

**CONVOCAATION:** Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State (left), being congratulated by the Chairman, Governing Board of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Prof. James Alachi, after the governor bagged the Fellow of the Institute at her 24th Convocation in Owerri, recently.

## 15 killed, 5 victims freed as armed forces, police raid kidnappers den in Abia

By Anayo Okoli

UMUAHIA—NO fewer than 15 kidnappers were killed in a devastating offensive launched in at least two of the camps of the hoodlums by a combined squad of Army, Navy, Air Force, Police and State Security personnel yesterday. Vanguard gathered that not less than five kidnapped victims were released by the joint team and handed over to officers from the Abia State Police Command, while the bodies of the killed gang

members were also taken away.

The military/police squad stormed the Ugwuatu Asa Camp of the gang situated in a forest in Ukwa West Council, yesterday, shortly after Governor Theodore Orji's broadcast, condemning the abduction of the 15 school children of Abayi International School.

The hoodlums who were taken by surprise were said to have engaged the squad in an exchange of fire and in the process about 15 of them were feared to have been killed, while the rest took to their heels in differ-

ent directions.

Governor Theodore Orji who later visited the dislodged camp of the kidnappers was happy that finally the onslaught had commenced and progress made in taking the battle to the kidnappers. He, however, noted that it was not yet time to celebrate until the 15 kidnapped nursery and primary school pupils were recovered and returned safely to their parents.

Orji told journalists on his return from the camps that he went to see things for himself and to also encourage the squad that was engaging the kidnappers in the war.

The governor said that he was still sad because the school kids were yet to be recovered, but noted that the operation will not hamper their safety in any way.

He declared "the children will be returned to

their parents safely. I want to assure you and their parents that."

He said that a squad of soldiers has been camped at Ohafia in Ohafia Local Government Area and that he will soon hand over 23 vehicles to enable them operate not only in the kidnap prone areas, but in all other places in the 17 Local Government Areas where there was criminality.

The governor said: "I want to assure you that whether in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Imo or Rivers once they have been sent packing, they will never return to Abia again, Orji boasted."

"We are no longer talking amnesty. We are now talking of fire for fire because they (kidnappers) refused to embrace amnesty. We want to show them that this is a government (and) you cannot challenge government."

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## Chime charges citizens on unity

our indomitable spirit to shape and not fear the future.

"That future of our beloved country is in our hands. Now is, therefore, the time to lay the solid foundation for a better tomorrow."

"Let us begin to envision a Nigeria in the next fifty years which continues to remain united despite its many diversities, a country genuinely committed to the fight to reduce poverty in our land, a country that caters for the downtrodden and the needy, a country where the creativity and industry of every citizen can find its full and free expression and a country where the words of the leaders shall

worked hard to translate critical aspects of our vision into reality, all in a bid to better the lots of our people."

"I have an abiding faith in the desire of our people to see Enugu State flourish, and I thank you quite immensely for being our partners in progress. Yet, there is more to do and more will be done," he said.

## Jonathan addresses nation today

**ABUJA**—PRESIDENT Goodluck Jonathan

This is a unique departure from the old practice

## Kidnapped kids: Igbo youths finger opposit

By Dennis Agbo

**A**BAKALIKI—A pressure group, Igbo

Youth Movement, IYM, has blamed the spate of kidnapping in Abia State on some desperate politicians who want a state of emergency declared in the state.

The group's stance comes against the backdrop of the kidnap of 15 school children in the state a few days ago.

The IYM in a statement signed by Elik

allow peace state.

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