

MASSOB's Sit-at-home Order: 6 Die In Onitsha, Residents In Part Compliance

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THREE members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) were reported to have died, Saturday, when their bus somersaulted and crashed at Modebe Avenue, Onitsha, as they attempted to evade arrest by military personnel.

There was total compliance on the sit-at-home order by the group in Awka and its environs. This crippled commercial activities and also left commuters stranded.

An eyewitness said some MASSOB members in a bus were monitoring and enforcing the order in Onitsha when they sighted a military patrol van.

Another account by MASSOB's Director of Information, Uchennna Madu, said, three members of the group, Sunday Idum, Emeka Ibe and Okechukwu Okolo, were shot dead by soldiers at Bida Road, Onitsha, while five others were critically injured and are receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital.

He said that three unconfirmed members were also shot dead at the bridgehead in Onitsha, while four others were arrested by security operatives.

Madu said: "We view the thousands of Army, Police, SSS and Civil Defence Personnel patrolling the streets on the cities of Biafraland as an act of cowardice. They are jittery over MASSOB's activities. The level of compliance from Ndigbo on the MASSOB order shows that no mountain can stop our move to freedom and we know that we must achieve our aim."

Few people came out on the streets. Commercial buses and motorcycles that operated had few passengers and most roads were deserted.

The Eke Awka market and others, like Enugwu Ukwu, Nimo, Abagana, Nibo remained closed.

Vehicular movement along Enugu-Onitsha Expressway and Awka-Old Road was reduced to a trickle. Those that plied Awka metropolis, including Zik Avenue, Arthur Eze and Works Road were predominantly private vehicles.

A trader in Awka, Chika Ibe, said the action is to inform the world on the plight of Ndigbo who are being slaughtered in large numbers under the watchful eye of the federal government.

"It is a struggle for freedom. It is this kind of killings that caused the civil war. I lost a brother, Marcel

Nwaenyi and Matthew Muolokwu in Yobe State. I am not happy. This is not one Nigeria,” he said.

In Abia State life continued normally. Business ventures opened and people moved about without molestation.

Members of MASSOB went underground and no trace of them was reported in any part of the state, as at the time of filing this report.

The state police command had on Friday patrolled the streets of Aba and Umuahia and other parts of the state in their anti-riot vehicles in a display of readiness to quell any threat by the group.

The state government had also warned against any form of illegal protest by any group, including MASSOB. It vowed to protect law-abiding citizens that would be harassed while engaging in their legitimate businesses. It also warned MASSOB against embarking on any unlawful act.

The order in Enugu recorded partial success.

The main market, the new market and Kenyetta market opened for business, though many of the shops were under lock. Few people were seen making purchases.

In some areas in Nsukka, members of the group blocked major roads and set tyres on fire.

Heavily armed policemen, as early as 5am yesterday, started patrolling the nooks and crannies of the state, dismantling blockades put up by the group.

In Ebonyi State the Abakpa market opened. There was little vehicular and human traffic on some popular roads, like Sam Egwu Way, Afikpo Road, Ezza Road and Kpiripki-Mile 50 Avenue.

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