**NAME:** Victoria Anorue

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I am from Imo state which is located in the South Eastern geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Our major problems at the south east are the little to no royalties for the oil drilled from our land, the brutality inflicted on us by the Hausa Fulani, the inability for Igbos and other minority groups to hold impor6ant positions in the government amongst other things. The problems can be traced back to the Nigerian Civil war (popularly known as the Biafran war), the reasons, events and effects of the war till date.

In 1960, Nigeria gained independence from Britain. Six years later, the Muslim Hausas in northern Nigeria began massacring the Christian Igbos in the region, prompting tens of thousands of Igbos to flee to the east, where their people were the dominant ethnic group.

From June through October 1966, pogroms in the North killed an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 Igbo, half of them children, and caused more than a million to two million to flee to the Eastern Region. 29 September 1966, was considered the worst day; because of massacres, it was called 'Black Thursday’. Ethnomusicologist Charles Keil, who was visiting Nigeria in 1966, recounted; ‘’The pogroms I witnessed in Makurdi, Nigeria (late Sept. 1966) were foreshadowed by months of intensive anti-Ibo and anti-Eastern conversations among Tiv, Idoma, Hausa and other Northerners resident in Makurdi, and, fitting a pattern replicated in city after city, the massacres were led by the Nigerian army. Before, during and after the slaughter, Col. Gowon could be heard over the radio issuing 'guarantees of safety' to all Easterners, all citizens of Nigeria, but the intent of the soldiers, the only power that counts in Nigeria now or then, was painfully clear. After counting the disembowelled bodies along the Makurdi road I was escorted back to the city by soldiers who apologised for the stench and explained politely that they were doing me and the world a great favour by eliminating Igbos.’’ As seen from Keil’s reports, it is obvious that the claimed intent of Gowon wasn’t the same with that of the military. The Igbos doubted that Nigeria’s oppressive military government would allow them to develop, or even survive, so on May 30, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu and other non-Igbo representatives of the area established the Republic of Biafra, comprising several states of Nigeria. Five weeks after its secession from Nigeria, the breakaway Republic of Biafra is attacked by Nigerian government forces. The Federal Military Government also laid the groundwork for the economic blockade of the Eastern Region which went into full effect in 1967.

After diplomatic efforts by Nigeria failed to reunite the country, war between Nigeria and Biafra broke out in July 1967. Ojukwu’s forces made some initial advances, but Nigeria’s superior military strength gradually reduced Biafran territory. The state lost its oil fields–its main source of revenue–and without the funds to import food, an estimated one million of its civilians died as a result of severe malnutrition.

Control over the lucrative oil production in the Niger Delta also played a vital strategic role. Oil exploration in Nigeria was pioneered by Shell-BP Petroleum Development Company in 1937. In a bid to control the oil in the eastern region, the Federal government placed a shipping embargo on the territory. This embargo did not involve oil tankers. The leadership of Biafra wrote to Shell-BP demanding royalties for the oil that was being explored in their region. After much deliberation, Shell-BP decided to pay Biafra the sum of 250,000 pounds. The news of this payment reached the Federal government, which immediately extended the shipping embargo to oil tankers. The Nigerian government also made it clear to Shell-BP that it expected the company to pay all outstanding oil royalty immediately. With the stalling on the payment for Biafra government ask Shell-BP to stop operations in Biafra and took over from the company. Within a year, the Federal Government troops surrounded Biafra, capturing coastal oil facilities and the city of Port Harcourt.

Towards the end of July 1967, Nigerian federal troops and marines captured Bonny Island in the Niger Delta, thereby taking control of vital Shell-BP facilities. Operations began again in May 1968, when Nigeria captured Port Harcourt. Its facilities had been damaged and needed repair. Oil production and export continued, but at a lower level. The completion in 1969 of a new terminal at Forçados brought production up from 142,000 barrels/day in 1958 to 540,000 barrels/day in 1969. In 1970, this figure doubled to 1,080,000 barrels/day. The royalties enabled Nigeria to buy more weapons, hire mercenaries, etc. Biafra proved unable to compete on this economic level. The blockade imposed during the ensuing stalemate led to mass starvation. During the two and half years of the war, there were about 100,000 overall military casualties, while between 500,000 and 2 million Biafran civilians died of starvation.

Throughout the war, Igbos felt as though they could only trust themselves and Nigerians took out their brutality on all Biafrans not just Igbos. This minority Biafran tribes in disarray. Minorities in Biafra suffered atrocities at the hands of those fighting for both sides of the conflict. The pogroms in the North in 1966 were indiscriminately directed against people from Eastern Nigeria. Despite a seemingly natural alliance among these victims of the pogroms in the north, tensions rose as minorities, who had always harboured an interest in having their own state within the Nigerian federation, were suspected of collaborating with Federal troops to undermine Biafra. The Federal troops were equally culpable of this crime. In the Rivers area, ethnic minorities sympathetic to Biafra were killed in the hundreds by federal troops. In Calabar, some 2000 Efiks were also killed by Federal troops. Outside of the Biafra, atrocities were recorded against the resident of Asaba in present-day Delta State by both sides of the conflict.

In mid-1968, images of malnourished and starving Biafran children saturated the mass media of Western countries. The plight of the starving Biafrans became a cause célèbre in foreign countries, enabling a significant rise in the funding and prominence of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The United Kingdom and the Soviet Union were the main supporters of the Nigerian government, while France, Israel and some other countries supported Biafra

With increased British support, the Nigerian federal forces launched their final offensive against the Biafrans once again on 23 December 1969, with a major thrust by the 3rd Marine Commando Division. The division was commanded by Col. Olusegun Obasanjo (who later became president twice), which succeeded in splitting the Biafran enclave into two by the end of the year. The final Nigerian offensive, named "Operation Tail-Wind", was launched on 7 January 1970 with the 3rd Marine Commando Division attacking, and supported by the 1st Infantry division to the north and the 2nd Infantry division to the south. The Biafran towns of Owerri fell on 9 January, and Uli on 11 January. Only a few days earlier, Ojukwu fled into exile by plane to the Ivory Coast, leaving his deputy Philip Effiong to handle the details of the surrender to General Yakubu Gowon of the Federal Army on 13 January 1970. The surrender paper was signed on 14 January 1970 in Lagos and thus came the end of the civil war and renunciation of secession. Fighting ended a few days later, with the Nigerian forces advancing into the remaining Biafran-held territories, which was met with little resistance. After the war, Gowon said, "The tragic chapter of violence is just ended. We are at the dawn of national reconciliation. Once again, we have an opportunity to build a new nation. My dear compatriots, we must pay homage to the fallen, to the heroes who have made the supreme sacrifice that we may be able to build a nation, great in justice, fair trade, and industry."

On 29 May 2000, The Guardian reported that President Olusegun Obasanjo commuted to retirement the dismissal of all military persons who fought for the breakaway state of Biafra during the Nigerian civil war. In a national broadcast, he said that the decision was based on the principle that "justice must at all times be tempered with mercy."

Biafra was more or less wiped off the map until its resurrection by the contemporary Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra. Chinua Achebe's last book, There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra, has also rekindled discussion of the war. In 2012, the Indigenous People of Biafra separatist movement was founded, led by Nnamdi Kanu.