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Curfew declared in Aba as IPOB, soldiers clash

By Linus Effiong, Umuahia & Victor Edozie, Port Harcourt | Publish Date: Sep 13 2017 2:00AM
3 killed in Rivers riot

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Abia State Governor Okezie Ikpeazu

Abia State Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has imposed a three-day curfew in the state, as tension escalates following confrontation between soldiers and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

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The dusk-to-dawn curfew took effect at 6:00 p.m. yesterday and will last till 6 pm Friday.

Ikpeazu made the declaration yesterday at the Government House while addressing newsmen after the Security Council meeting with heads of security agencies in the state.

The governor affirmed the supremacy of the Nigerian Constitution and assured that he would cooperate with the federal government to avert secessionist agitation.

Ikpeazu said he recognises the right of the Army and other security agencies, to carry out their constitutional duties but urged them to go about it with due respect to the human rights of citizens and sanctity of human lives.

He assured that the State Government is committed to the protection of the lives and properties of its citizens and others residing and doing business within the state.

The governor's statement reads:

"Abia State has for the past few days been the focus of security searchlight occasioned by the reported skirmish between some groups in the State, especially Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) with men of the Nigerian Army. Government notes and has observed the frenzy of activities of members of IPOB within Afara – Umuahia, the ancestral home of the leader of IPOB for some months now.

"Government is equally aware of the recent proclamation by the Nigerian Army of Operation Python Dance II within the South – East geopolitical region of Nigeria.

"The operation as declared by the Army is intended to check kidnapping, banditry, assassination, secessionist activities within the region, amongst other forms of criminal activities.

"The recent confrontation between the Nigerian Army and members of IPOB on Sunday, 10th September, 2017, could presumably be attributed to the commencement of the said Operation Python Dance II.



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“The Abia State Government unequivocally states that Abia is a component State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and subscribes to the supremacy of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and all other extant laws.

“While the Government of Abia State recognizes the right of the Nigerian Army and other security agencies, to perform their statutory duty of protection of lives and property of Nigerian citizens, such duties must be carried out within acclaimed Nigerian and international standards of engagement with the civil populace, with due respect to the human rights of citizens and sanctity of human lives.

“Abia State Government is committed to the protection of the lives and properties of its citizens and others residing and doing business within the geographical entity called Abia State.

“Abians and others living within Abia, are advised to remain law abiding and carry on their lawful business without fear, as efforts by Government will be made to reduce friction between the civil populace and military personnel in the State.

“Meanwhile, Aba residents are advised to observe a curfew from 6pm to 6am from today 12/09/2017 to 14/09/2017.

“Persons residing within the State are strongly advised to remain law abiding, while going about their lawful business without fear of molestation, and, not engage in any form of confrontation with military personnel or other security agents.

“The Government recognizes the constitutional Right to Freedom of Movement for all Nigerians, but objects to the influx of people into Abia State for purposes of unsettling the enduring peace in the State.

“Finally, Abia State will co-operate with security agencies to maintain the rule of law and order in the State.”

Soldiers continue patrol

Earlier in day, soldiers involved in the Operation Python Dance embarked on their show of force, patrolling major streets within the city.



The soldiers who were over 200 were carried in 15 armoured personnel carriers (APCs), 20 trucks and six hilux vans.

However, on getting to the Abia Tower where the state NUJ Secretariat is located, three trucks carrying about 20 soldiers packed and the personnel jumped down and went to the state council office where journalists were seated.

The soldiers surrounded the journalists and cocked their rifles and alleged that someone took their pictures when the show of force was on. They slapped some journalists, collected phones and iPad belonging to the journalists and smashed some to the ground and took some away.

Reacting, the State Chairman of the NUJ, Comrade John Emejor said they were not on national assignments where journalists were not required to cover.

Also speaking, member of the National Trustee of the NUJ whose iPad was among those destroyed by the soldiers, Comrade Boniface Okoro described the assault on journalists as unfortunate.

When contacted, the Assistant Director, Army Public Relations Officer, 14 Brigade Ohafia, Major Gbadamosi Oyegoke, dismissed the incident, saying the soldiers could not do such thing.

3 fear dead in Rivers riot Report from Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital said three people were killed and several others injured following the invasion of Oyigbo community in Rivers State by members of the Indigenous People of Biafra.

Trouble started when IPOB members were informed that eight of their members who were on their way to Umuahia on a solidarity visit to their leader, Nnamdi Kalu, were allegedly ambushed and killed by soldiers in Abia State.

The IPOB members who were at Oyigbo were said to have responded to the call made by IPOB second in command, Uche Mefor, who through the Radio Biafra in London, ordered IPOB members to move down to the residence of Nnamdi Kanu in Umuahia and resist any attack by anybody.



An eye witness account said in response to Mefor's call some of the IPOB members in Oyigbo became agitated and started attacking northerners in Oyigbo and its suburb.

The eye witness said the aggrieved IPOB members snatched three rifles from Policemen and burnt down a Police van at Oyigbo junction.

The eye witness said three Hausa residents were killed while business and shop owners were forced to close shop.

He said: "Problem started when IPOB members in Oyigbo heard that their members travelling to Umuahia were ambushed and killed by Soldiers. On hearing the news the IPOB members became riotous and started attacking all the Hausa residents"

"They will order any Vehicle that was coming to Oyigbo to stop and ordered all the occupants of the Vehicle to come down and indentify themselves. All the occupants that were identified as Hausa were lynched.

"At the Oyigbo Express, a Hilux van belonging to the Police was burnt down while traders from Northern parts of the country closed their shops and ran for safety, with some running to the Oyigbo Police Station."

Trucks coming from the north were set ablaze just as IPOB members set burn fire on the major road.

When contacted the spokesman of 6 Division of the Nigerian Army, Col. Aminu Iliyasu, said soldiers did not stop IPOB members from travelling to Abia State.

Rivers State Police Command Public Relation Officer, DSP Nnamdi Omoni said the command is investigating to find what actually happened.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) also reported there was fighting involving members of IPOB in Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers.

An eyewitness, who simply identified himself as Frank, told NAN that the incident left many injured from both sides.



He said the incident started when the suspected members of IPOB gathered at Timber Junction awaiting other members to join a procession to Aba, Abia.

“A deadly confrontation immediately ensued between IPOB members and soldiers and ultimately led to some members venting their anger on the Hausa community in the area,” he said.

Another eyewitness, Ibiere Tamuno, said that several properties were destroyed during the clash.

According to her, the clash began around 1 p.m. and lasted few hours before the intervention of the army, police and other security agencies.

Col. Aminu Illiyasu confirmed the clash and added that troops were deployed to restore law and order in the area.

“We learnt that some IPOB members disturbed the peace by attacking the Hausa community and threatening to burn down a mosque in Oygibo Local Government Area in Rivers.

“We are yet to confirm if anyone was injured or killed during the clash but be assured that normalcy is currently being restored to the area.

“I am still awaiting the full report of event and as such details are still sketchy at the moment,” he said.

Iliyasu said deployment of troops to the area was unconnected to Operation Python Dance, currently on-going in five states of the Southeast zone.

Meanwhile the south-south and south east coordinator of Arewa Consultative Forum, Alhaji Musa Saidu has called on the Hausa community resident in Rivers State to remain calm.

He also called on the law enforcement agents to protect lives and properties of Hausa residents in Oyigbo.

Curfew , Aba , IPOB , soldiers , clash

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