

Obi Extends Curfew Again In Onitsha

- **MASSOB Alleges Killing Of 27 By Soldiers**
- **Protests Over Kidnap Of Youth Leader**

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Anambra State Governor, Peter Obi, has for the second time extended the curfew imposed on some major towns in the state till July 16.

The extension is coming on the heels of claims by Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) that 27 of their members were killed by the joint police and army patrol

team at Ugwuagba area of Onitsha.

MASSOB's Deputy Director of Information, Mark Davis, told newsmen in Awka that he personally counted 27 bodies, while 23 others were injured in the onslaught.

"I was at Ugwuagba when the soldiers came. They were shooting everywhere and people were falling. I counted 27 dead bodies myself and about 20 to 23 people were injured while they were

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Obi Extends Curfew

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running away for safety. After that, the soldiers carried some of the dead bodies away to bury and some people who heard about what happened came to carry their identified dead relatives.

"What has happened has shown that the government of Nigeria does not want peace. All the same, we shall mourn our dead colleagues who the soldiers killed very soon and they will be mourned with coffins in Onitsha, Asaba and Awka to show the world how innocent and defenceless citizens were killed by the Nigeria Police and soldiers", he claimed.

But reacting to the allegation in his fourth broadcast since what has now been popularly referred to as the Onitsha mayhem started, Obi said the curfew would now end July 16.

The development was to ensure lasting peace was achieved in the area, he disclosed.

The governor pleaded with residents to report cases of misconduct by the joint task force to the appropriate authorities.

Said he: "As for the reported cases of abuse on the part of security agencies, government assures all and sundry that due investigations will be conducted and perpetrators (if any) promptly brought to book. Most importantly, everyone is enjoined to help us by filing honest and accurate reports with emphasis on the nature of the indignities suffered, the place and time of occurrence, including the specific security agency accused of being culpable".

Obi, however, noted that "our investigations have revealed that a lot of the claims and allegations

bordering on the excesses of law enforcement agencies are exaggerated or unfounded. They are simply aimed at rubbishing government's concern for the security of the good people of Anambra State".

President Olusegun Obasanjo, he announced, was in agreement with his government's position directing members of NARTO, MASSOB, Bakassi Boys, Anambra Vigilante Service and all other such organisations to vacate the markets, motor parks and other public places forthwith.

Meanwhile, Onitsha youths, yesterday, protested the alleged abduction of their president in the area by unknown persons. The youths, who chanted war songs, demanded the release of their leader.

Failure to secure the release of their leader, they warned, would attract a fresh crisis that would make the three-week-old Onitsha battle child's play.

Obi, who also confirmed the protest, said the youths had petitioned him.

The alleged missing youth leader was identified as Sydney Igweike.

The circumstances surrounding the kidnap were not clear as at the time of filing this report.

Also, yesterday, Chairman of the Presidential Committee on the Onitsha Mayhem, Peter Agure, and his committee members arrived Anambra State to commence a probe into the origin of the crisis.

Agure disclosed that they were to ascertain what led to the jailbreak in Onitsha Prisons, identifying those involved in the arson.

He added that the committee had held meetings with the police command.

He, however, demanded a secure place for people willing to testify to do so.