

Biafra and International Non State Actors' Support: Diplomatic Implications for Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite the various narrations, writings and debates on the Nigeria civil war, little attention has been paid to the actual existence of Biafra as a country from 1967 to 1970 and the support and aids received from the international non-state actors. This study examines the contributions of the Non-State actors to the literature on the civil war from the perspective of the impact of such support on the war. Relying on newspaper reports, interviews, commentaries and secondary sources such as journal articles and books, the study adopted frustration-aggression theory as theoretical framework of analysis. The methodological approach adopted is multidisciplinary and qualitative analysis with historical narratives. The study examines the nature, structure and impact of non-state support in the overall outcome of the thirty month war and the implications of such support in diplomatic terms for Nigeria. The findings of the study reveals that the availability of support from state and non-state actors had tremendous impact on the duration/outcome of the war. The study reveals that, although Biafra was ill-equipped for the war, with fewer army personnel and less equipment, it had a few advantages over the Nigerian state as they were fighting in their homeland, had the support of most Biafrans; instant recognition by Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Zambia and Tanzania, emotional, material support but not recognition by Israel, France, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Vatican City. Critically, Biafra received support from non-state actors or non-governmental organizations including Joint Church Aid, The Holy Ghost Fathers of Ireland and Caritas International as well as the U.S. Catholic Relief Services. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors without Borders) also originated in response to the suffering of the Biafrans during the war. The study concludes that Non State actors had tremendous impact on the survival of the Biafrans, the duration of the war and overall narrative of the thirty month war. Non-State actors have a measurable effect on policy outcomes of other actors on the international scene. Based on the findings, the study recommends the need to strategically and diplomatically engage the Non-State actors for their intervention in the agricultural efforts of the country and her current struggles against terrorism.

Keywords: Aids, Biafra, Diplomatic Implications, International Non State Actors, Outcome and Support.

Introduction

The various aspects of the Nigerian civil war otherwise called the “Biafran war” have been

well discussed, analysed and articulated by various scholars, historians, observers as well as authors. The intervention, interruptions, recognitions and participations of various governments and intergovernmental organizations especially the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have also come under social, scholastic and political discourses, the aspects perhaps that have not been well discussed and therefore may be new in scholarship remain the perspectives of the aids, support, intervention of international non-governmental organizations and non-state actors in the thirty month war especially the impact of such on the war and diplomatic implications of such interventions for Nigeria.

The facts represented in this study are drawn from the reports, commentaries and analysis of the non-state actors and observers as one of the high points of the war, hitherto neglected. It is noteworthy that the war actually led to the evolution of some of the non-state actors for example, the International Humanitarian Organization *Médecins Sans Frontières* originated in response to the sufferings, deprivations and pains of the Biafrans (Doctors Without Borders, 2015). During the crisis, French medical volunteers, in addition to Biafran health workers and hospitals were subjected to attacks by the Nigerian army and witnessed civilians being murdered and starved, malnourished and left sick without medicine by the blockading forces of Nigeria.

The other non-state actors especially, *Médecins Sans Frontières* were very critical at this period of the outbreak of the war that the international community had viewed as preventable and as such the events leading to the outbreak of the war had not been given adequate attention by the international community especially the United Nations and the four year old Organization of African Unity who could not persuade Nigeria against the blockade.

A blockade can be described as an effort to cut off supplies, war materials or communications from a particular area by force, either in part or totally. A blockade should not be confused with sanctions or embargoes which are legal barriers to trade. While most blockades historically took place at sea, blockade is still used on land to prevent someone coming into a certain area. The Nigerian forces indeed blockaded the Biafran territory thus inflicting excruciating pains and hunger on the warring citizens.

A blockading power can seek to cut off all maritime transport from and to the blockaded region, area or country; although stopping all land transport to and from an area may also be considered a blockade. Blockades restrict the trading rights of neutrals, who must submit for inspection for contraband, which the blockading power may define narrowly or broadly, sometimes including food and medicine. In the case of Biafra, both warring and neutral Biafran area occupants suffered tremendous starvation and hunger leading to diseases.

French medical doctor Bernard Kouchner witnessed these events, particularly the huge number of starving children, so on his return to Paris, using existing media, he publicly criticized the Nigerian government and the Red Cross accusing both of complicit

behaviours. Indeed, not only the corporate image of the Red Cross that was damaged, the national image of Nigeria and estimation in the eyes of reasonable members of the international community was decimated (Bortolotti, 2004).

With the help of other French doctors, Kouchner put Biafra in the media spotlight and called for an international response to the situation. These doctors, led by Kouchner, concluded that a new aid organization was needed that would ignore political/religious and ethnic boundaries and prioritize the welfare of the victims (Bortolotti, 2004) of the war which could have been prevented in the first place if the political gladiators in Nigeria's first republic have responded to the yearnings and complaints of the people from her Eastern bloc. Unfortunately, the early signals of the impending war were ignored and down played by the political juggernauts in the country that were pursuing other interests other than the national interest.

Interestingly, in their 2017 study on *Smallpox and its Eradication*, Fenner and his colleagues describe how vaccine supply shortages during the Biafra smallpox campaign led to the development of the focal vaccination technique, later adopted Worldwide by the World Health Organization of the United Nations which led to the early and cost-effective interruption of smallpox transmission in West Africa and elsewhere (WHO 2017 Reports). Thus, the Biafran war indeed became a breeding ground for humanitarian service providers and activation of non-state actors. Although, non-state actors were already in existence, the war enhanced their impact.

Conceptual Clarification

Biafra

Now, therefore, I, Lieutenant-Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, Military Governor of Eastern Nigeria, by virtue of the authority, and pursuant to the principles, recited above, do hereby solemnly proclaim that the territory and region known as and called Eastern Nigeria together with her continental shelf and territorial waters shall henceforth be an independent sovereign state of the name and title of "The Republic of Biafra" (Ojukwu, 1967).

Biafra, officially the Republic of Biafra, was a secessionist state, a part of Nigeria which existed from 30 May 1967 to January 1970; it was made up of the states in the Eastern region of Nigeria. It was the above declaration that led to the outbreak of the popular Nigerian civil war, otherwise called Biafra war. It was the swift reaction of the Nigerian government to Biafra's declaration of independence that resulted in the outbreak of the war between Biafra and Nigeria. Indeed, the events of the previous months and the embedded mutual suspicion within the state had not been managed effectively and efficiently to guarantee the peace and restore hope to the component units of the entity called Nigeria.

The new state was immediately and formally recognized by Zambia, Tanzania, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti and Gabon. Other nation-states, which did not give official recognition but provided support and assistance included but not limited to Israel, France, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Vatican City. Aside from the support and recognition by state actors, Biafra also received aid, support from non-state actors or non-governmental organizations which had tremendous impact on the parties to the war: The Joint Church Aid, Holy Ghost Fathers of Ireland, and Caritas International as well as the U.S. Catholic Relief Services *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors without Borders) originated in response to the suffering of the Biafrans. This is the crux of this study. Within twelve months of the war, the Nigerian troops surrounded Biafra, capturing coastal oil facilities and the city of Port Harcourt. The blockade imposed during the ensuing stalemate led to mass starvation. There were about 100,000 overall military casualties, while an estimated 3 million Biafran civilians died of starvation (Phillips, 2018).

Indeed, the nation Biafra actually existed with Biafran forces, Biafran currency, Biafran flag, Biafran anthem and Biafran laws and tax system among others in the thirty months of her existence before surrendering under Nigeria's motto of "No-victor, No-vanquished" to the Nigerian Federal Military Government. The surrender was facilitated by the Biafran Vice President and Chief of General Staff, Major General Philip Effiong who assumed leadership of the Republic of Biafra after the original President and leader of the new nation Col Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu fled from the battle to Cote d'Ivoire (Barnaby, 2000). Unfortunately, after the surrender, some properties owned by Biafrans were seized by Nigeria in the Abandoned Properties Act of September 28th, 1979 (Mwalimu, 2005). The bank accounts owned by Biafrans were also confiscated and each Biafran was given £20. Federal projects in Biafra were also greatly reduced compared to other parts of Nigeria. These factors have continued to generate high sense of disappointment and resentments from the Biafrans to the extent that the wounds have refused to be healed.

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 (NGOs) and Non-state actors. The United Kingdom, United States and the Soviet Union were the main supporters of the Nigerian state while the French, the Israelis and some other countries in Africa and beyond supported Biafra.

In 1968, the federal government established the National Rehabilitation Commission (NRC) with the primary task of coordinating post-war food relief efforts, palliatives, compensating those whose properties have been destroyed or damaged by the war, resettling and assisting fleeing populations, and undertaking reconstruction projects.

However, these policies were never actually implemented in the post-war era, raising the question of whether or not the Gowon regime was sincerely committed to genuine reconciliation. The situation was aggravated when the federal government openly rejected,

rounded up, and expelled the personnel of humanitarian organizations and countries that were eager to assist in these efforts in Biafra at the end of the war. The federal government's reservations stemmed from the view that these relief organizations and church charities played a crucial role in sustaining Biafra's war efforts and in prolonging the conflict.

The federal government's half-hearted and insincere approach to reconciliation along with its misguided approach in dealing with humanitarian organizations and countries willing to assist in post-war reconstruction in the region marked the beginning of ill feelings and sentiments harboured by the Igbo in post-civil war Nigeria. Operating from a position of relative disadvantage and inequality, the East-Central state remained the only state out of the twelve created in 1967 to be governed by an "administrator," while the others had military governors. This situation persisted until the Gowon regime was toppled five years after the war. The above had severe, far reaching diplomatic implications for Nigeria.

International Non-State Actors' Support

Apart from the support and aids received from states across the world, Biafra also received aid from non-state actors and non-governmental organizations including The Joint Church Aid, The Holy Ghost Fathers of Ireland, and Caritas International as well as the U.S. Catholic Relief Services. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (Doctors without Borders) also originated in response to the suffering of the masses of the Biafrans largely due to starvation, disease and frustrations. These non-state actors indeed played very crucial roles in the course of the war and even in the post war era and this study examine and analyses the actors and their contributions in turn.

Joint Church Aid

The Joint Church Aid was formed in response to the increasingly desperate humanitarian situation occurring in Biafra during the war. Various Protestant church organizations had been frustrated with the World Council of Churches' neutral stance in the war and by its decision to work through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to deliver aid. Joint Church Aid (JCA) was a collaboration of those groups and Caritas International. JCA was built on an earlier group, Nord-church Aid, a coalition of Northern European churches that had been coordinating airlifts of food, medicine and supplies to Biafra for several months. After an expansion of airfield capacity in October 1968, the organizations collectively decided it was time to purchase a larger aircraft in order to increase the shipments of aid to Biafra; this meant the formation of a coordinated group, thus the JCA was born.

At this point, then, there became two major relief efforts into Biafra. The ICRC's effort, which was supported by most governments and groups like the World Christian Council (WCC) was done with the permission of Nigeria's Federal Military Government and launched from Fernando Pó (now Bioko), an island off Equatorial Guinea; although

relations between the Nigerian government and the Red Cross were often tense and difficult. In early June 1969, a Red Cross plane was downed and the pilot killed; this effectively ended the ICRC's airlift. This created some diplomatic row between JCA and the Nigerian government.

The JCA airlift was launched from the island of São Tomé. Shortly after the JCA begins delivering aid, the JCA-USA is formed, made up of the National Council of Churches, Catholic Relief Services, and the American Jewish Committee. It raised funds to support the airlift of aid materials. The JCA also lobbied politicians in an effort to put pressure on them to call on the Federal Government of Nigeria to stop disrupting the humanitarian assistance being delivered to Biafra. Over the course of two years, pilots working for the JCA flew a total of 5,314 missions from São Tomé to various parts of Biafra, delivering a total of 60,000 tons of aid supplies. However, during the same time period, 25 JCA pilots were killed. This was a very unpleasant diplomatic error condemned by the international community including Nigeria allies and supporters. As a matter of fact, a section of the international media not only condemned the actions of Nigeria but also pressured the United Nations and the International community to compel Nigeria to pay compensation for the downed aircrafts and the families of the dead pilots.

The Holy Ghost Fathers of Ireland

The Holy Ghost Fathers have been in Eastern Nigeria for about eighty-five years. Not until after the recent Nigeria-Biafra war has their influence been somewhat minimized. Arriving originally from France in 1885, the Roman Catholic missionaries, as we shall see later in this essay, exerted a considerable influence far out of proportion to their number. But despite that they had become a factor to be reckoned with ever since, their missionary activity has scarcely been studied systematically. One principal reason for this has been the reluctance of the Roman Catholic authorities to permit scholars to use their private archives in Paris.

The core of mission remains constant: the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus to those who have never heard it at all and to those who have heard it inadequately. But the manner in which this is accomplished varies according to context and opportunity. The goal is always to establish a viable local faith community with its own leadership, incorporating the language and customs of the people.

The group played major roles in the provision of medicine, aids and care to the victims of the Biafran war in Nigeria with a few of their missionaries losing their lives to diseases and gunfire from the Nigerian military who were not too comfortable or favourably disposed to international aid providers.

Caritas Internationalis

Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of 165 Catholic relief, development and social service organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories worldwide.

Collectively and individually, their missions are to work to build a better world, especially for the poor and oppressed (CRS, 2017). The first Caritas organization was established by Lorenz Werthmann on 9 November 1897 in Germany (CRS, 2017). Other national Caritas organizations were soon formed in Switzerland (1901) and the United States (Catholic Charities, 1910).

Caritas Internationalis came in to assist the ailing, hungry and wounded in the course of the thirty months war in Nigeria. The body flew in aids into Biafra through the friendly neighbouring countries and at a point had altercations with the Nigerian military and officials. The relationship between Caritas Internationalis was not a very pleasant one. The group however remained in Nigeria all through the war as compelled by their mission to assist the victims of the blockade imposed by Nigeria with debilitating effects on the people from Biafra. It vacated Nigeria immediately the war was over. Even though the Catholic Church Nigeria had strong roots in Eastern Nigeria (Biafra), they withdrew their services because of Nigeria's posture. The Nigerian government levelled various allegations against the group bordering of religious motives and affiliation. This had tremendous impact on the multilateral relations of Nigeria.

U.S Catholic Relief Services

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States of America. It was founded in 1943 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the agency provides assistance to over 130 million people in more than 90 countries and territories spread across Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

A member of the Caritas International, the worldwide network of Catholic humanitarian agencies, CRS provides relief in emergency situations and helps people in the developing world break the cycle of poverty, starvation and malnutrition through community-based, sustainable development initiatives as well as peace-building, peace-making and peace-negotiation which is based solely on need, not race, creed, culture or nationality. Even though the Catholic Relief Services is headquartered in the Posner building in Baltimore and Maryland in US, it operates numerous field offices on the five continents. CRS has approximately 5,000 employees around the world. The agency is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 13 clergies (most of them Bishops) and 10 lay people (Caritas Jordan Humanitarian Response). The group grew in anger against the Nigerian government in the face of their deliberate calculated efforts to subject their kith and kin to all forms of malnutrition, hunger and anger.

Initially founded as the War Relief Services, the agency's original purpose was to aid the refugees of war-torn Europe. A confluence of events in the mid 1950s; the end of colonial rule in many countries, the continuing support of the American Catholic community and the availability of food and financial resources from the U.S. government assisted the CRS

to expand its operations. Its name was officially changed to Catholic Relief Services in 1955, and over the next 10 years (1955-1965) it opened 25 country programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

The Catholic Relief Services began working in Nigeria in the early 1960s before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war but almost on peripheral, selective and targeted programmes. It became very active during the 1967-1970 civil war in the area of emergency response. It is noteworthy that even though the US along with some other states like the UK, took side with Nigeria in the war, the CRS was non-partisan as they concentrated on their mission of providing relief packages, emergency medicare and rehabilitation of the wounded victims of the war.

After the war in 1970, the Nigerian government instructed CRS and other international development agencies to leave the country. Thirty years later, with the return of democracy after years of military rule, CRS returned to Nigeria in 2000 at the invitation of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. In partnership with the Catholic Church, other faith-based and community-based organizations, the private sector, local and international NGOs, and government institutions, CRS implements a range of complex programs with support from a variety of donors and private funds.

CRS works in three priority sectors: agriculture and livelihoods, health systems strengthening (HSS), and emergency response, recovery and resilience. CRS' HSS programs address HIV/AIDS, malaria, nutrition, and routine immunization/ polio eradication, and have also provided support to orphans and vulnerable children and their caregivers. Under livelihoods, CRS supports households, communities and farmer groups to increase their agricultural productions diversify their incomes and improve their economic resilience to shocks. The suspension of the CRS from Nigeria for thirty years (1970-2000) has socio-political, economic and diplomatic implications: the polio free status of Nigeria just attained in the year 2020 would have been attained earlier with the intervention and participation of the CRS in the immunization/polio eradication programmes and projects as it would have covered areas hitherto neglected by the Nigerian government initiative due to lack of funds or lack of personnel, the prevalence of the HIV, malaria diseases would have received greater attention.

CRS programming includes: promoting human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty and nurturing peaceful and just societies: emergency relief in the wake of disasters and civil conflict, long-term development programming in the areas of agriculture, water, community health, education, health, HIV/AIDS, micro finance and peace building. Overseas work is done in partnership with local church agencies, other faith-based partners, non-governmental organizations and local governments. CRS emphasizes the empowerment of partners and beneficiaries in programming decisions. Program examples include:

- Agriculture: CRS' immediate goal is to improve family well-being through agro-economic development and environmental stewardship. The long-term goal is to strengthen the capacity of local communities to take control of their own development. (Levy, 2006).
- Emergency Response: Natural and human-caused disasters disproportionately affect the lives of the poor. CRS works to ensure that disaster-affected populations are at least able to meet their basic needs and live a life with dignity. The agency works directly with affected communities and local partners to help restore and strengthen their pre-disaster capacities.
- Peace-building: The agency's commitment to global solidarity led CRS to adopt peace-building as an agency-wide priority. Peace-building in this context is defined as the long-term project of building peaceful, stable communities and societies.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)

During the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970, the Nigerian military formed a blockade around the newly independent Biafra: a south-eastern region component part of the country. At this time, France was one of the only major countries supportive of the Biafrans (the United Kingdom, USSR and the United States sided with the Nigerian government), and the conditions within the blockade were unknown to the world. A number of French doctors volunteered with the French Red Cross to work in hospitals and feeding centres in besieged Biafra (*Médecins Sans Frontières*, 2011). One of the co-founders of the organization was Bernard Kouchner, who later became a high-ranking French politician.

After entering the country, the volunteers, in addition to Biafran health workers and officials and hospitals, were subjected to attacks by the Nigerian Army and witnessed civilians being murdered and starved by the blockading forces. The doctors publicly criticised the Nigerian government and the Red Cross for their seemingly complicit behaviour. These doctors concluded that a new aid organisation was needed that would ignore political/religious boundaries and prioritise the welfare of victims. (*Médecins Sans Frontières*, 2011).

The *Grouped 'intervention médicale et chirurgicale enurgence* ("Emergency Medical and Surgical Intervention Group") was formed in 1971 by French doctors who had worked in Biafra, to provide aid and to emphasize the importance of victims' rights over neutrality. The group indeed provided succour and support from the Biafrans who had suffered terribly during the thirty month war. Various forms of diseases were treated across the nooks and corners of the Biafran conquered state with administration of free drugs, eye glasses and in some cases even surgery. Some of these cases handled by the Doctors without Borders would have degenerated in the process of waiting for the government intervention and attention

Diplomatic Implications for Nigeria

The Nigerian government in the course of the war garnered some support and solidarity from both international responses and reactions to conflicts wherever and whenever they arise, to a large extent; either contributes to the quick resolution of the conflict or its longevity. This is because whenever a conflict receives passive response especially internationally, there is always the tendency for the actors to infringe on the rules of engagement and other actions or inactions which negate international law.

Apart from that, comments and opinions shape international perceptions of the conflicts as well as the actions of the actors and how these are interpreted. The international media and comments were skewed against Nigeria in most parts of Europe and which greatly informed the Pope's decision to support Biafra. As a matter of fact, he propaganda machines of Biafra were never countered by Nigeria obviously because Nigeria tried as much as possible to wittingly or unwittingly paint a picture of an internal conflict rather than genocide as portrayed by Biafra in the international media. That dealt a huge blow to the Nigerian image in the estimation of reasonable people across the world with colossal diplomatic damages that took several years to repair or improve.

The physical practical witness of the French medical doctor Bernerd Kouchner of the pains, aches, diseases and starvation of the Biafrans especially children and women and particularly the huge number of starving children, and, when he returned to France, he publicly criticized the Nigerian government and the Red Cross for their seemingly complicit behaviour. With the help of other French doctors, Kouchner put Biafra in the media spotlight and called for an international response to the situation. These doctors, led by Kouchner, concluded that a new aid organisation was needed that would ignore political/religious boundaries and prioritise the welfare of victims. This submission was indeed a diplomatic minus for Nigeria as the government and people of Nigeria were subjected to very critical criticisms of their handling of the conflict with their kith and kin. Several aids were withdrawn from Nigeria and either cancelled or diverted to the Biafran side.

As recent as 2010, researchers from Karolinska Institute in Sweden in close collaboration with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka showed that Igbos born in Biafra during the years of the famine were of higher risk of suffering from obesity, hypertension and impaired glucose metabolism compared to controls born a short period after the famine had ended in the early 1970s. The findings are in line with the developmental origin of health and disease hypothesis suggesting that malnutrition in early life is a predisposing factor for cardiovascular diseases and diabetes later in life (Hult, 2010). Till date, several medical and health references are still made to the event for which the international community especially World Health Organization (WHO), Medical Historians, Health Researchers and commentators have berated Nigeria. Unfortunately, neither the Nigerian government nor the government of the five Eastern states (former Biafra) have taken any health

measures to address the issues raised by the medical research. The international community view Nigeria as irresponsible in this regard. The WHO expected Nigeria to have initiated healthcare programmes for the survivors of the civil war.

Furthermore, a 2017 WHO report found that Biafran "women exposed to the war in their growing years exhibit reduced adult stature, increased likelihood of being overweight, earlier age at first birth, and lower educational attainment. Exposure to a primary education program mitigates impacts of war exposure on education. War-exposed men marry later and have fewer children. War exposure of mothers (but not fathers) has adverse impacts on child growth, survival, and education. Impacts vary with age of exposure. For mother and child health, the largest impacts stem from adolescent exposure." (Heerten, 2014). The international community expects Nigeria to be worried about this finding but the successive military and democratic regimes in Nigeria have shown absolutely zero concern for these women especially considering the impact of the war on their life span, health care and procreation. The diplomatic implications of this negligence cannot be farfetched: apart from the contribution to the negative indices of the nation's healthcare index, it also negates the United Nations' (WHO) policy and has shut the door of international donors on Nigeria's specific health care aids.

The Holy Ghost Fathers have been in Eastern Nigeria for about eighty-five years. Not until after the Nigeria-Biafra war has their influence been somewhat minimized, with most of their activities that would have been beneficial to Nigerians have been withdrawn or minimised greatly. The Holy Ghost Fathers run the Holy Ghost Airline which would have enhanced Nigeria's dream of a functional profitable airline and national carrier in the overall interest of the Nigerian economy and image abroad. The expertise of the Holy Ghost Fathers should have been explored and exploited to build a world class national carrier with enviable records of superlative management and profitability. Unfortunately, the experience of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the attendant goodwill was lost.

Aside from that the Holy Ghost Fathers usually opened schools and hospitals, taught people marketable skills, and gave property to those who needed it. The Spiritans pioneered modern missionary activity in Africa and ultimately sent more missionaries to the continent than any other religious order in the Catholic Church. The humanitarian activities of this team would have enhanced Nigeria's educational standards, met some healthcare needs and taught so many people marketing skills that would have pulled them out of poverty but for the negative perception of Nigeria as a consequence of the civil war.

Because of the views generously expressed by the non-state actors in the international media, a few of the other non-state actors that would have contributed greatly to the post-war rebuilding efforts of Nigeria had withdrawn or withheld their services and aids to Nigeria.

In early June 1969, a Red Cross plane was downed and the pilot killed; this effectively ended the ICRC's airlift. This created some diplomatic row between JCA and the Nigerian government.

Conclusion

The Nigeria–Biafra war that raged between 1967 and 1970 made headlines around the world, with screaming headlines above all for the major famine in the secessionist enclave of Biafra, and prompted a major international relief. It was a genuinely global event that aroused the prompt, positive and massive attention and assistance of the international humanitarian agencies and even the formation of new ones as discussed above. Unfortunately, by the late 1970s, the activities of the non-state actors and the impact of such activities and interventions were seldom discussed outside Nigeria. The Nigerian civil war otherwise labelled Biafra war would have had a different outcome if not for the support from both state and non-state actors which indeed impacted on the narratives and the outcome.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) stance proved helpful for Nigerian diplomacy. Nigeria first turned to the Soviet Union for support after the west refused to provide arms to the federation, and after the war, a less pro-western stance was maintained. At the same time, Africa remained Nigeria's top priority.

The war and role of the international humanitarian bodies and non-state actors have not attracted so much attention from researchers and scholars since the end of the war in 1970 except for the memoirs, reports and records of the humanitarian bodies. However, in recent years, scholarly interest in the conflict is increasing. Alongside with a renewed literary interest in the war and its legacy, the international history of the war and the humanitarian operation in particular have started to attract the attention of historians and academics of other disciplines.

The international non state actors indeed contributed greatly to the alleviation of the suffering of the victims of the civil war and indeed drastically reduced the number of deaths through various feeding, healthcare counselling, clothing and farming programmes and projects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations;

- i. The Nigerian government should ensure further research into the activities of the Non-State actors especially before the outbreak of the civil war, with a view to understanding the extent of their impact on the Nigerian society before the war and possibly get them back on that track.
- ii. It is also imperative that the nation's image battered by the treatment and eventual expulsion of the Non-State actors be deliberately consciously addressed. This is to enable the Non-State actors resume their humanitarian,

- medical and agricultural services that will enhance the lives, living standards of the citizens and the economic advancement of the country.
- iii. Efforts should also be made to strategically and diplomatically engage the Non-State actors for their intervention in the agricultural efforts of the country as the nation begins the struggle for the diversification of the economy and food security for the nation.
 - iv. Nigeria in her current struggles against terrorism should appropriately direct research and intelligence gathering on the activities of Non-State actors with a view to determining their impact on the elongation of the war. It has now been established from this paper that Non-State actors indeed impact on the duration of wars including terror.

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