabled the researcher to select those respondents that are willing and ready to participate in the research. Questionnaire and Key Person Interview (KPI) was the data collection instrument. Data were processed using the Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 and analysed using descriptive (frequency table, bar chart and pie chart) and inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney U Test, Chi-square).

For the qualitative data, content analysis data analysis method was adopted for this study. Analysis started by reading and listening to the tape that was used to record the information over and over again to ensure proper transcription. After this, a coding manual was developed for the interview based on study objectives. Some aspects of the discussions were reported verbatim to draw important insight on the discussion.

RESULTS

Table 1: Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	467	48.2
Female	502	51.8
Total	969	100.0
Age		
18-29 years	268	27.7
30-41 years	237	24.5
42-53 years	199	20.5
54-65 years	158	16.3
66+	107	11.0
Total	969	100.0
Educational level		
None	141	14.5
Vocational	184	19.0
Primary/FSLC	204	21.1
Secondary	200	20.6
Higher/Tertiary	240	24.8
Total	969	100.0
Marital status		
Single	286	29.5
Married	571	58.9
Divorced	24	2.5
Separated	38	3.9
Widowed	50	5.2
Total	969	100.0
Occupational Status		
Retired	26	2.7
Student	104	10.7
Farming/Hunting	211	21.8
Trading	420	43.3
Artisan	89	9.2
Paid Employment/Salaried	119	12.3
Total	969	100.0
Annual Income		
No Income	121	12.5
Below N300, 000	286	29.5
N300, 000- N599, 999	394	40.7

N600, 000- N899, 999	120	12.4
N900, 000- N1, 199, 999	35	3.6
N1, 200, 000 and above	13	1.3
Total	969	100.0

Table 1 shows that 502 (51.8%) of the respondents, representing the majority of the study sample size, were females while 467 (48.2%) were males. The almost equal number of both sex that participated in the research may be as a result that awareness of IPOB activities in southeast Nigeria cut across all gender.

Data in Table 1 indicates that 268 (27.7%) of the respondents are aged between 18-29 years. This is followed by 237 (24.5%) respondents who are aged between 30-40 years, while only 107 (11.0%) are aged 66 years and above. The data shows that the majority of the study respondents who were willing to participate in the study were young people.

In terms of educational level, shows that 240 (24.8%) respondents which represent a majority of the respondents have higher/tertiary education. This is followed by 204 (21.1%) respondents who said they have primary/FSLC as their highest educational level, while only 141 (14.6%) of the respondents noted that they do not have formal education. The few numbers that indicated no formal education suggest that the study area is made up of a majority of literate people. The data also indicate that a majority of the respondents 571 (58.9%) were married, 286 (29.5%) respondents were single, while only 24 (2.5%) respondents were divorced. This shows that the frequency of divorce in the study area is low.

Data in Table 1 show that the majority of the study respondents 420 (43.3%) practice trading as their occupation, 211 (21.8%) respondents were farmers/hunters, while 26 (2.7%) respondents were retirees. This shows that majority of the people in the study area are traders. Finally, data on table 1 indicate that 394 (40.7%) representing majority of the respondents earn N300, 000- N599, 999 annually, 286 (29.5%) of the respondents earn below N300, 000 annually, while only 13 (1.3%) of the respondents earn N1, 200, 000 and above annually. the data from table 4.8 shows that majority of the people in the study area are low-income earners.

To inquire specifically if IPOB sit-at-home order induces insecurity in southeast region of Nigeria, the respondents were asked whether IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria. The responses are presented in figure 1.

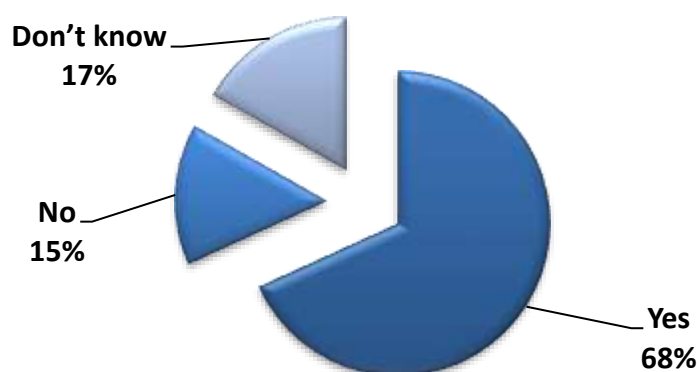


Figure 1: IPOB sit-at-home order and insecurity in southeast Nigeria

Figure 1 shows that 68 percent of the study respondents indicated that IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria, while only a few respondents (15%) said that it does not induce insecurity in the region. This shows that majority of the respondents believe that IPOB sit-at-home order negatively affect security of southeast Nigeria. This is also supported by the findings of the study qualitative data. Majority of the interviewees believe that security situation in southeast Nigeria has worsened since the start of IPOB sit-at-home order even though that it may have been hijacked by other interest groups. An interviewee revealed that: *We have experienced worsening security situation in southeast Nigeria since IPOB instituted this sit-at-home issue. We now live in fear because a lot of things can happen to you if you fail to obey the order. You can lose your property, injure yourself or even lose your life if you are unfortunate to meet these boys in action.* [Male, Retired Teacher, Aged 69, Anambra State].

To further inquire whether IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity, the respondents were asked to rate the extent IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria. The findings are presented in figure 2.

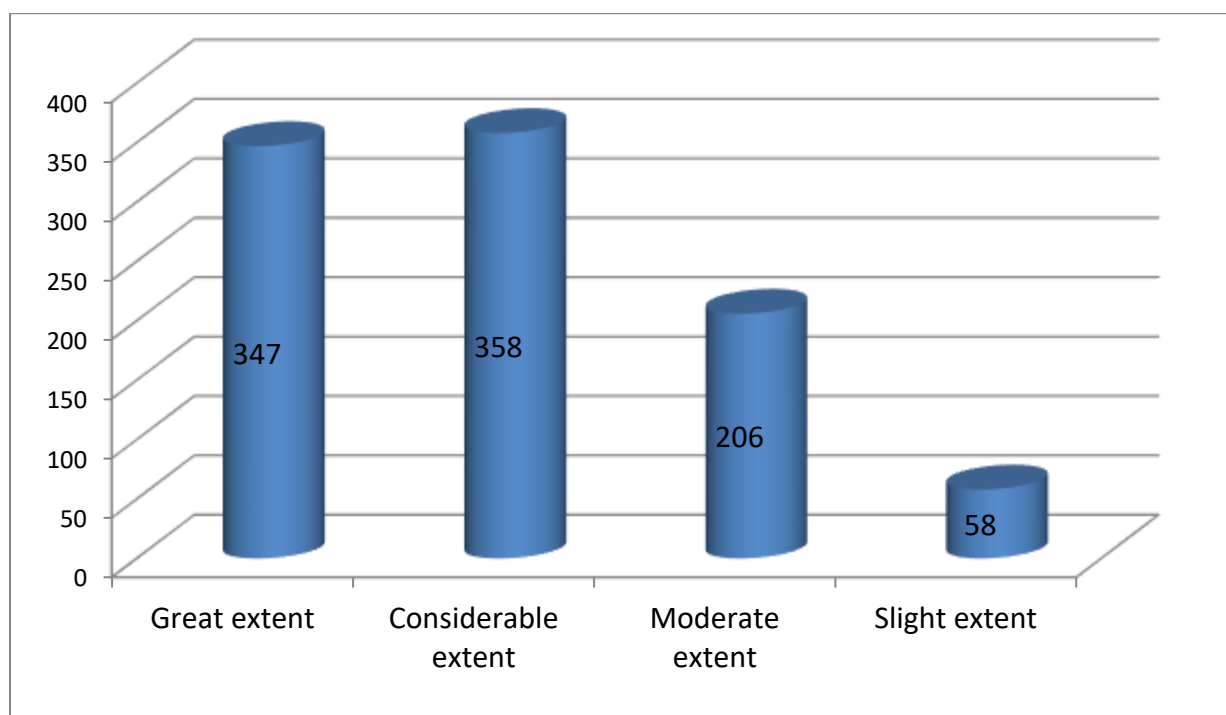


Figure 2: Rating of the extent IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria

Figure 2 show that many of the respondents 358 (36.9%) thinks that IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria to a considerable extent while only 58 (6.0%) respondents said it affects it to a slight extent. This further show that many of the respondents believe that IPOB sit-at-home order affect security situation in southeast Nigeria.

To inquire about the type of insecurity that is frequent during IPOB sit-at-home order, the respondents were asked to identify the type of insecurity that is prominent during the sit-at-home order. The responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: IPOB sit-at-home order and types of prominent insecurities in southeast Nigeria

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Attacks on individuals	97	10.0
Increase in kidnapping	192	19.8
Increase in killings	124	12.8
Destruction of goods	89	9.2
Increase in attacks on security personnel	256	26.4
Inducing security fear into the minds of people	211	21.8
Total	969	100.0

Data in table 4 shows that more of the respondents represented by 256 (26.4%) of the study respondents believe that attacks on security personnel are the major insecurity experienced during IPOB sit-at-home order. This is followed by fear induced in the minds of the people (211; 21.8%), kidnapping (192; 19.8%), killings (124; 12.8%), attacks on individuals (97; 10.0%) and destruction of goods (89; 9.2%).

Test of Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria.

Table 3: Chi-square Test of the relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and increasing insecurity in southeast Nigeria

Chi-square Test			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	81.35 ^a	3	.002

Significant at the level of 0.05

Table 3 provided the data for the chi-square test of the relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria. The chi-square test shows that the p-value of .002 for $X^2 = 81.35$ with $df = 3$ is less than 0.05. Since p-value is less than 0.05. This shows that there is a significant relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria. Therefore, hypothesis one is accepted.

2. There is no statistically significant difference between the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity among men and women

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Test of the Prevalence of the feeling of insecurity induced by IPOB sit-at-home order among Men and Women

Ranks				
	Sex	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Sex of respondents	Male	467	501.80	164694.00
	Female	502	507.90	182951.00
	Total	969		
Test Statistics				
	Rating of the extent IPOB sit-at-home order induce insecurity in southeast Nigeria			
Mann-Whitney U	81389.000			
Wilcoxon W	164694.000			
Z	-.491			
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.795			

From the rank section in table 2, Mean Rank of the insecurity prevalence for men and women is 501.80 and 507.90 respectively. This shows that since the mean ranking for female is higher than that of men, it is likely that the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity is higher among women. However, from the Test Statistics section of table 2, U= 81389, p-value = .795; meaning that there is no statistically significant difference between the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity among men and women. This implies that both men and women feel insecure as a result of IPOB sit-at-home order. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the effect of IPOB sit-at-home order on the security situation in southeast Nigeria. To determine the extent IPOB sit-at-home orders have increased insecurity in the southeast. It was found that the majority of the respondents believe that IPOB sit-at-home order negatively affects the security of southeast Nigeria. The data show that many people in southeast Nigeria believe that IPOB sit-at-home order to a great extent has induced insecurity in the region. This is supported by the study hypothesis on which states that “there is a significant relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria”. The data revealed that there is a significant relationship between IPOB sit-at-home order and the increasing rate of insecurity in southeast Nigeria. This corroborates with data from the study qualitative data. The majority of the interviewees believe that insecurity in the region was exacerbated when IPOB introduced the sit-at-home order. This is also in line with the findings of a study on IPOB agitation and self-determination by Chukwudi et al. (2019). The authors determined that there is a relationship between IPOB agitation and increasing insecurity in the region (Chukwudi et al., 2019).

While attacks on individuals, increase in kidnapping, increase in killings and destruction of goods were on the increase as a result of IPOB sit-at-home order induced insecurity, it was found that increase in attacks on security personnel and fear in the minds of the people were more prominent during the sit-at-home order.

To further understand IPOB sit-at-home order and insecurity, Mann-Whitney U Test was used to analyses the study hypothesis two which states that "there is no statistically significant

difference between the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity among men and women". It was found that even though women are more likely to feel insecure as a result of activities of IPOB during sit-at-home order, there is no statistically significant difference between the prevalence of the feeling of insecurity among men and women. This implies that both men and women feel insecure as a result of IPOB sit-at-home order. This is in line with the findings of Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, and Imhonopi (2019) in a study titled 'IPOB agitations for self-determination at the response of the federal government of Nigeria'. The authors revealed that there is hardly any person in southeast Nigeria that does not feel insecure due to the activities of IPOB in the region.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that IPOB sit at home order has to a considerable extent increased insecurity in the southeast region of the country. There is heightened sense of uneasiness and fear in the region due to fear of being attacked, caught in the cross-fire between the security agencies and members of IPOB or even been viewed as an IPOB saboteur for non-compliance to the sit-at-home order. Therefore, it can be recommended that to reduce insecurity in southeast Nigeria, government, especially at Federal level should initiate a constructive dialogue with IPOB hierarchies on ways to reach a middle ground and chart a course for peace and reduce insecurity in the region.

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