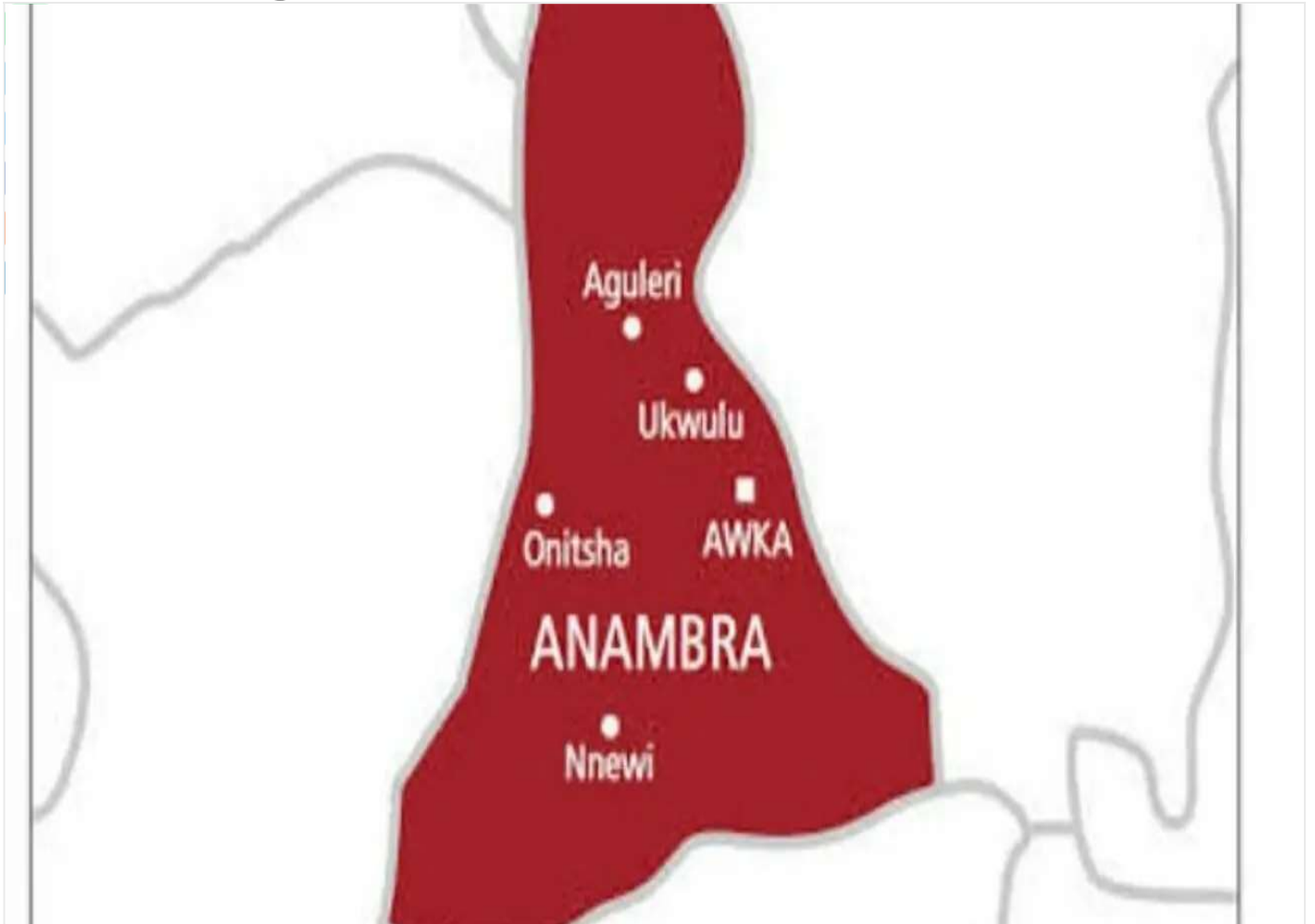


Discovered mass grave site in Anambra marked for forensic investigation



•322 allegedly killed, others missing

By Vincent Ujumadu

Awka—THE site of a mass grave discovered in Anambra State has been sealed off for forensic investigation.

Wife of the late Ikemba Nnewi, Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, Mrs. Bianca Ojukwu, who hinted at the discovery, said the Anambra Truth, Justice, and Peace Commission, set up by Governor Chukwuma Soludo, also observed that no fewer than 322 persons were killed in the state as a result of insecurity occasioned by violence.

Although she did not name the location of the mass grave, the former Nigerian Ambassador to Spain described the situation as alarming.

She said: “We are living in alarming and anxiety-inducing times.

,”The Anambra Truth, Justice and Peace Commission has concluded its second phase of public hearing. Our Commission, headed by Prof Chidi Odinkalu interrogated a total of 39 witnesses who testified on oath, while 243 exhibits were collected during the proceedings.

“The Commission also met with 31 petitioners, including 11 organisations, 19 communities, and one individual during the marathon sittings, which lasted from Oct. 26 to Nov. 3.

“Some 322 persons were verified as killed or dead, as a result of violence, as testified by the witnesses, while so many are still missing or their fate not yet verified.

“Eighteen persons have been categorically identified as missing or disappeared.”

In the course of the proceedings, the gruesome discovery of a mass grave site was brought by testimonies, to the attention of the Commission.

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“Chairman of the Commission Prof Chidi Odinkalu mandated that the suspected mass grave site be sealed for forensic investigation by pathologists. This will help in unraveling who the victims were and the circumstances of their deaths.

“The Commission had earlier held the first phase of its public hearing between June and July this year in the course of which we considered 24 petitions and met with 48 witnesses who testified on oath from 14 communities of the state within a 10-day hearing”.

Recall that the Anambra Truth, Justice, and Peace Commission was constituted by Governor Soludo in June 2022 to inquire into the violent agitations and restiveness in the state and other neighbouring states.

Already, a Bureau of Missing Persons as recommended by the Truth Commission has been established in the state to document the missing persons and the circumstances of their disappearance.