

Two die in pro-Biafran agitators, soldiers' clash

January 19, 2016



Members of the Indigenous People of Biafra protesting at the Alaba International Market in Lagos...

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At least, two persons were feared dead in Aba, the commercial capital of Abia State, on Monday following a protest by members of the Indigenous People of Biafra.

The pro-Biafran supporters had defied several warnings by the state government and security agencies against protesting the continued detention of the Director, *Radio Biafra*, Mr. Nnamdi Kanu.

It was gathered that the group marched through major roads in the city, chanting solidarity songs in support of their detained leader.

But the protest, it was learnt, turned violent when members of the group attempted to block the Aba-Enugu expressway and were stopped by a combined team of military and police operatives.

According to an eyewitness account, the protesters reportedly regrouped around Saint Michael Road to make bonfires, which attracted the presence of soldiers and policemen again.

It was gathered that the soldiers tried all means to disperse them but they failed. Two persons were reportedly hit by stray bullets in the process of dispersing them.

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Onyeke Udevito, said the combined team of the police and soldiers only dispatched protesters with tear gas.

Udevito, however, denied the knowledge of any casualty and added that 26 protesters were arrested by the police.

The state police spokesperson warned members of the pro-Biafran group to desist from further protest in the city.

Meanwhile, the Rivers State Police Command has warned any secessionist group against engaging in activities that could endanger the lives and property of residents of the state.

The Rivers State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ahmad Mohammad, warned that the command would not tolerate any form of protest, procession or demonstration that could jeopardise the peace being enjoyed in the state.

Mohammad spoke in a telephone interview with one of our correspondents while reacting to reports that pro-Biafran protesters were planning to stage a protest in Rivers State.

“We will not fail in our duty to ensure that lives and property are protected in the state. Therefore, we are warning against any protest, procession or demonstration that will endanger the lives and property of law abiding citizens in the state,” Mohammad stressed.

He, however, warned that the state police command would not hesitate to arrest any member of a group involved in activities that could lead to the breakdown of law and order.

The state Governor, Chief Nyesom Wike, had on Saturday directed security agents to arrest and prosecute any member of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra or the Indigenous People of Biafra who flouted the ban on illegal processions and demonstrations in the state.

Wike condemned the acts of criminality perpetrated by the pro-Biafran agitators, who capitalised on their protests to unleash mayhem on innocent citizens of the state.

The governor had placed a ban on all forms of street protests, procession and demonstration in November 2015 after two persons were feared killed in Oyigbo and Eleme areas of the state.

In a related development, Reverend Father Samuel Aniebonam, who was last week named as the Chairman of Biafra Independent Electoral Commission by Ralph Uwazuruike for the purpose of conducting and supervising election for offices in his newly-formed Biafra Independent Movement, has rejected the appointment.

He described the purported announcement linking his name with the organisation as “a spurious publication.”

In a statement in Awka, Aniebonam said he was surprised that Uwazuruike could publish such an appointment without seeking his approval and urged the general public to disregard it.

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