

# Gunmen shot dead three policemen, abduct priest, in Imo

• *ESN deny killing two brothers in Abia*

**T**HREE policemen were on Saturday reportedly killed by gunmen at Ngor Okpalla Junction in Ngor-Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State.

The gunmen, according to reports, stormed the junction in the early hours of Saturday, and shot sporadically at the policemen on duty at a checkpoint, killing three of them and causing serious stampede within the area.

Some sources who spoke to our reporter said that the hoodlums operated on a motorbike but after shooting the policemen, hurriedly zoomed off to an unknown destination.

The source said: "The bandits took the policemen unawares and opened fire on them while they were on duty at Okpala Junction. Three of them were gunned down while others ran away."

"This is the same junction where five policemen were shot dead about three weeks ago. This junction has become a danger zone for police officers. The govern-

Chris Njoku, Owerri

ment of Imo State needs to do something drastic about it because it is the leadway to the Sam Mbakwe Cargo Airport."

The incident, it was gathered, had crippled commercial activities in the ever busy airport junction as pedestrians and traders deserted the area for fear of being killed.

Imo State Police Public Relations Officer, Henry Okoye, confirmed the killing.

"Yes, it is true. We have commenced a manhunt to bring to book the perpetrators of the dastardly act. We are assuring members of the public that we are going to do everything possible to arrest the killers. And I can assure you normalcy will soon return to Imo State."

Prior to the Ngor Okpalla Junction incident, gunmen had in another area of the state abducted a priest, Rev. Fr Jude Kingsley Maduka of the Catholic Diocese

of Okigwe.

The cleric was reportedly kidnapped on Friday evening at his new adoration site at Ogii Village in Okigwe Local Government Area of the state while on inspection at his new site.

Rev. Fr. Maduka who was ordained on September 22, 2012, is the parish priest of Christ the King Parish, Ezinnachi/Ugwaku, Okigwe LGA, Imo State.

"He was kidnapped from his new adoration site at Ogii Village in Okigwe LGA while on inspection at the new site," Rev. Fr Iwuanyanwu said on Saturday.

"We solicit your fervent prayers that he may come back to us safe and sound," he added.

Meanwhile, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has denied involvement in the murder of two brothers identified as Aaron Onuoha and Obinechi Samuel Onuoha in their compound in Aba, Abia State by

gunmen.

The two brothers were gruesomely assassinated in their family house at Ohanku by Udoka Street/Amucha, off Ngwa Road last Wednesday morning.

While condemning the act, the separatist group through its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, said on Saturday that the group knew nothing about the assassination.

He said in a statement "The gruesome murder of these brothers and the incessant killings in the Southeast are perpetrated by criminals that were unfortunately created and sponsored by politicians, DSS, and the Police to make the Biafra struggle unattractive to our people."

"The murdered brothers had no problem with ESN operatives or IPOB. You cannot go after innocent Biafrans to the point of killing them in cold-blood. We condemn such barbarism in our territory."