Editorial Suite

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It is, indeed, the end of an era. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the greatest champion of the Igbo struggle for self actualisation died November 26, 2011. His death is the greatest loss of the Igbo since that of Nnamdi Azikiwe. Ojukwu was a great Igbo leader. He had played that role since his days as military governor of the Eastern region. The outbreak of the Nigerian civil war in 1967 occasioned by his proclamation of the Eastern parts of the country as Republic of Biafra in that year brought out his leadership qualities as a courageous soldier, one who loved his people passionately and was prepared to sacrifice his comfort and life in defence of their welfare and survival. The Igbo people, wherever they are on the globe, saw Ojukwu as their authentic leader and messiah. He loved them and they loved him, even adored him. Even when he joined the “wrong” political party on his return from exile in 1982 following a pardon granted him by the administration of President Shehu Shagari, his people forgave him. He was a man of strong personality. He never failed to express his opinion on serious national issues and no position was too controversial for him to take for as long as it represented his thinking and belief. He was always blunt and to the dislike of many people. His role in the Nigerian civil war is, perhaps, the most controversial part of his life. While most Igbo think he acted well by taking them to war, people on the other side did not (and still do not) think so. But it was good that he also played a big role in the healing process that followed the end of the war. He is certainly one great Nigerian that can never be forgotten. This week’s edition of Newswatch is devoted to this great Nigerian, an honest and true leader of the Igbo. The story of Ojukwu is told in six segments, each one dealing with a different aspect of his life. It is titled: Ojukwu – Exit of Igbo Legend.