

## Biafra Day: 3 soldiers killed as sit-at-home turns bloody in South East



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Three soldiers were killed, yesterday, as the sit-at-home declared by the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, and the Movement for the Actualization of Biafra, MASSOB, to honour Biafra heroes and heroines who died during the Nigeria-Biafra civil war, turned bloody.

Streets were deserted, schools, banks and markets shut while commercial activities were grounded in most parts of Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Enugu and Imo states.

This is coming as the leadership of Ohanaeze Ndigbo and the detained IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, yesterday denounced the killing of security personnel by unknown armed men.

Abia grounded, 3 soldiers killed

In compliance to the sit-at-home directive, our correspondent observed that there was total compliance to the sit-at-home directive in Umuahia, the Abia State capital in the early hours of the day before some gunmen reportedly attacked a Military Unit located at Obikabia junction, Ogbor Hill area and shot dead three soldiers.

The gunmen, who were said to have stormed the military unit with sophisticated rifles, also burnt the unit as well as a patrol van parked in the unit. Some soldiers were reported to have escaped the attack.

Efforts to confirm the incident from the Public Relations Officer, 14 Brigade, Ohafia, Lt. Innocent Omale, was unsuccessful, as he did not respond to a text message sent to his mobile number.

A young man who was hit by a stray bullet battled for life as sympathisers were seen making attempts to get a tricycle to take him to the hospital.

Tension pervaded the city as a military helicopter hovered around the Ogbor Hill area, causing residents to remain indoors. Some of the military units visited by Vanguard at Asa and Emelogu roads were deserted.

**Total lockdown in Onitsha, Nnewi**

In Anambra State, all the markets in Onitsha, the commercial city and Nnewi the industrial town, closed to observe the day, while school, banks, hospitals and government offices were shut.

Major roads known for their busy commercial, business and transport activities were equally deserted by motorists and passengers while major streets with entry and exit gates, as common in Onitsha and Nnewi, were under lock and key as vehicles entering and exiting were not allowed by security operative manning them.

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Residents expressed disappointed that the Police and security agents who urged them to go about their lawful business were no where to be seen as people observed the sit-at-home.

**Major streets deserted in Enugu**

Most parts of Enugu were deserted in the early hours of yesterday as many businesses, transport operators, schools, banks, filling stations and markets were closed for the day with major streets such as Zik Avenue, Agbani Road, Presidential Road and Okpara Avenue, also deserted.

A trader, who did want his name mentioned told Vanguard that he decided to stay at home to obey the order even when the government of Enugu State had frowned at such an order and told the residents to go about their business.

**Total compliance in Ebonyi**

The sit-at-home in Ebonyi State recorded full compliance, especially in Abakaliki the state capital.

Businesses, schools and social activities were completely shut down with most roads deserted. Only a few vehicles, especially those on essential duties were seen on the roads.

Armed security personnel were stationed in some strategic locations in the state to checkmate possible attacks.

The busy Water Works road, Ogoja road, Afikpo road, Gunning Street and Afikpo Street were all deserted.

A transport worker in one of the major motor parks told our correspondent that they are happy obeying the order, noting that he is hopeful that one day Biafra independence will be achieved.

**Economic activities grounded in Owerri**

Economic activities were ground in Owerri, Imo State capital, following the sit-at-home order. It was gathered that major streets were empty as residents stayed indoors.

Our correspondent observed that many shops were closed on the major roads including Wethedral, Tetlow, MCC/Uratta, Egbu, Orji, World bank, Douglas, Mabise road. Owerri-Port Harcourt, Owerri-Aba, Owerri- Onitsha roads were also deserted with shops, markets shut.

Some residents who spoke to newsmen said they decided to stay at home because of fear of attack from the enforcers of sit-at-home order.

**Ohanaeze condemn killing, calls for political solution to Kanu's detention**

Meanwhile, the President General of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo Worldwide, Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, yesterday condemned the killing of three soldiers during the sit-at-home directive and also called for a political solution to the detention of Nnamdi Kanu.

Speaking while answering questions from newsmen shortly after a three-hour meeting with Kanu, who is currently in the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS), Iwuanyanwu said the senseless killing of security operatives by a gang of "criminals" does not enjoy the support of all right-thinking Igbos, the leadership of Ohanaeze as well as Nnamdi Kanu, whom he referred to as "my son."

According to him, the detained IPOB leader who condemned the killings also condemned the sit-at-home directive given by some persons in the South-East.

Iwuanyanwu said: "The truth about it is, I discussed it with Nnamdi Kanu, he is very sad about it. He said it sometimes last year, he said to me today that he is not part of this sit-at-home thing. Two things that have made Igbos develop are education and business enterprise. There is no Igbo family that you don't find these two things. I think this is a political thing, I urge the President to use his political power to release him."

Earlier, Ohanaeze leader led a delegation which included the Secretary-General, Okey Emuchey, the Eze Ndigbo of Abuja, Eze Nwosu and the former Chairman of the Police Service Commission, Dr. Simeon Okeke among others to meet with Kanu at the DSS Headquarters where he is currently being detained.

The delegation entered the DSS Complex at about 1:05 pm and left at about 4:15 pm.

**Uzodimma condemns killing, wants perpetrators punished**

The Chairman of South East Governors Forum and governor of Imo State, Senator Hope Uzodimma, has condemned in strong terms the brutal assassination of soldiers in Aba on Thursday.

He regretted that the soldiers were attacked without any provocation and killed while on a lawful duty, protecting innocent citizens against the threat of nonstate actors.

Uzodimma regretted that the soldiers were shot and killed at Obikabia junction in Aba by masked gunmen who also set their patrol vehicle on fire.

In a statement in Owerri, Uzodimma said such callous and unwanted killings seriously dent the image of the South East among other Nigerians. He regretted that such callous and unprovoked attacks on security agencies were also a setback to efforts being made by South East governors to negotiate an end to the crisis in the region. According to him, at a time when the governors were talking with both the Federal Government and security agencies on ways of ending the siege on the region, such a killing was a setback to peace efforts. Uzodimma noted that there was no justifiable reason to murder soldiers who were not engaged in any conflict with anyone. "This act of cowardice is strongly condemned. There was no justifiable reason, no cause whatsoever to have killed those soldiers in cold blood," he lamented. The governor tasked security agencies to go after the killers and bring them to book without delay. He commiserated with the families of the victims and the Chief of Army Staff, Nigerian Army, over the deaths of the gallant soldiers. He urged all parties not to take the laws into their hands.