

Onitsha: Hoodlums free 240 prisoners inmates



ABUJA BUILDING COLLAPSES: Debris of a three-storey building at Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, which collapsed in Abuja yesterday. Photo by Gbemiga Olamikan

House collapses in Abuja

By Chris Ochayi & Gbemiga Olamikan

A THREE-STORY building housing two churches collapsed yesterday in Abuja.

Wuse II. Time was 11.45a.m. However, no life was lost in the incident which damaged property worth several millions of naira. Occupants were left in tears and agony. Musical equipment belonging to

building. Vanguard gathered that the building started giving signs that a major disaster was on the way in the last two weeks when the occupants including the pastors noticed some

By Amayo Okoli

AWK — THE bloody Acrisis rocking the commercial city of Onitsha escalated Sunday night after suspected miscreants stormed the Onitsha prisons and set

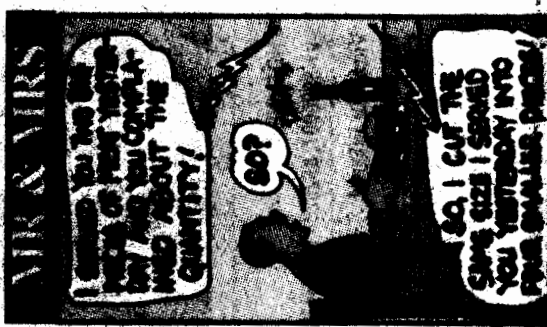
about 240 inmates free. Governor Peter Obi who, weekend, banned the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), NAKITO and Ambra Vigilante Service (AVS) told the police to explore the

Continues on Page 15

Cost of elections too high, says Obasanjo

By Charles Ozoemena

ABUJA — PRESIDENT A. Olusegun Obasanjo said, yesterday, that the cost of contesting elections in Nigeria was too high and therefore urged the political parties to moderate their fees for aspirants to enable youths con



NEWS

Continues from Page 1

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option of shooting hoodlums on sight if they (hoodlums) refused to allow peace to return.

The governor also imposed a one-week curfew on Onitsha between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

It was gathered that the miscreants forced their way into the prison yard at about 2 a.m., burnt the gate, and the office block before setting the inmates free.

This is the second time in six months that Onitsha prisons has been burnt and prisoners set free. More than 700 prisoners were set free in February during the cartoon reprisal riots in the commercial town. An Assistant Comptroller of Prisons confirmed the incident, but declined to give details.

Four of the inmates have since returned to the prison. One of them, Bright Chukwu-jekwu, said the hoodlums came at about 2.10 a.m., shooting indiscriminately into the air. "When they approached the gate of the prisons, nine hoodlums, and armed with locally-made pistols, pump action gun, machetes, axes and other dangerous weapons, ordered the prison officials to open the gate," he said.

They dealt machete cuts on the prisons officials, who they believed were not co-operating and were in possession of keys to the cells. They went to the cells, broke them open with axes and machetes and marched the prisoners to Akpaka forest reserve, their base. Early on Monday morning, they conveyed the inmates on motor bikes to an unidentified place in Onitsha town," Chukwu-jekwu said.

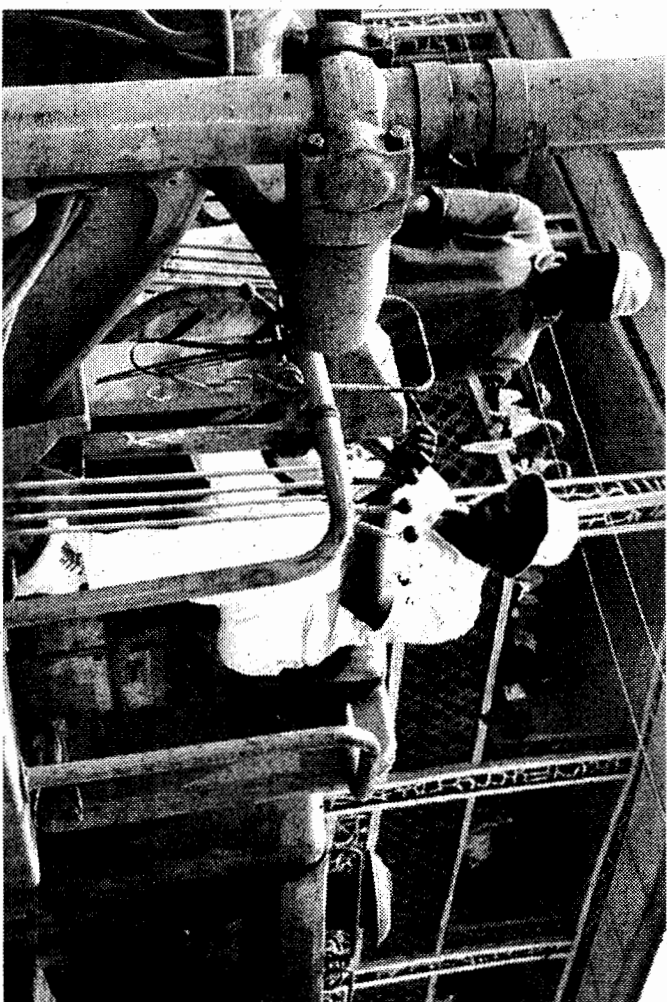
NARTO leave and expose those behind them because some people are behind them. These people represent nothing good to the people. All they represent is evil."

DIG Okiro who was at Government House, Awka to be briefed by the governor said government would not allow hoodlums to take over Onitsha because of its commercial importance to Nigeria.

Asked why the police still guard NARTO office and have not arrested any member of NARTO, even after NARTO has been outlawed by the state government, Okiro said he could not confirm who had been arrested so far until he was properly briefed. He said anybody who went against the law must be arrested "no matter where he comes from.

"If any group has been proscribed, it remains so and the police will not support illegality. It is our duty to make sure that law is enforced. Any group that is proscribed, until there is reversal, it remains proscribed.

"The situation is worrisome to everybody. That is why I am here. That is why I am here to study the situation and come out with a specific strategy to stop it," Okiro said.



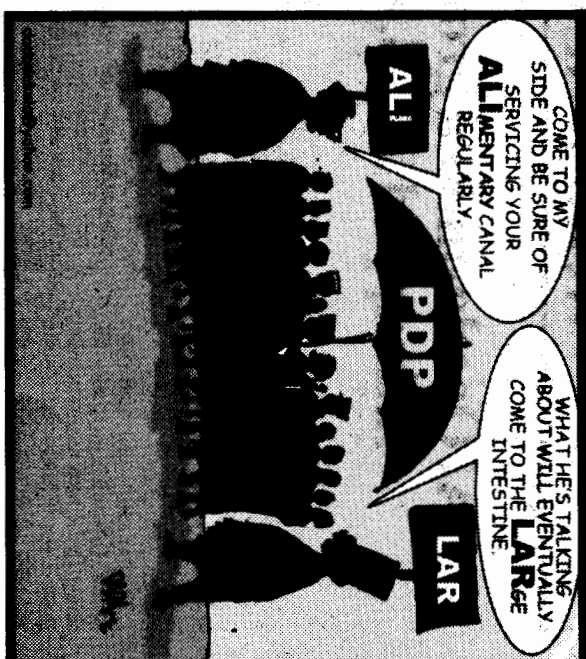
REHABILITATION: Governor Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti State during flag-off of the rehabilitation of Ayede township road in Ekiti State, last week.

4,000 enumerators for Lagos survey

POCKET CARTOON

COME TO MY SIDE AND BE SURE OF SERVING YOUR ALLMENTARY CANAL REGULARLY.

WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO THE LARGE INTESTINE.



Cost of elections too high, says Obasanjo

Continues from Page 1

test elective positions.

"The cost of participation by political parties should be moderate," he said with an advice youths to "start (politics) at a reasonable level — from local government to state to federal."

President Obasanjo spoke at a meeting of the Presidential Youth Forum at State House, Abuja.

Nigeria, he said, needed to be liberated through reform otherwise the ills of the past would continue to hamper the nation's progress. He challenged the youths to work and pray hard for success.

"We need to free our nation. We must go back to our fundamental values of hard

President Obasanjo, responding to a call for more employment opportunities, said the administration's policies had led to "tremendous growth in the agricultural sector with the consequent increase in jobs," stressing: "Agriculture and agro-allied industry remain the only sector that can generate huge employment opportunities for the youths of our country."

He spoke of the need to continue reforms in education, while he reported appreciable progress in road construction, implementation of NEEDS and the anti-corruption crusade.

The President welcomed the concern and desire for reform shown by members of the National Youth Council. "The youths are the greater benef-

Obi insists MASSOB must quit

Meanwhile, Governor Peter Obi, receiving the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) in charge of operations, Mr. Mike Okoro, maintained that MASSOB, NARTO and Anambra Vigilante Service (AVS) were not wanted in the state.

Okoro described the crisis as "very worrisome." He warned that there must be peace as the police would not spare anybody.

Governor Obi said: "I have said it every day, all of us know what the problem is and those behind it. This problem is easy and can easily be solved. All we want is let every group leave Onitsha, and by that, I mean MASSOB, NARTO, AVS, whosever. So, what the police should do is to direct that everybody leaves and any of them who does not leave shoot on sight. They must leave; that is all."

"The police know what to do. I'm saying they know the problem. As the chief security officer of the state, I'm saying we do not want these people again and they are our problem. We don't want these people. They are causing problems for us. Some people are behind them and these people represent nothing that is good for the people of Anambra State. I am not giving them order, they know what to do. This is the problem."

"And we are saying they should leave the state and all of you if you mean well, for this state should be in the same fight that MASSOB and

(NPC) is to engage about 4,000 enumerators and supervisors for the post-enumeration survey (PES) which begins nationwide today. The exercise, which is to make the last population and housing exercise conducted in March more credible, will end on June 26, 2006.

PES is the complete re-enumeration of a representative sample of the total geographic area and population, and matching each individual and their characteristics in the PES with information from the main enumeration.

The commissioner in charge of the state, Aliyu Gidado told newsmen yesterday in Lagos that the exercise would cover all the 20 local government areas of the state. "It is not a total count of the population, it is essentially a quality check exercise which seeks to evaluate the coverage errors and content errors in the main enumeration," the commissioner said.

Aliyu said PES was usually conducted three months after the main census to reduce the possibility of in and out movement of persons or households from the enumeration area (EA) where they were enumerated during the census. "Basically, it is a random check and quality check exercise on the main census," he said.

He listed some of the objectives of the PES to include accuracy of census coverage and its contents as well as the collection of additional information on fertility and mortality.

as sampling units for inter-census surveys and also to identify procedural and conceptual improvements needed in future censuses.

The commissioner also said through PES, information on additional questions not canvassed during the main enumeration, would be collected.

He said the household listing exercise had been completed and officials and materials are being assigned for today's assignment. He also gave some of the questions to be asked by enumerators during the exercise to include information about natural parents, children living with natural mothers, children ever born and those alive.

Others are births during the last 12 months, infant mortality, deaths in the household within the last 12 months and causes of such deaths.

Form 02 with questions on persons, shall be used as "PES would only involve persons not houses."

On recruitment and training of enumerators and supervisors for the exercise, he said only those who performed creditably well during the last census were recruited and trained. "Four levels of training were organised for all the 4,000 functionaries taking part in the PES with the support of donor agencies."

"We have also taken care of the mode of payment to avoid the identified problems of the main census," Aliyu said, adding that there would be no restriction of movements. "Enumerators are to be housed in their enumeration areas for easy access and the problem of transportation would have been eliminated. Lagos people are busy people, enumerators would have to wait for them until after work," he said.

PDP faction, Chukwumerije, others hold talks

Continues from Page 1

According to him, "Nigerians should not allow themselves to be cowed any longer in view of the level of corruption and insincerity on the part of the PDP-led government. What has happened to the recovered loots of the previous administrations and the funds retrieved from the dis-

missed principal actors of the present government? Due process has become due privilege to Nigeria leaders of today. The world cannot be deceived. The inadequacies of our leaders are glaring and for all patriotic Nigerians, this is a call to duty."

Honesty. We need re-evaluation and moral re-armament," he said.

House collapses in Abuja

Continues from Page 1

lord of the house to inform him of the ugly development.

The landlord reportedly went there with a building engineer who advised that the building could be strengthened. Based on this advice, the landlord invited a structure engineer to come and mend the cracks to strengthen the building.

Pastor of one of the churches, Pastor Yinka Yusuf, who spoke with newsmen was thankful to the Almighty God that no life was lost when the house collapsed. He said the church, which occupied the first floor of the building, was usually filled during Sunday's service.

Pastor Yusuf, who claimed to have been attending to about 50 members on the daily basis in the church, said he decided to declare a work free day yesterday because the church just ended a week-long programme on Sunday.

"We have lost millions of naira, but we thank God that today (yesterday) I declared a public holiday. I told them nobody should come to the

office. I was the only person in the office and immediately I came out of the building following the alarm raised by the people down stairs, it collapsed."

"I declared a public holiday because we just finished a programme and I wanted them to rest. I have never done that but today (yesterday), I am sure the Lord just told me to do that if not people would have been here today (yesterday) for counselling and everything, but I just said nobody should come to the office today (yesterday)."

"We are just waiting to see the owner of the building and the lawyer, from there we will know what to do," he said.

The coordinator of the second church, Pastor Ifeanyi Obia said the building had given sufficient notice that it would collapse any moment.

At the time of filing this report, an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Aliyu Doma and his team were still at the site of the building. He told *Vanguard* that, the police were still mobilising to unearth the circumstances surrounding the collapse.

