

MASSOB: Death-toll now 22

ALPHONSUS
Onitsha,

NWEZE,

THE death-toll yesterday increased to 22 in the clash between security operatives and suspected members of the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) as police in Onitsha, Anambra State recovered 12 more corpses from the River Niger.

Onitsha, the commercial city of the state, it would be recalled, witnessed clashes and sporadic shootings on Tuesday following alleged killing of 10 MASSOB members by the joint security team.

The security operatives from 302 artillery regiment Onitsha, Anambra State, the police command and its Delta

State counterpart allegedly were on special mission to flush out kidnappers at the Enenchele Island who have terrorised the city in the past few months.

Meanwhile, police yesterday said the corpses were recovered from the River Niger after the clash with the kidnappers on the island.

When *Daily Champion* visited the Ose Okwuodu end of the River bank yesterday, three recovered corpses were seen, even as an equal number of suspects were arrested.

Daily Champion gathered that the high casualty was recorded because the suspects were taken unawares at the island.

The security team led by David Onwughai, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and head of Special

Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) stormed the island early Tuesday morning, killing about 10 and arresting several suspects in the bloody duel.

Some witnesses said that they saw soldiers combing the Island which hitherto was occupied by suspected MASSOB members.

The Onitsha Police Area Commander, Rasheed Akintunde, an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), who confirmed the recovery of the corpses, however, was not forthcoming with further information. He merely, directed our correspondent to visit the state police command spokesman, Mr. Fidelis Agbo, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) for detailed information.

He, however, said the