

NDUBUISI UGAH
COORDINATOR
nduby001@yahoo.com
Tel: 08033617741

SouthEast

Our Correspondents

How Obieke emerged

For more than a year now the Ihiala, Okija, Uli axis in Anambra State and several neighbouring communities in nearby Imo State have been living under the terror of Innocent Obieke, popularly known in the underworld as Double Lion.

Obieke, who has been on the Police wanted persons' list for more than two years now, is a bloodthirsty and cold-blooded killer, who takes no thought about killing his victims.

He has evaded arrest on multiple occasions and is considered very elusive and deadly. Obieke is said to have multiple cases of murder linked to his names and cares nothing about adding to the list.

His escapades

It is believed that, though Obieke is from Orsumoghu in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State, he was part of the gang of killers forcibly dislodged by security forces in a horror camp in Nkwere-Uda in Orsu Local Government Area of Imo State.

He then moved his gang to a new camp located at a place called Oseakwa, from where he terrorized and held Ihiala, Okija, Uli, Amorka and other neighbouring communities, to the jugular.

An impeccable community source told our correspondence that there was no better word to describe the evil Double Lion represented other than 'devilish'.

He added: "If they had captured him alive and interrogated him, I bet you, he would have lost count of the number of people he has killed in the course of his devilish criminal enterprise."

"There is no level of crime that Double Lion has not committed against his people and the people of the neighbouring communities in both Imo and Anambra State."

"His traditional ruler and the traditional ruler of Liliu community for fear of him and the safety of their lives, both fled their communities and went into exile."

"Double Lion is a kidnapper and armed robber. He kills at will and would rape women at any given opportunity. He randomly snatches cars, demands and collects money before anybody will hold any major social event in Ihiala including weddings and burial ceremonies."

"He arbitrarily takes over people's properties using the force of arm. He is an all-round criminal, heartless to the point that some of his colleagues dread him. No community can be proud of such a son."

"We know Double Lion, he is our kinsman. He has never been an agitator for good governance or anything good for that matter."

"He was already neck-deep in crime before the 'unknown gunmen' craze started and he realised it perfectly suits his criminal enterprise, and so he hid under the unknown gunmen guise to expand his operation and influence."

"He suddenly began to enforce sit-at-home, putting on the toga of an agitator for self-determination. He

Double Lion: End of the road for murderous, dare-devil kingpin



Double Lion... after he met his Waterloo with the Police

aligned with Simon Ekpa's 'unknown gunmen' and started to randomly attack government and security personnel, including members of the political class."

Police connection

While Police has dissociated itself from the shoot-out where Double Lion was killed, a trending voice on credit to 'security men' without naming the security apparatus.

"Another school of thought hints it may be a special squad from the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), who have been serially embarrassed and fed up with the criminal excesses of hoodlums ravaging the South East under the guise of 'unknown gunmen' while deceptively claiming to pursue the Biafran cause."

When the amateur video surfaced online and went viral on Friday showing a convoy of about four SUV and Hilux vehicles occupied by heavily armed men and laden with number of corpses being paraded around the villages, members of Simon Ekpa's Auto-Pilot camp also posted the video on their platforms on Facebook and WhatsApp claiming it was a convoy of 'unknown gunmen' (who they normally cheer their activities) displaying the corpses of some security personnel who they killed at a burial.

Debunking the reports, the Spokesperson for the Anambra State Police Command, DSP Ikenga Tochukwu, said no single security official was involved in the video, whether as one of the patrolling armed men or their victims.

Double Lion on wanted list

Ikenga said: "Information from eyewitness account shows that a violent clash ensued between two criminal gangs, and further details

confirmed the killing of one Innocent Obieke (a.k.a. Double Lion) and three others."

"Double Lion had been on police wanted list and had featured in attacks on police formations, military locations and other government infrastructure."

Ikenga, however, said Police patrol has been intensified in the area, while the situation is also currently being monitored.

A source in the area, however, disclosed that the incident happened at in Akwa village in Ihiala, and further revealed that the clash was between the Unknown Gunmen terrorizing the state and the members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

The source said: "It is true. The incident happened at Akwa village in Ihiala during a clash between IPOB and unknown gunmen."

"The gunmen have a camp at a place called Oseakwa from where they have been terrorizing Ihiala, Okija, Uli and other neighbouring communities."

"For sometime, the gunmen have been disrupting burials and demanding to be settled before any ceremony is organised. They are also the group that has been kidnapping people and snatching cars."

"Few days ago, specifically on the 17th of June, 2022, IPOB swooped on the gunmen in their camp and no fewer than five of them were killed during the shoot-out. IPOB operatives loaded the corpses in a Hilux van and paraded them around the villages."

Different tales

Another source who narrated another version of the shoot-out and eventual killing of Double Lion and his gang, via a voice note, first dispelled the rumour that it was the

'unknown gunmen' that had shot and killed security personnel. He explained that the corpses on parade were those of the unknown gunmen who engaged in the shoot-out, adding that not one of them escaped.

According to him, the incident happened at the burial of one overseas returnee in Ihiala. The corpse had arrived the deceased's family house in the morning and suddenly a gang of 'unknown gunmen' stormed the house and started shooting sporadically in anger that they were not paid and must be settled before the burial ceremony can take place.

"Unknown to them, security men from Ihiala were on ground who immediately engaged them and an exchange of fire ensued."

"The shoot-out lasted long enough for the security men in the neighbouring Okija to also join the fray. Shortly after, Amorka and Uzoigwe also sent security reinforcement and they totally blocked off every escape route for the hoodlums."

End of the road

It did not take too long for Double Lion and his gang of hoodlums to be neutralized and not one of them escaped. He added: "For a very long time these hoodlums have been terrorizing Ihiala, Okija, Ozuibulu, Oraifite, Ukpo, Iseke. They are the same people enforcing sit-at-home and terrorising communities in the guise of promoting Biafra while they were clearly engaging in pure criminality."

This source maintained that Double Lion and his gang operated from neighbouring Imo state until they met their end.

Calm returns to Anambra

Calm is gradually returning to troubled communities in Anambra State following last week's killing of the suspected leader of the dreaded unknown gunmen, popularly called Double Lion, operating from Ortu in Imo State through some communities in Ihiala and Nnewi South in Anambra.

Double Lion and four members of his gang were killed by a suspected rival group at Ihiala at a time moving around the state had become frightening.

It was learnt that Double Lion originally belonged to the mainstream gunmen but later formed another more daring group.

His group was the one allegedly terrorizing most communities in Anambra South and facing people who have functions to pay them thousands of naira before such functions could take place.

And once the money was paid, organizers of the event were strictly warned never to invite the police.

Recently two persons who defied the warning at Ihiala and their houses were burnt.

Life before now

In the past few months, most

communities in the state have been deserted as the unknown gunmen allegedly led by Double Lion infiltrated villages and moved from house to house to find people to kidnap. Apart from kidnapping for ransoms, the hoodlums have been killing people with impunity.

The group was also said to be responsible for the confiscation of arms and ammunition procured by communities for their vigilante outfits, thereby rendering communities defenceless.

It was therefore heartwarming to the people of the state when the lifeless bodies of Double Lion and four members of his gang were paraded by another set of gunmen after they were routed in their den at Ogwu-niocha, a sleepy village across Uli River in Ihiala.

The atrocities

According to a very reliable source, Double Lion and his members were taken unawares and, therefore, could not mobilise to challenge their attackers on that fateful day.

While parading their bodies last week, the other group was seen in a viral video complaining that despite their decision to stop kidnapping for ransom and killing innocent people, Double Lion had continued to terrorise Anambra, even though he is not from the state.

An indigene of Ihiala, Mr. Damian Ngoka, said: "Double Lion and his fellow gunmen had a camp at a place called Oseakwa from where they were terrorizing Ihiala, Okija, Uli and other neighbouring communities."

"They disrupted burials and demanded to be settled before any ceremony was organized. They were also the group kidnapping people and snatching cars."

"Because of their activities, the Onitsha-Owerri Expressway has become a shadow of itself, and traffic on the road has become very light. What it means is that many people no longer travel and this is affecting the economy as goods and services are no longer transported from state to state."

Achukwu's beheading

Last week, another member of the House of Assembly, Mr. Nelson Achukwu, was beheaded barely one month after the member representing Governor Chukwuma Soludo's constituency in the Assembly, Okechukwu Okoye, was beheaded by gunmen suspected to be the gang led by Double Lion.

Achukwu, a lawyer with a physical disability, represented Nnewi South between 1999 and 2003.

He was kidnapped from his home in Ukpor, Nnewi South Local Government Area on June 9, and his headless body was found by his relatives in the boundary between Uke and Nkpor in Idemili North LGA.