

By Chinonso Alozie

**OWERRI**—APEX Igbo socio-cultural group, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, yesterday raised the alarm over the renewed violent attacks in Imo and the bizarre practice of beheading victims.

Just yesterday in Okporo and neighbouring communities in Orlu Local Government Area of Imo State, there was renewed violence and a community leader whose identity has not been made known was beheaded and his head placed on a table around the market in Okporo community.

The number of beheaded persons in the Orlu area has risen to five since this renewed violence started.

The apex group appealed to those behind the attacks to sheath their swords.

This came as the Imo State Police Command yesterday said a 15-year-old boy, Emmanuel Nnaji, a native of Awala in Ideato South Local Government Area of Imo State, was the one who led the police tactical team to a hotel in Orlu Local Government, from where attacks were planned and executed in Omuma, Oru East Local Government and Njaba Police station in the state.

In a related development, the Abia state government has lamented an alleged plot to attack and kidnap prominent persons in the state.

## Gunmen escalate violence

Besides beheading a community leader in Imo in the recent attacks, over twenty shops were also completely razed and vehicles numbering more than ten got burnt. A shop where caskets were sold was also burnt including the already constructed caskets waiting for potential customers.

Vanguard gathered from Orlu that the attacks which started on Sunday night continued till Monday morning.

At the time of filing this report, the reason for the attack was not yet known but residents linked it to the hardened criminal gang as well as native doctors that operate freely at night.

In another development, another group of gunmen dressed in security attire set ablaze a hotel owned by Chinonso Uba in the area. In the attack, two trucks were set ablaze. One of the trucks was loaded with alcoholic drinks.

According to an eyewitness, the gunmen stormed the hotel with two Hilux vehicles, Mercedes 360 and an armoured car. They also burnt a brand new HighLander car belonging to Uba.

A community source who spoke to Vanguard from Orlu said: "My brother, this is what we have been seeing since Sunday. Orlu is getting hot now. We are no longer sleeping. These criminals move freely in the night and they kill and destroy everything."

"Even this Monday morning, we heard of strange movements by these men in Okporo community and people started running. What is happening in Orlu is creating fears everywhere. These criminals started with the beheading of our people and now burning people's homes. What do they want?"

"When will all these attacks end. We are suffering in Orlu

# Violence spreads in Imo as gunmen behead community leader

•Over 20 shops, vehicles razed •How 15-year-old boy exposed hotel where ESN plan attacks on Njaba, Omuma —Police •27 ESN members, including 7 females, arrested •Abia govt alleges plot by non-state group to kidnap govt officials, monarchs



**CONFERMEN**—Chairman, Governing Council, Institute of Management and Technology, IMT, Enugu, Mrs. Ifeoma Nwobodo (middle), with Rector, IMT, Prof. Austin Nweze (right), and African Coordinator, Charisma University, Turks and Caicos Island, Prof. Ifeanyi Onodugo, during Mrs. Nwobodo's conferment with an honorary doctorate degree in Public Administration, by the University, in Enugu, yesterday.

local government and government should please send security operatives to us to end these attacks. Orlu deserves to be peaceful and people deserve to do their business peacefully. With a conducive environment, there will be development and people living in Orlu will be happy."

At the time of filing this report, security agencies were yet to react to the violence but Vanguard gathered from intelligence from security officers that efforts have been intensified to unravel the criminal gang causing mayhem in the Orlu area for the past one week.

According to the Imo State Police Command Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mike Abatam, the police had earlier cordoned the forest of Njaba to checkmate the activities of the hoodlums.

## Ohanaeze condemns renewed attacks, killings in Orlu

The apex Igbo body said it has been celebrating peace and tranquility in the South East and prized the area as the most secured, noting that it is worrisome to hear of the renewed attacks in Orlu.

"We have been celebrating the peace and tranquility in the South East, which we prized as the most peaceful. It is most unfortunate to hear that ugly attacks are being reported. It's most unfortunate and most unbearable."

"Whether it is coming from known or unknown gunmen, please, let them sheath their swords and give peace a chance. We don't need to destroy our land. Destroying our things means inflicting more hardship on our people. This is not acceptable. It is not our culture, not our character, not our way of life. We are builders not destroyers."

"All men of goodwill should join hands and help to call whoever are behind these atrocities to stop. We don't

need any attacks anymore. We need to join hands and make our zone an enviable place where peace and tranquility reign", Ohanaeze said through its spokesman, Hon. Alex Chidozie Ogbonna.

## 15-year-old boy exposed hotel where ESN plan attacks on Njaba, Omuma —Police

The Imo State Police Commissioner, Abutu Yaro, spoke in Owerri while parading over twenty suspected members of the Eastern Security Network, ESN, who were arrested at the said hotel in Orlu. Yaro said seven females were among those arrested.

It was said that the hotel was where a victim was beheaded by the suspects and the head placed along the road. Also, the ESN members were arrested with Army camouflage uniforms, arms, and ammunition.

The police said they discovered that the owner of the said hotel accommodated and gave financial support to the ESN members as a base from where they launched attacks in the state.

"Sequel to the recent attack on Omuma Police Station and Njaba Police Station respectively, the bandits were swiftly repelled by the tactical team of Imo State Police Command. We lost a Divisional Police Officer and arrested one of the bandits, Emmanuel Nnaji, 15, a native of Awala in Ideato South LGA of Imo State with bullet wounds and brought him to the station."

"On interrogation by the command's tactical teams, the suspect gave a vivid description of a Hotel located in Orlu where the bandits stayed and planned before they executed their dastardly act on the police stations."

"The owner of the hotel has been accommodating and assisting them financially. He

then volunteered and led security forces to the location of the hotel. On arrival, the hotel and the house were cordoned off and searched. Exhibits were recovered from the arrested twenty-six suspects including seven females."

"It was in the same hotel that the head of a young man was severed and placed on the road close to the hotel premises. Presently, investigation is ongoing and the suspects are undergoing interrogation."

The Police said it "recalled that in the same Orlu some months ago during the peak of IPOB/ESN attacks and killing of Police officers including innocent citizens and

burning of Police stations in the state; that the command's tactical teams and special forces arrested one Boniface Okeke, aged 57 years from Obor Autonomous Community in Orlu LGA of Imo State in connection with attacks on security agencies and private individuals."

"On interrogation, he confessed to being a facilitator and financier of IPOB/ESN operations in the state to the tune of Ten Million Naira (N10,000,000) while he was outside the country. He assisted the police in the arrest of some of their members and decimation of their camps in the state."

The Commissioner of Po-

lice, Imo State Command, CP Abutu Yaro, while commending the people of Orlu and Imo State, pleaded for calm as security agencies were doing everything to sustain the already improved peace in the state.

## Plot by non-state group to kidnap govt officials, monarchs

In a statement on Sunday, John Kalu, Abia Commissioner for information, warned the alleged plotters whom he described as "renegade members of a non-state group" to desist from their planned action.

He also advised high-profile personalities in the state to be watchful, adding that the state security agents are already on the trail of the masterminds of the alleged plot.

"Abia State Government has uncovered plots by renegade members of a non-state group to attack and kidnap prominent persons in the state including public office holders, traditional rulers, members of the clergy, and hold them as human shield and ransom for negotiations," the statement read.

"While we strongly admonish those behind the dastardly plot to desist from it, we advise such high profile personalities mentioned above to exercise utmost vigilance while going about their normal duties as security agents in the country are on the trail of the arrowheads of the plot to nip it in the bud and bring those involved to justice."

"Government further appeals to all citizens and visitors to keep their focus on maintaining the existing peace in the state and avoid acts that are capable of reversing the gains we have made collectively in securing the state through the understanding and cooperation of all."

## Nnamdi Kanu's lawyers finally have access to him

**LEAD COUNSEL** to Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, Ifeanyi Ejiofor, yesterday, said he has been able to see his client who is being detained by the Department of State Services, DSS.

In a statement, Ejiofor said that after weeks of speculations and uncertainties, he has finally seen his client, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu.

"We can authoritatively confirm this position to the world. He is firm and stable

apart from the burden of solitary confinement and concomitant mental torture arising therefrom. Though the detaining authority is giving him medical attention, he still requires advanced medical care which formed the substantial part of the relief in our application before the Court."

"He specifically requested that we should extend his heart-felt compliment to millions of his supporters world-

wide and all foreign governments and institutions who are relentlessly following up. Media houses are indeed not left out of this classification."

"We are winning but your prayers are doing wonders, don't relent as you continue to remain law-abiding. We shall continue to keep you all in constant communication on every development around him particularly now that the visit will be more regular than before."

## Ugwuanyi meets with Enugu-bom aircraft inventor

•Swears in 68 devt centre administrators

**ENUGU**—GOVERNOR Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State will, today, at the Government House, Enugu, receive the young inventor, Master Emmanuel Maduabuchi Chukwu, an indigene of the state and student of Government Technical College (GTC), Nsukka, who manufactured a hand-made aircraft.

Gov. Ugwuanyi will also at the Government House, Enugu, by 2pm, swear in all the 68 Development Centre Administrators whose nominations were recently confirmed by the Enugu State House of Assembly.

A statement by the Commissioner for Information,

Nnanyelugo Chidi Aroh, said the governor's decision to meet with the young aircraft inventor was "in pursuit of his administration's commitment to encouraging scientific and technological innovation in Enugu State".

Aroh disclosed that the parents of the student, the principal of GTC, Nsukka, the Commissioner for Education, and the Chairman of the Science, Technical and Vocational Education Management Board (STVEMB) and other invited guests, are to be seated at the Executive Council Chambers by 12.30pm.

The Information Commissioner added that guests invited to the swearing-in ceremony of the Administrators are expected to

be seated at the Lion Building, Government House, Enugu, by 1.30pm.

Those invited for the swearing-in ceremony, according to the statement, are the 68 Administrators of the Development Centres; the Speaker and members of Enugu State House of Assembly; members of the State Executive Council (EXCO); Chairmen of the 17 Local Government Areas; and Special Advisers to the Governor.

Others are Chairman and Members of the State Working Committee of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); Chairmen of PDP in the 17 Local Government Areas; State Chairman of the Traditional Rulers' Council and Local Government Chairmen of the Traditional Rulers' Council.