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## Nigeria Secessionist Leader Sentenced to Prison in Finland



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HELSINKI, Sept. 1 – A Finnish court has sentenced Simon Ekpa, a Finnish citizen of Nigerian origin and leader of a controversial secessionist movement, to six years in prison for terrorism-related offenses.

The Päijät-Häme District Court found that Ekpa attempted to promote the independence of the Biafra region in south-eastern Nigeria by illegal means. The court ruled he supplied armed groups

with weapons and explosives and used social media to incite crimes in Nigeria between August 2021 and November 2024. Ekpa, a former city councillor in Lahti, denied all charges.

He was also convicted of aggravated tax fraud. Ekpa was arrested at his home in Finland in February 2023. Parts of south-eastern Nigeria have experienced long-standing instability due to clashes between the Indigenous People of Biafra (Ipob) and government forces.

Ipob, banned in Nigeria, was formed in 2012 as a peaceful movement but launched an armed wing in 2020, claiming to defend the Igbo ethnic group. Critics say the campaign has caused widespread violence and suffering. The Nigerian government had requested Ekpa's extradition to face justice at home, and in 2022 the Nigerian army listed him and 96 others as wanted for terrorism, violent extremism, and secessionist threats.

The court's unanimous verdict highlights ongoing international efforts to address cross-border support for extremist activities, marking a significant moment in Finland's legal response to global terrorism concerns.