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## Violence worsens with killings in Imo, Enugu; panic in Umuahia

• Gunmen attack police station, abduct female cop • Imo indigene military officer killed in Izombe clash — Govt • Lifeless body of young man discovered in Enugu • Suspected hoodlums cause panic in Umuahia • Njaba BIM office raided by Naval ratings

**NSUKKA**—DESPITE the resolution by the South East Governors to contain the violence and killings in the region, the issues have continued unabated.

Pandemonium broke out at the Police Division Headquarters, Umuolokpa, in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State following an attack by yet-to-be-identified gunmen on Saturday.

Similarly, a lifeless body of a young man identified as Stephen Ajah, was yesterday discovered along Ozalla/Agbani Road in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Also yesterday, the Imo State government said one of the two military officers killed in last Friday's clash in Izombe community between members of the gang of the deceased Obele and the military officers was an indigene of Imo State.

Equally, there was tension in Umuahia, the Abia State capital following invasion by suspected hoodlums enforcing the sit-at-home order yesterday.

In a related development, the leader and protagonist of Biafra Independence Movement, BIM, Chief Ralph Uwazurike, has cried out over the raid of the group's regional office at Umuaka, Njaba local government area of Imo State by suspected officials of the Nigerian Navy.

### Unknown gunmen attack police station, abduct female cop in Enugu

Vanguard gathered that the gunmen stormed the police division at about 5pm in their numbers and started shooting sporadically, damaging the facility in the process.

A resident of the area who spoke on condition of anonymity said that policemen, on sighting the gunmen camped for safety, abandoning the division in the process.

Vanguard equally gathered that the unknown gunmen abducted a police woman who was on duty at the time of the attack and took her to an unknown destination.

Though no life was lost, it was learnt that having scared the policemen away, the hoodlums proceeded to the armoury compartment of the police division where they carted away arms.

Confirming the incident, the spokesperson of Enugu State Police Command, Daniel Ndukwe, said the State Commissioner of Police, Abubakar Lawal, had directed the Criminal Investigation Department, CID, of the command to intensify efforts to locate the abducted female cop.

Ndukwe, in a statement made available to Vanguard added that the Commissioner of Police has equally ordered full scale investigation into the attack, assuring that the perpetrators would be arrested and prosecuted.

Part of the statement read: "The Commissioner of Police, Enugu State Command, CP Abubakar Lawal, has ordered the State CID and tactical teams of the Command to intensify ongoing investigative efforts to locate a missing female personnel and fish out the yet-to-be-identified hoodlums, who in their numbers attacked and vandalized vehicles and other items at Umuolokpa Police Division Headquarters in Uzo-Uwani LGA, in the evening hours of 09/10/2021."

"He gave this order after leading a team of Senior Police Officers and Commanders of the Command's tactical/operational teams to the scene."

"Meanwhile, the general public, particularly citizens of the State, have been enjoined to assist the Command with credible information and/or intelligence that will lead to the location of the said personnel and arrest of the assailants."

### Imo indigenemilitary officer killed in Izombe clash — Govt

The Imo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Declan Emelumba, disclosed this to newsmen in Owerri while sympathising with the victims of the ugly incident and those whose houses were burnt.

He said the military officers came on the invitation of the villagers who placed a distress call across to the military over a security threat allegedly caused by Obele and his loyalists and that when the military wanted to arrest Obele, he resisted and engaged the military with his gun.

In the process, Obele was killed and his men came for attack and killed two military officers, collected their arms and ammunition, stripped them of their uniform and clubbed them to death.

He added that the suspect that was shot dead by the military was an escapee from the Owerri Correctional Center during the jailbreak.

Emelumba said: "Whenever loss of lives is involved, it calls for sober mood. We want to sympathise with the families of those who lost their lives and houses were burnt. It is so unfortunate one of the military guys that was killed was an indigene of Imo State."

"According to the security report, the 80 per cent of the planning that led to the attack of the Owerri Correctional Center took place in the Oguta area. The suspect according to the security report was an escapee of the Owerri correctional centre during the time of jailbreak."

"It is good to know this, it was the villagers who invited the military because of the security threat from this suspect that was killed and on seeing the military he engaged the military with his gun while they were trying to arrest him and in the process, he was killed."

"It was his men that now went and attacked the military and took two of the military officers to a particular place and collected their arms and ammunitions, collected their uniforms and beat them to death," Emelumba said.

### Lifeless body of young man discovered in Enugu

Vanguard gathered that the deceased was allegedly murdered by unknown gunmen.

According to a statement by the Public Relations Officer, PRO, of the Enugu State Police Command, Daniel Ndukwe, the command has commenced investigation to fish out the perpetrators.

The statement read: "There was a reported case of murder of a young man identified as Stephen Ajah, along Ozalla/Agbani Road in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, by yet-to-be identified



VISIT: Representative of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State, Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo (left) and the Chairman, Indices and Disbursement Committee, Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, RMAFC, Chris Akomas, during a courtesy visit to the governor at the Government House, Enugu, yesterday.

armed men.

"The lifeless body of the said young man was rushed to the hospital by Police operatives, where he was confirmed dead and the corpse deposited in the mortuary for preservation and autopsy."

"Meanwhile, investigation to fish out the perpetrators has commenced. Further development will be communicated."

### Suspected hoodlums cause panic in Umuahia

Tension took over the city when reports filtered in that suspected hoodlums were enforcing the sit-at-home order, from the Uzuakoli road area.

There was tension as shop owners hurriedly closed their shops and motorists deserted the roads. Banks also shut their gates for fear of attacks.

Some shop owners at the Isi Gate area who spoke to Vanguard said some people started running and they had to close their shops and fled.

"We didn't know what happened but some people came running that unknown gunmen were coming to Isi Gate from the Uzuakoli road area, enforcing the sit-at-home. They started running and we closed our shops and ran after them. After some minutes, we discovered that it was a rumour."

However, calm soon returned to the city as there were no gunmen on sight. Traders returned to their shops while motorists, some of who had abandoned their vehicles also returned. Most of the banks only opened their pedestrian gates.

### Njaba BIM office raided by Naval ratings

According to a press statement signed by Uwazurike's Senior Special Assistant on Media and Publicity, Elder Chris Mocha, "the Biafra flag and signpost were destroyed while cash and other valuable items were carted away."

While confirming that no casualty was reported and no arrests were made because members were not in a meeting during the afternoon raid, Uwazurike however lamented that "the overzealous naval ratings broke the doors and ransacked the office."

His words: "The heavily armed Naval officers, who arrived the area in two Toyota Hilux vans, were drafted from the Naval Base at Naze, near Owerri."

"They had on arrival, forced the doors open, destroyed the toilet facilities, ransacked the rooms and parlour and carted away vital documents and made away with some valuables, including the sum of N11,000 kept in an envelope being contributions by BIM members."

It was not immediately clear at press time, the motive behind the raid on BIM office but a resident who pleaded anonymity told the group's leadership that "before they left the premises, the Naval men threatened to burn the nearby houses in the area if the landlord fails to produce the suspected IPOB leader."

Meanwhile, Cajethan Ekwoyone and Emmanuel C Nwokeji, Orlu Zonal Leader and Regional Administrator for Njaba, respectively, have denied any

link to the members of Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, in a statement issued to journalists yesterday, and duly counter-signed by the Senior Special Assistant, SSA, on Media and Publicity to BIM Leader, Elder Chris Mocha.

They confirmed that one of their members, Mr. Calistus Udeogaranya, who was arrested by soldiers since August at his residence along Oguta Road, Mgbidi, in Oru west local government area of Imo State has been remanded in the Correctional Center, Owerri.

They insisted that "Mr. Calistus Udeogaranya was an innocent member of BIM, a peaceful organization that does not harm or constitute a security risk to the society and demanded that his case file be transferred from the Magistrate Court to a High Court that has jurisdiction to entertain his matter."

### Imo lawmaker calls for ceasefire

Meanwhile, the Lawmaker representing Oru West State Constituency in Imo State, Dominic Ezenoha has called for a ceasefire regarding the bloody clash between the military and some youths of Izombe community in

Oguta Local Government Area of the state, that claimed lives, burnt houses last Friday.

The lawmaker made this appeal in a statement he issued to newsmen in Owerri, while condemning the incident.

Ezenoha said the killing of military men and the killing of indigenous people of Izombe were all crimes against humanity.

But Vanguard gathered the cause of the clash between a group of youth and the military was linked to two different areas that the military men were attacked by oil smugglers and the other one was that the military officers were invited by some villagers due to a breach of security by one of the villagers whose name was given as Obele and eventually the suspect engaged the military.

However, the Imo lawmaker said: "As a member from the Ohaji/Egbema, Oguta & Oru West Federal Reserve Constituency, we, the people of Oru West condemn in its entirety, the act of brutality, killings, burning of houses and all other acts that diminished our respect for humanity from both parties."

"The killing of military men and the killing of Izombe indigenes are both crimes against humanity under our local and international laws. I appeal to my dear Izombe youths to help the situation by returning what belongs to the military if any. With tears in my eyes, I honestly urge our youths, people of Izombe, the entire Oguta LGA and our gallant military personnel to ceasefire while the government finds a lasting solution to the burning issues."

"On the above score, may I again appeal to the families of Izombe people and that of the Nigeria military personnel that lost their lives during this uncontrolled incident and also to the Nigeria Army authority to apply peaceful human techniques for peace while awaiting the modalities of findings and lasting solutions from the government."

"However, peaceful existence is one of the most important attributes to an existing community in the world. We want peace in Izombe land."

"Meanwhile the people of Oru West State Constituency sympathise with the families of those that their homes were affected and lost the lives of their beloved in this unacceptable saga. May their souls rest in peace," Ezenoha said.

### Ugwuanyi calls for designation of Enugu as oil-bearing state • Proposes 50-50 revenue formula among Enugu, Anambra, Kogi states

**ENUGU**—GOVERNOR Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has requested the leadership of the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, RMAFC, to expedite action on the process of formally designating Enugu as an oil-bearing state in the country.

Gov. Ugwuanyi made the request when he received Commissioners and top management team of RMAFC led by the Chairman, Indices and Disbursement Committee, Chris A. Akomas, who paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House, Enugu, yesterday.

The delegation from RMAFC is in Enugu for an interactive ses-

sion with members of the Enugu State Executive Council EXCO, 17 Local Government Chairmen and other stakeholders in line with the Commission's ongoing nationwide sensitization tour of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on the review of the existing Revenue Allocation Formula in the spirit of equity, justice and fairness.

Speaking, Gov. Ugwuanyi represented by his Deputy, Hon. Mrs. Cecilia Ezeilo, stated that the request for designation of Enugu as an oil-bearing state became imperative because of the volume of crude oil being harvested from its territory.

The governor drew the attention of RMAFC to the fact that "Enugu is about the only state in Nigeria which produces crude oil in commercial quantities without being formally accorded the status of an oil-bearing state."

He pointed out that "years of oil exploration in the Enugu/Anambra/Kogi States joint border corridor have resulted in the successful exploitation of crude oil in the area which includes a large part of Enugu State's territory", stressing: "On a desirable allocation formula for the country, Enugu State government, after considering all the relevant factors and parameters, is proposing 50-50 to the three states."