

6 killed as IPOB sit-at-home grounds South East

NO fewer than six persons were reportedly killed in separate incidents as the sit-at-home directive by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) took a bloody turn in Nkwogu, Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area of Abia and Nnewi, Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, yesterday.

Following abduction of Nnamdi Kanu in Kenya by security agents in collaboration with Nigeria government and arraignment in a Federal High Court in Abuja for continuation of his trial by the Department of State Services (DSS), the pro-Biafran group declared sit-at-home for every Monday until his release.

In Abia, the exercise witnessed the setting ablaze of three passengers in a transport company vehicle while the driver was shot by gunmen.

Police spokesperson, Michael Abattam, said the incident was under investigation.

In Nnewi, eyewitnesses said they heard gun shots at Izuchukwu Junction as early as 6am and found bodies of two young men. But nobody could explain who shot them.

Sources said one of them was suspected to be a leader of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), and the other, a commercial motorcyclist in the area.

Police Public Relations Officer in the state, DSP Ikenga Tochukwu, said he did not have details: "Yes, something happened in Nnewi but the information is still sketchy. There is a little bonfire on the road but the police have removed them. We are still monitoring the situation. Police presence is everywhere."

The sit-at-home order witnessed partial compliance in Imo State as most shops and other public places were initially under lock and key in the early hours of 7 and 8 am. But some shops later opened for business.

At Orlu, believed to be the epicentre of crisis in recent times, roads such as Banana junction, Okporo among others were deserted and shops closed. Except for vehicles of security operatives patrolling the roads, the roads were deserted. All banks were also shut.

At the Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, Owerri, three airlines had touched down at press time but the passengers remain stranded as there were no airport taxis or commercial motorcycles to take them to their various destinations. The roads leading to the airport were a shadow even as vendors selling around the airport did not turn up for business. The popular Douglas road where the Eke-Ukwu Owerri is located was partially open for business.

In Anambra, the order was largely observed in Awka, the state capital as banks, markets including the popular Eke Awka, filling stations and others were closed while most roads

were deserted.

Although security personnel were sighted in some locations, most people stayed indoors either in obedience or out of fear of the unknown.

In Onitsha, markets, banks, filling stations and other business premises were closed. It was also the same in Ekwulobia and other urban centres in the state.

Police spokesperson, Tochukwu, told Daily Sun that the police provided adequate security to enable people go about their lawful businesses without fear.

"Our patrol vehicles are everywhere. Shops are a little bit open. Some that did not open were sitting in front of their shops. But our men are still patrolling around the cities."

•Masked men invade Enugu communities

In parts of Enugu-Ezike, Igbo-Eze North Local Government Area, scores were injured, robbed and valuables destroyed as masked men on motorcycles invaded Ogrute, headquarters of Igbo-Eze North LGA smashed tables, looted shops and injured anyone on sight.

At Nkwo Aji community being a market day, the masked men descended on traders who came earlier to display their wares and attacked everyone with various weapons.

People of the area who normally sell palmwine were counting losses as suspected IPOB members descended on the palm wine tappers' sellers at their section smashed gallons of palm wine and beat up sellers as everyone ran for safety.

At the old Nkwo market, they also attacked a patent medicine store, broke the sliding glass shielding and scattered various drugs. A muslim faithful residing in the area popularly known as Momoh was also attacked as they damaged his motorcycle.

There were also reports of attack on hapless residents and shop owners in Isugwu, Okpo, Imufu and Onicha-Enugu communities in the area.

A businessman in Ogrute was also attacked in his farm at Imufu where they beat up the wife, struck the man with iron rod and collected the cash on him.

Traders at the Nkwo Aji market were helpless as the market was deserted while those who normally come to purchase or sell perishable goods on the Nkwo market day were stranded.

•Abia, Nsukka grounded

Economic and social activities were paralyzed in Enugu as the entire Coal City witnessed the crippling of government and private businesses as civil servants (both federal and state) and public servants shun offices just as markets, banks, fuel stations, motor parks and even eat-



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo (right) with Vietnam Ambassador to Nigeria, Luong Kuoe, during his visit to State House, Abuja, yesterday.

eries did not open for business.

Schools in the state were not left out as some of them, especially private ones, sent SMS to parents and guardians not to bring their children and wards to schools.

Not even the confusion in the discordant voices in IPOB were able to avert the lockdown, as people who thought it would not work and came out early were disappointed as they waited in vain for vehicles, while those who drove returned when it was obvious they were the only people on the road.

The situation also affected the media as newspapers vanished from known newsstands. At the popular Obiagu where newspapers are sold, everywhere were deserted and children turned the streets to football field.

A fruit seller who opened shop around 10am around Agric Bank bus stop said he did because his goods are perishables but noted that he was yet to make any sale by noon.

A motorist, John Agu said: "We are happy that we are observing it. Though we did not go to work, it is still good because the Federal Government should know that we the Easterners are not happy at all. They should release our leader, Nnamdi Kanu, because he has not done anything wrong to deserve this insults he is getting from them."

In Aba, Abia State residents kept indoors and left their shops and business houses under lock and key. Streets and major access roads in the city centre, including the ever busy Milverton Avenue luxury/mini bus terminals for long distant travels were all deserted. Banks and markets such as Ekeoha Market (Shopping Centre), Ariaria International Market, Ahia Ohuru (Ngwa Road Market), Cemetery/Eziukwu Road Market, and others were shut down.

However, no security agent was seen in all the locations our Correspondent visited, though they were on duty in their barracks and stations.

Speaking to Daily Sun, an Aba resident, Mr Nnanna Ezeonyia, said he returned from a journey to hear there would be a sit-at-home but thought it would not be effective, but only came into the town to see that every where was deserted and looked like a ghost town.

He commended Igbo for bonding in one spirit in their quest for a better placement in Nigeria or the opportunity for a country of their own.

Economic activities were also paralysed in the university town of Nsukka and its environs. Banks closed their banking halls but allowed customers to use their Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) to withdrawals.

In major motor parks, passengers who wanted to travel to different locations like Abuja, Owerri, Anambra were stranded as drivers refused sell tickets or load their buses. Also, major markets like Nsukka Main Market, Building Material Market and Ikpa Commodity Market were all under lock and key.

A passenger who identified himself as Patricia Eze said she was travelling to Gwagwara in Abuja but was stranded.

However, government establishments like University

of Nigeria Nsukka, Nsukka council secretariat, some primary and secondary schools were opened.

The ever-busy Enugu Road Nsukka by Nsukka known for traffic gridlock witnessed free with scanty flow of vehicular and human movement.

As at the time of filing this report, Nsukka town and its environs remained calm and peaceful as there were no reports of harassment or violence.

•Partial compliance in Asaba, Ebonyi, Aba

The exercise recorded partial compliance in Ebonyi and Asaba, Delta State capital.

Areas where it was observed in the Delta State capital included Okwe, Akwebu and Oko, where commercial activities were halted in the morning hours. The areas are considered as IPOB base in the capital city.

It also affected travelers to Onitsha in Anambra State, as commercial buses were not available on the road.

Security personnel were also seen around major roads to forestall break down of peace and order.

In Abakaliki, all the transport companies located along Afikpo road opened for businesses but

there were no passengers.

Some parks including popular Ishieke park located along Water Works road in the metropolis were opened when Daily Sun visited the park.

However, commercial banks located at Ogoja road and Afikpo road did not open but their Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) were dispensing cash.

Also, some shops opened for businesses in the capital city with free human and vehicular movements though not as it used to be on a normal day. Many filling stations in the capital city did not open.

However, workers defied the sit-at-home order as they were seen in their offices at Ochudo Centenary City Secretariat and the old government House.

However, in the Abia state capital, Umuahia, there was partial compliance to the order.

Although banks and schools did not open, gates of markets in Umuahia were opened and people moved about their businesses freely while commercial bus drivers and bicycle operators plied the streets of the city without hindrance.

Government offices were opened as workers went to work in obedience to Governor Okezie Ikpeazu's directive.

How we beat IPOB order to write NECO exam -Principal

THE order did not prevent the SS3 students in Enugu State from taking their ongoing NECO examinations though some hoodlums snatched some question papers at Enugu Ezike.

But the ingenuity and hard work of the principals and the Ministry of Education led by the Commissioner, Prof. Uche Eze did the magic as the students were saved from any complications in the examination. When Daily Sun visited some of the schools in metropolis, students were seen in their examination halls writing their exams under the watchful eyes of NECO officials.

At the Urban Girls Secondary School, Ogui New Layout, Daily

Sun observed that the school had 100 per cent attendance of the students for yesterday's examination with Principal, Ebue Chioma who dressed in full student's school uniform moving here and there to ensure that nothing went wrong. Ebue who took Daily Sun to the exam hall to confirm the students were writing the examination said she started on Saturday to prepare her students when the news of the sit-at-home came up.

"So as it stands I have a 100 per cent attendance. I have 125 students taking the NECO exam."

The Urban Girls Principal who said she supposed the

exam was taking place in all the secondary schools in the state stressed that the students would not find it difficult going home after the exams. Prof. Eze told Daily Sun that from his monitoring and information available to him at the time of the call, the examination was held all round the state.

"Yes, I've been in touch with everybody, I only learnt in Enugu Ezike that somebody snatched the question papers they were sending but I am talking with the person in charge of NECO in Enugu State to get more details because I don't have the details but they were able to distribute the question papers."