

By Anayo Okoli,  
Vincent Ujmadu,  
Chidi Nkwopara, Peter  
Okutu, Chimaobi  
Nwaiwu, Ugochukwu  
Alaribe, Chinedu  
Adonu, Ikechukwu  
Odu & Emmanuel  
Iheaka

## IPOB's sit-at-home triggers outrage, condemnation

• Igbo may withdraw support for them • Stopping students from sitting for WAEC unbelievable — Obi  
• We're losing more than other regions — Umahi • Appeals to CAN to intervene • We have since called off our Monday sit-at-home, it's the work of saboteurs, IPOB apologises to Igbo  
• Gunmen kill priest for inviting soldiers to protect school in Imo

**ENUGU**—OUTRAGE, condemnation and frustration, yesterday, trailed the frequent declaration of sit-at-home called by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, in the South East region, with many calling for people of the region to resist it and revolt against the group if need be.

Perhaps, gauging the mood of the Igbo, IPOB, yesterday, apologised to the people, promising to deal with anybody or group hiding under the sit-at-home to unleash mayhem on innocent people.

Describing such people as saboteurs, the pro-Biafra group reiterated that the weekly Monday sit-at-home has been rescinded.

Respondents from across the region had vehemently condemned the dimension and frequency of the sit-at-home and cautioned IPOB leadership to sit up or risk revolution of Igbo against the group, thereby rubbing whatever gain they have made in the past.

Since the sit-at-home was first declared by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, this week's appeared to be the worst.

Some people who dared IPOB yesterday, suffered the consequences as vehicles seen on the road were set ablaze by people suspected to be members of the pro Biafra group.

### We have suspended weekly sit-at-home —IPOB

In a statement, Media and Publicity Secretary of IPOB, Emma Powerful, while reacting to several complaints on the activities of hoodlums who are believed to be members of IPOB, harassing residents every Monday, warned that such people will face the wrath of IPOB.

"If we catch anybody disturbing the peace of Biafrans or residents in Biafraland under the guise of enforcing non-existent sit-at-home order, such a person will regret his action because he will receive the reward of traitors. IPOB is a responsible organization with reasoning and empathy. We cannot be part of the problem we are trying to solve. We cannot join the enemies to compound the woes of the people we are fighting to liberate.

"That was why we suspended the ghost Mondays that we earlier declared because of the economic implications to our people. We listened to appeals by the people and reviewed our stance on the matter.

"That was why we reduced the sit-at-home protests to the days our leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu will be making appearances in court. That is enough for now and we stand by it.

"Anybody trying to impose another sit-at-home order on our people or enforce illegal or imaginary sit-at-home is not IPOB and must be dealt with. Such a person(s) is working with the enemies to disrepute IPOB and we won't tolerate such stupidity."

IPOB explained that it will never support the action of the hoodlums who burnt examination materials at Nkume, Njaba council area of Imo State, while enforcing sit-at-home, on Monday.

"We strongly condemned the barbaric act by hoodlums and mentally deranged fellows who



CONFAB—A cross section of participants at the Mbaise Global Foundation's Women Development Advisory Council stakeholders conference (home and abroad), held at Chris VI Hotels in Ahiara, Mbaise, Imo State, weekend.

disrupted a WAEC exam in a school in Imo State on Monday. What a stupid madness! Whoever was behind such barbarity must be made to pay for their actions.

"IPOB leadership is hereby promising to replace those motorbikes burnt in the school to their owners and rebuild school blocks burnt by hoodlums in the name of ESN and IPOB volunteers. This is not to portray or indicate that IPOB committed the heinous crimes against our people. We promise to set up a task force to checkmate those parading themselves as IPOB volunteers and those committing this crime against humanity and our people.

"We plead to Biafrans to bear with us for this dastardly act against humanity they are using to disrepute and demonize IPOB in the world. We are calling on the school management and those whose properties were destroyed to contact any IPOB office near to them for possible payments of their properties."

### Lamentations in Nsukka, Enugu

In Nsukka, Enugu State, residents of Nsukka metropolis have condemned in strong terms, the frequent declaration of sit-at-home by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB.

Some residents described the situation as another lockdown in disguise which has inflicted untold economic hardships on families across South East, especially, those who live on daily job.

This outcry was promoted by the closure of commercial banks, markets and parks and all commercial and social activities in the university town and adjoining local government areas in the Enugu North Senatorial District.

A resident said, "Last week in Nsukka area, these hoodlums burnt a truck loaded with motor and motorcycle parts heading to Kogi which incidentally belonged to Igbo traders. How do you reconcile that, destroying the source of livelihood of your brother you claim to be protecting."

Though some of the residents expressed their sympathy with the Igbo marginalisation cause which IPOB is fighting against, they said frequent declaration of sit-at-home would make the group lose its affection with the people of the zone.

In Enugu metropolis, except students involved in the West African Examination Council, WAEC, other activities in Enugu State were grounded yesterday.

Parents braved it and took their children and wards to sit for the examination with their cars as there were no commuter vehicles on the roads.

Speaking to Vanguard, a business man, Mr Ugochukwu Onodugo who narrated his experience, blamed government for not listening to the complaints of South Easterners. He said that the agitation is as a result of accumulated anger over bad governance.

"We are passing through this mess today because the federal government failed to tackle the cause of this from the beginning. Any problem has root and the root of this agitation is marginalisation of the zone. Business activities have been crippled in Enugu but what is government doing over it," he questioned.

A student, Ngozi Eze who spoke to Vanguard on her way back from school, said it was difficult getting to school as no commercial vehicle was seen on the roads.

### We are tired of 'sit-at-home', Imo residents cry out

A resident of Owerri who gave his name as Iwunze, also lamented the idea of halting of students from Comprehensive Secondary School, Nkume, Njaba Local Government Area of Imo State from sitting for West African Examination Council, WAEC, examination.

According to a resident of the community: "The students who were sitting for the English Language paper and the invigilators had to run for safety.

"They set ablaze motorcycles belonging to some students and teachers. This exam should have been postponed to another day. They are just risking people's lives.

There was heavy shooting between security men and the gunmen. Everybody is lying inside. The situation is very terrifying and traumatizing.

"We now live everyday in fear of the unknown; we don't know when this thing will end. They should please stop this problem;

people are dying".

A commercial bus driver, who gave his name as Isaac Okoye, described the incessant declaration of sit-at-home and attack on persons and businesses as wickedness against the Igbo.

"I have a wife and four children, they expect me to provide money for feeding. Yet, for two days, I couldn't go to work. And you expect me to be happy. This is wickedness.

"We all want Biafra, I know some people have died in the course of fighting for Biafra. But are we all going to die before the Biafra comes? We said we want Biafra because we are being treated badly and you are still killing the Igbo in name of fighting for Biafra. They should stop this sit-at-home, I am tired," he lamented.

A retired principal, Mr. Ifeanyi Onyeukwu submitted that those behind the sit-at-home may soon declare everyday as sit-at-home if nothing is done urgently.

Onyeukwu condemned the incident of attacking students who were sitting for West African Examination Council exam in the state and destruction of motorcycles belonging to teachers.

### Residents lament business disruption in Anambra

At Nanka in Orumba North local government area of Anambra State, a bus was set ablaze by unknown arsonists, forcing few people walking along the road to run for their dear lives.

Although some people from the area claimed that all the passengers in the burnt bus were killed, the state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr. Tochukwu Ikenga said no life was lost, adding that all the occupants of the vehicle escaped to safety.

Some aggrieved residents of Onitsha and Nnewi told Vanguard yesterday that observing sit-at-home, for the 28 people allegedly killed by soldiers of the Nigerian Army, may be in order, but rejected the continued observance of the IPOB suspended Monday weekly sit-at-home.

Also speaking, an Ihiala, Anambra State based High Chief, Ifeanyichukwu Eke accused South East Governors of being redundant towards encouraging the return of trading and business activities in the South East.

He wondered what the Ebu-beagu security outfit set up by South East Governors are doing, saying that it is now that people are afraid to come out on Mondays that Ebu-beagu and the Nigeria security agencies are supposed to be present on the roads and the streets to ensure there is no break down of law and order.

"You are ordering the return of business activities in the state and you are not backing it up with the security of the people you want to return to markets and businesses. Where are the Police, Army, Navy and other security services and even the state vigilante?"

"No Army Police, Navy or any of the other security services including the state vigilante operatives were seen on Monday on the roads and streets, but when there is no sit-at-home, you see them mounting road blocks and check points where they extort money from the people coming in and going out of the state.

Also reacting, an importer in Nnewi whose business has been slowed down due to the Monday weekly sit-at-home, said they make the highest business transactions on Mondays and have over the years accepted the agitations of IPOB against the injustice by the federal government, saying that allowing the sit-at-home to continue will be against the interest of Ndigbo.

### Attack on school unbelievable —Obi

Miffed by the development, the Vice Presidential candidate of the people's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 general elections, Mr. Peter Obi expressed disbelief on the reported attack on school children in the South-East, describing it as 'un-Igbo, out of place and misguided aggression.'

When some journalists sought his views at the Airport in Lagos, yesterday, Obi said he did not believe any Igbo man should contemplate attacking innocent school children, more so those taking their WAEC exams, to compete with the rest of West Africans over academic excellence. He said that education should ideally be treated as something 'sacred', because it is not just about the future of the children but also the future of the society.

Wondering what informed the attack in the first place, Obi said it

was perplexing against the fact that IPOB had issued countless press releases suspending the Monday sit-at-home and therefore could not logically be responsible for the attack.

Based on his observations, Obi called for proper investigations to unravel those behind the attack. His words: "Since IPOB has announced suspension of sit-at-home, it is reasonable to suspect that other forces might be hiding behind IPOB to draw back the South-East through such acts as well as the needless call for stay at home on Mondays, a critical day for business/official work, which is only hurting the economy of the South-East."

### We're losing more than other regions —Umahi

Similarly, Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi State, yesterday, expressed dismay over the persistent sit-at-home order within the South East geopolitical zone of the country.

Umahi who called on the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, to intervene in the matter stressed that the South East region was losing economically, among other areas, following the ugly development.

"There is danger. There may be another group that would come up with another sit-at-home order. The Christian body should intervene. We are killing ourselves. You can stop the sit at home in the South East. We will lose more than other states. We must take our fate in our own hands."

Governor Umahi stated this during the inauguration of the new Executive of the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, South East zone at the Christian Ecumenical Centre.

"I want to appeal to the body of Christ, if we want to succeed, we cannot depart from the culture of our people. The Governors have good intentions, the President has good intentions but we cannot be everywhere at the same time, so I want to appeal to you, we can integrate the challenges we are facing today in our ecumenism."

### Gunmen kill priest for inviting soldiers

Meanwhile, Emeke Merenu, a priest with the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, was yesterday killed by yet-to-be-identified gunmen in Jhetekwa, Orsu LGA of Imo State.

Merenu was shot in his parsonage in the early hours, while his car was also set ablaze.

The killing of the priest came hours after gunmen invaded Comprehensive Secondary School, Nkume in Njaba LGA of Imo, and chased away students who were participating in the ongoing 2021 West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), on Monday.

Sources said suspected hoodlums attacked the priest, who hails from Amorji Agbomoni in Nkwere LGA, in his parsonage for allegedly inviting soldiers to secure the mission school, where he serves as principal.

Michael Abattam, police spokesperson in the state, told TheCable that the command is yet to get such report.

"You are just informing me about this incident. The command will investigate the matter and make our stand known in no distant time," he said.