

# 9 killed as pro-Biafra protests turn bloody

*Continues from Page 1*

Biafra, IPOB, and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, killing nine people and injuring 18. Five people were killed at Niger Bridge Head while three were killed at Obodoukwu Road. A suya (barbecue meat) seller said to have been hit by a stray bullet died instantly. The protesters were having a peaceful procession across South East states and had vowed to continue their blockage of the bridge for three days until detained Director of Radio Biafra, Mr. Nnamdi Kanu is released.

Miscereants, on hearing that some people had

been shot dead by the JTF, started another protest, marched to the Central mosque near Onitsha Main Market and set it ablaze. A Hilux pick-up van with Federal Government number plate was also burnt when the JTF held motorists and commuters hostage at Upper Iweka with sporadic shootings that had never been witnessed before in Onitsha.

**Despite losing two men, we didn't attack protesters - Police**

The Anambra Police Command said, yesterday, that despite

losing two of its men during the pro-Biafra protests in Onitsha, the command never retaliated.

The command's Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr. Ali Okechukwu, in an interview, faulted the allegation that Police fired at the protesters, adding that one of the policemen, a sergeant, was killed at Obodo Ukwu, while the other was killed at Eze Iweka road.

He said that following the problem in Onitsha, police kept vigil to ensure that peace was maintained and totally denied police involvement in the bloody riot that led to the death of about nine people.

"We did not fire a shot at anybody and even when our men were felled, we still did not retaliate," he said.

It was gathered that what led to yesterday's violence was an attempt by the JTF to reopen the blocked roads at the Bridge Head and at Upper Iweka road in the wee hours of Wednesday.

When the security operatives tried to open the roads, it was learned, they met resistance from the protesters, who grounded Onitsha on Tuesday and ensured that no vehicle entered or left the commercial city.

## How protests turned bloody

The protesting IPOB members had blocked the Niger Bridge early Tuesday morning, thereby grounding vehicular movements in and out of Onitsha. From Asaba, Delta State, many boarded speed boats provided by the Marine Police to get in and out of Onitsha.