

Meanwhile, the Anambra State Police Command and the State Homeland Security Network, popularly known as Agunechemba, have neutralised suspected members of a terror gang operating around the Old Aguata Union (OAU) geopolitical bloc.

The bloc comprises Aguata, Orumba North and Orumba South local councils of the state. Governor Chukwuma Soludo hails from Aguata Local Council.

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The suspects were killed during a shootout with security operatives, while several others reportedly escaped with gunshot injuries.

It was learnt that members of the gang had been disguising themselves in police and military uniforms to carry out attacks on unsuspecting victims.

The Media and Publicity Secretary of Agunechemba, Nweke Nweke, confirmed in a statement that the gang had previously attacked the convoy of the Chief of Staff to Governor Soludo, resulting in casualties.

Also confirming the operation, the spokesperson for the Anambra State Police Command, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the gang operated with a Toyota Sienna bus bearing registration number KJA 919 KH (Lagos).

He said: "During the operation, security operatives neutralised four members of the armed gang and recovered a cache of weapons, ammunition, explosive devices, and other incriminating items."

According to him, items recovered included one General Purpose Machine Gun with 53 rounds of linked live ammunition, two AK-47 rifles, two magazines, 29 rounds of 7.62 x 39mm ammunition, 13 rounds of 5.56mm ammunition, four undetonated Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), police camouflage uniforms and accessories, 10 Android phones, two feature phones, one laptop computer, one Point-of-Sale machine, two power banks, assorted charms, two live cartridges, ATM cards, a National Identification Card and a driver's licence belonging to identified individuals.

Ikenga added: "The operation was carried out during a visibility and confidence-building patrol following credible intelligence gathered over time concerning the movement of heavily armed suspected members of a secessionist group operating in the aforementioned Toyota Sienna vehicle."

“Preliminary investigations indicate that other members of the gang fled into the surrounding bushes with varying degrees of gunshot injuries.

“Consequently, the Joint Security Team has intensified its operations in the area, including extensive combing and search efforts to apprehend the fleeing suspects and recover additional weapons and operational equipment.”

He reiterated the command's commitment, in collaboration with other security agencies, to sustaining proactive, intelligence-led and results-oriented operations against criminal elements threatening the peace, safety and security of residents across the state.