

Five die as IPOB, gunmen clash in Anambra

IKENNA OBIANERI

FIVE persons were on Friday night killed during a confrontation with members of the Indigenous People of Biafra at Ihiala, Anambra State.

An eyewitness said the IPOB operatives carried the bodies of the gunmen in a Hilux van and fired some gunshots in the air as they drove towards the Onitsha-Owerri Expressway.

The eye witness said, "The incident happened at Akwa village in Ihiala during a clash between IPOB and unknown gunmen.

"The gunmen have a camp at a place called Oseakwa from where they have been terrorising Ihiala, Okija, Uli and other neighbouring communities.

"For some time now, the gunmen have been disrupting burials and demanding to be settled before any ceremony is organised. They are also the ones

that have been kidnapping people and snatching cars.

"On June 17, IPOB swooped on the gunmen in their camp and five people were killed during the shootout. IPOB operatives loaded the corpses in a Hilux van and paraded them around the villages."

Also on Friday, some people suspected to be members of the Ebubeagu clashed with gunmen at Ihiala during a burial ceremony, although no life was lost.

A source said due to the clash, the burial had to be cancelled and the corpse returned to the mortuary.

"The incident happened at the village called Umuojimaka in Akwa and when the shooting became so much, the family returned the corpse to the mortuary. No new date has been fixed for the burial."

Recently in the same Ihiala, some hoodlums set ablaze a mansion close to Aforigwe market in Ubahuekwem village for

allegedly inviting the police after the man had paid the gunmen to provide security for him during a ceremony in his compound.

Also, the Anambra State Police Command confirmed the killing of one of the leaders of the unknown gunmen in Ihiala.

The name of the killed gunman was given as Innocent Obieke alias Double Lion. The police said three other members of his gang were also neutralised.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Tochukwu Ikenga, who confirmed this to our correspondent in Awka, said the command had reinforced security in the area and environs.

Confirming the security development around Ihiala, Ikenga said, "The Anambra State Police Command has reinforced Ihiala and its environs following a trending video of SUVs and Hilux vehicles carrying young men that were wielding arms to yet unidentified location.