

NGO advises govt to withdraw soldiers from Onitsha

CLEMENT NWOJI

A non-governmental Global Peace Village Network has urged Federal Government to withdraw anti-Ndigbo soldiers deployed to Onitsha Anambra state and set-up a panel of inquiry to probe crisis rocking the city.

The call is coming on the heels of reports that Onitsha metropolis and its environs had been deserted, as inhabitants were gripped by fear of arrest and detention by a combined team of soldiers and other security agents guarding the city.

It would be recalled that following a fracas between members of Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), the Onitsha metropolis had been engulfed in crisis, leading to the deployment of soldiers by Federal Government on the request of Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State.

The executive director of the Lagos-based NGO, Mr. Bright Ezeocha in a press statement said, the call for withdrawal of soldiers was based on their excesses in handling Onitsha crisis.

In condemning the operations of the security agents, Global Peace Village Network official alleged that about 198 persons were in detention,

“equivalent number taken to Abuja for questioning while over 30 persons had been killed.

He accused the security operatives of gross atrocities such as raping of young girls, women, and looting of various sums of money from their victims.

According to him, “in the Fegge area of Onitsha, last Friday at about 2.00 am, about 20 mobile policemen forcefully entered the residence of one Chief Adolphus Iloegbunam and

raped his wife and two daughters.”

The group also alleged that the soldiers were on vengeance mission to execute reprisal attacks on the Igbo for an alleged killing of indigenes of a particular section of the country residing in Onitsha during last cartoon-induced riots.

Still deploring the activities of soldiers in Onitsha, the conflict resolution group said the panel of inquiry should consist of aggrieved parties involved in the crisis.

PDP senatorial aspirant pledges agric devt

SUNDAY KUDAIISI, Ado-Ekiti

PEOPLES Democratic Party (PDP) Senatorial aspirant in Ekiti State, Chief Dayo Okondo has said agricultural development of the state would be his priority if elected in 2007.

Chief Okondo, who is contesting the Ekiti South senatorial district said he would boost agriculture as a means of poverty alleviation in the district.

Speaking with the people of Ise-Emure and Ikere Ekiti in Ekiti State on Monday, he said ‘his mission of

going to the Senate was to impact on the lives of the people.’

As part of my manifestoes I would embark on poverty alleviation through the provision of small scale and cottage industries for the people.

The dividend of democracy, Okondo said, would be spread across the senatorial district, if eventually elected.

According to him federal presence will be greatly felt in the senatorial district while efforts will be made to improve on achievements of his predecessors in the state.

Chairman of PDP in the zone,