

MASSOB ACCUSES POLICE OF KILLING SEVEN MEMBERS IN DELTA

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Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has accused Delta State Police Command of killing seven of its members in two separate raids allegedly carried out jointly on Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning by anti-riot policemen and local vigilante operatives in the state.

According to the group, the raid started at the Upper Iweka area of Onitsha, Anambra State, on Monday, with the alleged arrest and detention of one Ndubuisi Nwosu, a MASSOB chieftain now believed to be detained in Cell 4 at the Anambra State Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) Headquarters, Awkuzu, and spread to Delta State where the latest onslaught allegedly took place.

MASSOB's accusation was contained in a statement in Onitsha on Thursday.

It was signed by Mazi Chris Mocha, Media Assistant to the movement's leader, Ralph Uwazuruike.

The statement was entitled: '7 MASSOB members shot dead, 102 arrested, several others sustain bullet injuries as a combined team of policemen/local vigilante raid MASSOB Delta Regional office.'

Mocha alleged that after the Tuesday evening raid at the MASSOB regional office at Omelugboma in Oshimili Local Government Area of the state, during which the seven members were shot dead, a similar operation was repeated in the early hours of Wednesday.

The statement also alleged that the two separate operations were led by Delta State Commissioner of Police, Ikechukwu Aduba, who instructed his men to open fire on the defenceless MASSOB members who were at the time of the incident holding their weekly meeting.

It also alleged that the second operation early on Wednesday morning involved house-to-house search and massive arrests of the MASSOB members.

In the incidence, the statement said, "Seven persons were shot dead on the spot, while over 96 others sustained various degrees of injuries arising from bullet wounds."

The statement further claimed that "those who died on the spot included Luke Okonta, Nathaniel Okosieme, Ephraim Okocha, Okey Innocent, Akaliese Aniemena, Joseph Oroni and Miss Blessing Uwechue."

It identified those arrested as Emeka Okafor, Regional Administrator of MASSOB for Oshimili North; Francis Onuigbo, Chukwuemeka Izogo, Ndubuisi Ezeocha, Andrew Nwifuru, Ikechukwu Okpe, Ifeanyi Ugwu, Samuel Uyo, Chinedu Ekwunife, Philip Chukwu, Odinaka Nkwuda, Samuel Okoha and 91 others.

MASSOB therefore demanded immediate release of its arrested members and the corpses of the deceased or to charge them to court within the period prescribed by the law.

In another development, at least one person was feared killed and two others injured at a market in Uga, Aguata Local Government area of Anambra State following a clash between the Anambra State Task Force Agency (ASTA) and truck drivers in the area.

Trouble reportedly started on Thursday when the task force stormed the market on a road decongestion exercise but the truck drivers who had packed their trucks along the market road insisted that they cannot move out of the road.

As a result of the disagreement state Commissioner for Transport, Chike Ohamobi, issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the truck drivers to remove their vehicles or face government's wrath.

It was in the midst of the disagreement that a free-for-all ensued leading to several casualties.

An eyewitness said one person died in the fracas.

But the commissioner told reporters that nobody died.

He, however, confirmed that some people, including an ASTA staff and truck drivers sustained injury while the angry mob burnt one of the buses belonging to the task force.

"Nobody died, the only thing that happened was that a member of ASTA was injured as well as one of the truck drivers and our bus was burnt by the angry mob," Ohamobi said.

"We as a government cannot condone such lawlessness. It is unacceptable and we are going to reinforce security agents to go and flush them out while we make arrangement to have a permanent police post there," he added.

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