

The Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), an ethnic militia, emerged in the Igbo-speaking region of Nigeria in 1999, shortly after military rule ended and Olusegun Obasanjo took office as elected President. MASSOB's stated goal is the struggle for Igbo self-determination and the re-emergence of a new sovereign state in the eastern part of the country to be known as the 'United States of Biafra', thereby raising the spectre of a possible break up of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

This Discussion Paper examines the circumstances of MASSOB's emergence in a period of political transition and considerable uncertainty as the Nigerian armed forces began to prepare to relinquish their grip on power, and the specific ways the promoters of this ethnic militia movement have shaped Nigeria's still unfolding democratization process since 1999.

IKE OKONTA is Coordinating Fellow, New Centre for Social Research (NCSR), Abuja, Nigeria. He has a doctorate in Politics from Oxford University and was until recently an Open Society Institute (New York) Fellow.

Biafran Ghosts

THE MASSOB ETHNIC MILITIA AND
NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS

IKE OKONTA

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
The Nordic Africa Institute
Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
(The Nordic Africa Institute)
P.O. Box 1703
SE- 751 47 Uppsala, Sweden
www.nai.uu.se



Nordiska Afrikainstitutet
The Nordic Africa Institute



6.69 x 9.61
244 mm x 170 mm

.133
3.378mm

6.69 x 9.61
244 mm x 170 mm

Content Type: B&W
Paper Type: White
Page Count: 64
No spine text allowed
File Type: InDesign
Request ID: CSS805383