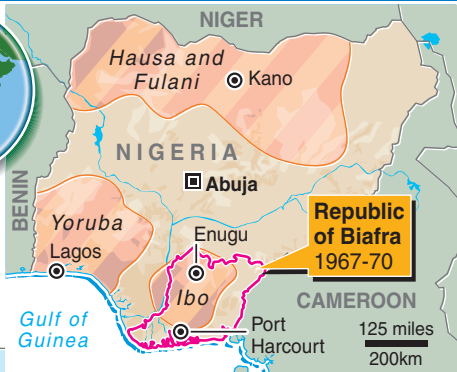


# Biafra: Icon of starvation and suffering

In 1967, an obscure corner of Africa introduced the world to the civil wars and starving children that would become recurring hallmarks of the continent's troubles. Forty years on, Biafra remains an issue threatening to disrupt Nigeria's fragile ethnic and religious balance



## NIGERIA'S CIVIL WAR

► **1960:** Nigeria marked by political turmoil and ethnic conflict following independence from Britain

► **1966:** Military coup and counter-coup spark riots and massacres of **Ibo** people in southeast

► **May 30, 1967:** Governor of Ibo-dominated region declares **Biafra** an independent state



*Biafran flag*  
During its brief life, Biafra had its own currency and was recognised by some African countries

► **Jan 14, 1970:** After fierce fighting, besieged Biafran army surrenders to Nigerian forces

► **1971:** International aid agency **Médecins Sans Frontières** created out of Biafra suffering

*As many as three million people may have died, mostly from hunger after food aid was blocked*

Sources: CIA, Global Security

Four ethnic groups account for more than two-thirds of Nigeria's total population

