

ABUJA, Nigeria, September 20 (Infosplusgabon) - The Nigerian federal government on Wednesday announced that President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the process for the proscription of the separatist group calling for an independent State of Biafra, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Speaking after the Federal Executive Council meeting, Information Minister Lai Mohammed, said that he would not join the debate over the legality or otherwise of the proscription of the group.

The leader of the main pro-Biafra group, Nnamdi Kanu, who was released on bail in April after being held in detention without trial since October 2015 escalated the campaigns, calling for a referendum on independence from Nigeria. This led to sustained clashes between the IPOB members and Nigerian security forces.

Last Friday, the Nigerian military announced the classification of the group as a "militant terrorist organization", urging residents of the mainly pro-Biafran enclave of Southeast Nigeria to shun the group.

Many Nigerian political and civil society organisations have called into question the legality of the military making such a declaration.

Mr Mohammed told journalists that “for those who are fixated with legality, I have good news for them: President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the process of proscribing IPOB, and the procedure is on as I speak. But I ask, if the President had been overly concerned with legality, where would Nigeria have been today?

"If attacks in the South-east had attracted reprisals elsewhere in the country, what would have happened? But for the quick action of state governors in the Southeast and and the North, there would have been a conflagration of immense proportions."

The minister commended Governors in the southeast for being proactive and “making it clear to IPOB that it has no support for its violent campaign.

"By its action, the Governors have cut off the oxygen that IPOB needs to survive. If the elected Governors of all the states in the Southeast have banned the activities of IPOB, who then is the organization fighting for?" he queried.

Mohammed reiterated that “IPOB is a contraption against the Buhari Administration, and that it is being sponsored by those I call the Coalition of the Politically-Disgruntled and the Treasury Looters”.

FIN/INFOSPLUSGABON/ITR/GABON 2017

© Copyright Infosplusgabon