

Massacre in Ebonyi: 2 policemen, 2 lawyers, 8 others killed as gunmen attack communities

- *Transport companies shutdown operations*
- *'Our staff, facilities, vehicles were attacked'*

By Peter Okutu

ABAKALIKI—NO fewer than 10 persons including policemen were yesterday killed as gunmen invaded Isu and Onicha-Igboeze communities of Onicha Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

This came as Transport Companies have shut down their operations and reportedly withdrawn their services in all parts of Ebonyi State.

Two Policemen were reportedly killed in Isu while others met similar fate in Onicha Igboeze.

Vanguard further gathered that two Lawyers were also killed by the gunmen during the attack.

The two affected Lawyers, according to sources, were driving in a vehicle when they ran into the gunmen who operated in a Lexus Jeep.

The invaders were said to have killed the Lawyers, burnt the Jeep they operated in and fled the scene with their victim's vehicle.

Recall that there have been killings in Onicha in the last three months by gunmen and suspected security agents.

Last month, a woman and daughter of a monarch in the area, Elizabeth Agwu, was hit by a stray bullet when policemen invaded the community to arrest a suspect.

The woman died as a result of the bullet which got her on the abdomen. The suspect the Policemen came to arrest was later shot dead.

Before that particular incident, about seven travellers were burnt alive inside the vehicle they were travelling in around the same axis.

Contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, in the state, DSP Loveth Odah confirmed the latest invasion but said details of the incident were still not clear at time of this report.

She also noted that the Commissioner of Police in the state, CP Aliyu Garba, had dispatched a team of Policemen to the area to ascertain the volatility of the situation.

Transport companies shutdown operations

National Chairman of the Association of Mass Transit Operators, AMTO, Chief Gregory Inyaba, stated this after their emergency meeting yesterday in Enugu, saying the sealing of parks in Abakaliki by the state government has caused unprovoked attacks on staff, facilities and vehicles of transport firms by persons suspected to be agents working for the state.

It should be recalled that the state government had on Tuesday, sealed shops belonging to transport companies in Abakaliki.

A source close to the transporters stated that they were asked to relocate to a central park designated for them, but had refused to do so after the expiration of a six-month notice.

But the AMTO National Chairman, Inyaba, said the attacks were unprovoked, unwarranted and amounted to open

hostility to business and investment, hence the boycott.

According to him, members of Public Transport Owners Association of Nigeria were also part of the boycott decision.

According to Inyaba, "From tomorrow, Thursday, October 7, 2021, no commercial vehicle, shall go to Ebonyi or leave the state.

"The government of Ebonyi State has asked us to leave the state and we have no choice but leave the state for them henceforth.

"Vehicles belonging to members with passengers, from other states were similarly attacked on Wednesday as a result of this development. How can you attack vehicles coming into Ebonyi with passengers from other states? It means we can't bring in people in safety and comfort and that is declaration of hostility.

Why I didn't attend S-East gov's meeting —Obiano

By Vincent Ujumadu

AWKA—GOVERNOR Willie Obiano of Anambra State has said that he deliberately decided to stay away from the meeting of the South-East Governors' Forum held in Enugu because some of his colleagues were allegedly sponsoring the current insecurity in his state. Anambra was the only state that was not represented at the meeting as the deputy governor, Dr. Nkem Okeke did also not attend.

Following the absence of Anambra State at the meeting, Obiano's political opponents have been blaming the governor for absenting himself from such an important meeting where issues of insecurity in the South East were deliberated upon.

Obiano, who spoke through his Special Adviser on Political Matters, Chief Ifeatu Obiokoye said the governor could not fathom sitting to discuss security with 'certain individuals' who were behind the violence plaguing his state.

Describing his critics as noise makers, who were merely justifying the sponsorship of their

benefactors, the governor said: "Did you really expect my governor would be meeting, and dining with some persons ostensibly funding and sponsoring insecurity and terrorism in Anambra State?"

"What people are saying goes to no issue in the first instance because it is a public knowledge that those doing the killings are not from Anambra State and no Anambra person would go to this extent.

"We have directed members of all transport unions in other states of the country to note the directive to boycott Ebonyi State from Thursday, and comply accordingly.

"Do not load passengers from anywhere to Ebonyi State and members who are inside Ebonyi State must not load passengers in the state no matter the circumstances."

Contacted, the Commissioner for Capital City Development, in the state, Barr. Onyekachi Nwebonyi, said the parks were sealed following refusal by the transport companies to move to the central park designated by the state government for them.

According to Nwebonyi, the State Government had, since six months ago, written to them to relocate to the general park but all efforts to relocate them failed.

He added, "The intention of the state government is to reclaim the original master-plan of the capital city. There is no going back on the relocation of the parks."

"These people are from outside Anambra State and those sponsoring them are from outside Anambra State and you expect the governor to be holding meetings with them on security challenges which those people are executing?"

"Be it known to all and sundry that the killings are politically motivated to create voter apart in Anambra and then manipulate the electoral process to the advantage of these desperados."

Insecurity: Uzodimma flags off Op Dawn' in Imo

OWERRI—GOVERNOR of Imo State, Senator Hope Uzodimma has flagged off the Armed Forces exercise that would help bring sanity in the State ahead of the Yuletide tagged Operation "Golden Dawn" with a promise to support the leadership of the security agencies succeed in the three months assignment.

The headquarters of the Operation is at Super Camp Orlu, in Orlu LGA, Imo State.

In his address while flagging off the ceremony on Wednesday, Governor Uzodimma commend-

ed the security agencies for their vision in creating the centre to address the peculiar nature of the security situation in the South East zone and Imo State in particular.

Governor Uzodimma said: "This is a special period and season in the lives of not only Christians all over the world but the people of South East who are predominantly Christians coming back for the celebration of Christmas which usually starts from October to December."

He reasoned that "the exercise would go a long way in improving on the security situation in the South East region and also