

IPOB's prayer rally paralyses businesses in Anambra

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As group denies the alleged killing, the beheading of police officers

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), yesterday, held a prayer rally for peace, unity and unconditional release of its leader, Nnamdi Kanu from the Department of State Services (DSS) detention, which paralyzed business activities in Onitsha and Nnewi, Anambra State.

Business premises were shut down for several hours in both cities in observance of the prayer sessions, as people withdrew to their homes, while schools, street markets, shops were abruptly closed in Nnewi, moments after they opened for business.

It was the same experience in Onitsha and environs, as schools, major markets and motor parks were closed to observe the special prayer session for Kanu.

In Nnewi, there was pandemonium from about 8:30 a.m when parents and guardians rushed to schools to pick their children, which caused fear among people, many of who did not know the cause of confusion.

However, banks, markets like the Nkwo Nnewi, factories and other offices did not open for businesses in compliance with IPOB's order that Tuesday would be dedicated to prayers.

Also, few people including commercial motorcycle operators, who were sighted on streets moved about in fear, as they suspected one another to be enforcers of the prayer order.

MEANWHILE, the group has denied the involvement of its militant group, the Eastern Security Network (ESN) in the alleged killing and beheading of three police officers, which recorded video went viral on the social media, insisting that it was not responsible for the dastardly act, which many had referred as barbaric.

IPOB had decried Minister for Information, Lai Mohammed, over the allegation, stressing that since inception, it had been and would remain a non-violent movement.

In a statement issued yesterday by its Media and Publicity Secretary, Comrade Emma Powerful, it insisted that IPOB and ESN were a disciplined freedom movement and security outfit and as such barbaric act in viral video was not and would never be part of its modus operandi.

“The attention of the global family of IPOB, led by Nnamdi KANU, has been drawn to the allegation by the Minister for Information, Lai Mohammed that we are responsible for the beheading of security agents in a viral video being circulated.

“The Nigerian Police, DSS, and the Nigerian Army in collaboration with some traitors like Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma and his Ebonyi counterpart, David Umahi, are the ones recruiting and arming hoodlums to perpetrate atrocities in Biafra land to implicate and demonise IPOB.

“They are the brains behind the violence in Biafra land and they have set up armed groups across Biafra land for this single objective to portray the ESN in a bad light.

“We must not forget that since the international community rejected the Nigerian government’s request to designate IPOB as a terrorist group, they have been looking for ways to justify their demand and this is just part of their clandestine plans to tarnish the image of IPOB and ESN,” the statement reads.