

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE... Heineken's Regional President, Africa and Middle East, Mr Tom de Man (r) congratulating Nigeria Breweries Plc Finance Director, Mr Ton Blum whose organisation recently emerged the Best Cost Saving Company in the Heineken Group.

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trapped in the buil
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Onitsha: MASSOB loses 2 activists

ALPHONSUS NWEZE, Onitsha

AT least, two persons said to be members of Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) were Wednesday killed and another 10 arrested by the joint military/police team in Onitsha, Anambra

State in a renewed offensive against the movement.

The offensive was launched at Iyiowa Odekpe, Ogbaru local government area of the state.

Attention of the Joint Military/Police Operation was attracted following alleged planned abduction of prominent

rich men in Iyiowa Odekpe by people said to be MASSOB members who demanded ransom ranging from N500,000 to N10m.

Although, the Commissioner of Police in the state was not available for comment, a top police officer who pleaded

anonymity confirmed the incident.

Daily Champion however, learnt that people believed to be MASSOB members gave several prominent and rich people including, chairman of a Landlord Association

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of the area, whose name was simply given as Chief Agwocha ultimatum to pay them money within a specific period, or face abduction.

Chief Agwocha refused to comply and mobilized the local vigilante and youths of the area who resisted MASSOB members when they came for his abduction after the expiration of the ultimatum.

MASSOB

MASSOB members were said to have over-powered the local vigilante, leading to the invitation of the Joint/Military Police Team.

When they came, the MASSOB members were said to have left Chief Agwocha's house, but the Joint team stormed the MASSOB base at Iyiowa-Odekpe where at least

two persons were said to have been killed and about ten of their members arrested.

When *Daily Champion* contacted the Commissioner of Police on his cell phone several times, a female voice, said he was too busy to answer the call.

A resident in the area told *Daily Champion* that rich men and landlords in the area have been leaving under fear due to threat by miscreants who allegedly go about extorting money and abducting people who fail to give them money.

Abduction of prominent rich men in Onitsha has become a common feature in several parts of the town with rich and influential men now resorting to hiding.

Only last week Police Sergeant was abducted at Fegge, Onitsha and was later found dead at Silas Works, the following day.

Several rich men in various parts of Onitsha were said to have been abducted, several millions of money and bags of rice extorted from them as a ransom.

Tenants

worried over the sudden notice and are planning to storm the regulatory agency's office to make their plight known.

One of the affected tenants, and a teacher, Mrs Taiwo Adeola told *Daily Champion* that it was a very trying period for them.

She said they were confused over the quit notice after paying rents running into hundreds of thousands of naira.

Some tenants have however, been moving out their

personal effects away from the endangered building.

Our reporters observed that there were visible cracks on the building and some other houses in the same vicinity of the collapsed structure.

Daily Champion recalls that on Wednesday Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State vowed to prosecute the developer of the collapsed building at 56 Bola Street Ebute Metta. The developer is on the run.

Forty people have so far been confirmed dead in the building which collapsed about 7p.m. Tuesday.