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AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF BIAFRA
TO SELF-DETERMINATION UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the rights of indigenous peoples under international law with particular focus on the rights to self-determination of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra in Nigeria. It is common knowledge that the movement for secession by the said Biafrans have recently resurfaced in national and international discourse. This paper therefore, evaluates the relevant regional and international human rights laws and apply the provisions thereof, to the explanation of the propriety of the rights of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra to secede from the current national configuration of Nigeria. It argues that, the indigenous peoples of Biafra (IPOB) cannot invoke the contemporary international laws for the sake of gaining autonomy from the present Nigerian sovereign nation-state because, the IPOB lacks the basic criteria for nationhood. The paper concludes that, the highest form of rights that IPOB can achieve are well entrenched in the Nigerian constitution hence, the task of gaining international backings with which to pursue and attain self-rule is probably impossible for the foreseeable future. We recommend amongst others that; the current map of Biafra should be redesigned in that, it is deficient which was one reason for the fall of Biafra in 1970; Also, that, the IPOB urgently require a working board of trustee that will act as mouthpiece at local and international level.

Keywords: Biafra; Nigeria; Human Rights, Peoples' Rights; IPOB, Indigenous Peoples; Self-Determination; Secession.