

14 feared dead in IPOB Southeast shutdown

THERE were killings in parts of the Southeast yesterday as residents were forced to stay at home following the call by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Major towns, markets and streets were deserted despite security agencies urging people to go about their normal business.

IPOB had announced a sit-at-home to protest the arrest and detention of its leader Nnamdi Kanu.

It said the 6 am to 6 pm "stay-at-home" would be observed every Monday "until Kanu is freed".

It began yesterday, leaving death and destruction in its wake.

Security agents had a busy day; they clashed in some places with suspected IPOB members who were enforcing the call.

No fewer than 14 persons were feared killed while hoodlums attacked commercial vehicles and residents.

The police could not confirm some of the reported killings.

From Nwanosike Onu, Awka; Sunny Nwankwo, Umuahia; Chris Njoku, Owerri; Damian Duruiheoma, Enugu; Ogochukwu Anioke, Abakaliki and Emma Elekwa, Onitsha

Kanu is facing charges of terrorism, treasonable felony management of an unlawful society and illegal possession of firearms.

His trial at the Federal High Court in Abuja will resume on October 21 before Justice Binta Nyako.

He remains in the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS).

1 Killings, violence rock Southeast

There were gunshots in the early hours of yesterday at Nkwogwu in Aboh Mbaise LGA of Imo State.

Two buses conveying passengers from Umuahia to Owerri were intercepted by gunmen and set ablaze.

Two persons could not escape; they were burnt. Two drivers were shot dead.

There were shootings at Isia-

la-Amadim village in Amaifeke, Orlu LGA, where gunmen chased a man in his car into the home of a widow.

The hoodlums took the man and his vehicle away and set the house ablaze.

In Anambra, two naval officers were feared killed following a clash with suspected IPOB members.

The incident occurred at Awkuzu in Oyi LGA.

Gunshots were still being fired in the area as of 5 pm yesterday.

Eyewitnesses said the gunmen in five different vehicles stormed where the security operatives were stationed and opened fire on them.

Police spokesman, Ikenga Tochukwu, said an investigation was ongoing.

Two suspected IPOB enforcers were feared killed on Ugwuorie/Nnewi road in Ozubulu, Ekwusigo LGA in Anambra.

The two were said to have been shot dead by a military patrol team approaching the spot where a roadblock was

mounted.

Two other residents were feared killed in Nnewi when three buses were set ablaze in the industrial city.

The casualties were recorded during a confrontation at the Izuchukwu junction.

An eyewitness said one of the deceased was the leader of IPOB's security arm, the Eastern Security Network (ESN); the other was a commercial motorcyclist.

The eyewitness said: "It was about 7 am when some IPOB members came out to enforce the sit-at-home order and in the process blocked the major roads in the town."

"Some soldiers stormed the area to clear the way, which led to an altercation between them and the IPOB members."

A resident said two bodies were seen on the road.

Also yesterday, gunmen attacked the Nnewi Police Area Command, carting away some arms.

The hoodlums engaged policemen in a gun duel having stormed the area at noon in seven vehicles.

The exchange of gunfire lasted for about an hour, according to eyewitnesses.

It was learnt that the gunmen overpowered the policemen and carted arms away. No life was lost.

"A security reinforcement arrived at the scene shortly after the gunmen had left," an eyewitness said.

In Ebonyi, a woman was shot at the Aguogboriga axis suspected robbers.

The victim was shot in the eye after being dispossessed of her belongings.

There were unconfirmed reports that three persons were killed in Obiozara in Ohaozara LGA.

The police could not be reached for comments.

Forced compliance

Most residents in the Southeast complied with the sit-at-home directive for fear of being harmed.

In Enugu, most residents wanted to go to work or open their shops but there were no vehicles to convey them.

Some who came out quickly

returned as news filtered that hoodlums were having a field day.

Some were left stranded at various bus stops as commercial bus drivers and tricycle operators withdrew their services.

Traders, workers and pupils, especially those who were to write General Mathematics and Woodwork in the National Examination Council (NECO) Senior School Certificate Examination as well as travellers were the most affected.

At Ogbete, Mayor and Gariki markets, some traders were afraid to open their shops.

Some policemen were urging them to open their shops, but the traders were not convinced.

In Ebonyi, eateries, telecommunications companies and shopping malls in Abakaliki, the state capital, did not open. Banks on Ogoja and Afikpo roads did not open.

The International Market in the capital city was deserted. Filling stations were shut. The popular mechanic village was deserted.