

Terrorism: Police destroy ESN operational base in Imo

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...Kill 6 kingpins, recover weapons, other items

From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

The Nigerian Police Force headquarters in Abuja said its operatives in Imo State have recorded a significant success in its fight against terrorism with the killing of six deadly terrorist kingpins associated with the Eastern Security Network (ESN).

Force Public Relations Officer, Olumiyiwa Adejobi, who made this known, said that the police recovered five AK-47 rifles, 552 rounds of live ammunition, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), several communication equipment, along with eight operational motorcycles used by the group.

Adejobi, in a statement said: “On January 24, 2025, operatives from the command’s tactical unit following credible intelligence launched a coordinated operation aimed at locating and dislodging the terrorist hideouts.

The police operatives located the terrorists’ hideout in a forest within Ihube, Okigwe LGA. Upon approach, the operatives came under heavy fire from suspected IPOB/ESN terrorists but demonstrated exceptional courage and engaged the attackers in a fierce gun battle.

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“The operation resulted in the neutralization of six members of the terrorist group, with three being ESN kingpins identified as Ifeanyi Anayo a.k.a. Zuma De Rock (28), Chukwuemeka Odionyenfe a.k.a. Nmimi (22), and Kingsley Sunday (21), all natives of Ogube, Ihube in Okigwe Local Government Area, and the recovery of five AK-47 rifles, 552 rounds of live ammunition, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), several communication equipment, along with eight operational motorcycles used by the group.

“Prior investigations had revealed the involvement of the group in several high-profile crimes, including the attack on the Owerri Correctional Center on April 5, 2021, the killing of five policemen in Umunna, Okigwe, on December 12, 2022, and the burning of Arondizuogu Police Station on February 8, 2022. The group was also involved in multiple kidnappings, including those of WAEC staff on June 5, 2023, four reverend sisters on August 21, 2022, and four Chinese nationals on December 6, 2023.”

He said that the Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, has commended the gallant operatives for their exceptional display of bravery and coordination.

“The IGP charges police operatives across commands and formations to sustain the tempo and implement the Force’s action plan aimed at reducing crimes drastically in the first quarter of the

year 2025.

“The Nigeria Police Force remains unyielding in its goal towards ensuring national security and public safety. Members of the public are hereby urged to remain vigilant and work collaboratively with the Nigeria Police Force to promote peace and ensure a safer environment for all citizens,” he said.