

# Tension in Onitsha as OCHA Brigade allegedly kills pregnant woman, 3 others

By Vincent Ujumadu

**T**ENSION is mounting in the commercial city of Onitsha following reports that operatives of Operation Clean and Healthy Anambra, OCHA, Brigade allegedly opened fire at the ever-busy Emeka Ofor Plaza at Bright Street, close to Onitsha Main Market, leaving four people, including a pregnant woman, dead.

Eyewitnesses said the incident sparked panic and outrage among traders and residents in the area, who immediately fled the scene for safety. The victims, it was gathered, were carrying out their businesses when they were shot by armed men reportedly working for OCHA Brigade, a state government sanitation enforcement outfit.

"This is heartbreaking. Four innocent people who left their homes this morning have been cut down in cold blood. Among them is a pregnant woman.

"Anambra people are liv-

ing in fear because criminals have been handed guns and uniforms in the name of government enforcement," the eyewitness said.

The reason for the shooting could not be immediately ascertained, but the incident has fueled widespread anger, with

## Strike: South East IPMAN begs NUPENG to dialogue with Dangote

**T**HE National Executive, Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), Chukwudi Ezinwa, has urged the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) to dialogue with Dangote Company over ongoing strike.

Ezinwa, who is representing the East in the IPMAN National Executive Council, appealed to NUPENG to consider the hardship they would subject Nigerians to during their strike. The IPMAN National Executive Committee member made the appeal at a press conference on Mon-

day in Enugu. NUPENG had announced that its members would commence a nationwide strike from Monday, and warned of an imminent nationwide fuel scarcity.

The strike is in protest against what it described as anti-labour practices linked to the deployment of newly imported Compressed Natural Gas (CNG)-powered trucks by the Dangote Refinery, for direct distribution of petroleum products.

According to him, there should be a dialogue, where parties can come together to discuss and find a common ground to settle it.

critics accusing the state government of empowering groups who terrorise the people. Reacting to the incident, the state Police command said the Commissioner of Police, Ikioye Orutugu, has sent an Assistant Commissioner of Police to the scene to calm the situation. The Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO SP Tochukwu Ikenga, however, said that only one person was dead, while four others were injured.

According to him, the incident followed an altercation between some traders and operatives of OCHA Brigade.

"I am glad that the Federal Government, through the Minister of Labour has summoned a meeting in this regard.

"That is the right way to go. I disagree completely with anybody calling for a strike at this moment.

"Nigeria is passing through a lot now, and we cannot add more pain to the injury of the masses because Dangote and other wealthy Nigerians cannot feel the strike but the common man on the street can.

"So, I am of the opinion that people calling for a strike should do that with restraint as it will cause inflation, panic buying, and an increase in the price of petroleum products," he said.