

Go after only soldiers' killers in Abia, LP tells military

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File photo: Soldiers

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The leadership of the Labour Party on Sunday urged the Nigerian Army to target the killers of the five slain soldiers deployed to Abia State over the Biafran Day celebration and not innocent citizens following the military's determination to avenge their killing.

The appeal was made in a statement issued in Abuja by the National Publicity Secretary of LP, Obiora Ifoh.

The military had confirmed the killing of five soldiers in Abia State during Thursday's sit-at-home called by the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra to mark Biafra Heroes Day in the South-East.

The military vowed to retaliate the killing of the soldiers.

The LP, in a statement on Sunday by Ifoh, however, appealed to the military to go only after the perpetrators to avoid any collateral damage on the side of the innocent and law-abiding citizens.

The LP also commended Governor Alex Otti for placing a N25m bounty on the perpetrators of the heinous crime.

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He said, “While we commiserate with the Chief of Army Staff, Maj. Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja, and the entire military command on the unfortunate incident and pray for the repose of the soul of the gallant heroes, we are, however, worried by the threat by the military command to avenge the death of the soldiers. We urge the military to be professional in their approach to vengeance in order to avoid further loss of lives.

“Unknown gunmen or whatever names they chose to bear do not deserve to be spared. They have caused untold and unnecessary pains to the South-East and deserve to be wiped out but we urge that the military’s response to this latest act of provocation must be measured and targeted at these elements alone.

“Abia has remained the most peaceful state in the whole of South East obviously due to the untiring efforts of the state government to rid the state of all criminal elements in the last year, the party, therefore, thinks this latest attack was a deliberate act to conflagrate the state with actions capable of attracting reprisal from the military.

We also urge the military not to allow this unfortunate incident to recede progress.

“The military’s threat to retaliate with a fierce response and to bring ‘overwhelming military pressure on the group to ensure their total defeat’ is of a fact, in order. But it is a threat with the potential of engendering a humanitarian crisis if the retaliation turns out to be occupational, indiscriminate, and unrestricted. News emanating from Aba and its environment is scary as youths and young men are reported to have started deserting the area for fear of their lives. Meanwhile, the perpetrators must have most certainly fled from the area leaving the Innocent and the vulnerable at the mercy of the military.”