

2 Police vehicles destroyed in clash with MASSOB

By James Okeke

O NITSHA — THE MOVEMENT for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) yesterday destroyed a Police Armoured Personnel carrier (APC) and a Tata Truck when they clashed with the Police at the popular Upper Iweka area of Onitsha.

Six Mobile Police officers also sustained minor injuries while others occupying the APC carrier and Tata Truck took to their heels immediately they were overpowered by fierce looking MASSOB members.

The Police/MASSOB clash came amidst clash between MASSOB and members of National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO), which brought economic and social activities in the market city to a stand still.

Confirming the incident, Police Area Commander, Onitsha, Mr. Matthew Uyanna said "I led the police teams with the Area Commander Mr. Umuar Gwadabe that dislodged the MASSOB Members at Nkpikpa area of Okpoko and Akpaka Forest Housing estate Onitsha".

"18 suspected MASSOB members have been arrested in connection with the clash and two double barrel guns and two pump action guns were recovered from them," said Uyanna.

He confirmed the destruction of the police APC vehicle and another Tata truck by the MASSOB Members but denied that 6AK 47 guns were seized from the police by

MASSOB members. He however declined to comment further on the incident when he received a call that Assistant Inspector-General (AIG) of Police, Zone 9, Umuahia is coming to Onitsha to assess the situation.

"The battle against MASSOB members which started on Tuesday night saw six police officers receiving minor injuries, he further stated".

Reacting to the incident, Mr. Edison Samuel, Onitsha MASSOB Area 2 Administrator said that they were holding a meeting at Akpaka forest housing estate Onitsha around 8.00am when the Police invaded the area in 30 buses, two armoured vehicles and eight saloon cars and began shooting sporadically and in the process arrested people who were passing by, including MASSOB Members.

He claimed that seven of his members were killed by the Police while over 40 sustained injuries during the raid.

He denied that MASSOB members destroyed police APC vehicle and Tata truck belonging to the police just as he denied MASSOB involvement in disruption of vehicular movement along Enugu-Asaba expressway, alleging that it was factions of NARTO fighting over control of motor parks that blocked the road.

It will be recalled that for the past three weeks the Police have launched a manhunt of MASSOB members who have proved stiff opposition to Police raids in Okpoko and Fege areas of Onitsha.