

Title of Article: Resurgent Ethno-Nationalism and the Renewed Demand for Biafra in Southeast Nigeria

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Abstract: The renewed quest for an independent Biafran state was examined under the backdrop of sea change in the dynamics of political development in Nigeria intensifying under the fourth democratic dispensation. Nigeria's decolonization has aroused ethnic consciousness that manifested in various events leading to independence in 1960. The Inter-ethnic political strife that characterized post-independent politics resulted into so many crises that eventually culminated in the declaration of Biafran after a gathering of Igbo ethnies at Ahiara by Colonel Chukwuemeka Ojukwu in 1967. the civil war that followed led to the crushing of the Biafran rebellion and ultimately putting an end to that adventure and by extension reducing the ethno-national politics that were dominant prior to that war. Ironically the mismanagement of the victory by domineering military leaders that dominated politics and the marginalization of post-war Igbo in Nigeria had kept the memories of Biafra therefore a perception that is widely held by many Igbo, generating bottled up grievance against the state For close to thirty years after that war, the major preoccupation of the Igbo was how to regain back a pre-eminent position as one of the third leg of the Nigerian society tripod and possibly attain the pre-eminent position as a power bloc as it was in the immediate post-independent Nigeria. However, all through the period, under the military, there were no recognizable groups agitating for resuscitation of Biafran republic publicly. Since the end of the war, upto the 1990s, major public discourse centred on how the Igbo the major ethnic group in the Biafran rebellion could be re-integrated back fully in Nigerian political process. But a dramatic change has occurred under the fourth republic dispensation,

numerous organizations in Nigeria and the diasporas are now openly calling for the revitalization of the defunct Biafrans republic generated pertinent questions as to why is the renewed demand for Biafra thirty-years after it was crushed? Who are the people behind the organizations spearheading this demand and what are their motivation. Is this renewed agitation a ploy by Igbo elites to achieve greater stake in Nigerian politics? All these form the major thrust of this study.