



By Anayo Okoli,
Clifford Ndujihe,
Vincent Ujumadu,
Chinonso Alozie &
Chimaobi Nwaiwu

Terror in Nnewi: 2 killed, DSS, FRSC offices set ablaze

●Lagos APC chieftain, Joe Igboke's house razed too ●Assailants kill 2 in Kaduna community
●Ohanaeze condemns carnage, calls for Igbo leaders meeting ●Says mayhem contrary to IPOB's philosophy ●S-East govts, Igbo leaders meet in Enugu ●INM asks S-East govts to end terror.

ENUGU UNKNOWN gunmen yesterday set ablaze the offices of the Directorate of State Service, DSS, and Federal Road Safety Corps, FRSC, in Nnewi, Anambra State, leaving two people dead.

This came as chairman of the South East Governors Forum and governor of Ebonyi State, Dave Umahi, pleaded with his governors to attend a meeting of South East governors, Ohanaeze and other Igbo leaders slated for Enugu tomorrow to chart a way out of the security problems in East, which is an indication of the division among governors of the zone.

Also set ablaze was the country home of a chieftain of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Mr Joe Igboke, who is based in Lagos.

The gunmen, according to eyewitnesses, drove from Owerri Road Nnewi, in four Sports Utility Vehicles, SUVs, stopped at Eme Court Road Junction, where they released some gunshots, which made passersby scamper for safety.

They were later said to have driven through Nkwo Triangle Roundabout and moved towards Nnobi Road, where their stray bullet reportedly hit a passerby, who was later rushed to a nearby hospital.

He said: "They later drove through Nkwo Nnewi Triangle roundabout and moved towards Nnobi road."

An eyewitness said: "Later, a military armoured vehicle drove around the town and passed through Emecourt Road."

"There was no exchange of fire as the military and the gunmen did not meet. Later, heavy smoke was seen at the country home of Joe Igboke whose house is located off Nnewi - Oba road."

It was also gathered that Igboke and members of his family were not at home at the time of the incident.

The gunmen, according to the eye witness, were said to be friendly with the newspaper free readers at Nnewi Roundabout area of the town who hailed them as they threw some bundle of money to the people.

However, a man who attempted to do a video recording of the unknown gunmen was said to have been shot dead by one of them who looked ruthless, at Eme Court Road Junction area of Nnewi, while another man was said to have been killed at Traffic Junction area of the town.

The incident was said to have happened at about 10.30 to 11.00 am when worshippers were returning from their various churches and fellowship centres at Nnewi.

Some of the people who spoke to Vanguard, expressed shock over the frequent operation of unknown gunmen within the



●Burnt Police station by unknown gunmen in Nnewi, yesterday.

state, especially Nnewi and Nnobi areas in particular.

They also questioned how those who alleged to be IPOB members and ESN operatives who they describe as miscreants, got four SUV jeeps to operate with.

The people who were sympathizers of IPOB, also questioned that if the gunmen were members of IPOB and ESN operatives, where did they get wads of naira notes they threw at people who hailed them around Nnewi roundabout where vendors and newspapers and magazines free readers were.

Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, in the state, Mr Tochukwu Ikenga has confirmed the incident of fire in Nnewi, although he did not give details.

His statement read: "At about 2 pm, on October 3, 2021, the command received a distress call of a fire incident in Nnewi."

"The police operatives are currently on the ground and the area has since been cordoned off. Further details shall be communicated."

Meanwhile, Joe Igboke took to his Facebook page, yesterday, to lament the invasion and arson.

Igboke, who is also the chairman at Lagos State Government Wharf Landing Fee Collecting Authority, wrote: "IPOB invaded my house in Nnewi about now. I am sure they raised [sic] down my house, given the jerry cans of petrol I saw being offloaded from their Sienna car via CCTV. "To God be the glory. I am still alive."

Igboke had consistently criticised IPOB sit-at-home order in the last two months.

Reacting to the incident yesterday, the apex Igbo Socio-Cultural Organisation, Ohanaeze, condemned the destruction in Anambra and killings in Igboland, and called for a meeting of Igbo leaders and stakeholders at all lev-

els to marshal the way forward.

Ohanaeze Publicity Secretary, Alex Ogbonna, who said it was difficult to believe that IPOB was carrying out the mayhem, said: "Our position is clear. I don't believe that IPOB is doing this. IPOB philosophy is protection of Igbo. What is happening is contrary to IPOB's philosophy. "Hoodlums may have cashed in on IPOB agitation and using the platform to unleash mayhem, killing and harassing people and ultimately creating siege in Igboland."

"I don't want to believe it is IPOB that is doing this because you see IPOB saying no more sit-at-home and others are encouraging it. So, there is cacophony of voices."

"Ohanaeze is calling on Igbo leaders, governors, archbishops, bishops, CAN leaders, traditional rulers, town union leaders and other stakeholders to come together to review the security situation in Igboland and take a position on the way forward. The meeting is being planned. We condemn the atrocities and killings going on in Igbo land."

Also yesterday, the South East Governors Forum announced a meeting of governors of the zone, Ohanaeze and other Igbo leaders to chart a way out of the present security problems in the South East in Enugu tomorrow.

The seeming attitude of the governors to calls by their umbrella body, the South East Governors Forum, had made stakeholders of the region to see them as unresponsive.

The disunity was noticed in the letter of invitation chairman of the South East Governors' Forum, David Umahi, sent out to his colleagues, as he begged them not to send representatives but to present themselves.

The attendance to the meeting would include

governors of the five states of the zone, Ohanaeze leaders and heads of religious and traditional institutions.

The invitation for the meeting which was sent out by Governor David Umahi read: "Your Excellencies and our highly esteemed leaders in consultation with our Governors and President of Ohanaeze Worldwide, where a decision for an urgent meeting to be called was reached."

"May I, therefore, invite you for an emergency meeting of Southeast Governors, some leaders of Ohanaeze, some of our political leaders, some of our religious leaders and some of our traditional leaders."

"Our Leaders begged that I request all Governors of Southeast to be please present at the time and not on representative capacity so that together we should reach some decisions to salvage our region that is presently battling with high rate of insecurity. May I, therefore, request that you please endeavour to attend this meeting for the sake of Ndigbo."

Meanwhile, Igbo National Movement, INM, yesterday challenged the five governors of the South East zone to rise from their slumber and deal with those causing the destruction of lives and properties in Igboland.

National Coordinator of INM, Anthony Olisa Okolo, who made the call in a statement in Owerri, against the backdrop of the continued killings in the South East, especially the murder of Chike Akunyili, the husband to the late former Minister of Information, Dora Akunyili, said if nothing was done urgently the narrative, a time would come when Igbo sons and daughters would not be able to travel into Igboland.

He noted that the activities of unknown gunmen were gradually destroy-



●Burnt Igboke's house in Nnewi, yesterday.

ing the economy of the Southeast zone, and asked governors of the zone to wake up from their slumber and take charge as the chief security officers of their states.

The group stated: "The recent spate of violence in the South-East, notably in Anambra State over the past few days, is at the same time, a sign of leadership failure, and/or a tell-tale sign of state failure."

"The killing of Dr Chike Akunyili along with close to a dozen others in just one day around Nkpor, Anambra state, spells more than any recent events, the height of insecurity in the South-East."

"If our elected government officials presiding over our people all over Ala'Igbo are leaders in any true sense, this 'Aka Enwe' would never have evolved into the human hands on triggers threatening and killing innocent Igbo sons and daughters in their homeland today."

"Given their state's chief security officers status, one will be spot-on to say that the South-East governors are sleeping on duty."

"Certainly, if their states were their homes, they would do so much better to secure lives within them. Having agonisingly observed the insecurity in the South-East for so long, it has become apparent that the state's chief security officers have slept on duty for so long."

"Tired and distressed over the plight of our people, especially with regards to security, we are

compelled to call on all our governors in Ala'Igbo to rouse themselves from their continued careless slumber and muster some credible courage in the face of this rising insecurity in Ala'Igbo."

"It is time to wake up and show leadership. Enough is enough!" If decisive actions are not taken right away, a time will soon come when Ndi'Igbo will no longer want to come home. This, in turn, will worsen the economy of Ala'Igbo; first by crippling its hospitality industry, then the local tourism driven by the deep nostalgia that makes Igbo return home often."

"Of course, when hospitality and tourism go, transportation will follow... Already, Igbo in the diaspora are thinking twice about weddings in the South-East... gradually, like a vicious cycle, we will breed more poverty in the region, and more crimes will follow."

"We must remind our elected officials that it is the duty of those elected by the people to act in the interest of the people as long as they occupy the office they may be so elected into."

"Igbo National Council calls on all well-meaning Igbo, Igbo leaders, as well as all who owe Ndi'Igbo any duty as regards the security of lives and properties in Igbo land to immediately commit best efforts, towards ending this terror taking root on our streets and homes, from Onitsha to Aba, from Nsukka to Owerri, and from Abakaliki to Okigwe."