

# Police kill 5 gunmen campaigning against election in S-East

• One policeman killed • One shot dead as hoodlums attack APC campaign venue in Ebonyi

By Vincent Ujumadu & Peter Okutu

**A**WKA—SEVEN people were killed over the weekend in the southeast over election matters.

While five gunmen campaigning for no election in the South East during the general elections were killed by the police in Anambra and one policeman lost his life, hoodlums on Saturday evening attacked the campaign venue that hosted the Ebonyi Central senatorial candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Engr Ken Eze, at Ezzagu Ward 1 in Ishielu Local Government Area of the state and killed one person.

In Anambra, the gunmen said to be working for Simon Ekpa residing in Finland, had attempted to bomb the 33 Police station in Nkwelle Ezunaka, Oyi Local Government Area of the state.

They were also said to be responsible for the bombing of the Police Area Command, Ogidi in Idemili North local government area where three policemen were killed on Saturday.

Similar attacks had also taken place at Ukpok in Nnewi South and Ihiala where the office of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, was burnt.

A resident of 3-3 where the police station is located said there was heavy shooting around 5 am on Sunday with the hoodlums shouting no election in Biafraland.

He said that when he came out around 7 am, he saw five dead bodies believed to be the unknown gunmen killed by the police during a gun duel, adding that their bodies were laced with all kinds of charms.

According to him, a bank opposite the police station was shattered with bullets and some shops around there were also torched.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Mr.

Tochukwu Ikenga who confirmed the incident, said: "The combined security team, made up of the police and the military, today (Sunday) 19/2/2023 by 5:58 am, neutralized a gang of five armed men, recovered two Ak47 rifles, one Toyota Sienna vehicle with Reg No Abuja ABC 848 EQ, charms and other incriminating items, in a response to a distress call on an attack at 3-3 Police Divisional Headquarters, Nkwelle-Ezunaka, Oyi LGA.

"The notorious gang who were armed with guns, IEDs, and petrol bombs, started shooting indiscriminately to gain entrance to the station but were engaged and resisted by gallant officers attached to the station.

"During the gun duel, unfortunately, one police operative attached to the station was fatally wounded and an office in the facility was partially affected by the petrol bomb the armed men threw inside the station.

"Also, one patrol vehicle parked in front of the station was set ablaze by the gunmen.

"The situation is under control and the incident is still being assessed. Meanwhile, Joint operations are still ongoing and further development shall be communicated."

## 3 One shot dead as hoodlums attack APC campaign venue in Ebonyi

The Campaign had already recorded success when the ugly incident occurred.

While the supporters were waiting to depart to their various destinations, the assailants invaded the venue and started shooting sporadically.

Vanguard gathered that the hoodlums also burnt a Toyota Hiace Bus and one ash-coloured vehicle before leaving the venue.

A stakeholder of Ezzagu community who did not want his name in print said: "It was around

5:30 pm on Saturday, February, that I received a distress call from my wife, Eunice, that she was in trouble. Her emotions were high, and palpitating profusely.

She narrated to me that she was calling me from a bush where she scampered for safety, which I sent a rescue team from my nearby village. She was unhurt.

"She was conveyed to the venue by the National President of Ogboji General Assembly, John Anyalagu; his wife and younger brother, Emeka Nwusolor.

"Unfortunately, while they were standing by the roadside for John to drive out his car for them to race back to Abakaliki, the hoodlums invaded and killed Emeka who was standing by.

"The security agents should up their games and duties. The proliferation of firearms is rampant in Ebonyi State.

"I, therefore, commiserate with the family of the deceased for paying a supreme sacrifice for the All Progressives Congress."

Reacting to the ugly incident, Ogbuatu Chidi Simbad, APC Publicity Secretary, Ebonyi State, alleged that the attack on the APC supporters in Amagu community was masterminded by the All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA, and its gubernatorial candidate, Prof Benard Odoh.

According to him "At about 4:30 pm, Saturday; Nigerian time, Odoh, the desperate and desperado gubernatorial candidate of APGA in Ebonyi State unleashed his rabid attack dogs who wielded AK-47 rifles and other war arms and ammunition on innocent armless APC members holding their political meetings in Ezzagu Ward of Ishielu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

"They killed, critically injured others and set vehicles ablaze in a blatant perpetration of arson which is a heinous crime in the Nigerian legal system.

"Odoh and his rag-tag Ebonyi APGA with their terrorist gang

have vindicated the Ebonyi APC that they are masterminds of all the attacks and killings in Ebonyi State, including the ones on themselves which they arranged just to discredit the Ebonyi State Government, sacrificing innocent lives in the process.

"The question bugging the minds of every Ebonyian and indeed Nigerians is; why is Odoh so desperate to become what he knows he will never become to the point that he and his Ebonyi APGA have no regard for human lives anymore? His nemesis has come.

"Ebonyi APC is a composition of civilized people. It is for this reason that we won't be dragged into a war with Odoh, APGA, and their misguided *mkpurumiri* gangsters. Hence, we toe as always; the legitimate path."

Responding on behalf of APGA, Charles Otu, Director, Media and Publicity, Odohzhia Ebonyi Campaign council

"We at the Odohzhia Ebonyi Campaign council of the All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA for the March 11, 2023, governorship election in Ebonyi State, Professor Benard Ifeanyi Odoh read with profound consternation the allegations leveled against our principal who has generally been described as the most peaceful, peaceable and widely-accepted choice of the majority of Ebonyians for the position of the Governor of Ebonyi State.

"Even though the allegations by the drowning Ebonyi APC are very fictitious, made rather out of the panic bags of the ruling party and lacking in every material fact as the spokesperson woefully failed to even mention the name of the alleged deceased and injured cum hospitalized victims, we wish to react as follows:

"That while our peaceful and peace-loving party, APGA and Odohzhia Campaign Council, all reasonable Ebonyians, Nigerians, and indeed, the whole world await from the APC Spokesperson, Simbad Ogbuatu and his descending ship of Ebonyi APC Excos the accurate details of the alleged incident, it is only wisdom to completely distance our principal, Professor Benard Odoh from the unfounded and rather strange allegations."