

3 Feared Dead as Police, MASSOB Clash in Nnewi

Barely one month after members of the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the police clashed in Onitsha, Anambra State in a supremacy battle, another twist has been added to the dimension with the Nnewi Central Police station and adjoining building razed down by the militant group, leaving a police sergeant and two members of MASSOB dead.

The MASSOB militants, who were said to have stormed the Nnewi Police station also burnt

ANAMBRA

From Osondu Emeka

in Nnewi

the fire vehicle within the premises, including three operational vehicles, while two other injured policemen are said to be critically ill at an undisclosed hospital in Nnewi.

The MASSOB militants also released some suspects detained at the police cell, including four notorious robbers being interrogated at the station, while 25 persons were reported injured as a

result of the clash.

The Anambra State Governor, Mr. Peter Obi† however said he believed the militants were hoodlums dislodged from Onitsha motor parks, markets and other public places during the Onitsha clash and urged the people not to panic as a result of the disturbance.

According to Obi, it is all about the management of the Anambra State resources by these miscreants either directly through the hijack of the fees meant for government or indirectly through the diversion of resources accruable from motor parks to private pockets.†

He claimed that this group was being sponsored by faceless politicians who used to benefit from confusion, adding that after being dislodged from Onitsha, these miscreants acting under the umbrella of the disbanded NARTO,† now shifted their base to† other commercial cities like† Ekwulobia and Nnewi where they now want to foist their business interests.

According to the Acting State commissioner of Police, Mr.

John Haruna, who briefed Journalists on the development in Nnewi after inspecting the level of damage at the station, the MASSOB militants numbering over 250 persons wore bullet proof vests as well as dressed in military fatigue uniforms, and rode into the scene on five Mitsubishi buses, armed with sophisticated guns, including AK-47 Assault rifles and pump-action guns, among others and shoot sporadically around the premises while cordoning off both ends of Nnewi/Ozubulu road.

Haruna said based on their numerical strength and fire power, the militants soon overwhelmed† the† police officers at the stations who then scampered for safety through a gully and back of the station.

He said no arrest have been made so far, assuring that the miscreants who took part in the operation would be apprehended and punished.

Haruna nonetheless, blamed community leaders in the state for not volunteering timely information to the police on the activ-

ities of the miscreants or even condemn their activities, even though he noted that some of these community leaders have often been threatened by the group.

Some of them have been threatened by the hoodlums that in the event of divulging any secrets concerning MASSOB that vengeance would be visited on them, their property and family, Haruna pointed, out, adding that it†his should not stop them from passing information to the police on how to get at the miscreants.†

He also disclosed that to boost their outfits, the MASSOB miscreants had coarsed a lot of landlords and well-to-do people in certain areas of the state into parting with huge sums of money or buying foodstuffs or even to the extent of buying fire arms for them under threats, while†they on some occasions subject their victims to some sort of oath taking and trial by ordeal.

He said he had already sent his men to various hospitals and clinics in the localities to search for the miscreants that escaped from

the shoot-out with injuries, so that the police can interrogate them and gain more information.

He said besides lack of information on the activities of the group, they have proved to be well-trained in the jungle warfare and that was why they succeeded in cordoning the police station, and have been able to distract police attention from most of their activities.

The commissioner of police and police deputy, Mr. Amusa Bello later lead a joint police/army patrol team to where the MASSOB miscreants were hiding very close to the abandoned prison yard in Nnewi, where it was said that on sighting them, the militants sensed danger and dashed into nearby forest. The police however, recovered on a jeep, one car and seven L-300 buses abandoned by the fleeing miscreants from the scene, but†when they opened the jeep, it exploded into flames as well as the car, but no one was hurt.

Meanwhile police authorities in Awka has said it is making efforts to apprehend the culprits and punish them accordingly.

N2.4bn Scam: Farmers' Plight Worries Kwankwaso

Minister of Defence, Dr. Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso yesterday said he was much concerned with the plight of Kano farmers this season, following the N2.4 bn fertilizer contract scam that pitched the state government against its legislative arm.

KANO

From Yakubu Musa in Kano

ers,† he added.

Speaking further, the immediate former governor of the state, said he never purchased a bag of fertilizer dur-