

## Original Research Article

## The Biafra Nations League (BNL): A New Scare in the Bakassi Peninsula

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**Abstract:** The thrust of this paper is to showcase the emerging threat posed by Biafra Nations League in the Bakassi Peninsula which could jeopardise the long fought peace between Cameroon and Nigeria over the area. The study first sketches on the events that led to the ICJ verdict and the Green Tree Agreement which eventually brought peace between the countries. The study went further to dissect the Biafra Nations League (BNL): origin and objectives, membership and funding, structural organisation and militant activities since 2013. To unravel the mystery behind this Non State Armed Group(NSAG), the study identified that poor resettlement schemes, low infrastructural development, human rights abuses by Cameroon and Nigeria in the Bakassi peninsula, has resulted to psychological, socio-economic and political fallouts on the part of the indigenes, who now see the aspect of self-determination as their main stay. The study also brings to the limelight the increasing trend of militant activities in the Bakassi peninsula, which if not properly checked, could shatter the already laid pillars of peace. The study brings to the front line the need for the adoption of an alternative post-conflict peace building approach in the face of the ineffectiveness of the extant approaches in fostering positive peace and sustainable development in the region. Upon these findings, the study proffers some recommendations that could incorporate the desires of these three stakeholders: Cameroon, Nigeria and the Bakassi people to advance development and lasting peace. This paper adopts the qualitative methods and from it, content analyses in terms of data collection, analyses and presentation. The collection of data is based on secondary sources. Secondary sources included written sources relevant to the study; online newspaper and blog publications, policy documents, books, magazine and journal articles, as well as unpublished works, theses and dissertations, seminar and conference studies, amongst others. On an important note, a lot of data was harnessed from the official verified Facebook page of Biafra Nations League (BNL), created in 2014, and currently has more than 19,000 Facebook followers. All these are geared towards generating a novel empirical data on the Biafra Nations League, who for some time now, have become a new scare in the Bakassi peninsula.

**Keywords:** Cameroon, Nigeria, Biafra Nations League, Bakassi Peninsula, Emerging threats.

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## INTRODUCTION

The colonially-orchestrated boundaries, though with problems, were accepted and rectified by postcolonial African leadership as the basis for territoriality and ordering postcolonial interstate relations. These orchestrated boundaries later became an unavoidable evil which these African leaders fought so hard to keep or resolve. The military and legal tango between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula is imbedded in the effects of these artificially

designed boundaries. The Bakassi peninsular is an area of some 1,000km of mangrove swamp, rich in oil and maritime resources, with strategic important, and an half submerged islands protruding into the Bight of Bonny(Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006, 177; Etekpe, 2013, 286). Though debatable, the population in the peninsula stands between 150,000 - 300,000 inhabitants, mainly of Nigerian descend (Konings, 2005, 289; Ngang, 2007; Tabetah, 2013, 41).

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Scholarly works holds that the Bakassi people emerged from the old Calabar kingdom who signed a treaty of protection with the British. They reiterate that in no account did the Obong of Calabar cede the Bakassi peninsula to the British, thus British had no right to give the territory to the Germans (Akak, 1999, 3-4; Duyile, 2015, 68). Conversely, other works showcase that the people found in the Bakassi migrated from Cameroon (Kirchner, 2001; Amoah, 1992, 79- 80; Mbaga and Njo, 2007, 6). The issue of ownership over the Bakassi peninsula has dragged the conflict into a low insurgency state, despite validations from colonial and post independent agreements, the International Court of Justice's verdict of October 12, 2002, and the Green Tree Agreement of June 12, 2006 (Tarlebba and Baroni, 2010, 208; Akinyemi, 2014).

Utter denial to these treaties, agreements and judgments by the Bakassi indigenes has given birth to Non-State Armed Groups, and sparked off separatist and irredentist movements which more or less are based on economic and ethno-cultural foundations (Sama and Ross, 2006, 104; Yerima and Singh, 2017). The Biafra Nations League (BNL) for almost a decade now, has championed militant activities in the Bakassi Peninsula. The main thrust of this paper is not to get into the quagmire surrounding the Bakassi conflict, but to focus on the emerging threat posed by Biafra Nations League in the Bakassi Peninsula. It probes into the historical evolutions, highlights its ideologies, and analyses its extremist activities. Last, this paper provides recommendations for ensuring peace and security, and to set up tools to totally end any form of insurgency in the Bakassi peninsula.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Wide ranges of literature exist on the relation between Cameroon and Nigeria, especially around border areas. Thus, these literatures have garnered alot of facts surrounding the Bakassi peninsula case, and serve as a spring board for dissecting the Biafra Nations League. Some of these studies look at the relation between Cameroon and Nigeria within and without borders (Njeuma, 2002; Konings, 2005; Akinyemi, 2014; Funteh, 2015; Amin, 2020). The pattern of these literatures delves on the economic, political and social atmosphere between Cameroon and Nigeria, and around their borders. Also, some highlighted the reason and effects of the protracted war between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula (Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006; Ngang, 2007; Tarlebba and Baroni, 2010; Baye, 2010; Ugbudian, 2018).

Subsequently, others have exploited the ICJ and the conflict, leaning on the processes, outcome, and the reactions (Cornwell, 2006; Ariye, 2015; Duyile, 2015; Bassey, 2014; Akonye and Nwapi, 2019; Aboh and Ubom, 2021). The aftermath of the ICJ ruling, following intense technical and bilateral meetings, saw the birth of the Green Tree Agreement. To this effect,

works have been geared towards explaining the processes leading up to the Green Tree Agreement, its validity and implementation, as well as its pros and cons (Chidi, 2018; Akonye, 2019; Ogunnoiki, 2020). Notwithstanding, some scholars have generally coined the saga surrounding the Bakassi conflict right up to its adjudication as a product of diplomacy (Anyu& Maria 2016; Ariye and Etemike, 2017). To some, though the ICJ verdict and Green Tree Agreement has brought peace in the Bakassi peninsula, there is need to achieve perpetual peace (Okonkwo 2009).

The processes of implementing the ICJ verdict and the Green Tree Agreement seemed to prove very successful in the first few years. However, since it did not completely resolve the Bakassi problem, it therefore was a failure of the conflict resolution approaches deployed since the indigenes were not placated. Against this backdrop, current literature is geared towards showcasing the problems plaguing the Bakassi indigenes, taking as trend, the issue of resettlement (Dos Santos, 2014; Nwoko, 2018; Chinwe, 2018; Nwokolo, 2020). The closest of exploring militant activities in the Bakassi peninsula, immediately after the ICJ ruling and the Green Tree Agreement was on a defunct militia group (Funteh, 2019).

Consequently, this available literature on militia groups in the Bakassi peninsula served as an insight as to the main reason why they sprung up (Yerima and Singh, 2017; Funteh 2019). Pundits opined that the adjudication of the ICJ and the green tree agreement, if not properly preserved may result to future insurgencies (Agbakwuru, 2012). For close to a decade now, the Bakassi indigenes who decided to stay in the peninsula and those who decided to leave the area have been howling out against the ill-treatment and poor resettlement schemes they received from the Cameroonian security forces and the Nigerian authorities respectively. All these, coupled with other microscopic reasons have forced the Bakassi indigenes to advocate for self-autonomy. As an antidote against future upheavals, Cameroon, Nigeria and the Bakassi indigenes needs to jointly collaborate (Ngang, 2007, 28).

### Background to the ICJ Verdict and the Green Tree Agreement

The events leading up to the adjudication process over the 2300km of boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria is a culmination of events predating as far back as 1960. Though a cordial relationship existed between the border towns, there were evidences of little squabbles here and there (Njoku, 2012, 198-199). Unfortunately, things took an awkward turn when both countries became independent, and the quest to show case military prowess and control of natural resource areas gave birth to military skirmishes, especially in the Bakassi peninsula. Cameroon and Nigeria almost entered into a

protracted war over the Bakassi peninsula following the May 1981 saga. Henceforth, things took an even more radical approach leading to loss of lives and property in the Bakassi peninsula (Kah, 2014).

Following the aforementioned developments, Cameroon decided to take the bull by the horns. On March 29, 1994 Cameroon filed a case against Nigeria to the World Court, asking the court to address the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi Peninsula, Nigerian aggression, and for the court to determine the course of the land and maritime boundaries (Baye, 2010, 11; Oluda, 2011; Nwoko, 2018, 68). In pursuit of a legal territoriality in the Bakassi peninsula, and the continuous skirmishes that occurred in the peninsula, the government of Cameroon on the 6th of June, 1994, filed an additional case file. The subject of this additional application that concerned the Bakassi peninsula was the problem of sovereignty (ICJ Report, 1994). The presence of the case before the ICJ still witnessed a rise in hostilities in the Bakassi peninsula (Kah, 2014, 13-14).

The intense rivalry, show of intelligence and grandiloquence by Cameroon and Nigeria at the World Court lasted for eight solid years. The International Court of Justice, after hearing from both the plaintiff and the defendant, and with a thorough fact finding missions, pronounced its judgement on October 10, 2002. The court adjudged and declared sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula laid with Cameroon. The court also fixed the boundary from Lake Chad to the maritime zones, agreeing mostly with Nigeria on the maritime boundary equidistance (Bekker, 2003, 388). To enforce this decision, the court declared that Cameroon and Nigeria are under obligation to expeditiously and without condition to withdraw any administration or military or police forces which may be present in the territories which fall within the others' sovereignty (ICJ Report, 2002, 155-159).

Anger, hate, disdain and disenfranchisement characterised the atmospheric condition in Nigeria following the ruling of the ICJ. The Nigeria press championed this reaction as seen in their numerous vilifying articles just a day after the verdict (Fombo, 2006, 173-174). Interestingly, though the atmosphere in Nigeria was stiff following the ICJ verdict, the Nigerian government outrightly ruled out the possibility of a hostile takeover in the Bakassi peninsula, albeit military strategists in some quarters continued to discuss the possibility of war (Fombo 2006, 174). Though a euphorically inclined atmosphere as per the ICJ verdict, it is interesting to know that the reaction from Cameroon was two-pronged. Cameroonian media outlets and statesmen applauded the judgement of the ICJ. Ironically, popular Cameroon Anglophone separatist groups showed their disapproval to the ICJ verdict (Orisakwe 2006).

The disenfranchisement that followed pronouncement of the ICJ verdict, especially from Nigeria and the Bakassi indigenes, forced the then UN Secretary General to summon a meeting in Geneva between Obasanjo and Biya in November 15, 2002. It was at this juncture that both leaders backed by the UN decided to create the Cameroon- Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) and also revived the Joint Cameroon Nigeria Border Commission (Kamto 2008, 14). This commission was entrusted with several tasks: Reflect on the means of executing the ICJ judgment and move the process forward; demarcating the land and maritime boundaries between the two countries; protect the rights of people affected in both countries; make recommendations on supplementary confidence-building measures (Konings 2005, 293; Kamto 2008, 14).

Following this development, the Mixed Commission held 14 alternating meetings and finally came up with the Green Tree Agreement on June 12, 2006. This agreement gave the Nigeria government to maintain their civil administration and police force for a non-renewable period of two years. After the final withdrawal, Cameroon shall apply a special transition regime for five year non-renewable period. The special transitional regime period gave Nigerians who opted to stay in the peninsula a conducive atmosphere. Last, after the transition period on August 13, 2013, Cameroon was to exercise full sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula. Subsequently, to ensure that the clauses of this agreement are kept, a Follow-up Committee, comprising of representative of Cameroon, Nigeria, the UN, and witness states was created. Following the implementation of the ICJ verdict and the Green Tree Agreement, the atmosphere has become tense, though in a very minimal frequency.

This paper adopts the qualitative methods and from it, content analyses in terms of data collection, analyses and presentation. The collection of data is based on secondary sources. Secondary sources included written sources relevant to the study; online newspaper and blog publications, policy documents, books, magazine and journal articles, as well as unpublished works, theses and dissertations, seminar and conference studies, amongst others. On an important note, a lot of data was harnessed from the official verified Facebook page of Biafra Nations League (BNL), created in 2014, and currently has more than 19,000 Facebook followers. All these are geared towards generating a novel empirical data on the Biafra Nations League, who for some time now, have become a new scare in the Bakassi peninsula.

### **An Anatomy of Biafra Nations League**

To ensure cohesion and proper understanding of the Anatomy of the Biafra Nations League, this section will examine the origin of the BNL, its objectives, its membership and funding, its structural

organisation, and its radical activities since its inception. Concerning its origin, objectives, membership, funding, and structural organisation, material was obtained and critical analysed from the group's official Facebook page. As per their radical/militant activities, data was sourced and analysed from online newspaper/blogs outlets, as well as from their official Facebook page. Grippingly, Cameroon and Nigeria have reiterated their efforts to combat any low insurgency that wants to jeopardise peace in the peninsula.

### Founding, Philosophy and Evolution

What is today known as the Biafra Nations League was first of all labelled Biafra National Youth League and Biafra Nations Youth League successively [1]. The latter was changed to engulf not only the youths in the hypothetical Biafra nation, but everyone within this area. The Biafra Nations League, BNL, is a grassroots Organization with operational base in Bakassi Peninsula of Cameroon and Nigeria, on the Eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea. The BNL was established on August 3rd 2013 in the popular city of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria following agreements by the founders to uphold the unity of the various ethnic nations in the Bight of Biafra. The group had been operating outside the Bakassi peninsula, not until 2016 were they moved their base to the Bakassi peninsula. Since then, the group has joined other militant groups in the Biafra territory to pursue their objectives. BNL has ruled out a number of reasons why she emerged. First, to actualise the plans of the 1960's Eastern Nigerian leaders of creating a Biafra State: Second, to retake the Bakassi peninsula from both Cameroon and Nigeria: Last, though in contention, to be in full control of the natural resources found in the area. The last premise has been strongly refuted by the BNL leaders who declared that the Bakassi struggle is not about the control and ownership of oil. However, there seems to be a contradiction their words and actions as the group been tackling oil companies in the peninsula [2].

### Membership and Funding

Becoming a member of the Biafra Nations League is by choice. Though a majority of its militants are of Igbo descend, BNL have militants from nearly all the ethnic groups within the acclaimed Biafra Nation. Still, militants operating within the Bakassi peninsula area are mostly sourced from the Internally Displaced Persons, and disgruntled Bakassi youths who are tired

of Cameroonian and Nigerian dominance. However, the BNL created a website where members who are willing to join could register. Moreover, the BNL leaders carried out campaigns both offline and online just to galvanise Biafra indigenes to join their cause. Generating funds by the BNL is carried out on two fronts. First, there are calls for people who cannot support financially, to support with material equivalence. The BNL appeals to its militants, followers and supporters, to provide things like Biafra flags, flyers, documents, expert services, boats, just to name a few. Last, the BNL appeals to its audience for financial support to carry out their operations. To achieve this, the people are either encouraged to support via Bitcoin or PayPal. Moreover, the BNL carries out online campaigns to rally funds for their cause [3]. Interestingly, the BNL has denied any allegations that it is a sponsored militant group, and has constantly denied any form of sponsorship.

### Structural Organisation

Biafra Nations League is currently led by PrincewillChimezie Richard alias Prince Obuka of Imo State and EbutaAkorTakon of Cross River State (not to be mistaken by the former Deputy, EbutaOgarTakon). At the helm of this Non State Armed Group (NSAG), we have the National Leader, Deputy National Leader, Chief of General Staff, Head of Operations, General Administrative Officer, Regional Leaders, and Operational Commander. The group has about sixteen branch offices termed "regional chapter". Each of these regional chapters is being led by a regional leader who is answerable to the National Leader. As earlier stated, the group since 2013 operated outside the Bakassi peninsula. On November 05, 2016, BNL finally moved operational base from Ikom to Bakassi Peninsula where they became enemies of both Nigeria and Cameroon. Still, BNL has a sub unit which contains only the displaced Bakassi youths, and it is being led by the Chief of General Staff, Linus Essien. Subsequently, the Biafra Nations League have organised series of combined Akwa-Cross elders and youths Congress in EsitEket, Eket and Onna in Akwa Ibom State where Chiefs, clan heads, women group and youth leaders adopted the BNL as a household Organization.

### Militant Activities: An Overview

Although this NSAG emerged in 2013, its resort to violence only began from the last months of 2016. Upon its inception, BNL began grassroots mobilization in many towns of the coastal area and gradually expanded to the inland areas including the Igbo speaking territory who are majority tribe of Biafra. Furthermore, the BNL was actively creating alliance with other groups working in the Biafran National

<sup>1</sup> Initially, the emblem BYNL or BNL was "Freedom, Land of the Rising Sun, and Justice". But it has been changed to, "Freedom, Equity, and Justice". The current leader of the BNL is PrincewillChimeze Richards.

<sup>2</sup> Linus Essien, Biafra Nations League Chief of Staff emphasised that the group's main objective is not control and own the oil wells in the Bakassi peninsula, but to fight for self-determination of the Bakassi people.

<sup>3</sup> BNL carries out weekly campaigns online via Zoom just to canvass funds for their cause. They have often reiterated that anyone within and outside Nigeria can support them financially.



Council. Jump start to 2016, the BNL embarked on a number of alliance making missions. On February 20th, 2016, BNL hosted a congress in Ekomlman, Abak Local Government Area, and Akwalbom State with the Governing council of former British Southern Cameroons dubbed the Ambazonia Governing Council, led by Dr Ayaba Cho Lucas. Hence, they became the first Biafra group to engage the Southern Cameroons separatist to fight their cause of self-rule. Still, on April 12, 2016, BNL proceeded with another Congress in Ekukunela, Ikom Local Government Area of Cross River State where they planned to extend operations to Bakassi Peninsula was discussed, and in attendance were some internally displaced natives of the Peninsula. When its operational base was transferred to Bakassi on November 5th, 2016, things took a different approach.

According to the BNL, guerrilla tactics is the best in the struggle where the enemy is more equipped than you. Apart from guerrilla tactics, the BNL engaged into issuing accusations and threats to Cameroon and Nigeria military present in the Bakassi peninsula, as well as oil extracting companies. Moreover they also engaged in to referendum activities in the area as a means to achieve their goal of self-determination. Against this backdrop, on November 6, 2017, Biafra Nations League, BNYL, started "grassroots referendum programs in South-South communities where it saw the attendance of chiefs, elders, and war veterans (Opejobi 2017). The group had earlier stated that it will begin referendum activities on November 6, 2017, a day to honour late General Philip Effiong of the supposed Biafra State (Nwachukwu 2017). Still, in January 2018, BNL accused the Federal Government of Nigeria for supporting the action the Cameroonian Government against the people of Bakassi peninsula. This Pro-Biafra activist also alleged that the Federal Government had been aiding the Cameroonian forces to abduct and arrest the people of Bakassi. They also accused the Cameroonian gendarmes for harassing the Bakassi indigenes, and the Nigerian government for neglecting hundreds of refugees from the ceded towns (Umoeffah, 2018).

In September 2020, the BNL and Ambazonia held another convention in Enugu. This convention was predicated on how to re-strategize and encourage self-defense mechanisms for Biafrans and Ambazonians in the escalating security challenges facing the people of Eastern Nigeria and Southern Cameroon. This was also in pursuant to secession from their respective countries to become independent nations (Oluwademilade, 2020). On March 17, 2021, BNL promised mayhem on Cameroonian and security agencies operating in the Bakassi peninsula. The group took over creeks and bushes all the parts of Bakassi peninsula belonging to Cameroon and Nigeria, and hoisted the Biafraflag (Nwachukwu, 2021a). Still, after three days, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the group warned all oil companies operating with the Bakassi peninsula to evacuate the area.

However, the group did not give any timeline as the opined that they could chase these oil companies away at any time (Odunsi, 2021). A week later, on March 27, 2021, the group warned Nigerian security operatives against arresting its officers in Bakassi Peninsula. The group disclosed that it has gathered information about how Navy personnel were harassing indigenes moving to and fro Cameroon-controlled areas in search of members of the group (Adeleke, 2021).

That notwithstanding, the group in April 20, 2021, introduced the Biafran pounds in the Bakassi Peninsula. Their aim was to replace the Nigerian Naira and the Cameroonian Franc with the Biafran pounds in the whole peninsula. They also warned the Cameroonian government not to harass any Bakassi indigene trying to use the Biafran pounds (Nwachukwu, 2021b). Thirteen days later, and on May 3, 2021, the group said it is battle ready to face both Cameroon and Nigeria forces should they be attacked in the cause of hoisting Biafra flags in the Bakassi Peninsula (Nwachukwu 2021c). A bloody confrontation occurred between the group and troops of the Cameroon Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (BIR) in Isangele on May 8, 2021. It is alleged that two elements of the Cameroon BIR dropped dead during this gun fight in Isangele (Ogbolu 2021a). To carry out their threats, BNL made constant visits to the creeks and bushes in the Bakassi peninsula where they destroyed government structures here and there. In this light, the group destroyed of a newly constructed market by the government of Cameroon in the Idabato subdivision on June 3, 2021 (National Daily, 2021a). The group has also been actively destroying public toilets constructed by the Cameroon government in the peninsula.

Following a ban from the BNL to all foreign vessels leaving Nigeria into the Bakassi peninsula, the group deployed its military wing to the peninsula to monitor and enforce this restriction on June 7, 2021. A month later, the Bakassi peninsula seemed to enjoy relative peace until Paul Biya commended the Nigerian government of arrested Nnamdi Kanu, the Biafra secessionist leader. These utterances by Paul Biya angered the BNL who vowed to restart violent militant activities in the Bakassi peninsula. They also promised to deprive Cameroon from enjoying full sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula from July 14, 2021 (Ogbolu 2021b). As a prelude to their vows to restart violence in the Bakassi peninsula, the group on July 19, 2021 revealed plots to conquer the government of Cameroon and formally retrieve the entire Bakassi Peninsula from Cameroon. The group, accordingly, declared that towns in Bakassi Peninsula renamed by Cameroon government will not be recognized by the Biafra nation. The group disclosed that it has already commenced breaking billboards and signposts that do not reflect real Efik names (National Daily, 2021b).

Events from the later part of 2021 saw the BNL more actively involved in militant activities in the Bakassi peninsula. On August 16, 2021, the group made headlines when militias loyal to the group it pulled down the Cameroonian flag in Abana and hoisted the Biafra flag. This was in concurrence to their numerous threats of removing billboards bearing the Republic of Cameroon in the Bakassi peninsula (Silas, 2021). However, this jubilation was limited as they were struck with heavy gunshots from the Cameroonian army. A week later, on August 23, 2021, the group issued another strong warning to the Cameroon government not to execute any projects in the Bakassi peninsula (National Daily, 2021c). Barely over a month, on September 27, 2021, the group banned all oil firms operating in the Bakassi peninsula from paying taxes to the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria. This time, the ultimatum was given a time limit of 20 days (National Daily, 2021d). Yet again, the BNL militia on October 4, 2021, ambushed an operational team of the Cameroonian army, the Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide (BIR), in Bakassi Peninsula, and in the operations, disarmed two Cameroonian soldiers. The commander of the BNL militia under the command of Dark Lord, narrated that the BNL militia intercepted the Cameroonian military who were on border patrol to inspect a former Nigerian Military barracks. No deaths were reported during this confrontation (National Daily 2021d).

Subsequently, the group in October 18, 2021 ordered a four day closure of borders between Nigeria and Southern Cameroon along the Bakassi, in solidarity with the embattled leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu (Sahara Reporters, 2021). On October 23, 2021, Cameroonian soldiers killed two members of the Biafra Nations League (BNL) in IneMba, a community adjacent to Idabato subdivision. After this incident, it was revealed that BNL militia were mobilizing for showdown with the Cameroonian military at the international border in the Peninsula (Alexandre, 2021). Following mounting tension, the group, on November 8, 2021, captured the border territory with Cameroon in the Peninsula, seizing control of the boundary between Bakassi Peninsula and Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria and hoisting the Biafra flag. A fortnight later, on November 21, 2021, the BNL still continued encroaching into the Cameroonian border territory to stabilize its struggle for Biafra independence, and kept hoisting the Biafra flag (National Daily 2021e). The still laid a ban on oil companies in the peninsula (Archibong, 2021). Still, from December 1-2, 2021, the militia wing of BNL engaged in a gunfight with Cameroonian forces. During this confrontation, the group lost a member and suffered minimal casualties (National Daily, 2021g).

Recently, on January 25, 2022, the BNL clashed with Cameroonian soldiers at AkpaNkanya in the Bakassi Peninsula. This reprisal from the Cameroon

forces came as a result of the BNL militia targeted foreign vessels passing through the peninsula. Following prolonged threats by the BNL; some oil companies had reportedly suspended operations for the safety of their workers. Some workers of Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH), a national oil and gas company of the Republic of Cameroon which holds a minor stake in projects operated by international partners, were afraid to operate due to fear of militant attack, although the Cameroonian and Nigerian military heavily surrounded the maritime borders to protect the firms and vessels (Idika, 2022). Since the inception of the BNL, the entire Bakassi peninsula has been thrown into a state of low insurgency. So far, to expand their militant activities, they group had created a radio station on August 4, 2017, called the Biafra Broadcasting Service (BBS).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has unveiled the Biafra Nations League (BNL) and its activities in the one disputed Bakassi peninsula between Cameroon and Nigeria. The analysis offered in this study provides that the ICJ verdict and the poor implementation of the Green Tree Agreement by both countries have served as a springboard for militant groups to emerge in the peninsula, and especially the Biafra Nations League. Other militant groups had existed in the Bakassi peninsula, but most have disappeared. The peculiarity that surrounds the BNL is that it has combined both traditional and modern ways to appeal to its audience to carry out its objectives. The prolonged hopelessness, deprivation, ill-treatment, human right abuses of the Bakassi indigenes has forced them to take to the bushes to fight for their rights. More so, this has become very critical in a region where identity political movements have increasingly deployed their cultural properties to press home the need for self-determination (Onuoha, 2015, 363). Besides, the failure of the Mixed Commission to midwife a functional and all-encompassing settlement, has enraged the indigenes (Nwoko, 2018, 77). This study as well brings to the front page the need for the both Cameroon and Nigeria to thoroughly and without delay implement the Green Tree Agreement of June 12, 2006. Without proper implementation, this study has revealed that external cooperation can be garnered by militant groups in the Bakassi peninsula and could definitely lead to full scale war.

It is in conjuncture with this that this study proffers the following recommendations:

1. That the government of Cameroon should speedily and effectively engage in the implementation of the Green Tree Agreement. In this case, there are to ensure and protect the rights of Nigerians living in the peninsula, thoroughly sanction any security or civil agent involved in harassment and extortion.

2. That the government of Nigeria should effectively carry out the promised resettlement programs for the Bakassi returnees, and to foster their reintegration into the rest of the Nigerian society. The provision of infrastructure facilities should be the agenda of the day.
3. That Cameroon and Nigeria should effectively and objectively educate the indigenes about the clause of the Green Tree Agreement. Most of this low insurgency in the area is circled around misinformation and disinformation about the ICJ verdict and Green Tree Agreement. Each country should state what she lost and gained.
4. That Cameroon and Nigeria, after implementing the clause of the Green Tree Agreement, should revamp the Joint Commission between them to ensure that peace and tranquillity reigns in the area. Partnership should be geared towards economic growth and ensuring safety of the indigenes in the area.
5. That Cameroon and Nigeria should properly organise their rehabilitation and disarmament programs so as to ensure a serene atmosphere for those willing to drop their weapons and embrace peace. A fair system of amnesty should be granted to those who are willing to throw the towel.

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