



NEWS

Referendum March: One feared dead, 25 injured as police disperse protesting IPOB women




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Vehicular traffic in the metropolis of Owerri, the Imo State capital, yesterday came to grinding halt as more than 1000 women of the Indigenous People Of Biafra (IPOB) stormed the city in a sensitisation march for Biafran referendum. The march which was peaceful and orderly witnessed a long procession of women of various ages clad in all black attires armed with placards and pro-Biafra banners.

This is also as one person is feared dead while more than 25 persons are said to be nursing various degrees of injuries following the alleged attack on the peaceful protesters by the police. The women who defied police teargas around the government house roundabout and Bank Road were said to have been attacked again along the Amakohia Road by another re-inforced team of police personnel leading to the arrest of scores of the women while many sustained various degrees of injuries.



The women who caused massive traffic gridlock along Okigwe Road, Wetheral Road-Government House Roundabout, Warehouse Junction, Amakohia Road and a number of other roads said they were marching to sensitise the people of the state and indeed the South East on the forthcoming Biafran referendum. One of the women who identified herself as Betty Biafra told our correspondent that in view of the state of the country and the subservient status of the Biafrans in the Nigerian state, it has become necessary to sensitise residents of the Biafran enclaves to jettison any hope in Nigeria and focus on the realisation of an independent Biafran state which according to her was within reach. She said: “Take a look at the pathetic state of the country, Nigeria.

What is the difference between Buhari now and Buhari in 1983 or 1984? Civil rule has been militarised while the northern section of the country unapologetically apports to itself all privileges and benefits derivable from the commonwealth of Nigerians. Buhari clamped down on IPOB and outlawed it because we are Biafrans while he is still unable to even verbally reprimand herdsmen who have repeatedly engaged in the mass killing of Nigerians.

The global society has since tagged them a terrorist organisation but Buhari’s Nigeria won’t. In the face of these and many more evils plaguing this country, the only just thing to do is to pursue the independence of the Biafran state.” She added that the IPOB women were also demanding the whereabouts of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu, whose home was attacked by the Nigerian Army and about 28 Biafrans killed and their leader abducted. He said the women were also calling on Imo people and all other Biafran regions to shun and boycott the 2019 elections as a way of pressing home their grievances and focus on the Biafran referendum.

“They can do whatever they like; they can continue killing and maiming our people, what is certain is that Biafra must come, it is a done deal, bought and delivered with the blood of

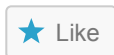
martyred Biafran heroes. We are unstoppable.” IPOB spokesman, Comrade Emma Powerful, in a terse statement condemned the attack on the IPOB women as barbaric and unprovoked.

He said: “Our women were peaceful and harmless but Nigerian government and Governor Rochas Okorocha ordered security operatives to shoot at them claiming four innocent lives with 15 others left with different degrees of injuries.” Meanwhile, the Imo State Police Public Relations Officer, Mr Andrew Enwerem, confirmed the arrest of some of the women. He said that the IPOB women were arrested for engaging in illegal assembly, unauthorised protest and acts capable of breaching public peace.

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