

# Eight killed as IPOB's sit-at-home order turns bloody

- Gunmen attack Anambra police area command, kill four cops, cart away weapons
- Two burnt as hoodlums raze five vehicles in Imo attack
- Banks, business premises shut, roads deserted

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**T**HE sit-at-home order handed down to the people of the South-East turned bloody on Monday as hoodlums wreaked havoc in Anambra and Imo states, killing four policemen and four other persons.

Gunmen, who went on a shooting spree in Anambra, attacked a police Area Command in Nnewi axis of the state.

The incident was said to have occurred few hours after a joint security patrol team allegedly killed two persons suspected to be members of the Eastern Security Network/IPOB, who were enforcing the group's sit-at-home directives in area.

## Gunmen attack Anambra Area Command, kill cops, cart away arms

A police officer, who pleaded not to be named, said, "Many policemen were wounded in the attack and were rushed to the hospital. I think four of our men lost their lives in the attack."

"What I'm telling you is unofficial report. The PPRO will brief soonest. It was terrible; these guys (hoodlums) came in seven vehicles.

"There were speculations that the hoodlums came for reprisal following the early morning killing of two persons by unidentified soldiers (joint patrol team) in Nnewi. I didn't know about that incident until we were attacked at the Area Command this (Monday) afternoon."

Another source confirmed that the gunmen came in seven vehicles and overpowered the police personnel on duty, carted away arms and ammunition.

He added, "The gunmen overpowered the police and carted away their arms. By the time reinforcement from the Navy came, the attackers had left, though they were pursued to no avail."

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Ikenga Tochukwu, confirmed the incident to our correspondent in a text message.

Still in Anambra, apart from the four cops that were said to have been killed by hoodlums, two persons were shot dead in Nnewi, while three buses were set ablaze in the area.

A Toyota Camry was seen abandoned on a street near the scene of the crime.

A source said the car was abandoned when the occupant

saw that the hoodlums were advancing towards his direction.

"They were singing and shouting, 'Today is sit-at-home. Anything sighted, even if it's a fly must be destroyed'. There were gunshots around Izuchukwu Park junction around 6am."

When contacted, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Ikenga Tochukwu, confirmed the incident, adding that police operatives had been deployed to the scene.

## Travellers burnt as hoodlums raze five vehicles in Imo attack

Also, five vehicles; three Hummer buses belonging to Libra and Okey Transport companies, a Sienna and a Highlander SUV were set ablaze along the Owerri-Umuahia Road, which was later deserted by motorists.

Scores of the occupants, who were travelling to Lagos and others returning to Imo State from Lagos, escaped with some carrying bullet injuries.

It was learnt that drivers of the commercial vehicles were seriously hit by the attackers.

The incident occurred along the Owerri-Umuahia Road, which was later deserted by motorists.

One of the charred remains of the victims was seen in one of the buses where two persons were suspected to have died.

An elderly man, Pa Johnson, whose house is opposite the scene, told *The PUNCH* that the incident happened around 4:30am.

The octogenarian disclosed that they were jolted by the deafening sound of intermittent gunshots.

He said, "The incident happened around 4:30am. The military came here around 11am. This is disturbing; the people were travellers."

The police spokesperson in the state, Mike Abattam, confirmed the attack when he was contacted.

## Total compliance of sit-at-home order

Meanwhile, there was total compliance to the sit-at-home order in Nnewi and Onitsha areas of the state as banks, shops and markets were under lock and key.

In Awka, the state capital, the major Eke Awka market and banks were shut, but some street shops were opened while vehicular movements were not impeded.

The situation was not different in Imo State, as two travellers were burnt to ashes at Nkwo-Ogwu in the Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area of the state.

In Umuahia, major streets

witnessed scanty movements of human beings and vehicles, while at Aba, there was a total lockdown of movement of both commuters and motorists.

In Aba, Obinna Degree, a businessman and astute politician noted, "We are indoors. At Pauls Road, there is no movement, no keke and no motor on the road."

However, commercial activities came to a standstill on Monday in Owerri, the Imo State capital, as residents complied with the sit-at-home order declared by IPOB.

Banks and other corporate offices, markets failed to open, while only employees of the state and federal governments attended work.

Also, social and commercial activities were grounded in some parts of the Asaba, as Okwe and Akwebulu Oke areas witnessed a total shutdown.

In Abakaliki, the Ebonyi State capital, businesses, including shops, schools and banks, were shut down, on Monday, as residents obeyed the sit-at-home.

## We're intact, our leader's absence notwithstanding, says IPOB

Meanwhile, IPOB said on Monday that there was no crack in its ranks despite the fact that its Leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was currently being detained by the Department of States Services.

Calling on its teeming supporters never to be dissuaded by the antics of those willing to play a spoiler's role, the group observed that Sunday's 'unauthorised' statement was never targeted at discouraging people from observing its sit-at-home order.

IPOB's Director of Media and Publicity, Emma Powerful, stated this in a statement while reacting to the statement issued by Nnamdi Kanu's younger brother, Kanunta Kanu, on Sunday, which countered its planned weekly sit-at-home order in the South-East region.

## No disruption of exams in South-East - NECO

In a related development, the National Examination Council said there was no report of disruption of examination in the South-East due to the sit-at-home order by IPOB.

The council's spokesman, Azeez Sani, disclosed this in an interview with *The PUNCH*.

Sani said, "We have not received any news of any form of disruption whatsoever from the areas you mentioned or any other part of the country. But in case that happens, the council will handle everything appropriately."