

Police accuse IPOB as gunmen kill 2 cops in Imo

...Stop linking us to crime, pro-Biafra group fires back, denies killing 2 brothers in Aba
• Says politicians, criminals responsible for killings in region

From **Stanley Uzoaru,**
Owerri

THE Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has denied the recent killing of two brothers, Aaron Onuoha and Obinechi Onuoha, in their home in Aba, Abia State just as the police in Owerri, Imo State, yesterday accused the pro-Biafra group of killing two of their officers at Okpala Junction.

Spokesman of the group, Emma Powerful, who debunked the claim in a statement, accused politicians and criminals for the gruesome murder in Aba, adding that they are equally responsible for the numerous killings in the Southeast.

According to Powerful, IPOB is always linked to crime by the security agencies to dissuade the minds of the people on its struggle for a Biafra nation.

He said: "But their agenda has failed and that's why the Nigeria Police is quick in using the media to tag every criminality on IPOB and ESN without investigation. They hastily use their police to tag crime on IPOB within minutes of the crime."

That notwithstanding, the

police have blamed the gunmen attack in the early hours of yesterday in which two police officers were killed and one injured at Umudim very close to the popular Okpala Junction along Owerri/Aba road, where three cops were killed last month, on the IPOB.

A reliable source from Umudim, who spoke to Sunday Sun about the incident said that the slain police officers who were on duty at a checkpoint on the road were shot by the hoodlums who were said to be in large numbers and heavily armed.

"They came this morning and in about two vehicles, they sighted the police officers and opened fire on them, two of them died on the spot while another one was shot in his leg," the source said.

Confirming the incident, the State Police Public Relations Officer, Henry Okoye, said that the hoodlums suspected to be members of the security arm of the Indigenous People of Biafra, Eastern Security Network (ESN), fled the scene after being confronted by a reinforcement team of the police.

According to the police spokesman, some of the suspects escaped with bullet

wounds during the gun battle with the officers.

"It is true that some hoodlums suspected to be members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) shot at our men who were defending the properties of residents of the area, two of the officers died in the process while another one shot in the leg is recuperating.

"They fled after they observed we have sighted their operational vehicle, some of them were hit with bullet, but escaped with it. We have already launched a manhunt for them in a bid to arresting all those involved," Okoye said.

It would be recalled that three police officers were killed almost at the area (Okpala Junction) last month, including a couple, who ran a fast food business.

However, reiterating the obligations of its security arm, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), Powerful said: "ESN is a child of necessity, and they have no problem with our people. They are concerned with their primary assignment of dislodging Fulani terrorists masquerading as herdsmen out of our bushes and forests".

On the allegation of the killing of the two brothers in Aba, Powerful said: "The murdered

brothers had no problem with ESN operatives or IPOB. YOU cannot go after innocent Biafrans to the point of killing them in cold-blood.

"We condemn such barbarism in our territory. Nigeria Police must beware of the murderers. In order to avoid any investigation into the murder, the police usually quickly blame it on ESN or IPOB. How can ESN commit the same crime that they are trying to eradicate by going after those perpetrating such in Biafra land?

"We challenge Nigeria security agencies to publicly arraign those arrested criminals. Please bring ESN to an open court for legal scrutiny rather than extra-judicial executions of non-IPOB members, claiming that they are. We want the world to know the criminals and their sponsors.

"ESN did not kill the two brothers in Aba. An anonymous person reported they had survived a similar attack last year from cult members. However, in the usual black-mailing nature of Nigeria's police they rushed to the media to accuse IPOB and ESN of killing the duo even when there is no altercation between them and ESN operatives and no evidence against IPOB."