

# Pandemonium as gunmen attack Ebonyi

• No cause for alarm, say govt, police

From **Chijioke Agwu**,  
Abakaliki

**THERE** was pandemonium in Ebonyi State yesterday as gunmen terrorised Abakaliki and its environs and allegedly set some markets ablaze in a bid to enforce the sit-at-home order.

The gunmen shot sporadically during their operations which made people run for safety.

The panic caused banks and business operators to hurriedly shut their shops. It was said that the gunmen killed some people in the Ahiaofuru and Ezzamgbo areas of the state.

A resident of Abakaliki and journalist, Ogochukwu Anioke, who was coming out of his house for work said, "The town is rowdy right now. I had to go back to my house as I saw everybody driving back and running away".

Another resident said: "I am taking refuge in a hotel now. I went to buy a recharge card opposite the government house when I saw people running helter-skelter."

"People hurriedly parked their things inside their shops while traffic policemen on duty opposite government houses immediately changed their clothes. I drove out of that area following heavy gunshots to Kpirikpiri, where the road is deserted."

"People have parked their things inside their shops along that old Enugu road. If you are still in your houses, remain there until calm returns," he advised.

However, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Chris Anyanwu, in a message said there was no cause for alarm.

"Rumours of killings/burning within the metropolis

renting the air. There is no cause for alarm. Ebonyi State is calm. However, if anything in the contrary is confirmed, I will come up with updates/briefs, please," he said.

Meanwhile, the Ebonyi State government yesterday said the commotion that occurred in different parts of the state was orchestrated and escalated by unscrupu-

lous elements to cause panic and apprehension in the state. Special Security Consultant to the government, Chief Stanley Okoro Emegha, said this in a statement.

He said: "This is to inform all government officials, civil servants as well as the general public to confidently go about their lawful engagements as what just happened in Ebonyi

State was misconstrued and escalated by unscrupulous elements to cause panic and apprehension among the peace loving people.

"For clarity purposes, it was a gang of hoodlums that invaded Ahiaofuru, along Abakaliki/Enugu Highway, where they partially attacked a provision shop, causing a stir around the axis.

"No life was lost as being circulated by rumour mongers and enemies of the state.

"Again, all government functions still stand as scheduled because the state is fully and absolutely under control. The men of Ebubeagu and other security agencies have been drafted to strategic locations, while others are on patrol to further secure the citizens and their properties.

"Please, rest assured that our men are tracking down on them, and very soon, they will be arrested and prosecuted according to the law."

## 2 Air Force kills scores, destroys bandits' camp in Kaduna

From **Noah Ebije**, Kaduna

**THE** Nigerian Air Force has killed several bandits and destroyed their camps in the latest round of operations across three local government areas of Birnin Gwari, Igabi and Chikun in Kaduna State.

However, reports claimed there were no suspicious activities along the Kaduna-Abuja road and rail lines.

This was contained in a statement issued yesterday by the state Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan.

"In continuation of aerial patrols across Kaduna State, the Nigerian Air Force has reported that several bandits were neutralised and camps destroyed in the latest round of operations."

"According to the feedback to the Kaduna State Government, aerial patrols identified and attacked an active location in the Kasarami general area in Chikun LGA."

2 "A bandits' camp was similarly struck with rockets and destroyed at Kofita and Kuyambana Forest in Birnin Gwari LGA. Camps were also targeted and destroyed at Kuduru and Gonan Baturiya, and terrorists were neutralised about 4km west of Nabango."

"While conducting armed surveillance around the Karshi, Kerawa and Walawa axes of Igabi and Giwa LGAs, bandits were sighted nearly 6km southwest of Kerawa and promptly neutralised."

"Close air support was provided to troops conducting clearance operations around Ligarma, Igabi LGA. During

this mission, the house of a notorious bandit leader, Alhaji Lawan, was attacked and destroyed with rockets. The crews maintained a presence overhead as the ground troops cleared terrorists' enclaves in the area.

"Armed reconnaissance was conducted along the Kaduna-Abuja road and rail

lines, with no suspicious activity observed."

"The Kaduna State Government received the report with thanks and warmly commended the crews and personnel for the sustained effectiveness of the operations. Ground and air patrols will continue in these and other general areas."

## Yuletide: FG opens Lagos-Ibadan Expressway

• Police to arrest hawkers  
By **Maduka Nweke**

**IN** fulfilment of its earlier promise to remove the barriers narrowing the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, the Federal Government, yesterday, opened the road for use to motorists during the Yuletide season.

The Federal Ministry of Works, while removing the barriers yesterday, said the aim was to fasten vehicular traffic along the road. Motorists on traffic seeing the efforts noted that the removal would be a relief.

Supervising the re-opening around Opic, the Director, Federal Highways, South West region, Mr Adedamola Kuti, said the government earlier promised to re-open the highway to traffic on Thursday, but

brought it forward to ease gridlock. He said because of the festive season, all obstructions on section one, which spans Ojota in Lagos to Sagamu Interchange, were removed.

"As part of our Ember Months programme, there was an announcement that all barriers at road construction sites will be removed by December 15, to allow for free movement this season. So, on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway project, we have already attained a level where we can allow those barriers to be removed."

"So, rather than waiting for Thursday, December 15, just as we did at the other section, from Old Toll Gate up till Otodola Bridge, which we opened to traffic last week, we have also completed this stretch up

to the level where we can allow movement," he said.

Kuti added that all construction would, also, be halted on section two of the project, which spans Sagamu Interchange to Ojoo in Ibadan on Thursday, to further boost movement ahead of the Yuletide. He said the contractors would return to site in January, to complete the project, adding that the Federal Ministry of Works was targeting delivery by the first quarter of 2023.

He said some unforeseen circumstances, including heavy rainfall, slowed down construction, hence, the new targeted delivery date in 2023. He added that the police and traffic regulatory agencies would take over the highway and thanked motorists for their patience during the period of construction.