

# MASSOB denies report on **alleged killing of members**

**N**O fewer than 12 bodies suspected to be those of some members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) were on Wednesday seen floating on the River Niger at Elenchele Island.

The bodies were discovered after a bloody clash between the members of MASSOB and a joint military/police task force last Tuesday morning at Onitsha.

The victims were said to have jumped into the river as the battle raged, resulting to several casualties and deaths around the alleged MASSOB hide-out.

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*From Uzoma Nzeagwu,  
Awka*

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Some of the deaths had resulted from bullet wounds while the rest had died by drowning in an attempt to escape from the encounter.

But MASSOB authorities have denied the reports, saying their members were neither involved in nor had been part of the alleged shoot-out.

According to an eyewitness account, members of the movement had relocated to the Island from Akpaka Forest where they had allegedly been involved in violent crimes that included incessant kidnapping, abductions

and arm robbery.

"As a result, security operatives comprising soldiers and policemen, launched a manhunt for the culprits which have been in progress since early this year.

It would be recalled that the state Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, Mrs. Ego Uzoezie and her son, as well as the Provost of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Dr. Josephat Okoye, were abducted sometime this year.

Also abducted was a female police officer, Mrs. Philo Mba (ASP), with her two kids and four students of the college.