



Crisis Simulation

JCC: Nigerian Civil War - Biafra

Aditya Badhrayan and Maddy Dunaway
Co-Chairs



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Biafra

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates and Sponsors,

Welcome to GSMUN XXVI's Nigerian Civil War: Biafra Committee! Aditya Badhrayan and Maddy Dunaway, your chairs, are ecstatic to meet everyone this year. As delegates in this committee, you will be working throughout the conference to help ensure the secession of Biafra and its victory in the Nigerian Civil War. As this is a joint-crisis committee, you will be working against the committee representing the Nigerian government's side of the civil war, as rebels in the and we cannot wait to see all of your unique ideas, thoughts, and agendas. Remember, there is no need to stick to history, so we encourage all of you to come up with creative solutions.

Aditya Badhrayan, a junior, is one of your co-chairs and cannot wait to be a part of GSMUN XXVI. Aditya started MUN in 9th grade and has attended conferences for the past three years, winning awards at college conferences such as ODUMUNC and WMHSMUN. Aditya is the treasurer of the MUN club, lead manager of his robotics team, and president of his school's TSA chapter. In his free time, Aditya likes to hang out with his friends, binge-watch Netflix, and try to get better at the violin. Maddy Dunaway is also a junior, and your other co-chair. Maddy has been participating in GSMUN since her freshman year and has participated in conferences such as ODUMUNC, VAMUN, WMHSMUN, and more throughout her time in the club. Outside of MUN, Maddy is interested in global history and Arabic. Maddy is also class secretary, Arabic honors society vice-president, and working to get her archeology technician certification. Outside of school, she enjoys rock climbing, listening to music, and reading.

All delegates are expected to come prepared to participate in the committee. Delegates should have potential solutions in mind when they enter the committee room. In addition, each delegate is expected to write a position paper pertaining to their position in preparation for debate. All papers are expected to follow the Maggie Walker honor code, and any plagiarism will not be tolerated. The position paper must be formatted in Chicago Manual Style (CMS), double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font. Papers must be submitted by 5 PM conference day.

Another important aspect of GSMUN is its charity work. This year's charity, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, seeks to provide support, assistance, and fund research for patients suffering from blood cancer. The conference will be selling snacks and merchandise, so please bring money if you'd like to purchase anything in support of our charity! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact gsmunxxvi.biafra@gmail.com. Your chairs cannot wait to see all of your unique ideas come to life. Good luck at GSMUN XXVI!

Your Chairs,

Aditya Badhrayan
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Maddy Dunaway

JCC: Nigerian Civil War - Biafra

Committee Overview

Topic I: Military and Political Crisis

History of the Issue

The Nigerian Civil War, which lasted from 1966 to 1970, was a destructive conflict involving the country of Nigeria and the secessionist state Biafra. The creation of the state of Biafra was primarily driven from Igbo nationalism, a ethnic group that mainly inhabited the area¹. Located in the Eastern portion of Nigeria, the Igbo began to express strong resistance to what seemed to them as a growing encroachment of the values of its neighboring tribes—the Yoruba of the West and Hausa Fulani of the North².

Although there were more than 300 ethnic groups within the nation of Nigeria, the Yoruba, Hausa Fulani, and the Igbo were the largest and most dominant, but were nearly separate civilizations with varying cultures and political practices³. The Hausa Fulani functioned with an hierarchical, feudal-like system of government with Islamic roots, practicing strict conservatism⁴. However, the Igbo, a minority compared to the Hausa, practiced more liberal values, with a democratic system of government and emphasis on global trade and innovation⁵. At a time of vast global development, the Igbo began to excel in commerce and development, causing resentment from the Hausa Fulani and Yoruba, who primarily practiced isolationism⁶.

As the Igbo grew wealthy, and the East began to rise as a beacon of Nigerian economic success, Hausan and Yoruba resentment grew tenfold⁵. Specifically, the Igbo were favored by the colonial powers that still influenced the nation, proving to be a major factor of dislike within Nigeria⁶. In addition, the Hausa wished to maintain their dominance over the Igbo, as they had during the colonial period under the British. However, the Igbo soon began to realize that

their dependence on the Nigerian nation was unneeded⁷. The rise of ethnic tensions began to escalate with open displays of hatred, the first one at the city of Jos, where over 300 Igbo people including women and children were murdered, and many more injured by Hausa Fulani troops⁸. Soonafter, cities such as Kano became rife with similar hate crimes against the Igbo⁹.

Following a briefly instituted government by General Aguiyi-Ironsi in early 1966, Igbo massacres began to increase as Yakubu Gowon, a northerner, took over the government¹⁰. By September 1966, more than 15,000 Igbos were murdered, and many others had been tortured, harassed, and tormented from Hausa Fulani forces¹¹.

Stemming from this hatred, the idea of “Biafra” arose, which would be a state solely dedicated to the Igbo people, protecting them from violence and in the name of law and order¹². Spearheaded by Chukwuemeka Ojukwu and officials such as the Chief Justice of Eastern Nigeria, the concept of Biafra as a home for the Igbos grew exponentially in popularity¹³. By the end of 1966, the East’s desire for secession led to negotiations taking place¹⁴.

Early 1967 saw a series of discussions and debates between leaders of all regions but largely amongst leaders of the North and the East, headed by Yakubu Gowon and Odumegwu Ojukwu respectively¹⁵. All of these negotiations remained futile, as members of both parties failed to compromise or institute measures that would negate a possible secession. With all else failing, Ojukwu, authorized by the consultative assembly of Eastern Nigeria, declared the region as a sovereign nation under the name of Biafra¹⁶.

Current Status of the Issue

With the rest of Nigeria failing to acknowledge this new state, conflict escalated, causing Biafra to assess its military standpoint¹⁷. Specifically, General Okujwu immediately began to develop the Biafran Armed Forces (BAF) with three branches: the army, navy, and airforce. With a defense unit of over 3,000 people, Okujwu was successful in recruiting people from across the parastate for the cause, but it was minute compared to the over 85,000 people present in the Nigerian Armed Forces.¹⁸ With the East historically not having their own defense measures and having a minority population, the Igbo began to ask for international aid. However, although humanitarian aid was provided, no official support arrived from any foreign nation, requiring Biafra to resort to black markets for weaponry and technology¹⁹. In addition, at an operational standpoint, the members of the Biafran Army began to consider membership as a way of obtaining a higher social status, thus failing to perform well on the battlefield²⁰.

In March of 1967, Nigeria imposed a blockade on all resources to Biafra, crippling the secessionist state²¹. With Biafra being landlocked, it depended on Nigeria for food, medicine, and essential supplies. When these supplies were snatched away, intense harm to the Igbo began. However, what was most damaging to the military, was the embargo on oil. Oil exploration was handled by the Shell BP-Petroleum Development Company. However, the federal government of Nigeria prevented Shell from conducting any more oil exploration activities in the Eastern region, halting supply of fuel and diesel for any of their military equipment²³. While oil tankers were still allowed across the border, it provided nowhere near the amount of fuel needed, crippling the BAF in just the first weeks of conflict²⁴.

Analysis and Solutions

The crises faced by Biafra can be divided up into two distinct

segments—internal development and external influences. Specifically, in terms of internal development, resources must be allocated on building up the BAF at an operational level, including more training, rigorous discipline, and less emphasis on the social aspects of the army. In addition, Biafra must find a path to obtain the technology needed for this war from international sources that can provide reliable and efficient weaponry. Because nations such as the United Kingdom and France have provided extensive humanitarian aid, Biafra may be able to utilize these countries for aid in their fight against Nigeria, especially due to Nigeria's violation of human rights with the institution of the blockade.

In terms of external influence, Biafra must resume negotiations with Nigeria in order to remove the blockade. Due to the limited nature of the BAF, a new outlook must be found into how Biafra can compromise with Nigeria to prevent harm to their nation. Furthermore, appealing to the United Nations and other global platforms to garner defensive support is another viable option within this conflict.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the BAF rebuild morale and strength at an operational standpoint?
2. Through what military techniques can Biafra defend their state, especially utilizing their limited population?
3. How can Biafra regain their access to oil and fuel in wake of the embargo?
4. What values and assets are Biafra willing to utilize as compromise during negotiation?
5. How can Biafra re-evaluate their political structure to focus on efficiency instead of social status?
6. Through what means is Biafra able to garner military support from nations such as the United Kingdom?
7. Considering the landlocked location of Biafra, to what other African nations is the parastate able to request aid from, and through what means?

Further Research

1. On Biafra, JSTOR: Provides general history of the Biafran conflict.
2. Biafra and the Nigerian Civil War, JSTOR: Provides military information and history to the Biafran Armed Forces.
3. Biafra's War 1967-1970: A Tribal Conflict in Nigeria That Left a Million Dead: Helps provide societal and hierarchical nuances of the Biafran Force during the Nigerian Civil War.
4. Biafra- Britannice: provides a broad introduction to Biafra and a good foundation for beginning research

Topic II: The Humanitarian Struggle History of the Issue

The Nigerian Civil War, which raged from 1967 to 1970, was a devastating conflict that unfolded due to deep-seated historical, ethnic, and political divisions. During the “Scramble for Africa,” in which various European countries vied for control of territory throughout Africa, Nigeria was created as a result of solely European economic interests with little consideration of ethnic and religious tensions. Therefore, Nigeria is composed of over 300 ethnic groups, with the majority being the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Igbo (pronounced Ivo) in the southwest, and the Yoruba in the southeast. With these ethnic groups came inherently different values, religions, and beliefs. The North was heavily influenced by their history as a part of the Sokoto Caliphate, led by Uthman Don Fodio, and had received primarily Muslim education throughout the rural region by the Yan Tara movement, led by Nana Asmaa’u. Therefore, the region was known for its strict religious conservatism, and belief in a hierarchical, feudal-like structure of governance.²⁵

At the heart of this conflict was the secession of the southeastern region of Nigeria, predominantly inhabited by the Igbo people. The Igbo practice Christianity, a

democratic style of governance, and place a high value on work ethic and pursuit of achieved success.²⁶ During Nigeria’s colonization by the British beginning in 1914, the country was led indirectly with the Hausa-Fulani placed in places of authority, despite the overall better education of the South. This action by the British was meant to ensure the country stayed fractioned and lessened the attempts for rebellion or independence. Due to the Hausa-Fulani’s role in government, the Igbo people had long felt marginalized and oppressed by the dominant northern elite, who held sway over the country's political and economic affairs.²⁶

Frustrated by this marginalization and its perpetuation by the British, the southern regions sought autonomy as a means of self-determination and were the primary leaders of Nigeria’s independence movement. Their efforts culminated in the Declaration of Independence on October 1, 1960, with a new Constitution granting their freedom from British rule.²⁷

However, many Northern elites were hesitant to support the independence movement due to concerns about losing their status established by the British. Following Nigeria’s Declaration of Independence, Northern leaders demanded that the new nation maintain its colonial political structure as a condition of their cooperation and support. This ardent stance led to further mistrust between the Northern and Southern regions, despite their combined pursuit of independence.²⁸

The Nigerian state was then divided into three geopolitical regions in 1960; a large Northern region, and two smaller Eastern and Western regions in the South, representing the new government’s perpetuation of the ingrained divisions between the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, and the Igbo. Throughout the development of Nigeria’s parliamentary system, populations voted primarily based on ethnicity and religion, and political parties developed based on ethnic interests as well. As a result, many of Nigeria’s political parties

lack concrete political agendas and struggle to be defined as conservative or liberal.²⁹

In 1966, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, an Igbo officer in the Nigerian Army, led a coup against the Nigerian government. The coup resulted in the assassination of several political leaders, but was ultimately unsuccessful in taking the power of the government. There were many conspiracy theories in the North, suggesting that the coup was to put General Aguiyi-Ironsi in power, transferring control of the military to Igbo leadership. This theory was supported by the fact that four out of five of the coup plotters were Igbo, and none of those killed in the coup were of Igbo descent. In July of 1966, a counter-coup led by Northern army officers successfully assassinated and overthrew General Aguiyi-Ironsi, replacing him with northerner Yakubu Gowon.³⁰

In the three months following the counter-coup, violence was prevalent between ethnic groups throughout the country. An estimated 8,000 to 30,000 South Easterners living in the North to find work were attacked, killed, and robbed by local mobs. Over 1 million of these Southeastern Igbo fled back to their homeland.³¹

During this time, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military governor of the Eastern regions of Nigeria became far more vocal in his criticisms of the government's failure to protect the Southeastern regions. General Yakubu Gowon and Colonel Ojukwu met in Aburi, Ghana, in January 1967 to discuss the escalating tension demands.³²

Current Status of the Issue

As the Nigerian Civil War unfolded, a host of pressing humanitarian issues emerged, shedding light on the dire situation faced by the civilian population.

The Nigerian government imposed a crippling blockade on Biafra, severely restricting the flow of essential goods and humanitarian aid into the region. This blockade led to widespread famine and

starvation, with particularly devastating consequences for children. The civilian population found itself caught in the crossfire of conflict, resulting in a dire humanitarian crisis.³³

Despite these challenges, humanitarian organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) worked tirelessly to deliver essential medical supplies and food aid to Biafra. These efforts provided much-needed healthcare services and saved countless lives. However, they operated under the shadow of the prolonged blockade and the ongoing conflict, which posed significant challenges in reaching remote and besieged areas, where some regions received limited or no aid, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.³⁴

The war also triggered mass displacement, forcing countless Biafran civilians to flee their homes. Overcrowded and under-resourced refugee camps in Biafra faced dire living conditions, with limited access to necessities such as food, water, and medical care. The crisis was exacerbated by severe malnutrition, leading to widespread cases of kwashiorkor and marasmus (diseases caused by severe malnutrition) among Biafran children. Limited medical supplies and facilities worsened the situation. The United Nations attempted to broker a humanitarian corridor to facilitate aid delivery, but this endeavor was hampered by political complexities and resistance from the Nigerian government, resulting in a limited impact on alleviating conditions in the refugee camps.³⁵

Allegations of war crimes by Nigerian forces further escalated the humanitarian crisis. Reports of indiscriminate bombings and attacks on civilian populations, including markets and refugee camps, raised serious concerns about the conduct of Nigerian forces. In response, Biafran counter-accusations further complicated the conflict, and limited international investigations struggled to gain traction due to

the intricate web of political complexities and the dynamics of the Cold War.³⁶

Analysis and Solutions

The Nigerian government's blockade posed a formidable obstacle to delivering humanitarian assistance to Biafra, exacerbating the population's suffering. International organizations like the Red Cross and UNICEF played pivotal roles in coordinating aid efforts but faced immense hurdles due to the complexity of the conflict and the government's resistance.

Various diplomatic efforts were made to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, including mediation attempts by third parties such as the Organization of African Unity. However, deep-rooted ethnic tensions and political power struggles within Nigeria presented formidable obstacles to achieving lasting peace.

The international media played a crucial role in raising awareness about the humanitarian catastrophe in Biafra. Global media coverage shed light on the dire conditions and influenced public opinion and government actions. Some nations, swayed by public pressure and humanitarian concerns, advocated for intervention or aid, while others supported the Nigerian government, driven by geopolitical interests.³⁷

After the cessation of hostilities, efforts were initiated to rebuild infrastructure, provide social services, and reintegrate former combatants into society. These comprehensive post-war rehabilitation initiatives focused on education, healthcare, and economic opportunities as part of broader economic and social development efforts in the regions affected by the conflict.

Questions to Consider

1. How did the international community respond to the humanitarian crisis in Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War?
2. How did the mass displacement and refugee crisis impact the region and

what measures were taken to address it?

3. What role did allegations of war crimes play in shaping the international response to the Biafran crisis?
4. How did epidemics and healthcare challenges exacerbate the humanitarian situation in Biafra, and what efforts were made to address them?
5. What diplomatic efforts were made to resolve the conflict and how effective were they in alleviating the humanitarian crisis?
6. How did media coverage and public opinion influence the handling of the Biafra crisis by the international community?
7. What were the key priorities and strategies for rebuilding and reconstructing Biafra after the war?

Further Research

1. [An Honest Explanation of the Nigerian Civil War](#): Provides a detailed and unbiased overview of the causes and complexities of both sides of the war.
2. [Remembering Nigeria's Biafra war that many prefer to forget - BBC News](#): An overview of the war itself, including personal testimonies from both sides and an accurate timeline of major events.
3. [Fifty years after the Biafra War, a turning point for humanitarian assistance - World | ReliefWeb](#): Discusses the humanitarian long-term results of the war.
4. [Humanitarian Aid and the Biafra War: Lessons not Learned on JSTOR](#): Details the military impact of relief operations, and the dark side of humanitarian aid.
5. [2 Biafra's legacy](#): Detailed exploration of the role of the Nigerian Civil War

on NGOs, and the politics behind
humanitarian aid.

Endnotes

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21. Warren, Godfrey B. "Petroleum and The Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970." *The Fletcher Forum* 3, no. 2 (1979): 66–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45330966>.
22. Warren, Godfrey B., 70
23. Ibid, 71.
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25. Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia. "Remembering Nigeria's Biafra War That Many Prefer to Forget." BBC News, January 15, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51094093>.
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