

Two feared killed as Enugu traders protest shops sealing

Raphael Ede, Enugu

NO fewer than two Ogbete Main Market traders were feared killed while others were injured on Wednesday during a protest against the sealing of shops at the market by the Enugu State Government.

Governor Peter Mbah-led state government on Monday sealed no fewer than 106 shops and two banks on Monday for refusing to open for business in deference to the sit-at-home order by the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra.

The governor had in June banned IPOB's sit-at-home in the state, saying it was hurting the economy.

The government warned that businesses that fail to open in the name of sit-at-home risked being permanently shut.

The governor, accompanied by state officials, went round the capital city on Monday to monitor compliance, sealing 106 shops and two banks that failed to open for business.

It was gathered that trouble started on Wednesday when traders whose shops were sealed told the market leadership that their shops must be unsealed or they would not allow those unaffected to do business.

A trader in the market, who gave his name as Gerald Ede, told our correspondent that the insistence of traders that other shops would not open led to a protest.

"Shortly, soldiers and hundreds of policemen were deployed to the market by the governor. They came in and started shooting, chasing people out and locking their shops.

"In the confusion, soldiers shot two traders dead inside the market. I escaped unhurt by only the grace of God," he said.

A police officer, who confirmed the incident, described the situation as unfortunate.

The officer told our correspondent that the governor ordered security agencies to ensure that no trader was seen

inside Ogbete Main Market. He said the situation degenerated when traders resisted the move by security agents to drive them out.

The police officer said, "I am in the market with my DPO, soldiers and so many other security agents. Ogbete Main Market has been shut down. There's no single soul in the

Jonathan denies picking nominee for Tinubu cabinet

Daniels Igoni, Yenagoa

FORMER President Goodluck Jonathan has denied an allegation that he is seeking to nominate Bayelsa State candidate to make President Bola Tinubu's ministerial list.

The ex-President said this in reaction to the Bayelsa State All Progressives Congress Elders Council which made the claim on Tuesday.

The chairman of the group, Michael Adomokeme, had condemned the alleged attempt by Jonathan to produce a minister after actively and publicly supporting the candidate of his Peoples Democratic Party, Atiku Abubakar, in the February 25 presidential election.

The group accused Jonathan of wanting to reap where he did not sow.

But the former president, in a statement by his Special Adviser, Ikechukwu Eze, on Wednesday, described the claim by the group as 'strange' and 'untrue'.

Eze said, "Our attention has been drawn to a strange allegation in the media claiming that former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is seeking to nominate a minister from Bayelsa State for the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"We would have ordinarily ignored the falsehood, given that neither the authors who are shadowy characters nor their nebulous organisation, Bayelsa APC Elders Council, which is unknown to the structure of the ruling party, the All Progressives

market as I speak to you.

"I learnt that two traders were shot dead by soldiers. I am inside the market but I can't confirm the killing; but I heard about it."

The state Police Public Relations Officer, Daniel Ndukwe, confirmed that there was a protest over the sealing of businesses by the government.

Congress, command any credibility. However, we have continued to receive calls from friends and well-wishers who are concerned that some innocent Nigerians might be misled by the duplicitous fabrication; hence, this rebuttal.

"We state without equivocation that the publication is false, malicious, preposterous and unnecessary. It is instructive that the authors of the hackery, who are quick to spin such unfounded narrative, could neither provide any clarification on the nature of the alleged consultations nor name the beneficiary of the envisaged nomination."

Eze said he guessed the group misinterpreted Jonathan's recent visit to Tinubu in Aso Rock, "even when the former President, who is ECOWAS mediator in Mali and Chairman

Ndukwe, who spoke to our correspondent on the telephone, said he could not confirm if any trader was killed.

"There is a protest by traders in Ogbete Market and police, soldiers and other sister security agencies have been deployed in the market forestall a breakdown of law and order," the PPRO said.

of ECOWAS Council of the Wise, clearly explained that he had gone to brief President Bola Tinubu, who has just been elected as the Chairman of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, on the recent developments in the sub-region."

"The publication is simply a tactless ramble by some benighted politicians seeking to draw attention to their hopeless plight by raising malicious allegations against the former President. Howbeit, they have failed in this bid because most astute politicians within and outside Bayelsa State are well aware of Jonathan's selfless and exemplary disposition to politics and statesmanship. Such people will never subscribe to the cheap blackmail from the so-called Bayelsa APC Elders Council," he said.

14 directors fail Unity School principals' exam

Deborah Tolu-Kolawole, Abuja

FOURTEEN out of the 65 directors seeking to become principals of Unity Schools have failed the first round of the qualifying examinations, *The PUNCH* has learnt.

Our correspondent had earlier reported that 65 directors sat the Computer-Based Test, which was held on Tuesday.

The PUNCH reports that Nigeria's 110 Unity Schools include special schools for the gifted spread across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The Federal Ministry of Education, in an earlier memo,

explained that it had activated a selection process to replace principals in Unity Schools who have spent six years and above in office.

The two-stage process has a written exam and oral interview.

A memo signed by the Director, Human Resources, FME, David Gende, which was sighted by our correspondent on Wednesday, said the 51 directors who passed the written test will be interviewed on July 28 at 8 am.

In the list attached to the memo, it was revealed that a total of 51 directors would be examined, indicating a drop-down from the 65 earlier shortlisted.