

Five feared dead as IPOB attacks catholic priest, others in Anambra

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• A street in Enugu during the sit-at-home protest... on Thursday. Photo: Ogbonna Casmir

Tony Okafor, Awka

Five people were feared killed on Thursday in Anambra State during the sit-at-home protest of the Indigenous People of Biafra.

It was gathered that fracas ensued when some people suspected to be members of IPOB allegedly attacked a catholic priest, identified as Rev. Fr. Festus Eziamaka for attending a morning mass contrary to IPOB's sit-at-home order.

It was gathered that the priest is the vicar of St. Jude's Parish in Nnewi.

Dissatisfied with the way the priest was manhandled, the parishioners it was learnt, challenged his attackers which result in a violent free-for-all.

A source said Eziamaka was attacked with stones and other objects, and his car damaged while he was rushed to the hospital unconscious.

“The man has been identified as a Catholic priest, and he has been rushed to the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, for treatment,” the source said.

When contacted on the telephone, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Mustapha Dandaura, said he was not aware of the development.

He said, “What I know is that there was partial compliance to the sit-at-home order in Onitsha where traders refused to open their shops and banks also refused to open. I’m not aware of any fracas or killing.

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“People are calling me on the telephone to say that five persons were killed and a priest was attacked somewhere in Nnewi. All these cannot be confirmed now.

“I have called the DPOs in those areas to furnish me with what is happening in their areas and they said the places are calm and peaceful.

“Maybe the incident they are talking about has not been reported to the police. If we get information on the matter we shall communicate to you soonest,” the CP stated.

But a Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Celestine Okonkwo, Secretary to the bishop of the area, in a WhatsApp message confirmed the incident.

He said, “Our priest, Fr. Festus Eziamaka, Parish Vicar of St. Jude’s Parish, Nnewi, presently residing at the Bishop House, from where he shuttles everyday to his duties for his parish, was attacked before 6am today (Thursday) on his way to say the first Mass of Ascension for his parish.

“He was attacked and shot by IPOB members who had declared no-movement today. They shot very close to his eyes and beat him up. His vehicle was badly damaged. Thank God, he was rushed to the teaching hospital. The doctors immediately took him to the theatre.”

Okonkwo said his colleague was responding to treatment as he had been stabilised by medical personnel.

Meanwhile, residents of Awka, the Anambra State capital, shunned the IPOB's sit-at-home-order.

Our correspondent, who monitored the incident around the capital, observed that there was vehicular and human movements in the town just as public places were open for business.

The Eke Awka Market, one of the biggest markets in the town was in session, even though the number of traders and customers in the market were limited when compared to what it used to be.

A market leader, who refused to disclose his identity, said the state government handed specific instructions to the market leaders to ensure that the market was open.

He said the reason for the scanty business could be the fear of a possible attack by the Biafran agitators.

Banks were also open in the capital city just as a visit to the state secretariat showed that workers were at their duty post.

The story was, however, different for the commercial city of Onitsha and the industrial town of Nnewi.

In Onitsha, markets were not open, just as the usually busy streets were a ghost of themselves.

In Nnewi, almost all the industries were closed just as the roads remained scanty.

IPOB, in a statement by its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, on Thursday boasted that with the high level of compliance with the sit-at-home protest, it had conquered the South-East and South-South geopolitical zones of the country.

It said, "Any lingering doubt that IPOB is in complete charge of the entire Biafraland has been dispelled by the level of high compliance with the sit-at-home directive issued by the leadership of our great movement.

"The early morning broadcast from our leader in Atlanta Georgia USA at 6am local time in Biafra set the tone for the day. Indications from all quarters points to total compliance across the board

including Yenegoa, Bayelsa State.”

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“We expected our people to comply, but never anticipate the near perfect compliance registered. The respect and humility Biafrans demonstrated today is an indication that Biafra restoration is the singular most important issue in the lives of our people.

“If this level of solidarity with the direction and philosophy of IPOB leadership is sustained in the coming months, the feared Fulanisation agenda of Aso Rock will be successfully repelled.

“We encourage our people to remain steadfast and not allow themselves to be intimidated into disrespecting our war heroes by venturing outside. Today (Thursday) is a truly historic day, our dead soldiers will be proud of us.”

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