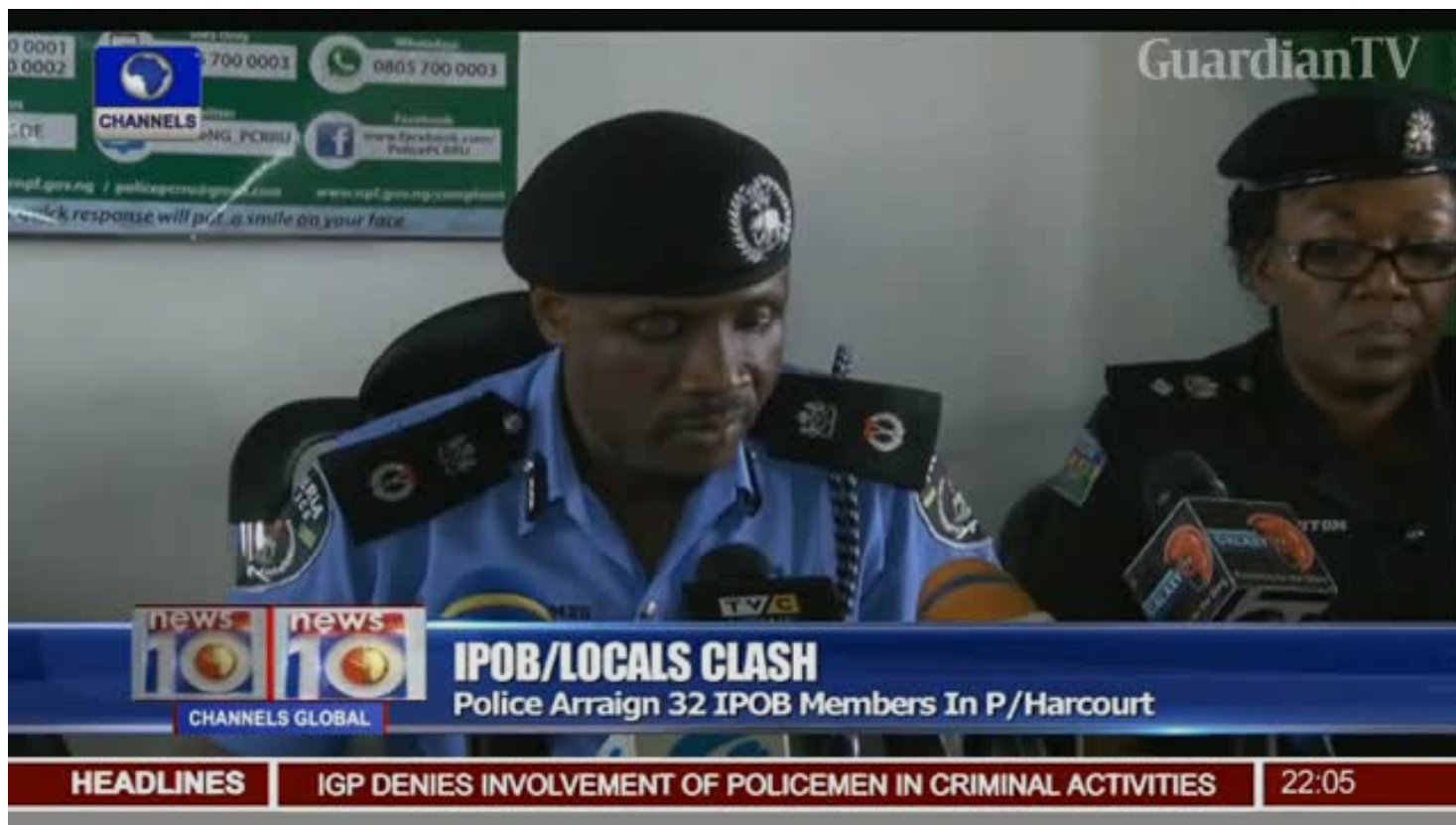


Force arraigns 32 IPOB members in Rivers

By Kelvin Ebiri, Ann Godwin (Port Harcourt) and Maria Diamond (Lagos) | 15 September 2017 | 4:20 am



- Legal practitioner decries alleged maltreatment of apologists
- Islamic body flays onslaught

The Rivers State Police Command has arraigned 32 members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) who were arrested on Tuesday following attacks on Police officers and Hausa residents in Oyigbo Local Council of the state.

The Police had earlier arrested 23 members of the group, after which they were dispersed from the area by security personnel. But the IPOB members regrouped shortly after and attacked the Mobile Policemen at Oyigbo Junction, killing a Police Sergeant identified as Steven Daniel attached to 19 PMF, injuring two and setting a patrol vehicle ablaze resulting to the arrest of nine other members on Wednesday.

The State Commissioner of Police, Zaki Ahmed, assured that the suspects would face the full weight of the law if found guilty at the end of their trial to serve as deterrent to others.

Meanwhile, a constitutional lawyer and author, Sebastine Hon (SAN), has lamented the dehumanising treatment of Biafra apologists by the Nigerian Army. He said in a statement that it was disappointing that the Nigerian Army would condescend to the level of flogging its hapless captives and compelling them to submerge themselves in thick mud.

His words: “The video which has gone viral on the Internet, showing most dehumanising treatment of persons suspected to be Biafra apologists, is horrible and horrifying.

“I could not believe my eyes when I first saw the video and I almost became a psychological wreck when I attempted seeing it again. What that video has depicted the Nigerian Army doing is condemnable in all ramifications. Not even prisoners of war are treated that way,” he said.

He, therefore, urged Igbo leaders, politicians and traditional leaders to not just speak up against separatism but should constructively engage the agitators on the need for them to see the futility of their action, as a stitch in time saves nine.

However, the Rivers State Council of Islamic Affairs has condemned the killing of Muslims in Oyigbo Local Council of the state on Tuesday. The State Islamic leader and Vice President General of the body, Nasir Awhelebe Uhor, told newsmen that although the Igbo have the right to agitate but he condemned what he described as continuous attacks on Muslim communities and their mosque by the Igbo.

“We know the Igbo have right for any form of agitations whatsoever but the unprovoked attacks on Muslims by the Igbo in Rivers State and not even the Rivers people is highly condemnable.

“IPOB protest has in the past targeted Muslims and their mosques and it is quite disheartening,” he said. He, however, charged the state government to find a lasting solution to the series of attacks on law-abiding Muslims in the state by IPOB supporters.