



A DECADE OF IMPUNITY

ATTACKS AND UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN
SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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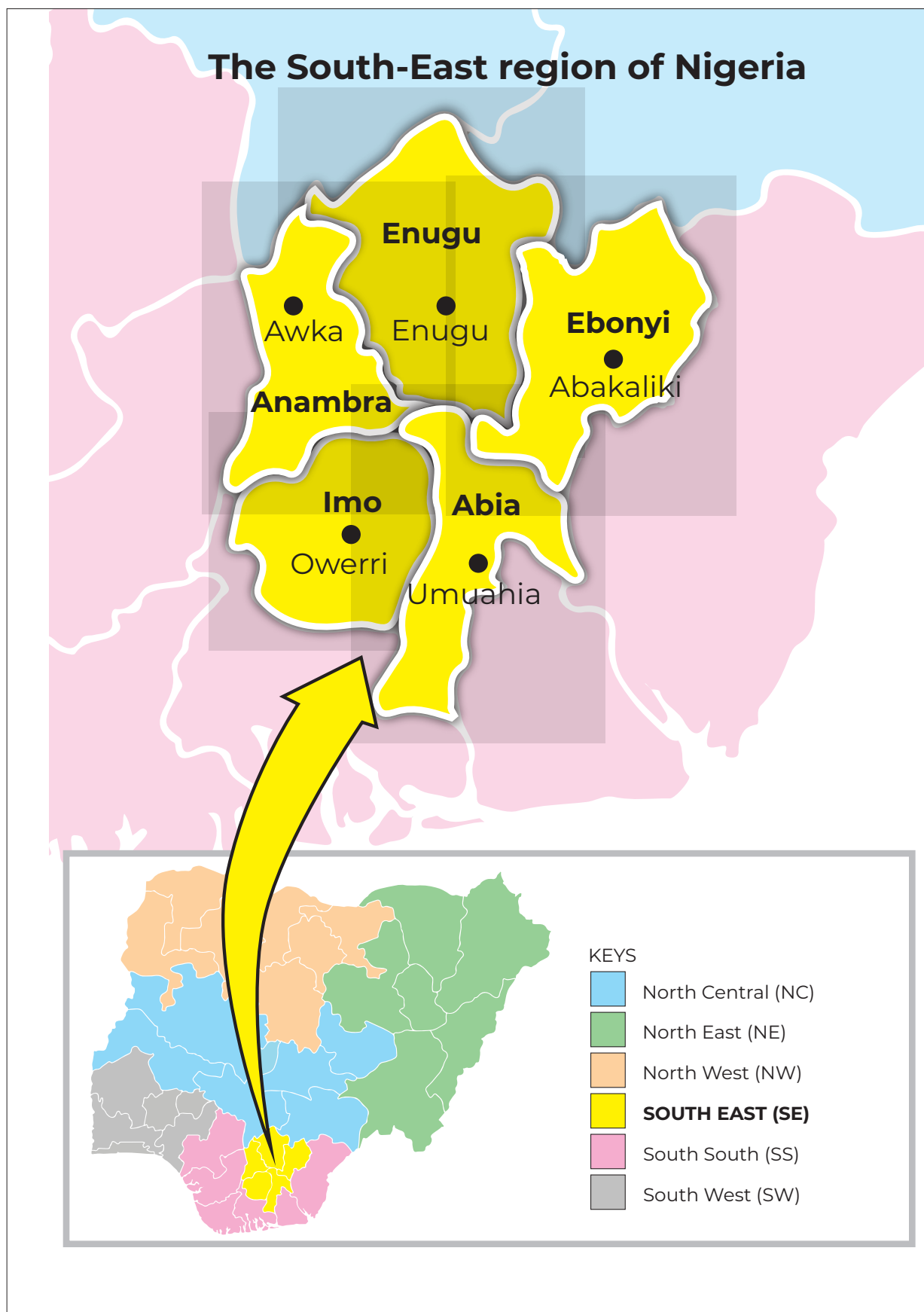
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ABBREVIATIONS

WORD	DESCRIPTION
DSS	Department of State Services
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
APC	All Progressives Congress
AVS	Anambra State Vigilante Service
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSP	Chief Superintendent of Police
ESN	Eastern Security Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPOB	Independent People of Biafra
IRT	Intelligence Response Team
LGA	Local Government Area
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
POS	Point of Sale
SARS	Special Anti-Robbery Squad
SSS	State Security Service
UGM	"Unknown gunmen"
UNCAT	UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examination Council

MAP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“... We know the gunmen. They are not unknown gunmen. They are people from our communities ...”

Amnesty International interview with South-East community member

OVERVIEW

This report documents human rights violations and abuses committed by various state and non-state actors in the South-East region of Nigeria between January 2021 and December 2024. The actors concerned include the state-backed paramilitary outfit, commonly referred to as “Ebube Agu”, and members of the defence and security forces. The non-state actors include the Eastern Security Network (ESN) - the militant arm of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), “unknown gunmen”, cult groups, and vigilante group members.

The period between January 2021 and December 2024 witnessed violence, unlawful killings, attacks, torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention, internal displacements, and suppression of the right to freedom of movement.

Amnesty International estimates that between January 2021 and June 2023, according to available data, 1,844 people were killed in the South-East region of Nigeria. Since 2021, there have been several attacks on security agents by gunmen leading to the unlawful killing of security agents and residents. Amnesty International has documented several cases of killings in different areas in the South-East by so-called “unknown gunmen,” cult groups, and IPOB and its militant arm, the ESN.

In this report, Amnesty International also presents cases of killings perpetrated by herders over grazing lands in the South-East, particularly in Enugu and Ebonyi states. It further documents the activities of gunmen who have turned some communities into “ungoverned spaces,” by sacking traditional rulers, displacing residents, and taking total control of communities, including Agwa and Izombe in the Oguta Local Government Area (LGA) of Imo state and Lilu in Ihiala LGA of Anambra State. This report also documents abuses by various cult groups, which operate unchecked amidst a thriving drug business, in several towns in Anambra state, including Obosi, Awka, Onitsha, Ogidi and Umuoji. These cult groups have been responsible for the killing of hundreds of residents in cultism-related clashes.

The enforcement of a sit-at-home order by IPOB/ESN, covering the South-East region, issued on 9 August 2021, led to violations of the human rights of the people in the region, including the rights to life, freedom of movement, and the right to education. This report also documents violations by the state-backed paramilitary force, Ebube Agu, established by the South-East governors on 11 April 2021 following increasing violence in the region. The Ebube Agu paramilitary force has committed several human right violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, unlawful killings and enforced disappearances, extortion, and destruction of homes.

Furthermore, the report documents violations by the Nigerian military, including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, enforced disappearances, and destruction of properties. These attacks on people occurred during “Operation Python Dance” or “Operation Egwu Eke” (November - December 2016), “Operation Python Dance II” (September 2017), and “Operation Udo Ka” (October 2023). Further attacks occurred in Imo state in Orlu and Orsu towns (14 February 2021); Amuzi and Odenkwume communities in Ihitte/Uboma (21 May 2021); and Aku Ihube in Okigwe (26 September 2023); as well as in Anambra state, in Orsumoghu in Ihiala LGA (11 August 2023); and Mother Valley Orsumughu in Ihiala LGA (26 September 2023).

To document this situation, between April 2023 November to 2023, Amnesty International conducted three research missions to Owerri in Imo state, Obosi in Anambra state, Asaba in Delta state, and Enugu in Enugu state. During these missions, researchers interviewed individuals from Enugu, Abia, Imo, Anambra and Ebonyi states at safe locations in Enugu. Amnesty International conducted in-person and phone interviews with more than 100 survivors and relatives of victims of human rights violations and abuses, as well as representatives of civil society organizations, lawyers, and religious leaders based in the South-East region. However, requests by Amnesty International to meet with the five South-East state governors did not receive any answer, except the Anambra state government, which acknowledged receipt of our request but did not provide any opportunity for a meeting.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Amnesty International's research found:

- Between January 2021 and June 2023, over 1,844 people were killed in the South-East region, while there were cases of abductions, mob violence, and electoral violence.¹ As at the time of writing this report, the killings continued.
- The security situation in South-East Nigeria involves a hybrid of criminal and political violence that different actors can choose to portray and manipulate to suit their interests.
- The multifaceted nature of the actors in the South-East violence makes it easy for state and non-state actors to reduce the actors to a singular narrative: an IPOB/ESN secessionist group.
- The so-called “unknown gunmen” are prevalent in conducting random assaults across the South-East, as opposed to a coordinated and calculated attack targeted at the Nigerian state and its institutions or interests.
- The “unknown gunmen” are indeed known persons in the communities where they operate.
- There is no clear-cut difference between the activities of the “unknown gunmen” and IPOB/ESN in the South-East, as both have committed violations and abuses of human rights.
- In clashes between farmers and herders over grazing lands, the herdsman have killed an unspecified number of people between 2019-2023 in Enugu and Ebonyi states.
- Since 2020, there have been several attacks on security agents by gunmen, leading to the killing of security agents and residents.
- In Imo state, the gunmen operate from camps located in forests in Okigwe, Mbaitolu, Arondizuogu, Ihiteukwa, Ihitenansa, Okwudo, Agwa, Izombe, Umuorji Mgbidi, Ihube, Atta, Aku Umulolo, and Njaba River on the Awo-Omamma and Ezioha border.
- In Anambra state, the gunmen operate from camps located in forests in Lilu, Ukpok, Ezinifite Nnewi, Unubi, Akwaihedi, Umuze, Isseke, Mbosi, Ihiala, Azia, Okija, Uga, Idara Nnebo, Ihembosi, Ukpok and Mother Valley in Orsumughu.
- In Enugu state, the gunmen operate from camps located at Nkwere Inyi Forest in Oji River.
- In Ebonyi state, the gunmen operate from camps located in forests in Mgbalukwu, Inyimagu Izzi.
- The police appear to be unable to tackle this insecurity or to carry out arrests in several parts of the South-East, including Ihiala LGA of Anambra state, following the spate of attacks on security agents by gunmen.
- Many communities, including Agwa, Izombe and their neighbouring communities in Oguta LGA of Imo state could be described as “ungoverned spaces” due to the activities of gunmen who have taken total control of the communities.
- In several towns in Anambra state, including Obosi, Awka, Onitsha, Ogidi and Umuoji, cult groups operate unchecked, amidst a thriving drug business, with hundreds killed in cultism-related clashes.
- The enforcement of the sit-at-home order, issued by IPOB in the South-East region on 9 August 2021, has led to human rights abuses by IPOB/ESN across the South-East, including the rights to life, freedom of movement and education.

¹ International Centre for Investigative Reporting, “At least two people die daily from insecurity in south-east”, 7 September 2023, <https://www.icirnigeria.org/at-least-2-people-die-daily-from-insecurity-in-south-east/>

- The state-backed Ebube Agu paramilitary force, established by the South-East governors on 11 April 2021, has committed human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and destruction of homes.
- The Nigerian military has committed human rights violations during military operations in the South-East. These include “Operation Python Dance” or “Operation Egwu Eke” (November to December 2016), “Operation Python Dance II” (September 2017), and “Operation Udo Ka” (October 2023). Violations committed by the Nigerian military during these operations include arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and destruction of homes.
- There have been cases of military reprisal attacks in several communities in the South-East, in relation to the activities of IPOB/ESN and gunmen, leading to human rights abuses.
- The Nigerian military has carried out several airstrikes in Imo state, in Orlu and Orsu towns (14 February 2021); Amuzi and Odenkwume communities in Ihitte/Uboma (21 May 2021); and Aku Ihube in Okigwe; and in Anambra state, in Orsumoghu in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state (11 August 2023); and Mother Valley Orsumughu in, Anambra state (26 September 2023).
- The Nigerian authorities have continued to clampdown on IPOB supporters, with several cases of unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions, excessive use of force, torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, detention, and unfair trials of suspected IPOB members.
- The Nigerian authorities have arbitrarily arrested and forcibly disappeared suspected IPOB members and have abducted several suspected IPOB members, holding them in secret detention centres.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Therefore, among other recommendations, Amnesty International calls on the Nigerian authorities to:

- Conduct prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into all allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed by state and non-state actors in the context of the violence in the South-East region, including by the security forces, the state-backed Ebube Agu militia, the “unknown gunmen” and IPOB/ESN, and to prosecute those suspected to be responsible in fair trials, without recourse to the death penalty, and make all findings of the investigations public;
- Ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims and their families, including measures of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition;
- Implement safeguards to prevent human rights violations by the security forces, including unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention and torture and other ill-treatment, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial execution, and airstrikes;
- Assure the families of all persons arrested by security agents or the Ebube Agu paramilitary operatives in South-East Nigeria that immediate measures will be taken to notify them of the fate and whereabouts of their relatives;
- Ensure that enforced disappearance constitutes a criminal offence under domestic law, in line with Nigeria’s obligations under the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- Promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently, and effectively investigate all allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and bring anyone suspected to be responsible to justice in fair trial without recourse to the death penalty;
- Provide timely and adequate alternative accommodation, cash transfers, and humanitarian assistance to individuals rendered homeless due to destruction of homes and forced evictions. Also, ensure that such support is tailored to the specific needs of affected communities;
- Ensure that no student is denied access to education as a result of the sit-at-home order. If students and teachers are unable to access schools, develop and implement innovative ways for them to continue accessing learning remotely.

Amnesty International also calls on all state forces, “unknown gunmen”, IPOB/ESN forces, the state-backed Ebube Agu militia and armed groups to immediately cease all human rights violations and abuses including extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, acts of torture, enforced disappearance, and burning of homes in the South-East region.

METHODOLOGY

This report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the South-East region of Nigeria is the result of research carried out from 2021 to 2024. It covers events from May 2016 to December 2024, but mainly focuses on human rights abuses and violations committed since 2021.

To be clear, the primary focus of this report is on documenting human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the South-East region of Nigeria since 2021. This report does not address the agitation for self-determination by the IPOB and its militant wing, the ESN.

The report is based primarily on research missions undertaken between April 2023 to November 2023, including three research missions to Owerri, Imo state, Asaba, Delta state, Obosi, Anambra state, Enugu, Enugu state, and Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. The report also draws from five remote interviews by Amnesty International in 2023 and in March 2024. The research covers the five Nigerian South-Eastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

This report is based on interviews with 100 people, including at least 44 women. Interviews with survivors were conducted in English, Igbo, and pidgin English.

Before conducting each interview, written consent, including for pictures and videos, was obtained and interviewees were informed of their right not to be interviewed if they did not want to be. The interviews in the communities were conducted independently and face-to-face at locations chosen as suitable by the interviewees.

Amnesty International interviewed 18 family members, friends, or colleagues of men and women who have been forcibly disappeared by the Nigerian government, and two women who were released after having been forcibly disappeared. Several witnesses in this report asked that their names or the name of the disappeared person be withheld to protect their own safety, the safety of the disappeared person or the safety of family members living in South-East Nigeria. Amnesty International also cooperated with several monitoring groups and activists to gather information and establish contact with the family members of individuals who had been forcibly disappeared.

Hundreds of articles from news websites and academic research, as well as press releases and statements from the authorities, were also consulted during the research.

Between 19-22 April 2024, Amnesty International sent letters to the governors of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states, outlining the main findings of this report, offering a right to reply and requesting the opportunity to discuss the research findings with them or their designated representatives. Amnesty International received an email on 15 May 2024 from the Chief of Staff to the Anambra state governor, undertaking to communicate a date to meet with the governor to discuss the report findings. This is yet to eventuate, despite repeated reminders. Again, between 28 November- 4 December 2024, Amnesty International sent further letters summarizing the report's preliminary findings and requesting a response from the Governors of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. Amnesty International has not received any response from the five states at the time of writing.

Between 29 January - 6 February 2025, Amnesty International sent letters to the Inspector General of Police, Chief of Army Staff (with a copy to the Chief of Defence Staff), and the Director of the Department of State Services requesting information on the report findings. All the letters remain unanswered at the time of writing.

Amnesty International thanks everyone who took part in the research. For most of the participants, this was at personal risk and in very difficult circumstances. In accordance with Amnesty International's policy, the anonymity of some interviewees has been protected at their request, or after the organization's assessment of the potential risks to these individuals. Names and other identifying details, including locations of the interviews and incidents, have been omitted to protect identities of interviewees for security and confidentiality reasons. Throughout the report, names have been changed to either pseudonyms or initials to protect the identity of the survivors.

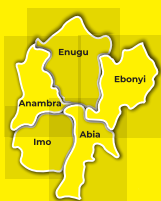


SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

Region of
research focus:
South-East



Number of
states:
5



INTERVIEW CONDUCTED:



Years of
research focus:
2021-2024



Period of event:
**May 2016-
Dec 2024**



Number of languages used
during the research
3



Focus of the
report:
**Human rights
abuses and
violations**



Materials consulted during
the research:

- Articles from news websites and academic research
- Press releases and statements



1. BACKGROUND

Since 1999, there have been several groups aiming for secession in South-East Nigeria. The two main groups have been the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) founded in 1999. In recent years, the IPOB, a group founded in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu and Uche Mefor, emerged.² IPOB claims it is a self-determination movement that aims to restore the defunct republic of Biafra, the then Eastern region that seceded from Nigeria, which led to the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). In a 2016 report, Amnesty International noted that the IPOB emerged in 2012 and campaigned for an independent Biafran state.³

On 14 October 2015, IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was arrested by Nigerian authorities and arraigned on eleven charges, including terrorism, treasonable felony, managing an unlawful society, publication of defamatory matter, illegal possession of firearms and improper importation of goods.⁴ In response to his arrest, IPOB supporters held protests across South-East Nigeria to push for his release. Following the protests, there were several reported cases of clampdown on IPOB supporters by security agents across the South-East. On 8 November 2016, Nnamdi Kanu was re-arraigned before Justice Binta Nyako at a Federal High Court in Abuja.⁵ On 25 April 2017, Nnamdi Kanu was granted bail on health grounds. Kanu was given 12 conditions for bail; some of which included not travelling out of Nigeria, not holding rallies, not granting interviews, and providing the court progress on his health.⁶

However, Nnamdi Kanu allegedly defied the conditions of his bail and IPOB continued agitating for a Biafran state. On 10 September 2017, personnel of the Nigerian army, under an operation in the South-East states code-named “Operation Python Dance II”, invaded Nnamdi Kanu’s home at Afaraukwu community near Umuahia, Abia state.⁷ According to reports, Nnamdi Kanu fled the country during the military invasion, which led to the death of 28 persons.⁸ On 20 September 2017, the Nigerian government proscribed IPOB as a terrorist organization and banned the group’s activities. IPOB challenged this in court but failed as a federal court upheld the proscription.⁹ On 28 March 2019, the court revoked Nnamdi Kanu’s bail and ordered that he be arrested to face trial.¹⁰ In December 2020, the IPOB launched the Eastern Security Network (ESN) reportedly to respond to alleged killings by herders, whom they accused of grazing on farmlands and killing of farmers and residents.¹¹

2 UK Home Office, *Country Policy and Information Note: Nigeria – Biafran Separatists*, April 2020, bit.ly/3V41OKP (accessed on 25 November 2024).

3 Amnesty International, *Nigeria: ‘Bullets Were Raining Everywhere’: Deadly Repression of Pro-Biafra Activists*, 24 November 2016 (Index: AFR 44/5211/2016), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/5211/2016/en/>

4 CNN, “Nigerian separatist leader brought back to Nigeria to face trial”, 29 June 2021, <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/29/africa/nnamdi-kanu-arrested-nigeria-intl/index.html>

5 Cable, “Court denies Nnamdi Kanu bail”, 29 January 2016, <https://www.thecable.ng/breaking-court-denies-nnamdi-kanu-bail>

6 Premium Times, “Judge gives Nnamdi Kanu 12 conditions for bail”, 25 April 2017, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/229581-judge-gives-nnamdi-kanu-12-conditions-bail-full-details.html?tztc=1>

7 Daily Post, “Nigerian Army allegedly invade Nnamdi Kanu’s home, five feared dead, several injured”, 10 September 2017, <https://dailypost.ng/2017/09/10/breaking-nigerian-army-allegedly-invade-nnamdi-kanus-home-five-feared-dead-several-injured/>

8 Cable, “Nnamdi Kanu: How I was smuggled out of Nigeria during Operation Python Dance”, 29 October 2018, <https://www.thecable.ng/nnamdi-kanu-how-i-was-smuggled-out-of-nigeria-during-operation-python-dance/>

9 UK Home Office, *Country Policy and Information Note: Nigeria – Biafran Separatists*, April 2020, bit.ly/3V41OKP (accessed on 25 November 2024).

10 Punch, “Don’t restore Nnamdi Kanu’s bail, FG tells court”, 26 January 2020, <https://punchng.com/dont-restore-nnamdi-kanus-bail-fg-tells-court/>

11 Daily Post, “Nnamdi Kanu launches Eastern Security Network”, 13 December 2020, <https://dailypost.ng/2020/12/13/breaking-nnamdi-kanu-launches-eastern-security-network/>

On 19 June 2021, Nnamdi Kanu was arrested at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi by Kenyan security forces. According to reports, he was denied access to lawyers and denied extradition proceedings in Kenya.¹² On 27 June 2021, Kanu was subjected to extraordinary rendition to Nigeria.¹³ On 29 June 2021, Nnamdi Kanu was arraigned and charged with terrorism, treason and “perpetuating falsehoods against former President Muhammadu Buhari, mainly through broadcasts on the Radio Biafra outlet and also through social media”.¹⁴ On 9 August 2021, IPOB declared a sit-at-home order in the South-East on Mondays and sometimes also on other weekdays to protest Nnamdi Kanu’s extraordinary rendition from Kenya and his continued detention.¹⁵

On 28 June 2022, the Federal High Court in Abuja dismissed Nnamdi Kanu’s application for bail on the ground that he breached the previous bail terms. On 13 October 2022, the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division delivered a judgement ordering Kanu’s release from detention. The court held that he was abducted, ill-treated, and “illegally moved” from Kenya to Nigeria to face treason and terrorism charges.¹⁶ The court also dismissed the terrorism and treasonable felony charges filed against Kanu.¹⁷ However, the Nigerian authorities continued to hold Nnamdi Kanu, despite the judgement of the Court of Appeal which ordered his release.

Subsequently, the Nigerian government filed an appeal at the Supreme Court and applied that the execution of the Court of Appeal judgment be suspended pending the resolution of its appeal. On 28 October 2022, a three-member panel of the Court of Appeal halted the execution of its judgement which freed Kanu of terrorism charges. On 15 December 2023, the Supreme Court set aside the judgement by the Appeal Court which dismissed the terrorism charges against Nnamdi Kanu.¹⁸ On 26 February 2024, the Federal High Court in Abuja resumed the trial of Nnamdi Kanu with an amended 15-count charge of terrorism and treasonable felony.¹⁹ On 19 March 2024, Nnamdi Kanu was denied bail and the court ordered an accelerated trial.²⁰ The trial continues till date.

Since the detention and trial of Nnamdi Kanu, there has been heightened violence and killing in the South-East. Although there were cases of violence and killings in the South-East prior to 2021, the killings have intensified since 2021, leading to escalating human rights violations and abuses by both state and non-state actors.

In addition to the activities of IPOB/ESN, this report will demonstrate that since 2021, several militant and other armed groups have begun operating under the guise of IPOB/ESN in a way that hides the true nature and intent of their operations. A South-East Nigeria security analyst succinctly summarized the security situation in the South-East, vis-à-vis the activities of the “unknown gunmen” as follows:

“Nigeria’s South-East had become home to a mélange of different criminal groups, nominally ideological insurgents, and state-backed militias that were all implicated in horrific violence against local communities and federal security forces. The multifaceted nature of the actors in the South-East conflict makes it easy for the state and the non-state actors to reduce the actors to a singular narrative of IPOB/ESN secessionist group.”²¹

Despite the multifaceted nature of the conflict, as indicated by the ongoing violence and killings by various

12 UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 25/2022 concerning Nwannekaenyi Nnamdi Kenny Okwu-Kanu (Nigeria and Kenya), 17 August 2022, A/HRC/WGAD/2022/25.

13 CNN, “Nigerian separatist leader brought back to Nigeria to face trial”, 29 June 2021, <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/29/africa/nnamdi-kanu-arrested-nigeria-intl/index.html>

14 Punch, “IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu arraigned in Abuja”, 29 June 2021, <https://punchng.com/breaking-ipob-leader-nnamdi-kanu-arraigned-in-abuja/>

15 Cable, “Self-determination and the IPOB sit-at-home-tactic”, 29 September 2021, <https://www.thecable.ng/self-determination-and-the-ipob-sit-at-home-tactic>

16 Channels TV, “Supreme Court insists Nnamdi Kanu must face trial, overturns a’ court judgement”, 15 December 2023, <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/12/15/breaking-supreme-court-insists-nnamdi-kanu-must-face-trial-overturns-a-court-judgement/>

17 Premium Times, “Supreme Court orders continuation of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu’s trial”, 15 December 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/651780-supreme-court-orders-continuation-of-ipob-leader-nnamdi-kanus-trial.html>

18 Punch, “Nnamdi Kanu must face trial, says Supreme Court”, 15 December 2023, <https://punchng.com/nnamdi-kanu-must-face-trial-says-supreme-court>

19 Channels TV, “Nnamdi Kanu’s trial resumes at High Court In Abuja”, 26 February 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/02/26/nnamdi-kanus-trial-resumes-at-high-court-in-abuja>

20 Reuters, “Nigerian court denies separatist leader Kanu bail, orders trial”, 19 March 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigerian-court-denies-separatist-leader-kanu-bail-orders-trial-2024-03-19/>

21 Hudson Institute, “Understanding the ‘unknown gunmen’ who attacked a US convoy In Nigeria”, 18 May 2023, <https://www.hudson.org/terrorism/understanding-unknown-gunmen-whso-attacked-us-convoy-nigeria>

state and non-state actors, Nigerian authorities continue to attribute every attack and security challenge in the South-East to the activities of IPOB/ESN, thereby oversimplifying the complex situation on the ground. Amnesty International believes there is no traditional or coherent insurgency in the region.

To demonstrate the multifaceted nature of the South-East conflict, and to serve as a pointer to the broader issues discussed in this report, Amnesty International has documented cases of violence and killings, by both state and non-state actors, in the five South-Eastern states of Imo, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Abia from 2021 to 2024, as shown in Tables 1 – 5 below:

TABLE 1: TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS IN IMO STATE (2021-2024)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 25 January 2021, five people were killed during a military operation against IPOB/ESN members in Okporo community in Orlu LGA.²²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 20 February 2021, 23-year-old Tobeche Duru was killed during a cult clash at Agwa community in Oguta LGA.²³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2021, gunmen attacked the home of Declan Emelumba, a former Imo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, in Ubulu-Ihejiofor in Oru West LGA, leading to the death of one person.²⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In June 2021, the police killed several ESN members during shootouts in ESN camps at Atta in Ikeduru LGA, Izombe in Oguta LGA, and in Ideato North LGA.²⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 8 August 2021, gunmen killed and burnt four commuters at Nkwogu community in Aboh Mbaise LGA for defying the IPOB Monday sit-at-home order.²⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 16 August 2021, gunmen killed a police officer, and four oil workers sustained gunshot injuries at Assa community in Ohaji/Egbema LGA.²⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 9 September 2021, a mob killed a suspected Point of Sale (POS) device thief at Afor-Ukwu market at Isiekenesi community in Ideato South LGA.²⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 19 October 2021, gunmen killed Eze Anayochukwu Durueburuo, the traditional ruler of Okwudor Autonomous Community, and Eze Sampson Osunwa the traditional ruler of Ihebineowerre Autonomous Community, during a meeting at Nnenasa in Njaba LGA.²⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 12 December 2021, gunmen abducted Eze Acho Ndukwe, the traditional ruler of Amagu Ihube Autonomous Community, and Eze Paul Ogbu, the traditional ruler of Ihitte Ihube Autonomous Community, both in Okigwe LGA, and burnt their palaces.³⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 2 February 2022, a cult group killed a retired Assistant Commissioner of Police, Christian Kpatuma, at his residence in Mgbala Agwa community in Oguta LGA.³¹

22 Sahara Reporters, "Soldiers invade IPOB Eastern Security Network's operational base, kill five, burn church, others", 25 January 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/01/25/soldiers-invade-ipob-eastern-security-network%E2%80%99s-operational-base-kill-five-burn-church>

23 Punch, "Twenty-three-year-old arrested for allegedly killing man during Imo cult clash", 25 February 2021, <https://punchng.com/23-year-old-arrested-for-allegedly-killing-man-during-imo-cult-clash>

24 Punch, "Gunmen raze country home of Imo commissioner", 6 June 2021, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-raze-country-home-of-imo-commissioner>

25 Punch, "Many IPOB, ESN members killed, three camps destroyed in Imo – police", 27 June 2021, <https://punchng.com/many-ipob-esn-members-killed-three-camps-destroyed-in-imo-police/#:~:text=The%20Nigeria%20Police%20Force%20said,different%20parts%20of%20the%20state>

26 Sun, "Sit-at-home turns bloody in Imo, four killed, two buses razed", 9 August 2021, <https://thesun.ng/sit-at-home-turns-bloody-in-imo-4-killed-2-buses-razed>

27 Vanguard, "Gunmen ambush Imo oil workers, kill police officer, four workers, scores injured", 16 August 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/gunmen-ambush-imo-oil-workers-kill-police-officer-4-workers-scores-injured>

28 Daily Post, "Mob lynches three suspected POS robbers in Imo", 12 September 2021, <https://dailypost.ng/2021/09/12/mob-lynches-3-suspected-pos-robbers-in-imo>

29 Guardian (Nigeria), "Gunmen kill three Imo traditional rulers", 20 October 2021, <https://guardian.ng/news/gunmen-kill-three-imo-traditional-rulers>

30 Vanguard, "Villagers vacate Imo communities, as gunmen kidnap two monarchs", 12 December 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/12/villagers-vacate-imo-communities-as-gunmen-kidnap-2-monarchs>

31 Sahara Reporters, "Panic in Imo community as suspected cult members kill retired police chief", 2 February 2022, <https://saharareporters.com>

- On 8 February 2022, cultists killed seven people during an attack at Mmaahu community in Ohaji/Egbema LGA.³²
- On 12 February 2022, one person was killed during a cult clash at Akalovo Emekuku community in Owerri North LGA.³³
- On 14 April 2022, suspected IPOB members attacked a voters' registration centre at Nkwo Ihitte Polling Unit 004, Amakohia Ward in Ihitte-Uboma LGA, killing Anthony Nwokorie, a security guard.³⁴
- On 17 April 2022, several people were killed as gunmen engaged in a gun battle with soldiers at Ihioma community in Orlu LGA.³⁵
- On 6 May 2022, gunmen engaged the Tactical Team of the Imo State Police Command in an exchange of fierce gun fire at Agwa community in Oguta LGA, resulting in the death of a police personnel and two gunmen.³⁶
- On 16 May 2022, the police confirmed the killing of six suspected IPOB members over plans to attack the palace of Eze E.C. Okeke, the traditional ruler of Amaifeke community in Orlu LGA.³⁷
- In May 2022, several people were killed, and properties destroyed, as soldiers clashed with ESN operatives in Orlu.³⁸
- On 16 June 2022, gunmen killed five family members at Umuebele-Okporo community in Orlu LGA.³⁹
- On 19 June 2022, Justice Anukam, an escapee of the Owerri jailbreak of 5 April 2021, allegedly stabbed a pregnant woman to death at Umuejechi Nekede community in Owerri West LGA.⁴⁰
- On 17 July 2022, seven persons returning from a marriage ceremony were shot dead by Ebube Agu operatives at Awo-Omamma community in Oru East LGA.⁴¹
- On 18 July 2022, Ebube Agu operatives killed 14 persons at Awo-Omamma community in Oru East LGA.⁴²
- On 13 August 2022, the police killed three gunmen who attacked a police station at Izombe in Oguta LGA. Two police officers were killed during the exchange of gun fire.⁴³

[com/2022/02/02/panic-imo-community-suspected-cult-members-kill-retired-police-chief](https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/02/panic-imo-community-suspected-cult-members-kill-retired-police-chief)

- 32 Vanguard, "How police, army allegedly abducted, killed IPOB protesters in Abia – Kanu's lawyer", 1 April 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/04/how-police-army-allegedly-abducted-killed-ipob-protesters-in-abia-kanus-lawyer>
- 33 Tribune Online, "One killed in cult clash in Imo", 13 February 2022, <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/one-killed-in-cult-clash-in-imo>
- 34 Daily Nigerian, "IPOB attacks Imo voter registration center, kill security guard", 14 April 2022, <https://dailynigerian.com/ipob-at-tacks-imo-voter>
- 35 Premium Times, "Bloody Easter: Many feared killed as gunmen, military clash in Imo", 19 April 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/524575-bloody-easter-many-feared-killed-as-gunmen-military-clash-in-imo.html>
- 36 Daily Post, "Imo: police officer, two IPOB/ESN members killed in gun duel", 6 May 2022, <https://dailypost.ng/2022/05/06/imo-police-officer-two-ipob-esn-members-killed-in-gun-duel>
- 37 Vanguard, "Six suspected IPOB members killed during attack on Eze's palace – Imo police", 16 May 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/05/6-suspected-ipob-members-killed-during-attack-on-ezes-palace-imo-police>
- 38 Sahara Reporters, "Breaking: Army kills 11 ESN, IPOB operatives during Orlu shootout, says no soldier killed", 7 May 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/05/07/breaking-army-kills-11-esn-ipob-operatives-during-orlu-shootout-says-no-soldier-killed>
- 39 Premium Times, "Five family members feared killed as gunmen invade Imo community", 19 June 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/538034-five-family-members-feared-killed-as-invade-imo-community.html>
- 40 Punch, "Imo prison escapee stabs pregnant woman to death", 19 June 2022, <https://punchng.com/imo-prison-escapee-stabs-pregnant-woman-to-death>
- 41 Premium Times, "Year in review: Some victims of senseless killings in Nigeria's South-East in 2022", 6 January 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/574248-year-in-review-some-victims-of-senseless-killings-in-nigerias-south-east-in-2022.html>
- 42 Tribune Online, "Police react as 'Ebube Agu' allegedly shoot dead 14 youths in Imo", 19 July 2022, <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/police-react-as-ebube-agu-allegedly-shot-dead-14-youths-in-imo>
- 43 Vanguard, "Attack on police station: Three suspected ESN members, two policemen killed in Imo", 14 August 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/attack-on-police-station-3-suspected-esn-members-2-policemen-killed-in-imo>

- In August 2022, gunmen killed four police officers on duty and burnt a police station at Agwa community in Oguta LGA.⁴⁴
- On 9 September 2022, gunmen abducted the traditional ruler of Isiala Umudi community in Nkwerre LGA.⁴⁵
- On 14 November 2022, gunmen invaded Obudi Agwa community in Oguta Local Government Area and killed five people leaving one other injured.⁴⁶
- On 14 November 2022, gunmen invaded Mgbala Agwa community in Oguta LGA, shot and injured a pregnant woman and a vigilante officer.⁴⁷
- On 14 November 2022, gunmen killed Eze Ignatius Asor, the traditional ruler of Obudi Agwa autonomous community, and two other persons, when they attacked the monarch's palace at Obudi Agwa community in Oguta LGA.⁴⁸
- On 9 December 2022, gunmen enforcing the IPOB's sit-at-home order killed four persons at two locations on Owerri-Okigwe Road at Umunachi in Isiala Mbano LGA and at Umuna in Onuimo LGA, respectively. The gunmen also abducted two persons supervising a road construction work.⁴⁹
- On 9 December 2022, gunmen killed Chidi IHEME, and injured Martin Eke, the Imo state commissioner for mineral resources, at Ubomiri community in Mbaitoli LGA.⁵⁰
- On 12 December 2022, gunmen attacked the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) office in Owerri and killed a police officer and left one other injured. Three of the gunmen were killed during the attack.⁵¹
- On 16 December 2022, gunmen killed Christopher Elehu, the Labour Party House of Assembly candidate for Onuimo LGA constituency and set his house ablaze.⁵²
- On 31 December 2022, gunmen attacked a military checkpoint and killed two persons at Ubomiri/Nwaorieubi road in Mbaitoli LGA.⁵³
- On 2 January 2023, gunmen attacked the convoy of Ikedi Ohakim, a former governor of Imo state and burnt four police officers to death at Oriagu community in Ehime Mbano LGA.⁵⁴
- On 10 January 2023, gunmen killed three passengers in a commercial tricycle at Arondizuogu in Ideato North LGA.⁵⁵

44 Leadership, "Four policemen killed, properties destroyed in Imo terror attacks", <https://leadership.ng/4-policemen-killed-properties-de-destroyed-in-imo-terror-attacks>

45 Sahara Reporters, "Tension in Imo state community as gunmen kidnap traditional ruler", 10 September 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/09/10/tension-imo-state-community-gunmen-kidnap-traditional-ruler>

46 Punch, "Gunmen kill Imo traditional ruler, chiefs", 14 November 2022, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-imo-traditional-ruler-chiefs>

47 Punch, "Gunmen kill Imo traditional ruler, chiefs", 14 November 2022, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-imo-traditional-ruler-chiefs>

48 Guardian (Nigeria), "Imo monarch, policeman, others killed by suspected IPOB members", 15 November 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/imo-monarch-policeman-others-killed-by-suspected-ipob-members>

49 Punch, "Sit-at-home: Gunmen kill four, kidnap expatriates in Imo", 10 December 2022, <https://punchng.com/sit-at-home-gunmen-kill-four-kidnap-expatriates-in-imo>

50 Punch, "Sit-at-home: Gunmen kill four, kidnap expatriates in Imo", 10 December 2022, <https://punchng.com/sit-at-home-gunmen-kill-four-kidnap-expatriates-in-imo>

51 Premium Times, "Police officer, three gunmen killed in another attack on INEC office", 12 December 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/570124-breaking-police-officer-three-gunmen-killed-in-another-attack-on-inec-office.html>

52 Premium Times, "Gunmen kill Labour Party house of assembly candidate", 16 December 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/570820-2023-gunmen-kill-labour-party-house-of-assembly-candidate.html>

53 Nation (Nigeria), "Two shot dead at Imo military checkpoint", 2 January 2023, <https://thenationonline.ng/two-shot-dead-at-imo-military-checkpoint>

54 Premium Times, "Gunmen bomb ex-governor's convoy in Imo, kill four police officers", 3 January 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/573786-gunmen-bomb-ex-governors-convoy-in-imo-kill-four-police-officers.html>

55 Sahara Reporters, "Unknown gunmen kill intending couple one week to wedding in Imo, South-East Nigeria", 12 January 2023, <https://saharareporters.com/2023/01/12/unknown-gunmen-kill-intending-couple-one-week-wedding-imo-southeast-nigeria>

- On 14 January 2023, gunmen killed three persons during an attack at Ikenga Ikeagwuonu Ugochinyere-Imo's home at Umukegwu community, Akokwa in Ideato North LGA.⁵⁶
- On 18 January 2023, the police killed three gunmen during a gun battle at Agwa community in Oguta LGA.⁵⁷
- On 20 January 2023, gunmen abducted and killed Chris Ohizu, the Administrator of Ideato North LGA at Imoko community, Arondizuogu in Ideato North LGA, after collecting a six-million-naira ransom for his release.⁵⁸
- On 2 February 2023, five gunmen shot dead Nnemeka Ugboma, the customary court president of the Ejemekuru Customary Court, during a court session at a Customary Court in Ejemekuru, Oguta LGA.⁵⁹
- On 25 February 2023, gunmen shot and killed a police officer providing security services for the Nigerian presidential and National Assembly elections in Orlu.⁶⁰
- On 13 March 2023, gunmen ambushed and killed three personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) at Eke market in Obiangwu community, Ngor Okpala LGA.⁶¹
- On 18 March 2023, gunmen abducted 19 ah-hoc INEC staff on their way to conduct the House of Assembly election in Ideato South LGA.⁶²
- On 21 April 2023, gunmen attacked and killed four policemen and two other persons along Okpala Junction in Ngor Okpala LGA.⁶³
- Between 7 June and 19 June 2023, security operatives killed five residents and destroyed over 170 buildings in Izombe community, Oguta LGA.⁶⁴
- On 14 June 2023, a combined team of the police and Ebube Agu operatives engaged in a gun battle with ESN members at the State Secretariat, Owerri, leaving over ten people injured.⁶⁵
- On 30 June 2023, gunmen abducted John Ugorji, a supermarket and pharmacy operator, at Ikenegbu Layout, Owerri.⁶⁶
- On 7 July 2023, gunmen enforcing the IPOB's sit-at-home order burnt a market and razed vehicles and goods at Amaraku in Isiala Mbano LGA.⁶⁷
- On 19 July 2023, gunmen killed three persons at Orogwe, Ndegwu and Irete communities in Owerri West LGA.⁶⁸

56 Channels TV, "Gunmen attack CUPP spokesman's home in Imo, kill three persons", 14 January 2023, <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/01/14/gunmen-attack-cupp-spokesmans-home-in-imo-kill-three-persons>

57 Vanguard, "Police kill three hoodlums, one officer injured in Imo", 19 January 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/01/police-kill-3-hoodlums-one-officer-injured-in-imo>

58 Punch, "Gunmen kidnap Imo LGA boss, burn house", 20 January 2023, <https://punchng.com/just-in-gunmen-kidnap-imo-lga-boss-burn-house>

59 Vanguard, "Five gunmen attacked, killed Imo judge – police", 3 February 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/02/5-gunmen-attacked-killed-imo-judge-police>

60 Leadership, "Election: Gunmen kill policeman, 100 corps members withdraw in Imo", <https://leadership.ng/election-gunmen-kill-policeman-100-corps-members-withdraw-in-imo>

61 Leadership, "Unknown gunmen kill three NSCDC personnel in Imo", <https://leadership.ng/just-in-unknown-gunmen-kill-3-nscdc-personnel-in-imo>

62 Vanguard, "Imo: INEC confirms kidnap, release of 19 ad hoc staff", 18 March 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/03/imo-inec-confirms-kidnap-release-of-19-ad-hoc-staff/#:~:text=The%20Independent%20National%20Electoral%20Commission,Local%20Government%20Area%20of%20Imo>

63 Channels TV, "Gunmen kill four policemen, two others in Imo", 21 April 2023, <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/04/21/gunmen-kill-four-policemen-two-others-in-imo>

64 Sun, "Desolate, bleeding", 28 June 2023, <https://thesun.ng/desolate-bleeding>

65 Leadership, "Scores wounded in stampede as police, Ebubeagu clash at Imo secretariat", 15 June 2023, <https://leadership.ng/stampede-as-police-ebubeagu-clash-at-imo-secretariat>

66 Vanguard, "Gunmen kidnap the owner of supermarket in Imo", 2 July 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/07/gunmen-kidnap-the-owner-of-supermarket-in-imo>

67 Punch, "Sit-at-home: Gunmen burn Imo market, raze vehicles", 8 July 2023, <https://punchng.com/sit-at-home-gunmen-burn-imo-market-raze-vehicles/?amp>

68 Daily Post, "Unknown gunmen kill three in Imo communities", 19 July 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/07/19/unknown-gunmen-kill-three-in-imo-communities>

- On 1 August 2023, gunmen shot at the occupants of a building at Orogwe in Owerri West LGA, killing seven people and injuring six others.⁶⁹
- On 13 August 2023, gunmen set ablaze the palace of Eze Kanu Ikenolu, the traditional ruler of Ndianiche Arondizuogu community in Ideato North LGA.⁷⁰
- On 19 September 2023, gunmen killed over six security operatives on patrol duty along Aba-Branch, Oriagu in Ehime Mbano LGA.⁷¹
- On 26 November 2023, gunmen abducted and killed Eze Achulor, the traditional ruler of Otulu community, from his palace at Otulu in Ezinihitte-Mbaise LGA.⁷²
- On 27 November 2023, gunmen killed two police officers at Ahiara Junction in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA.⁷³
- On 12 January 2024, gunmen attacked a Correctional Farm Settlement in Umualomoke community in Okigwe LGA and killed a police inspector, abducted the officer in charge of the farm settlement, and released seven inmates.⁷⁴
- On 5 March 2024, the military killed five IPOB/ESN fighters during a gun battle at Ejemekuru in Oguta LGA.⁷⁵
- On 8 March 2024, gunmen on motorcycles invaded Abacheke community in Ohaji/Egbema LGA killing five youths.⁷⁶
- On 7 March 2024, security agents in a joint operation killed 20 IPOB/ESN fighters in their hideouts in Orsu LGA.⁷⁷
- On 9 April 2024, gunmen killed a lawyer, Garricks Anyanwu, at Orodo community in Mbaitoli LGA.⁷⁸
- On 6 May 2024, security agents killed an IPOB commander, Tochukwu, also known as Ojoto, and two others, in a combined operation in Ihiteukwa in Orsu LGA.⁷⁹
- On 11 June 2024, gunmen killed two police officers and one other person at Akabor in Ikeduru LGA.⁸⁰
- On 26 June 2024, six people were killed as gunmen attacked Ama Hausa in Garki, Okigwe LGA.⁸¹

- 69 HumAngle, "Seven killed in gruesome attack in South-East Nigeria", 7 August 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/7-killed-in-gruesome-attack-in-southeast-nigeria>
- 70 Punch, "Hoodlums burn Imo monarch's house, vehicles", 13 August 2023, <https://punchng.com/hoodlums-burn-imo-monarchs-house-vehicles>
- 71 Cable "Gunmen kill security operatives, set cars ablaze in Imo", 19 September 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-kill-security-operatives-set-cars-ablaze-in-imo>
- 72 Cable, "Gunmen abduct, kill traditional leader in Imo", 26 November 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-abduct-kill-traditional-ruler-in-imo>
- 73 Vanguard, "Unknown gunmen kill two police officers in Imo", 27 November 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/11/unknown-gunmen-kill-2-police-officers-in-imo>
- 74 Channels Television, "Gunmen free seven inmates in Imo prison" 12 January 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/02/12/just-in-gunmen-free-seven-inmates-in-imo-prison-attack-kill-cop/>
- 75 Punch, "Military kill five IPOB fighters in Imo", 5 March 2024, <https://punchng.com/army-navy-kill-five-ipob-fighters-in-imo/>
- 76 Daily Post, "Five youths killed in Imo Community" 8 March 2024, <https://dailypost.ng/2024/03/11/imo-cp-meets-community-leaders-over-killings-of-five-youths/>
- 77 Punch, "Security agents kill 20 IPOB fighters, destroy 50 hideouts", 7 March 2024, <https://punchng.com/security-agents-kill-20-ipob-fighters-destroy-50-hideouts-in-imo/>
- 78 Nation, "Gunmen kill another lawyer", 9 April 2024, <https://thenationonlineng.net/gunmen-kill-another-lawyer-in-imo/>
- 79 Channels Television, "Troops kill IPOB commander and two others", 6 May 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/05/07/troops-kill-notorious-terrorist-ojoto-two-others-in-imo/>
- 80 Vanguard, "Police finger IPOB in death of two officers and one other in Imo", 11 June 2024, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/06/police-finger-ipob-in-death-of-two-officers-one-other-in-imo/>
- 81 Cable, "Six persons killed as IPOB members attack Imo Community", 26 June 2024, <https://www.thecable.ng/six-persons-killed-as-ipob-members-attack-imo-community/>

- On 29 June 2024, “unknown gunmen” killed four police officers at a stop-and-search checkpoint along Owerri-Onitsha Road near MOPOL headquarters, Owerri. A woman selling items along the road was also killed.⁸²
- On 2 July 2024, the Nigerian army killed an IPOB/ESN fighter, Chinemerem, popularly known as “Bam Bam”, and arrested two others at a suspected IPOB/ESN hideout at Umucheke community in Onuimo LGA.⁸³
- On 30 July 2024, “unknown gunmen” shot sporadically in the air while at the Owerri-Enugu Road in Orji, killing one person and set an Imo State Government Waste Management Agency vehicle ablaze at Nkwo Orji market in Owerri North LGA.⁸⁴
- On 3 August 2024, gunmen shot and killed eight community leaders - Hyginus Ohazuruike the President General of the community and seven other chiefs - in Umucheke community in Onuimo LGA.⁸⁵
- On 3 September 2024, gunmen attacked Umulogho community in Obowo LGA, killing a police operative and burnt a section of the local police station.⁸⁶
- On 9 September 2024, gunmen abduct four persons along Umuanunu Obinze in the Owerri metropolis.⁸⁷
- On 27 September 2024, eight persons were killed during an inter-cult clash in Awarra and Ochia communities in Ohaji/Egbema LGA.⁸⁸
- On 8 October 2024, several persons were killed as gunmen attacked soldiers at the headquarters of Ehime Mbanjo LGA.⁸⁹
- On 5 November 2024, gunmen abducted a catholic priest at Obollo community in Isiala Mbanjo LGA.⁹⁰
- On 4 December 2024, the Joint Security Task Force in Imo State code-named “Operation Udo Ka” uncovered a shallow grave said to be operated by IPOB/ESN in Aku community in Okigwe LGA.⁹¹
- On 5 December, 2024 gunmen abducted Gregory Maduakolam, a News Agency of Nigeria editor, in Owerri.⁹²

82 Thisday, “Four Policemen shot dead in Imo”, 29 June 2024, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2024/07/31/four-policemen-shot-dead-in-imo/>

83 Channels television, “Troops kill suspected IPOB kingpin, arrest two others”, 2 July 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/07/02/troops-kill-suspected-ipob-kingpin-arrest-two-notorious-terrorists-in-imo/>

84 Pulse, “Gunmen shot man, burnt sanitation agency vehicle”, 30 July 2024, <https://www.pulse.ng/news/metro/gunmen-shoot-man-to-death-burn-sanitation-agency-vehicle-in-imo/b5ngcy3>

85 Premium Times, “Gunmen kill eight in Imo”, 3 August 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/721004-gunmen-kill-eight-in-imo.html>

86 PM News Nigeria, “Gunmen murder cop, burn police station”, 3 September 2024, <https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2024/09/04/deadly-assault-in-imo-gunmen-murder-cop-burn-police-station/>

87 Cable, “Gunmen abduct four residents in Imo”, 9 September 2024, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-abduct-four-residents-in-imo/>

88 Punch, “Eight killed in Imo inter-cult clash”, 27 September 2024, <https://punchng.com/eight-killed-in-imo-inter-cult-clash/>

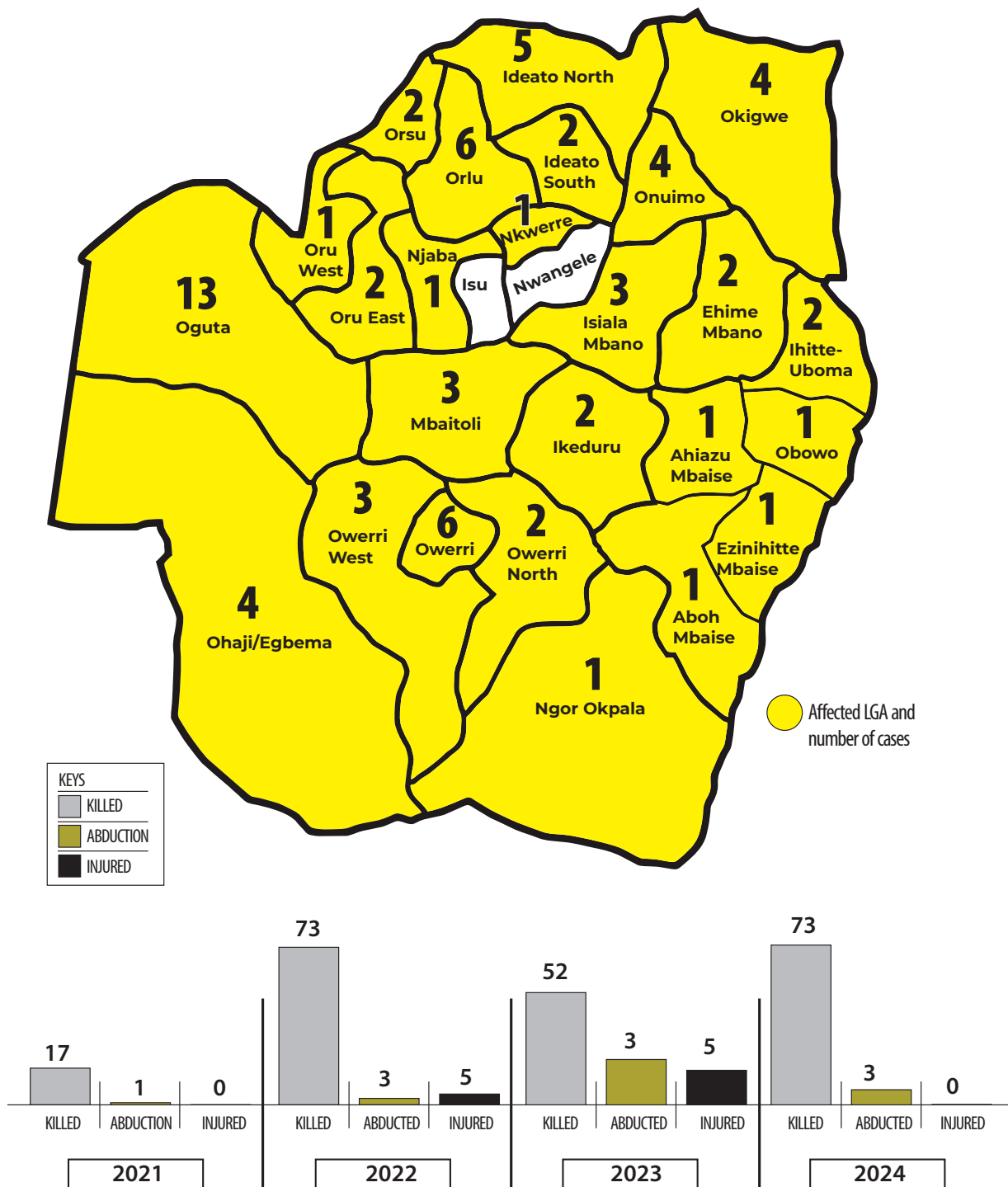
89 Premium Times, “Many killed as gunmen attack Soldiers in Imo”, 8 October 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/743398-many-feared-killed-as-gunmen-attack-soldiers-in-imo.html>

90 Punch, “Gunmen kidnap Imo Catholic Priest” 5 November 2024, <https://punchng.com/just-in-gunmen-kidnap-imo-catholic-priest/>

91 Channels Television, “Task force uncovers shallow grave operated by IPOB”, 4 December 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/12/04/task-force-uncovers-shallow-grave-allegedly-operated-by-ipob-in-imo-state/>

92 News Agency of Nigeria, “NAN Editor kidnapped in Owerri Imo State”, 5 December 2024, <https://nannews.ng/2024/12/06/nan-editor-kidnapped-in-imo/>

IMO STATE



Note: There are several additional uncounted killings, abductions, and injuries that were not captured in the report

TABLE 2: TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS IN ANAMBRA STATE (2021-2024)

● On 6 June 2021, several people were killed as security operatives and IPOB members clashed over the invasion of the residence of IPOB lawyer, Ifeanyi Ejiofor Oraifite in Ekwusigbo LGA. ⁹³
● On the 9 August 2021, soldiers killed six IPOB members trying to enforce the sit-at-home order during a gun duel in Onitsha. ⁹⁴
● On 10 September 2021, gunmen killed Alex Edozieuno, a monarch, and his driver, Chukwueme-ka, in an ambush at Otuocha. ⁹⁵
● On 29 October 2021, soldiers killed four IPOB/ESN members during a gun battle at Nnobi Junction in Idemili South LGA. One security operative was killed during the exchange of gunfire. ⁹⁶
● On 11 November 2021, gunmen abducted Emeka Chiaghana, from his house in Nibo, Awka South LGA. ⁹⁷
● On 27 January 2022, a soldier shot dead a revenue collector at the Onitsha Bridgehead check-point. ⁹⁸
● On 21 February 2022, gunmen killed two policemen and abducted a couple, Ceejay and Dr Nini, at Okija in Ihiala LGA. ⁹⁹
● On 15 May 2022, gunmen abducted and beheaded Okechukwu Okoye, a legislator in the Anambra state house of assembly, along Nnobi road. His severed head was found on 21 May 2022 in a motor park at Nnewi. ¹⁰⁰
● On 16 May 2022, gunmen burnt down the headquarters of Idemili North LGA in Ogidi. ¹⁰¹
● On 22 May 2022, gunmen killed 11 people, including a woman and her four children, in Orumba North LGA. ¹⁰²
● On 17 June 2022, five gunmen were killed by suspected IPOB members at Akwa community in Ihiala LGA, in a tussle over the control of the area by rival militant groups. ¹⁰³
● On 22 June 2022, gunmen abducted and beheaded Nelson Achukwu, a former state lawmaker. A N15m ransom was earlier paid to the abductors, before his headless body was found at the Uke and Ukpok boundary in Nnewi South LGA. ¹⁰⁴
● On 3 September 2022, Ebube Agu security operatives attacked and shot Maxwell Obadike, and other youth leaders in Oba community, Idemili South LGA. ¹⁰⁵

93 Authority, "Shooting in Anambra community as security operatives clash with IPOB members", 6 June 2021, <https://authorityngr.com/2021/06/06/shooting-in-anambra-community-as-security-operatives-clash-with-ipob-members>

94 Nation (Nigeria), "Navy: We killed six suspected IPOB members in Anambra", 11 August 2021, <https://thenationonline.net/navy-we-killed-six-suspected-ipob-members-in-anambra>

95 Punch, 11 September 2021, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-deposed-anambra-monarch-driver-2>

96 Nation (Nigeria), "Soldiers kill four IPOB/ESN allegedly involved in attack on DSS", 31 October 2021, <https://thenationonline.net/soldiers-kill-four-ipob-esn-allegedly-involved-in-attack-on-dss>

97 Punch, "Bandits abduct UNIZIK engineer in Anambra", 13 November 2019, <https://punchng.com/bandits-abduct-unizik-engineer-in-anambra-2>

98 Punch, "Soldier shoots revenue collector dead in Anambra", 28 January 2022, <https://punchng.com/soldier-shoots-revenue-collector-dead-in-anambra/#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20soldiers%20at,motorists%20from%20plying%20one%20way>

99 Daily Post, "Gunmen kill two policemen in Anambra, kidnap couple", 22 February 2022, <https://dailypost.ng/2022/02/22/gunmen-kill-two-policemen-in-anambra-kidnap-couple>

100 CNN, "Severed head of missing Nigerian lawmaker found in park, police say", 23 May 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/23/africa/nigerian-lawmaker-beheaded-anambra-intl/index.html>

101 Daily Nigerian, "IPOB militants burn down LGA secretariat in Anambra", 16 May 2022, <https://dailynigerian.com/ipob-militants-burn-lga>

102 HumAngle, "Many vacate Anambra communities as terrorists kill mother, children", 24 May 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/many-vacate-anambra-communities-as-terrorists-kill-mother-children>

103 Premium Times, "Five killed in Anambra as gunmen, IPOB members clash", 18 June 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/537751-five-killed-in-anambra-as-gunmen-ipob-members-clash.html>

104 Channels TV, "Gunmen kidnap, behead ex-Anambra lawmaker Nelson Achukwu", 22 June 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/06/22/gunmen-behead-ex-anambra-lawmaker-nelson-achukwu>

105 Premium Times, "Suspected Ebubeagu operatives invade Anambra community, shoot youth leaders", 3 September 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/552078-suspected-ebubeagu-operatives-invade-anambra-community-shoot-youth-leaders.html>

- On 11 September 2022, gunmen attacked the convoy of Senator Ifeanyi Ubah, killing two police officers and three aides of the now, late senator at Enugwu-Ukwu community in Njikoka LGA.¹⁰⁶
- On 28 September 2022, gunmen attacked and killed five soldiers and a civilian at Umunze in Orumba South LGA.¹⁰⁷
- On 26 November 2022, cultists killed six people during a supremacy clash with a rival cult group along Zik's Avenue, Awka.¹⁰⁸
- On 1 January 2023, five people were killed in cult-related attacks, following clashes by rival cult groups in Okpuno and Ifite Awka, and Obosi communities.¹⁰⁹
- On 2 January 2023, cultists killed Ikechukwu Okolo, the president-general of Obosi community in Idemili North LGA.¹¹⁰
- On the 8 January 2023, Nonso Okoye was killed as rival cult groups clashed at Nkpor Agu community in Idemili North LGA.¹¹¹
- On the 13 January 2023, police killed a cult group leader in Nkpor community in Idemili North LGA.¹¹²
- On 20 January 2023, 10 female students were raped and robbed when armed robbers invaded six off-campus hostels at Ifite, near Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.¹¹³
- On 1 February 2023, gunmen bombed an office of the INEC at Ojoto community in Idemili South LGA.¹¹⁴
- On 14 February 2023 gunmen abducted 15 National Youth Service Corps members along Onitsha-Owerri Road in Ihiala town.¹¹⁵
- On 19 February 2023, gunmen attacked a police station at Ogidi in Idemili North LGA, killing three police officers and burning the station.¹¹⁶
- On 19 February 2023, gunmen killed six persons during an attack at the 3-3 Police Divisional Headquarters, Nkwelle-Ezunaka in Oyi LGA.¹¹⁷
- On 19 February 2023, the police killed five gang members championing "no-election" in the South-East.¹¹⁸

- 106 Daily Trust, "Ifeanyi Ubah escapes, orderlies, aides gunned down in Anambra", 11 September 2022, <https://dailytrust.com/ifeanyi-ubah-escapes-orderlies-gunned-down-in-anambra-attack>
- 107 Daily Trust, "IPOB kills five soldiers, civilian in Anambra", 29 September 2022, <https://dailytrust.com/ipob-kills-5-soldiers-civilian-in-anambra>
- 108 Premium Times, "Six persons dead in Anambra cult clash", 27 November 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/567793-six-persons-dead-in-anambra-cult-clash.html>
- 109 Cable, "Five killed in 'cult-related attacks' on New Year's Day in Anambra", 3 January 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/five-killed-in-cult-related-attacks-in-anambra-communities>
- 110 Punch, "Monarch decries cult-related killings in Anambra community", 5 January 2023, <https://punchng.com/monarch-decries-cult-related-killings-in-anambra-community>
- 111 Nation (Nigeria), "Suspected cultists kill, dismember man in Anambra", 9 January 2023, <https://thenationonlineeng.net/suspected-cultists-kill-dismember-man-in-anambra>
- 112 Premium Times, "Police kill cult leader, arrest two others in Anambra", 14 January 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/575707-police-kill-cult-leader-arrest-two-others-in-anambra.html>
- 113 Punch, "Robbers invade Anambra students' hostel, rape, rob victims", 21 January 2023, <https://thenationonlineeng.net/suspected-cultists-kill-dismember-man-in-anambra>
- 114 Premium Times, "One killed as gunmen bomb INEC office, police facility", 1 February 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/579227-breaking-one-killed-as-gunmen-bomb-inec-office-police-facility.html>
- 115 Vanguard, "Gunmen kidnap 15 NYSC members in Anambra", 15 February 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/02/gunmen-kidnap-15-nysc-members-in-anambra>
- 116 Crisis24, "Nigeria: Armed assailants attack police station, kill police officers in Ogidi, Anambra state", 19 February 2023, <https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2023/02/nigeria-armed-assailants-attack-police-station-kill-police-officers-in-ogidi-anambra-state-feb-19>
- 117 Punch, "Six killed as gunmen attack another Anambra police station", 20 February 2023, <https://punchng.com/six-killed-as-gunmen-attack-another-anambra-police-station>
- 118 Nigerian Tribune, "Anambra: Police kill five gunmen championing 'no election in South-East'", 19 February 2023, <https://tribuneonlineeng.com/anambra-police-kill-5-gunmen-championing-no-election-in-south-east>

- On 20 February 2023, gunmen killed four police officers while three gunmen were killed during an attack at Awada Police Divisional Headquarters in Obosi, Idemili North LGA.¹¹⁹
- On 4 April 2023, cultists shot and killed a commercial tricycle rider near Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.¹²⁰
- On 3 June 2023, Rev Fr. Stanislaus Mbara, a priest of the Nnewi Catholic Diocese, was abducted by gunmen.¹²¹
- On 26 September 2023, Nigerian Airforce fighter aircraft conducted several strikes on suspected IPOB/ESN locations at Mother Valley Orsumughu in Ihiala LGA.¹²²
- On 28 November 2023, four persons were killed in a gun battle between gunmen and security operatives at Aguluzigbo community in Anaocha LGA.¹²³
- On 4 December 2023, police killed three IPOB/ESN members during a raid on their camp in Ogboji, Orumba South LGA.¹²⁴
- On 11 December 2023, seven persons were killed and many others injured as gunmen attacked Porsche Nightclub in Oba, Idemili South LGA.¹²⁵
- On 28 December 2023, four people were killed, including two policemen, by gunmen who attacked Senator Chris Uba's convoy at Uga junction in Aguata LGA.¹²⁶
- On 29 December 2023, two police officers were killed by gunmen at Uga community roundabout in Aguata LGA.¹²⁷
- On 14 January 2024, police killed two gunmen and arrested three others at Igbo-Ukwu town in Aguata LGA.¹²⁸
- On 31 March 2024, cultists killed six persons in Awka during a rival cult clash at Dike Street, near Eke market and at Obinagu Awka.¹²⁹
- On 3 September 2024, gunmen attacked the Divisional Police Station in Oba in Idemili South LGA and killed a policeman.¹³⁰
- On 16 September 2024, gunmen attacked the Umunze police station in Aguata LGA, killing two personnel on duty and burnt a building in the station.¹³¹

- 119 Premium Times, "Four officers, three suspected IPOB members killed in another attack on police facility", 20 February 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/583059-four-officers-three-suspected-ipob-members-killed-in-another-attack-on-police-facility.html>
- 120 This Day, "Suspected cultists kill tricycle operator in Awka", 5 January 2023, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/01/05/suspected-cultists-kill-tricycle-operator-in-awka>
- 121 Daily Post, "Gunmen kidnap young Catholic priest in Anambra", 4 June 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/06/04/gunmen-kidnap-young-catholic-priest-in-anambra>
- 122 Vanguard, "NAF strikes IPOB/ESN hideouts in Anambra, Imo", 27 September 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/09/naf-strikes-ipob-esn-hideouts-in-anambra-imo>
- 123 Vanguard, "4 killed and others injured as police and gunmen exchange gunfire", 28 November 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/11/4-killed-as-police-gunmen-exchange-fire-in-anambra-community/>
- 124 Vanguard, "Police kill three insurgents, rescue abducted victim in Anambra", 4 December 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/01/police-kill-3-insurgents-rescue-abducted-victim-in-anambra/>
- 125 Vanguard, "Gunmen kill seven and injured others in a nightclub", 11 December 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/gunmen-storm-anambra-nightclub-kill-7-injure-many/>
- 126 Vanguard, "2 Policemen and two others killed as gunmen attack Uba's convoy" 28 December 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/2-policemen-2-others-killed-as-gunmen-attack-chris-ubas-convoy-in-anambra/>
- 127 The Cable, "Gunmen kill two Police Officers", 29 December 2023 <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-kill-two-police-officers-in-anambra/>
- 128 Premium Times, "Police kill two gunmen, arrest three others in Anambra" 14 January 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/659151-police-kill-two-gunmen-arrest-three-others-official.html?tztc=1>
- 129 Arise News, "Cultists kill six in Awka on Easter Day", 31 March 2024, <https://www.arise.tv/cultists-kill-6-in-awka-easter-day-clash-as-police-arrest-man-with-ak-47/>
- 130 Vanguard, "Gunmen attack another police station in Anambra kill Corporal", 3 September 2024, https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/09/gunmen-attack-another-police-station-in-anambra-kill-corporal/#google_vignette
- 131 Thisday, "Gunmen attack police station in Anambra and kill two officers", 16 September 2024, https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2024/09/17/gunmen-attack-police-station-in-anambra-kill-two-officers-3/#google_vignette

- On 6 October 2024, gunmen killed five persons in Nawfia community in Njikoka LGA during a cult clash.¹³²
- On 8 October 2024, gunmen killed SuperSport crew members and a policeman along the Ihia-la-Orlu Road.¹³³
- On 20 October 2024, gunmen invaded Ndobbo community in Awka South LGA, killing 16 people. The community was celebrating Onwa Asaa, a traditional festival when the gunmen attacked.¹³⁴
- On 24 October 2024, gunmen killed six people near Nnamdi Azikiwe University gate in a cult clash.¹³⁵
- On 2 November 2024, cultists killed three brothers in relentless cult violent attacks in Awka, the Anambra state capital.¹³⁶
- On 18 October 2024, gunmen attacked Abatete community in Idemili North LGA and Ukpo community in Dunukofia LGA, killing five persons.¹³⁷
- On 20 October 2024, 13 people were killed in a cult clash at Nibo and Nodu-Okpuno communities in Awka South LGA.¹³⁸
- On 18 November, gunmen killed four vigilante members in Abate town in Aguata LGA.¹³⁹
- On 18 November, gunmen enforcing sit-at-home in Abatete, Abagana, and Ukpo communities killed five people.¹⁴⁰
- On 20 November 2024, two people were killed and others injured when local security operatives and policemen engaged in a gun duel at the Izuchukwu Junction, Nnobi/Nnewi Road.¹⁴¹

132 Punch, "Gunmen kill five in Anambra", 6 October 2024, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-five-in-anambra/>

133 Daily Post Nigeria, "Gunmen killed SuperSport crew members and policeman", 8 October 2024, <https://dailypost.ng/2024/10/13/nigeria-vs-libya-gunmen-killed-supersport-crew-members-policeman-nff/>

134 The Sun, "Gunmen kill 16 in Ndobbo community in Awka South", 20 October 2024, <https://thesun.ng/the-reprehensible-killings-in-anambra/>

135 Punch, "Gunmen kill six near Unizik school gate", 24 October 2024, https://punchng.com/gunmen-kill-six-near-unizik-school-gate/#google_vignette

136 Channels Television, "Cultists kill three brothers in Anambra", 2 November 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/11/02/suspected-cultists-kill-three-brothers-in-anambra/>

137 Punch, "Five killed as gunmen attack two Anambra communities" 18 October 2024, <https://punchng.com/five-feared-killed-as-gunmen-attack-two-anambra-communities/>

138 Punch, "13 killed in Anambra cult clash", 20 October 2024, <https://punchng.com/13-feared-killed-in-suspected-anambra-cult-clashes/>

139 Tribune, "Gunmen kill four vigilantes in Anambra", 18 November 2024, https://tribuneonline.ng/gunmen-kill-four-vigilantes-in-anambra/#google_vignette

140 Arise News, "Gunmen enforcing sit-at-home attack Anambra communities killing five", 18 November 2024, https://www.arise.tv/sit-at-home-at-least-five-feared-dead-as-gunmen-attack-anambra-communities/#google_vignette

141 Punch, "Two persons killed in Anambra community shooting", 20 November 2024, <https://punchng.com/two-feared-killed-others-injured-in-anambra-community-shooting/>

ANAMBRA STATE

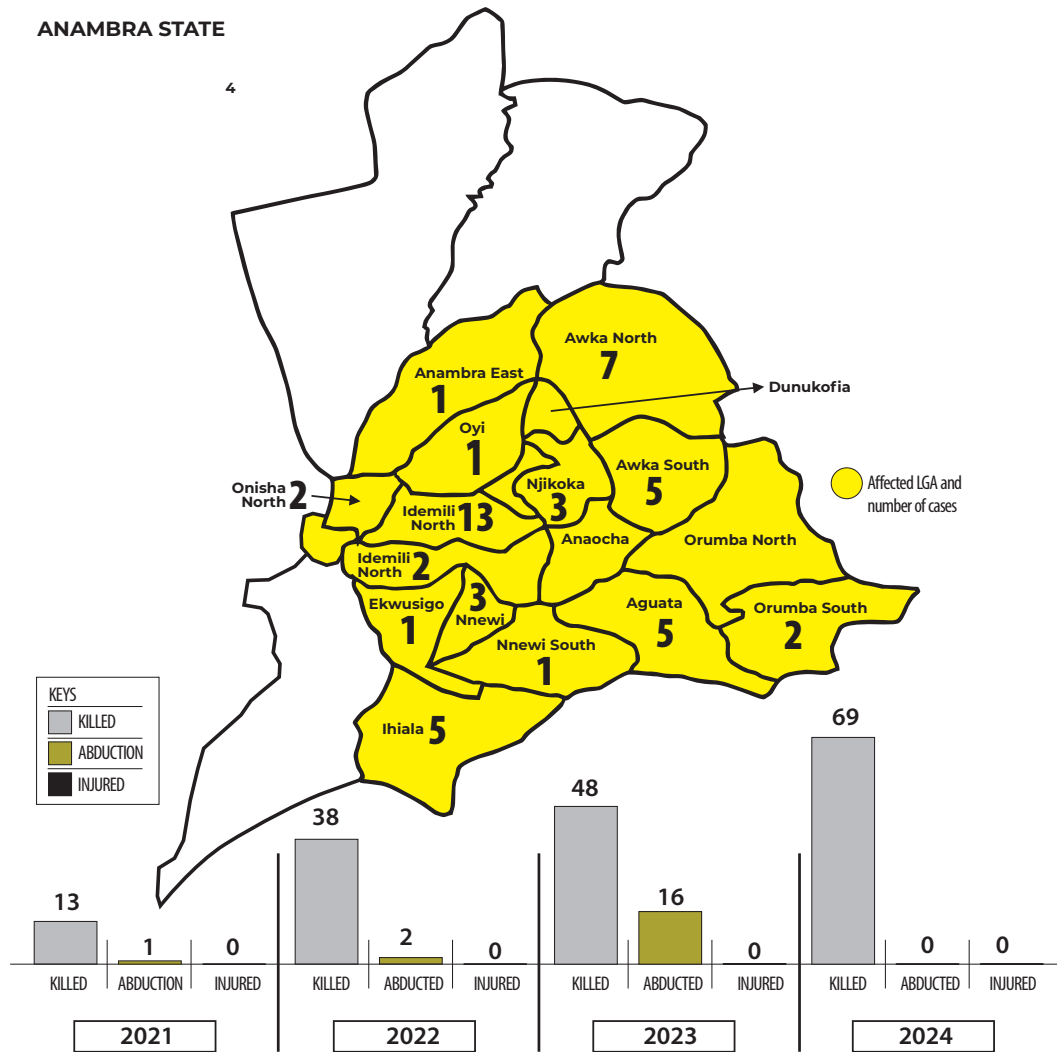


TABLE 3: TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE AND KILLING IN EBONYI STATE (2021-2024)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 12 April 2021, gunmen killed four people and destroyed seven houses in Ogahukwu LGA., killing four people and destroying seven houses in Ohaukwu LGA.¹⁴²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 9 September 2021, Ebube Agu security operative killed the daughter of a traditional ruler in Onicha Igboeze community, Onicha LGA.¹⁴³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 October 2021, four youths were killed and many others injured by Ebube Agu operatives in Amasiri, Afikpo North LGA.¹⁴⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 10 January 2022, gunmen killed and set ablaze Ifeanyi Orogbo, an Ebube Agu security operative, in Abakaliki.¹⁴⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 24 January 2022, the police arrested two persons in connection with the beheading of Sunday Nwafor, an Ebube Agu security operative, at Ekpelu community in Ikwo LGA.¹⁴⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 24 August 2022, gunmen killed Henry Chukwu, the bodyguard of an opposition governorship aspirant, Ifeanyichukwu Odii, and two others in a hotel at Isu community, Onicha LGA.¹⁴⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 13 October 2022, several people were abducted and some injured by gunmen in Obeagu community in Ishielu LGA.¹⁴⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 November 2022, two Ebube Agu security operatives were killed, and others were injured by gunmen in Abakaliki.¹⁴⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 November 2022, in a separate incident, two persons were killed by a mob over stealing of electricity transformer parts.¹⁵⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 25 and 27 November 2022, Fulani herdsmen killed three people in Isi-Uzo LGA, bringing the total number of those killed by herdsmen in the area to 20.¹⁵¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 5 December 2022, a police officer, two Ebube Agu security operatives and a gunman were killed during a gun battle at the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.¹⁵²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 10 December 2022, gunmen enforcing the sit-at-home order killed four people and set a police vehicle ablaze at Nwakpu Market in Ikwo LGA.¹⁵³

142 Daily Post, "Unknown gunmen attack Ebonyi community, kill four, raze houses", 12 April 2021, <https://dailypost.ng/2021/04/12/unknown-gunmen-attack-ebonyi-community-kill-4-raze-houses>

143 Sahara Reporters, "Stray bullet from south-eastern Nigeria security outfit Ebube Agu ills traditional ruler's daughter In Ebonyi", 9 September 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/09/09/stray-bullet-southeastern-nigeria-security-outfit-ebube-agu-kills-traditional-rulers>

144 Nation (Nigeria), "Four killed, others injured in Ebonyi community", 18 October 2021, <https://thenationonlineng.net/four-killed-others-injured-in-ebonyi-community>

145 Sahara Reporters, "Unknown gunmen kill intending couple one week to wedding in Imo, South-East Nigeria", 12 January 2023, <https://saharareporters.com/2023/01/12/unknown-gunmen-kill-intending-couple-one-week-wedding-imo-southeast-nigeria>

146 Cable, "Police arrest two in Ebonyi for 'beheading' Ebube Agu operative", 24 January 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/police-arrest-two-in-ebonyi-for-beheading-Ebube-Agu-operative>

147 Premium Times, "How gunmen killed PDP guber aspirant's bodyguard, two others", 30 August 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/551469-how-gunmen-killed-pdp-guber-aspirants-bodyguard-two-others.html>

148 Punch, "Gunmen invade Ebonyi community, kidnap many, injure others", 14 October 2022, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-invade-ebonyi-community-kidnap-many-injure-others>

149 Daily Post, "Unknown gunmen kill two security operatives in Ebonyi", 19 November 2022, <https://dailypost.ng/2022/11/19/unknown-gunmen-kill-2-security-operatives-in-ebonyi>

150 Leadership, "Three suspected vandals burnt to death in Ebonyi", <https://leadership.ng/3-suspected-vandals-burnt-to-death-in-ebonyi/#:~:text=Three%20suspected%20electricity%20transformer%20vandals%20have%20been%20burnt,Igweledoha%2C%20Ndufu%20Amata%20and%20Ekawoke%2C%20all%20in%20Ikwo>

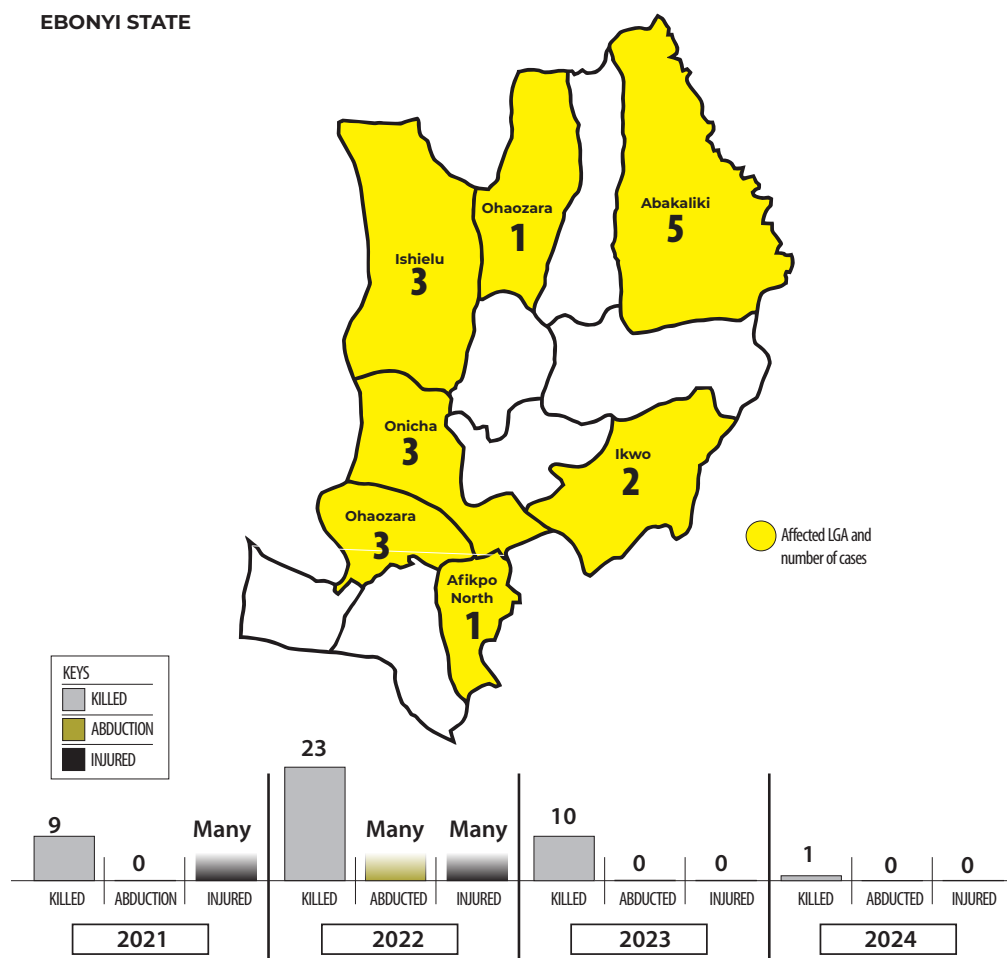
151 Punch, "Again, herdsmen invade Enugu communities, kill three", 29 November 2022, <https://punchng.com/again-herdsmen-invade-enu-gu-communities-kill-three>

152 Vanguard, "Police officer, two Ebubeagu operatives, hoodlum killed in Ebonyi", 6 December 2022, <https://punchng.com/again-herdsmen-invade-enu-gu-communities-kill-three>

153 Nigerian Tribune, "Four killed in Enugu as gunmen enforce sit-at-home order", 10 December 2022, <https://tribuneonlineng.com/four-killed-in-enugu-as-gunmen-enforce-sit-at-home-order>

- On 21 December 2022, police operatives invaded IPOB/ESN camps in Ishielu LGA, killing four people and destroying the camps.¹⁵⁴
- On 22 December 2022, the Nigerian Army said its troops attached to 82 Division killed several members of the ESN during a gun battle in Nkalaha community, Ishielu LGA.¹⁵⁵
- On 7 March 2023, the police killed three gunmen in a shootout at Ogor community, following the burning of two vehicles and a filling station by gunmen.¹⁵⁶
- On 2 June 2023, gunmen attacked and burnt two vehicles and shot a passer-by in the shoulder at Uburu and Okposi communities in Ohaozara LGA.¹⁵⁷
- On 7 July 2023, seven people were killed during a communal clash between Ishinkwo and Abaomege communities in Onicha LGA.¹⁵⁸
- On 11 April 2024, gunmen attacked a police checkpoint at Ishieke Enugu-Abakaliki expressway and killed one police officer.¹⁵⁹

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Note: There are several additional uncounted killings, abductions, and injuries that were not captured in the report

- 154 Punch, "Gunmen invade Ebonyi community, kidnap many, injure others", 14 October 2022, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-invade-ebonyi-community-kidnap-many-injure-others>
- 155 Vanguard, "Police kill four IPOB members in Ebonyi", 21 December 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/12/police-kill-four-ipob-members-in-ebonyi>
- 156 Nation (Nigeria), "Three die in Ebonyi, police shootout", 8 March 2023, <https://thenationonlineng.net/three-die-in-ebonyi-police-gunmen-shootout>
- 157 Guardian (Nigeria), "Police confirm gunmen attack on Ebonyi communities", 4 June 2023, <https://guardian.ng/news/police-confirm-gunmen-attack-on-ebonyi-communities>
- 158 Daily Post, "Killings: Police confirms arrest of seven persons as communal clashes persist in Ebonyi" 7 July 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/07/07/killings-police-confirm-arrest-of-seven-persons-as-communal-clashes-persist-in-ebonyi/>
- 159 Channels TV, "Police officer killed as Gunmen attack checkpoint in Ebonyi" 11 April 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/04/11/just-in-police-officer-killed-as-gunmen-attack-checkpoint-in-ebonyi/>

TABLE 4: TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE AND KILLING IN ENUGU STATE (2021-2024)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 30 March 2021, eight persons were killed during a clash between Fulani herdsmen and ESN operatives at Adani community in Uzo-Uwani LGA.¹⁶⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 31 March 2021, the police confirmed that herdsmen killed six people in Adani community in Uzo-Uwani LGA, although residents claim 18 persons were killed.¹⁶¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 January 2022, gunmen killed Kelvin Ezeoha, the Enugu South All Progressives Congress (APC) youth leader, and another person, during a political party meeting in Enugu South LGA.¹⁶²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 22 June 2023, gunmen attacked and killed Onyebu Idoko, a member of the Central Neighbourhood Watch in Igboeze North LGA.¹⁶³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 8 October 2022, gunmen killed the APC youth leader of Igboeze South LGA, while she was travelling on a motorcycle.¹⁶⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 November 2022, gunmen killed Gabriel Onuzulike, a former commissioner of rural development in Enugu, and his brother at Nkpokolo-Achi community in Oji River LGA, while they were returning from a burial ceremony.¹⁶⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 20 and 21 November 2022, Fulani herdsmen killed 13 people in communities in Isi-Uzo LGA.¹⁶⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 25 and 27 November 2022, Fulani herdsmen killed three people in communities in Isi-Uzo LGA of Enugu state. Residents say this brings the total number of people killed by herdsmen in the area to 20.¹⁶⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 28 December 2022, militants burnt down ten houses belonging to a rival group in Nkanu East LGA.¹⁶⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 26 March 2023, gunmen killed two police officers when they attacked a police checkpoint along Kenyatta Road, near the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus gate in Enugu.¹⁶⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 11 August 2023, the police killed three ESN operatives, while several others escaped with gunshot wounds, following a gunfight at Imufu community in Igboeze North LGA.¹⁷⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 September 2023, a combined security force killed three ESN members said to be planning to enforce the sit-at-home order in Enugu state.¹⁷¹

160 Sahara Reporters, "Eight killed as ESN operatives, Fulani herdsmen clash in Enugu community", 30 March 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/03/30/eight-killed-esn-operatives-fulani-herdsmen-clash-enugu-community>

161 Vanguard, "Massacre in Ebonyi: Priest, 17 others killed by herdsmen", 31 March 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/03/massacre-in-ebonyi-priest-17-others-killed-by-herdsmen>

162 Guardian (Nigeria), "Tension in Enugu as gunmen allegedly kills APC chieftain, one other during meeting", 19 January 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/tension-in-enugu-as-gunmen-allegedly-kills-apc-chieftain-one-other-during-meeting>

163 Channels TV, "Gunmen kidnap, behead ex-Anambra lawmaker Nelson Achukwu", 22 June 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/06/22/gunmen-behead-ex-anambra-lawmaker-nelson-achukwu>

164 Premium Times, "Gunmen kill APC youth leader in Enugu community", 9 October 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/558799-gunmen-kill-apc-youth-leader-in-enugu-community.html?tztc=1>

165 Cable, "Gunmen kill ex-commissioner, brother in Enugu", 19 November 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-kill-ex-commissioner-brother-in-enugu>

166 Punch, "Herdsmen invade Enugu communities, kill 13, sack residents", 23 November 2022, <https://punchng.com/herdsmen-invade-enugu-communities-kill-13-sack-residents>

167 Punch, "Again, herdsmen invade Enugu communities, kill three", 29 November 2022, <https://punchng.com/again-herdsmen-invade-enugu-communities-kill-three>

168 Nigerian Tribune, "Militants burn down 10 houses in Enugu", 29 December 2022, <https://tribuneonlineng.com/militants-burn-down-10-houses-in-enugu>

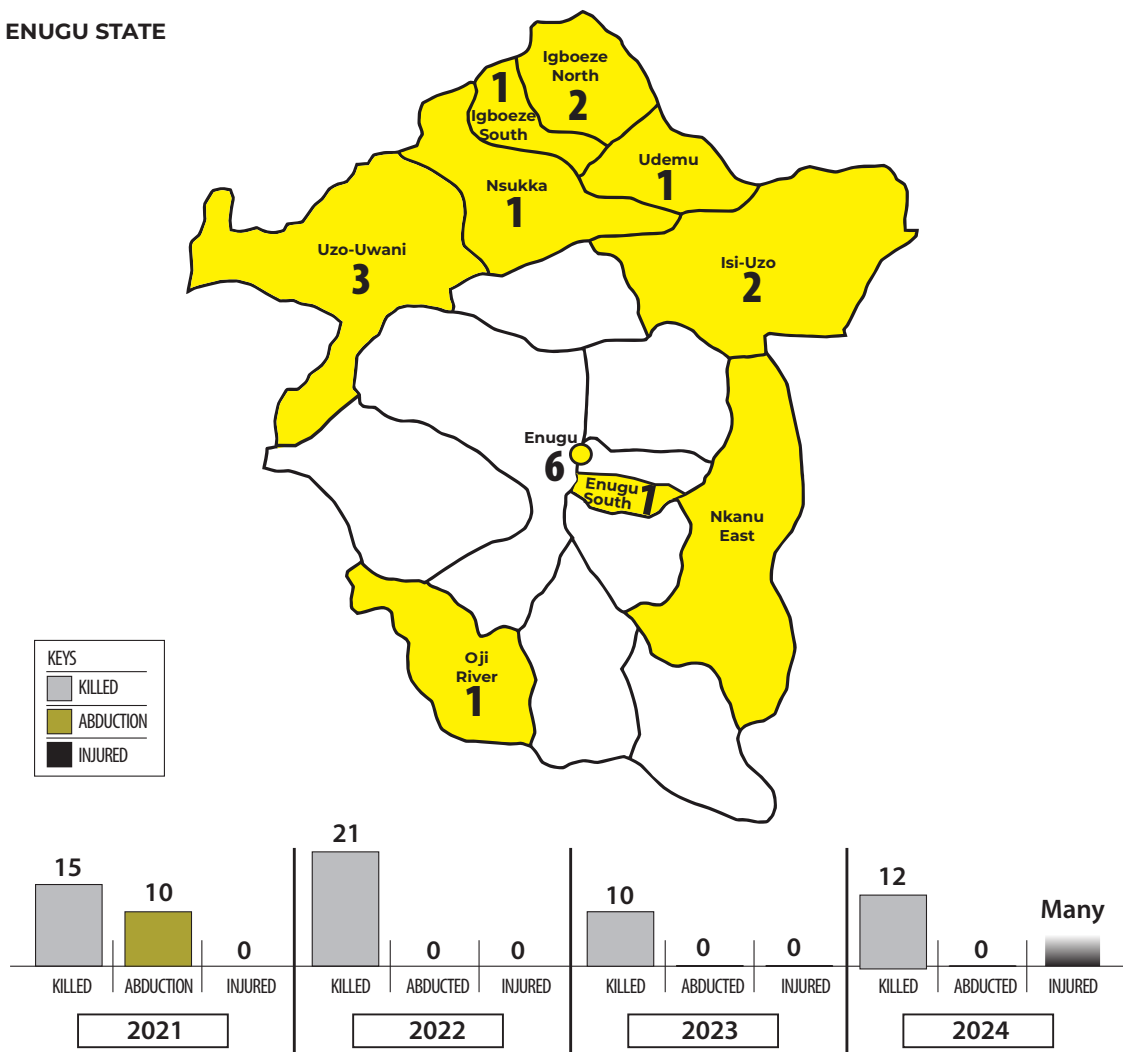
169 Premium Times, "Gunmen attack police checkpoint, kill two officers", 26 March 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/590173-just-in-gunmen-attack-police-checkpoint-kill-two-officers.html>

170 Peoples' Gazette, "Three gunmen killed, several escaped with gunshot wounds in Enugu IPOB-ESN camp – police", 11 August 2023, <https://gazettengr.com/three-gunmen-killed-several-escaped-with-gunshot-wounds-in-enugu-ipob-esn-camp-police>

171 Punch, "Enugu police kill three IPOB/ESN members plotting sit-at-home enforcement", 18 September 2023, <https://punchng.com>

- On 23 October 2023, a combined team of police operatives and the Enugu State Neighbourhood Watch Group killed a suspected ESN member and recovered firearm and ammunition.¹⁷²
- On 28 April 2024, at least four people were killed by suspected herders at Nimbo in Uzo-Uwani LGA.¹⁷³
- On 11 May 2024, in different incident, “unknown gunmen” attacked Nsukka LGA and Udemu LGA, killing three police officers and one Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) official. In another attack on the same day, one police officer and one FRSC official attached to a traditional ruler were also killed.¹⁷⁴
- On 14 September 2024, Chief Stephen Aniagu, the Chairman of Ogbete Main Market Traders Association, was killed by “unknown gunmen”.¹⁷⁵

ENUGU STATE



Note: There are several additional uncounted killings, abductions, and injuries that were not captured in the report

[com/enugu-police-kill-three-ipob-esn-members-plotting-sit-at-home-enforcement](https://punchng.com/enugu-police-kill-three-ipob-esn-members-plotting-sit-at-home-enforcement)

172 Punch “Police kill suspected IPOB/ESN member in Enugu, recover arms”, 23 October 2023, <https://punchng.com/police-kill-suspected-ipob-esn-member-in-enugu-recover-arms>

173 Premium Times, “Herders’ attack in Enugu, massacre in Ebonyi, other top stories from south east” 6 May 2024, Herders’ attack in Enugu, massacre in Ebonyi, other top stories from South-east

174 Channels TV, “Gunmen Kill Three Police Officers, One FRSC official in fresh Enugu attack” 13 May 2024, <https://www.channelstv.com/2024/05/13/gunmen-kill-three-police-officers-one-frsc-official-in-fresh-enugu-attack/>

175 Premium Times, “Gunmen kill popular market leader in South-east” 14 September 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/734637-breaking-gunmen-kill-popular-market-leader-in-south-east.html?tztc=1>

TABLE 5: TIMELINE OF VIOLENCE AND KILLING IN ABIA STATE (2021-2024)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 16 to 18 May 2020, over ten people, mainly students, were abducted, with one killed, along Okigwe-Uturu Road in Isuikwuato LGA.¹⁷⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 23 March 2021, eleven people were killed in a gun duel between soldiers and gunmen at the Ariraria axis of Aba.¹⁷⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 September 2021, students at Abia State University Uturu were abducted by suspected herdsmen.¹⁷⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 21 October 2021, five persons were killed as soldiers and IPOB members clashed in Aba.¹⁷⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 21 October 2021, soldiers on guard at a bank in Arochukwu killed three IPOB members.¹⁸⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 15 February 2022, gunmen killed at least nine people at the new Abia cattle market in Omuma Uzo, Ukwia West LGA, with over 60 persons displaced.¹⁸¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 16 May 2022, seven students at Abia state university were abducted by gunmen along Okigwe-Uturu Road.¹⁸²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 18 May 2022, suspected Fulani herdsmen attacked a shuttle bus along Okigwe-Uturu Road, near Abia State University Uturu. The shuttle bus driver was shot dead.¹⁸³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 29 May 2022, gunmen abducted Samuel Kanu, the Prelate of the Methodist Church Nigeria, Dennis Mark, the Methodist Bishop of Owerri, and another person, along Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway in Umunneochi LGA.¹⁸⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On July 24, 2022, gunmen abducted several travellers in Lokpanta community, Umunneochi LGA.¹⁸⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 27 July 2022, gunmen attacked a bullion van and injured four persons at Ntigha junction in Umuahia community at the Enugu-Port Harcourt expressway.¹⁸⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 17 August 2022, gunmen killed a soldier during a shootout in Ebem community in Ohafia LGA.¹⁸⁷
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November 2022, soldiers from the Ebele Jonathan Barracks of the 14 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Ohafia invaded Amangwu Ohafia community in Ohafia LGA and went on a shooting spree.¹⁸⁸

- 176 Sahara Reporters, "Abia community protests incessant kidnapping by suspected herdsmen, laments police inaction", 19 May 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/05/19/abia-community-protests-incessant-kidnapping-suspected-herdsmen-laments-police-inaction>
- 177 Nation (Nigeria), "Eleven feared killed as soldiers, gunmen battle in Abia", 24 March 2021, <https://thenationonline.net/11-feared-killed-as-soldiers-gunmen-battle-in-abia>
- 178 The Sun, "Panic in Imo as bandits kill, kidnap students", 19 September 2021, <https://thesun.ng/panic-in-imo-as-bandits-kill-kidnap-students/>
- 179 Sun, "Five feared dead as soldiers, IPOB members clash in Abia", 22 October 2021, <https://thesun.ng/5-feared-dead-as-soldiers-ipob-members-clash-in-abia>
- 180 Guardian (Nigeria), "Soldiers kill suspected IPOB members in Abia", 22 October 2021, <https://guardian.ng/news/soldiers-kill-suspected-ipob-members-in-abia>
- 181 Cable, "Eight killed as gunmen invade cattle market in Abia", 16 February 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/arewa-forum-kicks-as-gunmen-kill-eight-northerners-in-abia>
- 182 Punch, "Kidnapping: Abia varsity students, lecturers protest, destroy checkpoints", 20 May 2022, <https://punchng.com/kidnap-ping-abia-varsity-students-lecturers-protest-destroy-checkpoints>
- 183 Punch, "Suspected herdsmen kidnap passengers, kill driver in Abia", 18 May 2022, <https://punchng.com/suspected-herdsmen-kidnap-passengers-kill-driver-in-abia>
- 184 Premium Times, "Methodist Church Prelate Uche, two others kidnapped in Abia", 29 May 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/533455-breaking-methodist-church-prelate-uche-2-others-kidnapped-in-abia.html?tztc=1>
- 185 Premium Times, "Gunmen abduct travellers in Abia", 25 July 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/544813-gunmen-abduct-travellers-in-abia.html>
- 186 Guardian (Nigeria), "Bank official killed in Abia bullion van attack", 28 July 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/bank-official-killed-in-abia-bullion-van-attack>
- 187 Premium Times, "Gunmen kill soldier during shootout in Abia", 18 August 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/549398-gunmen-kill-soldier-during-shootout-in-abia.html>
- 188 Sun, "Days after military/ESN face-off: Abia, Imo communities mourn the dead, search for missing persons", 12 November 2022, <https://thesun.ng/days-after-military-esn-face-off-abia-imo-communities-mourn-the-dead-search-for-missing-persons>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 17 February 2023, gunmen killed three officials of Abia State Environmental Protection Agency at Samek junction on Faulks Road, near Ariaria International Market, Aba.¹⁸⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 31 March 2023, over 50 members of IPOB were killed by joint security operatives during a pro-Nnamdi Kanu protest in Abia state.¹⁹⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 8 April 2023, gunmen attacked a military patrol van in Aba.¹⁹¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 23 June 2023, gunmen abducted nine and killed two residents of Amangwo Olokoro in Umuahia South LGA.¹⁹²
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 26 July 2023, gunmen attacked the convoy of Chimezie Ukaegbu, the Abia Commissioner for Trade, Commerce, and Investments, killing two police officers.¹⁹³
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 27 October 2023, gunmen beheaded a vigilante operative in Isiahia Umuojima community in Osisioma Ngwa LGA.¹⁹⁴
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 30 May 2024, gunmen enforcing the sit-at-home directive of IPOB opened fire on a military checkpoint at Obikabia Junction, Aba metropolis, Obingwa LGA, killing five soldiers.¹⁹⁵
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 8 June 2024, troops of “Operation Udo Ka” of the Nigerian army killed six persons at a suspected IPOB/ESN camp in Igboro Forest in Arochukwu LGA.¹⁹⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 13 November 2024, gunmen attacked an army checkpoint at Ekenobizi, a border between Abia and Imo states, killing two soldiers.¹⁹⁷

189 Daily Post, “Cultists killed three ASEPA officials in Abia – police”, 18 February 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/02/18/cultists-killed-three-asepa-officials-in-abia-police>

190 Sun, “IPOB flays killing of members in Abia”, 3 April 2023, <https://thesun.ng/ipob-flays-killing-of-members-in-abia>

191 Sahara Reporters, “Many feared dead as unknown gunmen attack soldiers in Abia”, 8 April 2022 <https://saharareporters.com/2022/04/08/breaking-many-feared-dead-unknown-gunmen-attack-soldiers-abia>

192 Tribune, “Unknown gunmen abduct nine Abia mourners, kill two at Arondizuogu”, 25 June 2023, <https://tribuneonlineng.com/unknown-gunmen-abduct-9-abia-mourners-kill-2-at-arondizuogu>

193 Cable, “Two officers killed as gunmen attack Abia commissioner convoy”, 26 July 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/two-officers-killed-as-gunmen-attack-abia-commissioners-convoy>

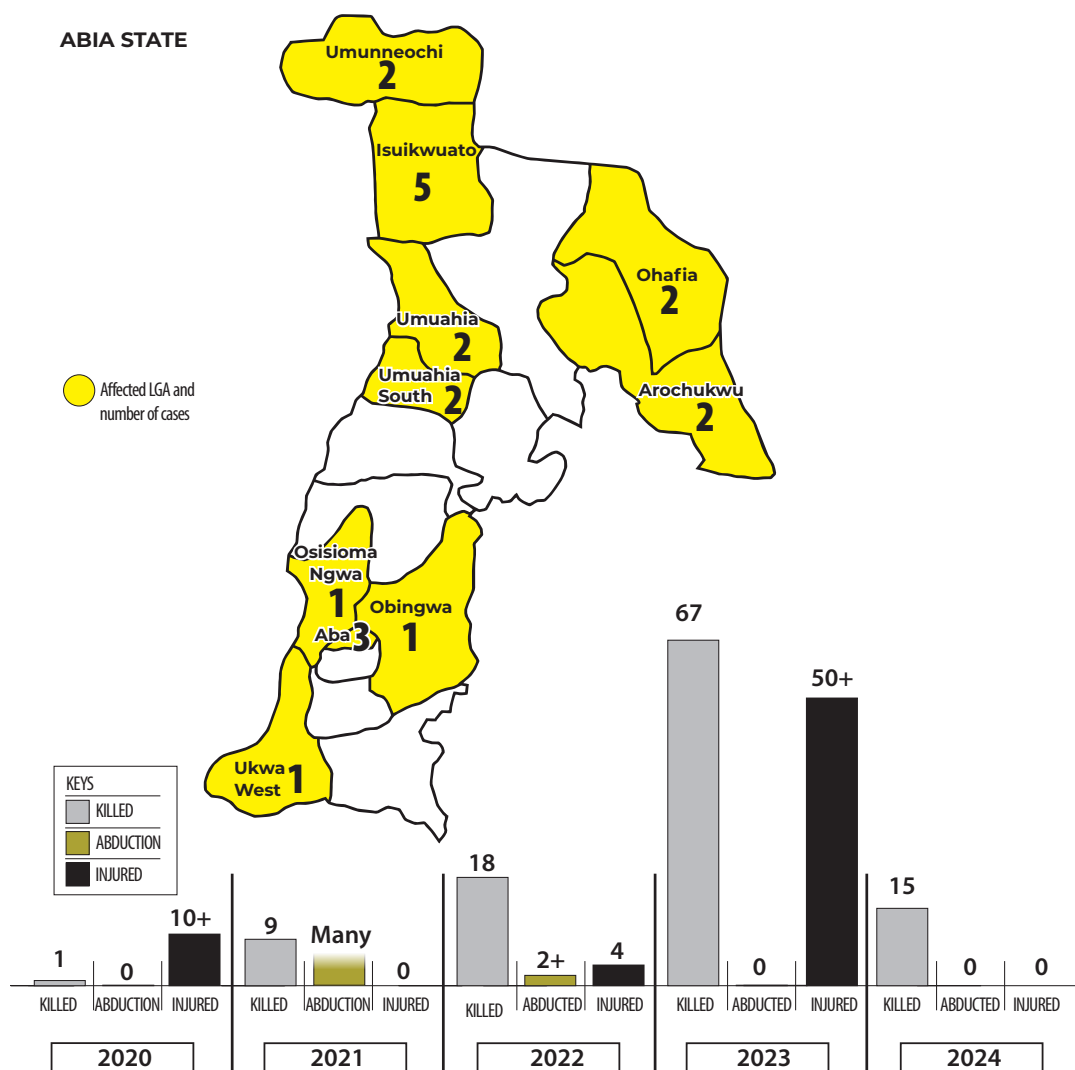
194 Premium Times, “Gunmen behead vigilante operative in Abia”, 27 October 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/637795-gunmen-behead-vigilante-operative-in-abia.html>

195 Cable, “Gunmen ‘enforcing sit-at-home’ kill five soldiers in Abia”, 31 May 2024, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-enforcing-sit-at-home-kill-four-soldiers-in-abia/>

196 Premium Times, “Soldiers’ Killing: Nigeria Troops kill six suspected IPOB members in Abia Forest, 9 June 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/702246-soldiers-killing-nigerian-troops-kill-six-suspected-ipob-members-in-abia-forest.html>

197 Punch, “Gunmen attack army checkpoint in Abia, kill two soldiers” 13 November 2024, <https://punchng.com/gunmen-attack-army-checkpoint-in-abia-kill-two-soldiers/>

ABIA STATE



Note: There are several additional uncounted killings, abductions, and injuries that were not captured in the report

2. THE “UNKNOWN GUNMEN” AND THE EASTERN SECURITY NETWORK

“... We know the gunmen. They are not unknown. They are people from our communities. But people are afraid to talk; when you talk, your name will be given to the gunmen, and you will be killed.”

Amnesty International interview with South-East community member

Although Nigerian authorities attribute every attack and security issue in the South-East to IPOB/ESN, Amnesty International's research indicates that several criminal and militant groups in the South-East have begun operating under the guise of IPOB/ESN in a way that hides the true nature and intent of their operations.

Suspected IPOB/ESN members, and “unknown gunmen” have continued to engage in violence and killings in the five states of the South-East, causing people to live in fear. These groups have attacked, raided, and burnt down multiple police stations, killing numerous police officers and security operatives. The killing of police officers and security operatives has triggered countless reprisal attacks, resulting in death and injury for thousands of residents.

The government has also responded to some of these crises by abducting IPOB/ESN members and holding them in secret detention, despite the fact that enforced disappearance is a crime and a violation of international human rights law. Over the years, Nigerian security forces have abducted IPOB/ESN members, with many subjected to arbitrary arrest and enforced disappearance.¹⁹⁸

On 20 September 2017, the Nigerian government proscribed IPOB as a terrorist organization, contending that the organization intended to break away from Nigeria by force. The Nigerian authorities accused IPOB's militant wing, ESN, established on 12 December 2020, of waging an insurgency in the South-East.

198 Premium Times, “Nigerian government must end enforced disappearance – Amnesty International”, 30 August 2021, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/482023-nigerian-govt-must-end-enforced-disappearance-amnesty-international.html>

PROMINENT KILLINGS: DR. CHIKE AKUNYILI



Dr. Chike Akunyili

On 28 September 2021, gunmen killed Dr Chike Akunyili at Afor Nkpor in Idemili North LGA, Anambra state. He was returning to Enugu from a meeting in Onitsha when the gunmen opened fire on his vehicle, killing him, his driver, and a police orderly.¹⁹⁹

2.1 THE “UNKNOWN GUNMEN”



Eastern Security
Network (source)

According to reports, the activities of the so-called “unknown gunmen” point to random assaults that have become prevalent throughout the South-East, rather than “a coordinated, premeditated attack” targeted at the Nigerian state, any state institution, or interests.²⁰⁰ Odum, an Enugu resident told Amnesty International in Enugu that:

““Unknown gunmen” were not known in the South-East in the recent past. Some criminal elements in the South-East are acting on the so-called “unknown gunmen” to perpetrate violence.”

The “unknown gunmen” operate based on information and their source of information remains unknown. They are armed with guns and machetes, and purported “diabolical powers” which, residents say, protect them from

199 Premium Times, “Gunmen kill Chike Akunyili, late Dora Akunyili’s husband”, 29 September 2021, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/487260-gunmen-kill-chike-akunyili-late-dora-akunylis-husband.html>

200 Hudson Institute, “Understanding the ‘unknown gunmen’ who attacked a US convoy In Nigeria”, 18 May 2023, <https://www.hudson.org/terrorism/understanding-unknown-gunmen-who-attacked-us-convoy-nigeria>

gunshots. When they attack, residents do not attempt to fight back. If anyone tries to put up any form of resistance, they will mark the person's house, attack the house in the night, and set it ablaze.

2.1.1 ABUSES BY “UNKNOWN GUNMEN”

2.1.1.1 ARMED ATTACKS

According to a report by local researchers, over 400 deaths caused by gunmen were recorded in Imo state between January 2019 and December 2021.²⁰¹ Most times, the gunmen emerge from their camps unmasked to carry out attacks on residents, police stations, and vigilante offices.

Since 2021, the “unknown gunmen” have operated at any time of the day in Imo and parts of Anambra state, attacking people and security formations. On 9 March 2024, “unknown gunmen” on speed bikes, dressed in military camouflage, shot dead four persons at Abacheke community in Ohaji LGA of Imo state.²⁰²

Obika, who survived a near-fatal attack by the gunmen in January 2023 at Ogbaku Junction in Imo state, narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Owerri:



ARMED ATTACKS

According to a report by local researchers, over 400 deaths caused by gunmen were recorded in Imo state between January 2019 and December 2021



DEMAND FOR MONEY

‘For one to conduct a burial ceremony at Isseke community, the gunmen must demand between N200,000 and N500,000, depending on your status’



DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

On 3 January 2024, the gunmen burnt the palace of the traditional ruler of Isseke community in Ihiala LGA of Anambra State

“On 5 January 2023, I was returning from Abuja to Imo state with my family for my sister’s marriage ceremony. On getting to Ogbaku junction, close to Owerri, between 7pm and 8pm, we saw a Sienna car parked at the centre of the road; we did not know who was there. Suddenly, we started hearing gunshots. Gunmen were holding a vehicle hostage. The vehicle moved, and they kept on shooting at it. We alighted from our vehicle and ran. When I heard the gunshots, I noticed that everybody was running, because the bullets were surplus; a lot of people got injured and some died on the spot. My little son was in a state of shock. I was badly wounded. A bullet hit me on the leg. A bullet also brushed my wife’s leg a little. Bleeding profusely, we ran into the police station at Ogbaku. No police officer, nobody, was there to attend to us, they had all run away. We ran to a hospital close to Ogbaku junction. When we got there, the nurses closed the gate, switched off their lights and were very scared. They could not attend to us. They told us that there was no doctor on duty and referred us to Federal Medical Centre Owerri. I managed to call my people in the village. They came to pick us up. On the way to hospital, we found out that the hospital too was closed. They had gotten information of the attack, so they closed their hospital too... I have been in a hospital for over three months now. While at the hospital, I heard that such an attack happened again in that same environment. The pain has kept me idle for more than three months now, with no help. I am yet to recover. I stand the risk of having my leg amputated. My family is still in shock. The government should please come to our aid. “Unknown gunmen” regularly raid communities without the intervention of the police... The faces of the gunmen were not covered.”

Ebulie, a local resident, who is a survivor of the devastating activities of the “unknown gunmen” confirmed this to Amnesty International in Asaba:

“The “unknown gunmen” are armed – some come with guns, cutlasses, and machetes. If they come for an attack, anyone that blocks their way, they will kill them. It has been a terrible situation, people are scared...”

Most residents in Orsumoghu and Lilu communities in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state have fled their homes, leaving their houses overgrown with weeds. In most places, the gunmen used logs of wood to block the roads while others dug gutters across roads to prevent easy movement in the area. In Uli and other nearby communities in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state, many houses have been burnt, leaving many people homeless, with residents relocating to other towns.

Eluigwe, a resident of Ihembosi community in Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra state, told Amnesty International:

201 Cable, “Report: Attacks in Imo led to over 400 deaths within three years”, 23 April 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/report-attacks-in-imo-led-to-over-400-deaths-within-three-years>

202 Leadership, “Masked gunmen kill four in Imo community”, 9 March 2024, <https://leadership.ng/masked-gunmen-kill-4-in-imo-community>

“There is insecurity [in Ihiala LGA] and the confusing part of it is that it seems the government is powerless. It seems as if the government has apportioned that part of the state to these gunmen and concentrated their security [efforts] somewhere else. People living in those areas are not safe. At times they do not come out. It is like these gunmen just want them to sit at home. Woe betides anyone who tries to [come out].”

2.1.1.2 DEMAND FOR MONEY

A resident of Isseke community narrated the ordeal of the community in the hands of the gunmen:

“This is what the gunmen always do to us for no justifiable reasons. They go after the *Igwes* [kings] and the indigenes of the town during burial ceremonies, traditional marriages, and weddings. For one to conduct a burial ceremony at Isseke community, *the gunmen must demand between ₦200,000 and ₦500,000, depending on your status.*”²⁰³

Ebulie, an Ihiala LGA resident, told Amnesty International in Asaba:

“[I]t has been a fearful situation in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state. Everybody has been so afraid, even some prominent men that we know do not sleep in their homes anymore. When they come back home, they lodge in hotels at Asaba in Delta state or another nearby state or town to spend the night because they are afraid that in the night some group of people will abduct them and mention the amount of money they will pay. After payment of the ransom, they may still kill the person.”

2.1.1.3 DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

The gunmen operate mostly during the daytime and sometimes at night. They are known in the communities where they operate and move around freely. Amnesty International’s research confirms that residents are sceptical about divulging information about the gunmen to security operatives for fear of being attacked or killed by the “unknown gunmen.” A resident of one of the affected communities, told Amnesty International in Asaba, Delta state:

“If they know you give out information about them, they will come after you at night. They might set your house ablaze, regardless of whether your children are inside the house or not. It has been a terrible situation. People are afraid to come to the town because they might see corpses littered on the roads.”

On 3 January 2024, the gunmen burnt the palace of the traditional ruler of Isseke community in Ihiala LGA of Anambra State, Igwe Emmanuel Nnabuiife. Isseke is a border community that shares boundaries with Imo state. The community has been troubled by insecurity in recent times, with several people having been rendered homeless due to the activities of the gunmen.²⁰⁴

PROMINENT KILLINGS: AHMED GULAK



← Ahmed Gulak

203 Punch, “I am now homeless – Anambra monarch whose palace was burnt”, 13 January 2024, <https://punchng.com/i-am-now-homeless-anambra-monarch-whose-palace-was-burnt>

204 Punch, “I am now homeless – Anambra monarch whose palace was burnt”, 13 January 2024, <https://punchng.com/i-am-now-homeless-anambra-monarch-whose-palace-was-burnt>

On 30 May 2021, Ahmed Gulak, a former political advisor to ex-president Goodluck Jonathan, was attacked and killed by gunmen in Owerri, Imo state, on his way to the Sam Mabkwe Airport to board a flight to Abuja.²⁰⁵

2.1.1.4 ABUSE OF THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Amnesty International research shows that insecurity in South-East Nigeria has affected people's right to freedom of movement. Many people have not travelled to their hometowns for several years for fear of being attacked. Traditional marriage and burial ceremonies that were normally conducted in people's ancestral homes now mostly take place in other communities outside the South-East due to fear of attack by the gunmen. A local resident confirmed this to Amnesty International:

"A friend of mine lost a sister during childbirth. One month after, the burial has not taken place because they are trying to agree on a date with gunmen who are in control of the community. The gunmen must give you a date for the burial, tell you the time the burial will start, when the burial will end, and the kind of vehicles that will come for that burial. The non-state actors are now calling the shots. If they tell you the burial will end by 3p.m., if they see anybody around the area after 3p.m., the person is gone. If I mention the community, the life of the person involved will no longer be safe. They will know the person. A friend who was abducted few days ago told me how, in his presence, these gunmen were killing innocent people, slaughtering them."

The gunmen seize people's vehicles to use them for their operations. Presently, one cannot safely drive a Hilux car in Ihiala and its environs as the gunmen regard all Hilux vans as belonging to security agents and therefore attack such vehicles. Ebulie, an Ihiala resident, told an Amnesty International in Asaba:

"No individual can drive a Hilux truck because it seems like a threat to the gunmen. They will think it is driven by security agents that have come to spy on them. A man that came to do his wedding at Ihiala drove that kind of car. The man was abducted and was only released after the family paid a ransom to the gunmen. We are used to living with the gunmen now. Sometimes you will hear gunshots around you."

A survivor, Ikemka, recounted his harrowing encounter with "unknown gunmen" at Uli town in Anambra state:

"The "unknown gunmen" abducted my friends and I at Uli in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state in 2022 when we went for a burial ceremony. We did not know that people no longer pass that route. Suddenly, the gunmen emerged from nowhere. There were so many of them. One of them had a covering in one of his eyes. We could hear them shouting in loud voices: "We are *umu Chineke!* (children of God) Come down! Who are you? Who is this?" There were gunshots everywhere; they shot over 100 bullets in the air. I thought I was dead. The person we were attending his relative's burial is well known in the community. He alighted from his vehicle and tried talking to them. He explained that he had earlier paid the gunmen 300,000 naira for them to permit the burial to take place. The gunmen refused to listen and held us for over two hours. My friend kept begging them. They reluctantly agreed to release us but took our vehicles. They asked us to come for our vehicles after two weeks when they might have determined the amount we are to pay to retrieve the vehicles. They threatened that if they had taken us, they would have shot us and dumped our bodies in a pit in the bush. A resident of the community joined us in pleading with them. Two days after the encounter, the gunmen went to his house and shot him dead."

PROMINENT KILLINGS: OYIBO CHUKWU



←  Oyibo Chukwu

205 Cable, "Suspect: How Gulak was killed in Imo", 31 May 2021, <https://www.thecable.ng/suspect-how-gulak-was-killed-in-imo>

On 22 February 2023, gunmen killed and burnt Oyibo Chukwu, the senatorial candidate of the Labour Party for Enugu East Senatorial District, at Amechi Awkunanaw, as he was returning from a campaign tour. The gunmen also killed five supporters who were with him in the car and set the car ablaze.²⁰⁶

2.1.2 THE *UMU OMA* MILITIA

A particular group of the “unknown gunmen” operating in the South-East refer to themselves as “Umu Oma”, literally meaning “The Good Ones”. Amnesty International research shows that the “Umu Oma” gunmen usually invade communities – moving from house to house – to search for weapons. They attack vigilante offices and take away arms.

On 4 March 2022, a group of gunmen, numbering over 30, attacked Ebenator community in Nnewi South LGA of Anambra state. In each home they entered, they tied up every adult male, assaulted them with machetes and took their phones, cash, guns and other valuables. The Umu Oma gunmen wrote to the traditional rulers of Ebenator community demanding they gather all the guns used by the local vigilante operatives and bring them to a certain location: The gunmen went there and took all the guns away.²⁰⁷ They also snatched motorcycles from their owners and mandated them to come to their camps to recover the motorcycles upon payment of a ransom.²⁰⁸

On 12 March 2022, gunmen attacked the vigilante office at Utuh community in Nnewi South LGA of Anambra state, set it ablaze and abducted one of the vigilante operatives.²⁰⁹



206 Vanguard, “Labour Party Senatorial candidate Oyibo Chukwu killed in Enugu”, 22 February 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/02/breaking-labour-party-senatorial-candidate-oyibo-chukwu-killed-in-enugu>

207 Guardian (Nigeria), “Unknown gunmen comb Anambra communities for weapons, others”, 7 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/unknown-gunmen-comb-anambra-communities-for-weapons-others/#:~:text=Unknown%20gunmen%20%28UGM%29%20now%20addressed%20as%20Umuoma%20%28nice.groups%20to%20disarm%20them%20and%20collect%20their%20arms>

208 Guardian (Nigeria), “Unknown gunmen comb Anambra communities for weapons, others”, 7 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/unknown-gunmen-comb-anambra-communities-for-weapons-others/#:~:text=Unknown%20gunmen%20%28UGM%29%20now%20addressed%20as%20Umuoma%20%28nice.groups%20to%20disarm%20them%20and%20collect%20their%20arms>

209 Sun, “Gunmen attack Anambra burial event, kidnap vigilante, burn station”, 12 March 2022, <https://thesun.ng/gunmen-at-tack-anambra-burial-event-kidnap-vigilante-burn-station>

210 Guardian (Nigeria), “Unknown gunmen comb Anambra communities for weapons, others”, 7 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/unknown-gunmen-comb-anambra-communities-for-weapons-others/#:~:text=Unknown%20gunmen%20%28UGM%29%20now%20addressed%20as%20Umuoma%20%28nice.groups%20to%20disarm%20them%20and%20collect%20their%20arms>

211 Daily Trust, “Again, gunmen attack mourners at burial In Anambra”, 12 March 2022, <https://dailytrust.com/anambra-again-gunmen-attack-mourners-at-burial-abduct-one>

2.1.3 THE KNOWN CAMPS OF THE “UNKNOWN GUNMEN”

Amnesty International research shows that there is a high prevalence of activities associated with the “unknown gunmen” around communities in Imo and Anambra states where they have established their camps in forests in some communities. According to Amnesty International’s findings, the existence of these camps is well known by residents and security agents in the communities.

In Imo state, the “unknown gunmen” have camps in forests in Okigwe, Mbaitolu, Arondizougu, Ihiteukwa, Ihitenansa, Okwudo, Agwa, Umuorji Mgbidi, Ihube, Aku and Umulolo, Njaba River on the border between Awo-Omama and Ezioha communities. In Anambra state, the camps are in forests in Lilu, Ukpok, Ezinifite Nnewi, Unubi, Akwaihedi, Umunze, Isseke, Mbosi, Ihiala, Azia, Okija, Uga, Idara Nnebo, Ihembosi, Ukpok and Mother Valley Orsumughu. In Enugu state, the gunmen have camps at Nkwere Inyi Forest in Oji River LGA, while they have a camp at Mgbalukwu in Inyimagu Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi.²¹²

The “unknown gunmen” launch attacks on communities and then return to their camps. On 31 March 2022, they set ablaze the headquarters of Nnewi South Local Government in Anambra state, killing the security guard on duty.²¹³ On 7 April 2022, the gunmen razed the headquarters of Aguata LGA of Anambra state.²¹⁴ A resident of Ihiala LGA informed Amnesty International that:



IPOB/ESN supreme headquarters destroyed by troops in Imo.

Credit: Nigerian Army

“... the “unknown gunmen” operate from their camps located inside bushes in Orsumgbo community in Ihiala LGA and in Ogboji community in Orumba South LGA. The forests where these gunmen camp are not large forests... The gunmen eliminate any authority that could challenge theirs in their areas of operation. Police stations and the palaces of the traditional rulers in the communities are usually targeted and burnt to demonstrate their capacity and establish their authority.”

From Amnesty International’s findings, it appears these “unknown gunmen” are in charge in the Anambra-Imo border communities. For over four years, residents of the border communities have been unable to move around freely, conduct their business or sleep in peace, due to constant threats of attack. Most of the security

²¹² **Vanguard**, “We don’t have camps in Okigwe, says IPOB”, 29 January 2024, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/01/we-dont-have-camps-in-okigwe-says-ipob/>; **Leadership**, “Troops clear IPOB/ESN camps in Anambra, Enugu”, <https://leadership.ng/troops-clear-ipob-esn-camps-in-anambra-enugu>; **Daily Trust**, “Troops clear four IPOB/ESN camps in Imo, recover corpses”, 2 October 2023, <https://dailytrust.com/troops-clear-4-ipob-esn-camps-in-imo-recover-corpses>; **Premium Times**, “Seven ESN members killed as army invades camp – Official”, 29 May 2021, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/464493-seven-esn-members-killed-as-army-invades-camp-official.html?tztc=1>; **Vanguard**, “Police raid suspected ESN camps, kill three commanders, arrest nine in Imo”, 9 February 2022, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/02/police-raid-suspected-esn-camps-kill-3-commanders-arrest-9-in-imo>; **Punch**, “Fifty IPOB camps destroyed, shallow graves uncovered – Military”, 11 March 2024, <https://punchng.com/50-ipob-camps-destroyed-shallow-graves-uncovered-military>; **Pulse**, “Troops raid notorious IPOB/ESN camp in Imo, recover IEDs”, 1 April 2024, <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/troops-raid-notorious-ipobesn-camp-in-imo-recover-ieds/4trpk8s>; **Nigerian Air Force**, “Air strikes target IPOB/ESN hideouts at Mother Valley Orsumughu in Anambra state and Aku Ihube in Imo state”, 27 September 2023, <https://airforce.mil.ng/news/air-strikes-target-ipobesn-hideouts-at-mother-valley-orsumughu-in-anambra-state-and-aku-ihube-in-imo-state1832258859>; **Southern Examiner**, “Security operatives kill more IPOB members in another successful raid in Ebonyi”, 24 March 2024, <https://thesouthernexaminer.com/security-operatives-kill-more-ipob-members-in-another-successful-raid-in-ebonyi-11815-221.htm>

²¹³ Channels TV, “Gunmen set ablaze Nnewi South LG Headquarters”, 31 March 2022, <https://www.channelstv.com/2022/03/31/gunmen-set-ablaze-nnewi-south-lg-headquarters>

²¹⁴ Daily Post, “Governor Soludo’s Aguata LG Headquarters under heavy attack”, 7 April 2022, <https://dailypost.ng/2022/04/07/governor-soludos-aguata-lg-headquarters-under-heavy-attack>

challenges are underreported. According to residents, the government has not done anything meaningful to secure the communities. Aladimma, former resident of Ihiala LGA of Anambra state, who fled from the town, told an Amnesty International in Enugu:

“If there is any form of attack, they [unknown gunmen] will go into the bushes and forests till after the security agents have [come and] gone back.”

Another resident of one of the communities where the “unknown gunmen” have a camp, confirmed to Amnesty International that security operatives know the location of the camps of the gunmen:

“They [security agents] are aware they [gunmen] are there. They are aware of those camps and sometimes they raid those camps. It is like they [the gunmen] have informants because the police will go there, and they [“unknown gunmen”] are not there anymore, only to resurface after the police are gone.”

This testimony corroborates the assertion that security agencies are aware of the security situation in these communities, but the authorities appear to lack the political will to address the problem. Further, Njike, a resident in one of the affected communities told Amnesty International:

“The security agencies are aware of the security situation in these communities. Sometimes, security helicopters will release gunshots inside the forests to neutralize the gunmen, but this has not been effective. The gunmen appear to get prior information of the operations, and they will escape and later attack the security operatives. Several people have been molested, and their human rights have been infringed upon, especially those living in the rural areas where the gunmen’s camps are located. People have suffered various degrees of hurt by the activities of these “unknown gunmen”. Some buildings have been burnt. Some people have been killed. If the government is sincere, they can redress these damages and help people resume their normal life.”

According to Ezeugo, another resident of Ihiala LGA, occasionally, the state security operatives come in response to the attacks. In most cases, they burn the family house of an identified attacker, and sometimes, the fire spreads to the houses of innocent people, causing more pain to the villagers.

Ikike, a security analyst, attributed the South-East security context to either a compromise on the part of security agents or a failure of leadership in the South-East. He told Amnesty International:

“It is highly implausible for these activities to thrive in a society where there is no compromise on the part of security agents. It is not possible for these criminals to have a field day in the South-East without the security agents compromising. It is also an indication of failure of leadership in the South-East.”

Akwarandu, a resident familiar with the activities of “unknown gunmen” in the South-East, explained what he perceived as the cause of the insecurity:

“The insecurity is political and the aftermath of the detention of Nnamdi Kanu. They [IPOB] started as a group that is agitating for self-determination, but other groups have hijacked it. It got worse to the extent that if you want to hold a burial ceremony you must go to them [gunmen] and register with money. They [gunmen] don’t have an office; but people go to meet them. They have agents working for them.”

IPOB/ESN continue to deny involvement in the activities of the “unknown gunmen” and their camps. A statement released to the media by IPOB claims that “any group operating any camp in these areas and communities are not ESN operatives. They are either organized criminal gangs or agent provocateurs. The Nigerian government and its security agencies know the truth but chose to blackmail IPOB/ESN.”²¹⁵

Based on Amnesty International’s research, it is obvious that camps and hideouts of the “unknown gunmen” or the “Umu Oma” groups are known, while the identity of most of the gunmen are known by residents. The gunmen seize items like motorcycles and vehicles and tell the owners where to retrieve them with a ransom. In some instances, the gunmen order community leaders to collate arms from vigilante operatives and hand them over to the gunmen at prescribed locations.²¹⁶ The question arises as to how the orders are being conveyed to the communities without state security operatives leveraging on such information to arrest the gunmen.

215 Vanguard, “We don’t have camps in Okigwe, says IPOB”, 29 January 2024, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/01/we-dont-have-camps-in-okigwe-says-ipob>

216 Guardian (Nigeria), “Unknown gunmen comb Anambra communities for weapons, others”, 7 March 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/unknown-gunmen-comb-anambra-communities-for-weapons-others/#:~:text=Unknown%20gunmen%20%28UGM%29%20now%20addressed%20as%20Umuoma%20%28nice,groups%20to%20disarm%20them%20and%20collect%20their%20arms>

PROMINENT KILLINGS: ATTACK ON SENATOR IFEANYI UBAH'S CONVOY



Attack on Senator Ifeanyi Ubah's Convoy

On 11 September 2022, gunmen attacked the convoy of Senator Ifeanyi Ubah (now, deceased but not as a result of the attack) at Enugwu-Ukwu in Njikoka LGA, Anambra state. Five persons, including two policemen, were killed during the attack.²¹⁷

2.2 THE EASTERN SECURITY NETWORK

“... criminals have infiltrated the ESN in the guise of fighting for self-determination. They now wreak havoc on the people.”

Amnesty International interview with South-East community member

2.2.1. KILLINGS BY FULANI HERDERS

The five states in the South-East, particularly Enugu and Ebonyi states, have been the sites of several clashes between farmers and Fulani herders over grazing lands.

Amnesty International's research shows that scores of persons were killed when Fulani herders invaded the Ukpabi Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu state on 25 April 2016 and displacing the residents.²¹⁸

Amnesty International research found that between 2019 and 2023, an unspecified number of people were

²¹⁷ Reuters, “Five aides killed after gunmen attack Nigerian senator's convoy”, 12 September 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/five-aides-killed-after-gunmen-attack-nigerian-senators-convoy-2022-09-12>

²¹⁸ Vanguard, “Many feared killed as Fulani herdsman invade Enugu communities”, 25 April 2016, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/04/many-killed-fulani-herdsmen-invade-enugu-communities>

killed by herdsmen in Enugu state, in communities such as Eha Amufu, Emene, 9th Mile Corner, Amagunze in Nkanu East, Oji River, Nimbo Nsukka, Igboeze North/South, and Awgu.



Members of IPOB's ESN. Photo credit: Daily Nigerian (<https://dailynigerian.com/ipob-attacks-imo-voter/>)

On 17 and 18 February 2023, Fulani herdsmen attacked people on their farmlands in Olori, Obovia and Amaovia communities in Awgu LGA of Enugu state, killing two people, injuring many, and burning motorcycles and bicycles belonging to the farmers.²¹⁹ In a statement viewed by Amnesty International, the leader of Awgu Town Youth Association noted that:

"Nobody is going to the farm again. [There is] hunger everywhere [and] killings everywhere, every day."

Akpu, an Enugu state resident familiar with the South-East context told Amnesty International in Enugu:

"A lot of communities have caught the herdsmen who perpetrated these acts, such as in Nimbo and Nkporogu in Uzo-Uwani LGA and in Igboeze North LGA, but an order came that they should be released. In the case of Awgbu, a group of farmers were determined to hold off the Fulani herdsmen who destroyed their crops. Immediately this information got to the police station in Awgbu, they ordered that the farmers should release the Fulani herdsmen. It was because of acts like this that ESN came into existence. Why won't there be hardship when Fulani herdsmen and their cows invade people's farmlands, destroying crops?"

2.2.2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ESN

In December 2020, the IPOB launched the ESN as a reaction to killings by herdsmen, whom they accused of grazing on farmlands and committing crimes such as rape and murder of residents.²²⁰

There have been several reports of cases of human rights abuses by suspected IPOB/ESN members and other non-state actors operating in the South-East. However, IPOB has always maintained the narrative that ESN operatives are not violent. Anamaka, an IPOB member who spoke to Amnesty International in Enugu claimed that ESN members are not complicit in the violence in the South-East:

"Nnamdi Kanu formed the ESN in 2020 to defend and protect the lives and property of our people. The South-East governors created a parallel security outfit (Ebube Agu) so that they will be hunting ESN. ESN members are youths who volunteered to pursue the herdsmen from our bushes and farmlands. Since the existence of ESN, the killings and other activities of Fulani herdsmen have reduced numerically. ESN came up because of Fulani herdsmen's activities in the farmlands across the South-East and South-South. The Nigerian government has not prosecuted any of the Fulani herdsmen."

On whether the establishment of ESN has served the intended purpose, a South-East security analyst told Amnesty International that:

²¹⁹ Sun, "Herdsmen kill two, injure others in Enugu community", 3 March 2023, https://sunnewsonline.com/herdsmen-kill-2-injure-others-in-enugu-community/?expand_article=1

²²⁰ Daily Post, "Nnamdi Kanu launches Eastern Security Network", 13 December 2020, <https://dailypost.ng/2020/12/13/breaking-nnamdi-kanu-launches-eastern-security-network>

“ESN was set up by Mazi Nnamdi Kanu for the purpose of securing the lives and properties of people. That was when the Fulani herdsmen were on rampage, killing people in the farms and the governors were not doing anything about it. People were being slaughtered like animals on various farms across the South-East. That was why Nnamdi Kanu set up ESN to contain the activities of the criminals. At that point, this effectively worked.”

Ekwe, an Enugu state resident, also stated to Amnesty International that the ESN has been effective in countering crimes in his community:

“When abductors took some people in my community, the community called the police. For three days, there was no response. They called the ESN, and immediately the ESN responded.”

According to Obioma, the people formed ESN to safeguard life and property in the South-East:

“... It was formed by Biafran activists because people were dying. Their target was to go into the forest and confront Fulani herdsmen. They are doing a marvellous job. Wherever the Fulani herdsmen hear that ESN operatives were coming, they run. The ESN is an extension of IPOB. They do not attack people. They attack Fulani herdsmen in Igbo forests.”

Again, an ESN operative in Enugu told Amnesty International that ESN operatives live and operate in the bushes and farms in the South-East to provide security against Fulani herders who destroy farmlands and abduct local farmers.

“I am an ESN member. We do not have a single weapon and there is no place you can point out a weapon belonging to ESN... It is [the state-backed] Ebube Agu [security outfit] that is killing our youths. The ESN are not killing anyone, rather we are inside bushes, and we pursue all the Fulani who are killing our fathers and mothers and raping our women. [We] do not have any weapon, [we] carry sand and pursue them, and the gods of the land will protect us, and nothing will happen.”

Notwithstanding the claims by IPOB/ESN members, Amnesty International’s research shows that there is no clear-cut difference between the operations of ESN operatives and the “unknown gunmen” in the South-East. But a local resident, who spoke to Amnesty International in Enugu, contends that:

“Criminal elements are taking advantage of ESN’s existence, but they do not want to work in tandem with the policies of ESN. They are the “unknown gunmen”. Some criminals have infiltrated the ESN in the guise of fighting for self-determination. They wreak havoc on the people.”

Another IPOB member told Amnesty International that:

“There is serious propaganda against ESN. The state governors in Igboland [the South-East] sponsor men and give them weapons, give them Biafra flags, and give them uniforms. So that they can go and commit crimes and say these are ESN people, these are Biafran people. That is the truth. I can never lie to you. Even the past governors and the new ones now, they are the ones that recruit [these] men.”

According to a lawyer familiar with the South-East security challenges:

“The arrests and continued incarceration of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu against the orders of the Court of Appeal has continued to give room for criminals to act in the manner they want to; criminals that have no relationship or no connection with IPOB. But now, the state security agents call every criminal group operating in the South-East IPOB members when they know really that these people have no connection with IPOB. IPOB is struggling day and night to tell you that these people are not part of the project; that these people are not part of IPOB. I have released statements, relying on my discussion and briefs from Nnamdi Kanu, to tell the world his position about this... IPOB has several times in their publications distanced the ESN from the activities of criminals who operate in the South-East. If we are to go by the objective for which ESN is set up, I can completely agree with IPOB that ESN is not part of those who are causing confusion. Because IPOB is there to checkmate ESN’s activities and if they are going against the set-out objectives, they know how to go about sanctioning them.”

When asked by Amnesty International whether the ESN has committed human rights violations in the South-East, Anolie, an IPOB member stated:

“ESN does not possess arms. They stay only in the bushes. You cannot see them on the streets. It has never been on record or any video or anywhere that people saw ESN members in the streets. They do not come out at night. They do not have anything to do with the streets of the South-East. You can make further findings; our famers can testify to this.”

From a video clip monitored by Amnesty International, IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, maintained the same position when he spoke on the insecurity in the South-East on 19 March 2024 at the Federal High Court, Abuja:²²¹

221 Vanguard, “South-East: Peace’ll return two minutes after my release – Nnamdi Kanu boasts”, 19 March 2024, <https://www.van->

“We [IPOB] are here to fight for our freedom, for justice, equity, and fairness. That is what we are fighting for. Nothing more, nothing less ... Anybody committing crime cannot go scot-free. They cannot go scot-free. Anybody involved in any type of crime in the [South] East cannot go free. They are doing it because I am in DSS [detention]. And I suspect some people in government are complicit. They are making money with this insecurity. They are making money with it. They know [that if] Nnamdi Kanu is outside, in two minutes, this nonsense will stop ... Anybody involved in any form of violence or insecurity in the South-East in the name of IPOB is a goner and they know it. Let me come out of this; [in] only two minutes, I guarantee there will be peace in the [South] East...”

PROMINENT KILLINGS: ATTACK ON A UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CONVOY



Attack on a USA convoy

On 16 May 2023, gunmen attacked an advance convoy of government representatives from the United States of America (USA) in Ogbaru LGA, Anambra state. Two locally employed staff of the USA Embassy and two police personnel were killed during the attack. The attackers abducted three other people and set their vehicle on fire. The advance convoy was travelling to a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project providing humanitarian assistance to people displaced by the 2022 flood in Anambra state.²²²

2.3 ATTACKS ON SECURITY AGENTS AND POLICE

“... the gunmen attacked the police headquarters at Ihiala. Now, one cannot see a policeman wearing uniform at Ihiala, except when they come in a group. The police are afraid ... They have also attacked and killed soldiers ...”

Amnesty International interview with South-East community member

According to Amnesty International’s findings, since 2020, there have been several attacks by gunmen on security agents in the South-East. There have also been frequent clashes between security operatives and members of IPOB/ESN that have led to the killing of residents and passersby. For example:

guardngr.com/2024/03/south-east-peace-ll-return-two-minutes-after-my-release-nnamdi-kanu-boasts

222 U.S. Department of State, “Attack on U.S. convoy in Nigeria: Press statement”, 17 May 2023, <https://www.state.gov/attack-on-u-s-convoy-in-nigeria>

- On 8 January 2023, gunmen set ablaze Umuchu police station.²²³
- On 19 February 2023, gunmen attacked Ogidi area police command, killing three police officers.²²⁴
- On 28 December 2022, gunmen attacked Ihiala police headquarters with explosives and set the station on fire.²²⁵
- On 5 August 2022, gunmen raided the Agwa police division, burnt it down and killed four police officers on duty.²²⁶
- On 20 April 2022, gunmen attacked the police divisional headquarters in Anaku, setting three operational vehicles on fire.²²⁷
- On 18 April 2022, at least four residents were killed in Ihioma community in Orlu LGA of Imo state as soldiers opened fire on residents while shooting sporadically at suspected IPOB/ESN members.²²⁸
- On 22 October 2021, Nigerian authorities announced that the IPOB attacked 164 police stations in the South-East.²²⁹
- On 30 September 2021, seven gunmen attacked Ajali police station, killing five policemen, and setting the station ablaze.²³⁰
- On 19 September 2021, gunmen killed three police officers at a checkpoint in Onitsha.²³¹
- On 6 May 2021, gunmen attacked Obosi divisional police station, burnt down the station, and killed two police officers.²³²
- On 20 March 2021, gunmen attacked Ekwulobia police station, injuring several police officers.²³³
- On 23 October 2020, armed attackers burnt four stations in Nnewi, killing two police officers in the process.²³⁴
- On 21 October 2020, gunmen attacked and burnt down the Nnewi police station and destroyed police patrol vehicles.²³⁵

223 Cable, "Anambra police station destroyed during #EndSARS set ablaze while undergoing renovation", 8 January 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/hoodlums-set-ablaze-anambra-police-station-under-renovation-after-it-was-destroyed-during-endsars>

224 Punch, "Three killed as hoodlums attack police station", 19 February 2023, <https://punchng.com/three-killed-as-hoodlums-attack-anambra-police-station>

225 Cable, "Gunmen attack police station in Anambra with explosives", 28 December 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-attack-police-station-in-anambra-with-explosives>

226 Punch, "Gunmen invade Imo police station, kill four cops", 6 August 2022, <https://punchng.com/breaking-gunmen-invade-imo-police-station-kill-four-cops/>

227 Cable, "Gunmen attack police divisional headquarters in Anambra, set vehicles ablaze", 20 April 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-attack-police-divisional-headquarters-in-anambra-set-vehicles-ablaze>

228 HumAngle, "Residents live in fear after soldiers' clash with IPOB in Southeast Nigeria", 22 April 2022, <https://humanglemedia.com/residents-live-in-fear-after-soldiers-clash-with-ipob-in-southeast-nigeria>

229 Cable, "FG: IPOB attacked 164 police stations, killed 175 security operatives", 22 October 2021, <https://www.thecable.ng/just-in-ipob-attacked-164-police-stations-killed-175-security-operatives-says-fg>

230 Vanguard, "Gunmen set police station ablaze, kill five officers in Anambra", 30 September 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/09/gunmen-set-anambra-station-ablaze-kill-5-officers>

231 Guardian (Nigeria), "Gunmen on rampage in Southeast, kill three policemen, torch INEC office, disperse political meeting", 20 September 2021, <https://guardian.ng/news/gunmen-on-the-rampage-in-southeast-kill-three-policemen-torch-inec-office-disperse-political-meeting>

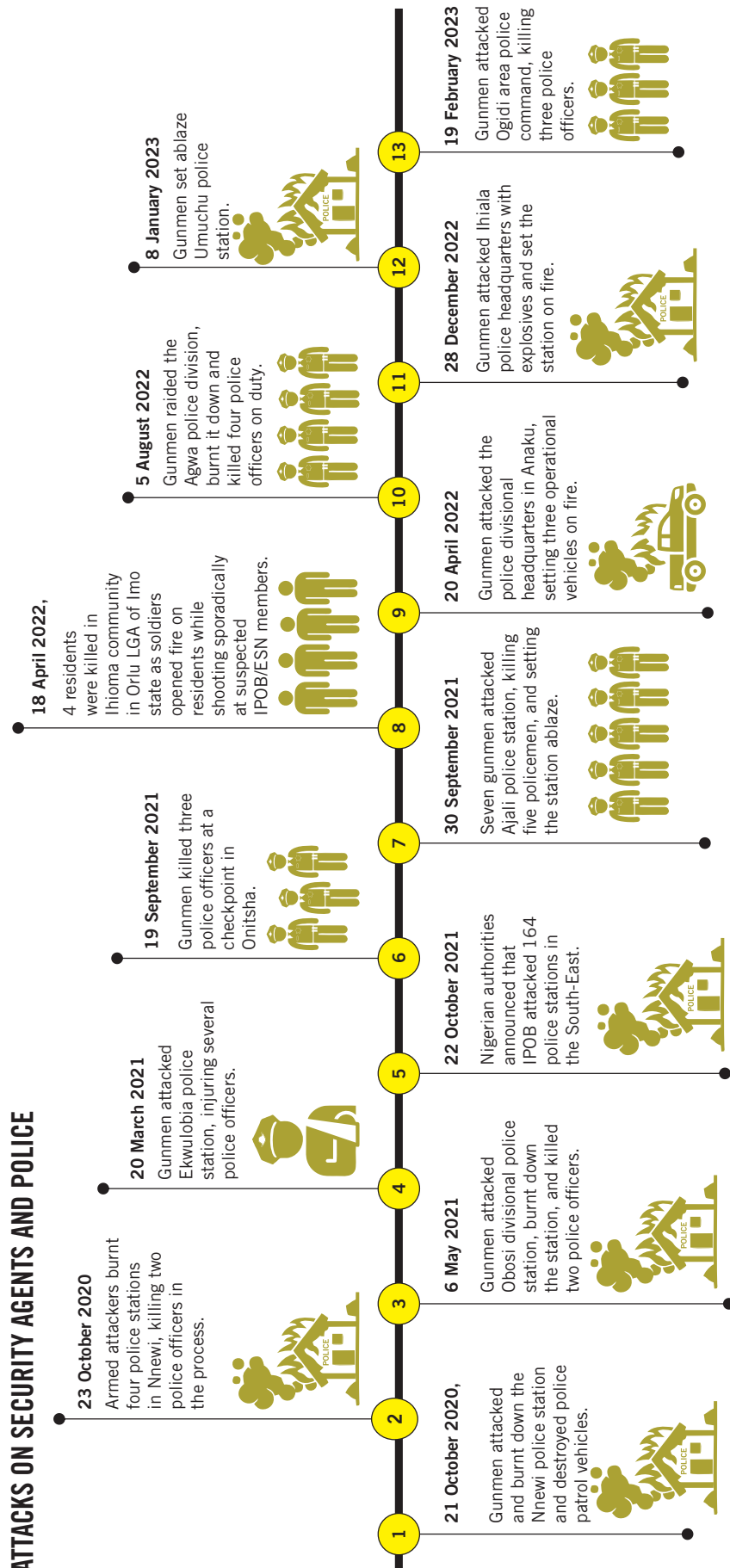
232 Daily Post, "Again, gunmen raze police station, kill two officers in Anambra", 6 May 2021, <https://dailypost.ng/2021/05/06/again-gunmen-raze-police-station-kill-two-officers-in-anambra>

233 Guardian (Nigeria), "Anambra: Gunmen kill two NCS staff, attack police station", 20 March 2021, <https://guardian.ng/news/anambra-gunmen-kill-two-ncs-staff-attack-police-station>

234 Daily Post, "EndSARS: Twenty-one police stations attacked, seven burnt, policeman beheaded in Anambra", 23 October 2020, <https://dailypost.ng/2020/10/23/end-sars-21-police-stations-attacked-7-burnt-policeman-beheaded-in-anambra>

235 Daily Post, "EndSARS: Twenty-one police stations attacked, seven burnt, policeman beheaded in Anambra", 23 October 2020, <https://dailypost.ng/2020/10/23/end-sars-21-police-stations-attacked-7-burnt-policeman-beheaded-in-anambra>

ATTACKS ON SECURITY AGENTS AND POLICE



Amnesty International's research indicates that with the spate of attacks, the police appear to have become weakened in tackling insecurity. The police are no longer able to make any arrests in the Ihiala axis because the "unknown gunmen" will come after any person who calls or reports them to the police, and this has put serious fear in the minds of residents. A local resident confirmed this pattern of attacks to Amnesty International in Asaba:

"The gunmen have attacked the Ihiala police headquarters several times. Now, one cannot see a policeman wearing uniform at Ihiala, except when they come in a group for a roadblock. The police are afraid. One cannot see a policeman in any bank in the area. You cannot even call the police to make arrests because they are afraid to even walk around in their uniforms. Policemen no longer carry guns because if they do, they are in trouble. It is only the army that the gunmen fear, though they have also attacked soldiers and killed some."

Amnesty International monitored several media reports of attacks by gunmen on security formations and local vigilantes across Anambra state. For example:

- On 28 November 2023, gunmen shot and killed two members of the Anambra State Vigilante Service (AVS) at Aguluzigbo community in Anaocha LGA. Two other men sustained gunshot injuries as the police and the local vigilante tried to repel the attack.²³⁶
- On 12 November 2022, gunmen attacked a military checkpoint at Afor junction in Isuofia community of Aguata LGA. Two military officers and four gunmen were killed in the gun battle.²³⁷
- On 9 February 2022, the Nigerian military had a shootout with gunmen in Ihiala town in Ihiala LGA, Anambra state. The military confirmed it lost two officers, while four gunmen were killed during the exchange of fire.²³⁸

Amnesty International's research indicates that local vigilantes established by communities to assist the police in the protection of lives and properties have also been attacked by gunmen. According to Ebulie, a local resident, vigilante operatives are presently not in operation in the Ihiala axis of Anambra state. He told Amnesty International in Asaba, Delta state:

"There were local vigilantes in the Ihiala area, but the gunmen attacked them. After burning the Ihiala police station, the gunmen traced the vigilante operatives, collected their guns, and burnt the vigilante house, and burnt six of their vehicles. The Ihiala community was trying to rebuild the vigilante house, but the attackers warned them not to rebuild it."

In Abia and Imo states, most of the attacks were either on government officials, institutions, police stations or security operatives. For example:

- On 30 May 2024, gunmen enforcing the sit-at-home directive of IPOB opened fire on a military checkpoint at Obikabia junction, Aba metropolis in Obingwa LGA, killing five soldiers.²³⁹
- On 19 September 2023, gunmen killed many security operatives in Umualumaku community in Ehime Mbaono LGA of Imo state.²⁴⁰
- On 17 May 2021, gunmen attacked Apumiri Ubakala police station in Umuahia, Abia state, with two policemen killed during the attack, while the Divisional Police Officer's office was set ablaze.²⁴¹

236 Daily Post, "Anambra: Two feared dead as unknown gunmen attack Agulu-Uzoigbo", 28 November 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/11/28/anambra-two-feared-dead-as-unknown-gunmen-attack-agulu-uzoigbo>

237 Sahara Reporters, "Six dead as gunmen attack Nigerian Army checkpoint in Anambra Governor Soludo's hometown", 12 November 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/11/12/six-dead-gunmen-attack-nigerian-army-checkpoint-anambra-governor-soludos-home-town>

238 Guardian (Nigeria), "Army confirms killing of two soldiers, four gunmen in Anambra", 10 February 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/army-confirms-killing-of-two-soldiers-four-gunmen-in-anambra>

239 Cable, "Gunmen 'enforcing sit-at-home' kill five soldiers in Abia", 31 May 2024, <https://www.thecable.ng/gunmen-enforcing-sit-at-home-kill-four-soldiers-in-abia/>

240 Premium Times, "Gunmen kill many security operatives in Southeast", 19 September 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/626838-breaking-gunmen-kill-scores-of-security-operatives-in-south-east.html>

241 Guardian (Nigeria), "Again, gunmen burn police station in Abia", 18 May 2021, <https://guardian.ng/news/again-gunmen-burn-police-station-in-abia>

- On 9 May 2021, gunmen attacked a police station at Trademore Housing Estate in Ubani Ibeku community in Umuahia, injuring a police officer.²⁴²
- On 28 April 2021, gunmen attacked Nkporo police station in Ohafia LGA, Abia state. The gunmen released some suspects in detention, burnt exhibits including cars and motorcycles.²⁴³
- On 8 April 2021, gunmen attacked a police station in Mbieri, injuring two police officers, damaged four vehicles, and abducted four persons.²⁴⁴
- On 5 April 2021, gunmen raided the Owerri prison in Imo state, using explosives, rockets and guns, and released 1,844 inmates from the prison.²⁴⁵
- On 5 April 2021, gunmen armed with advanced weapons, attacked the police headquarters in Owerri.²⁴⁶
- On 23 February 2021, gunmen attacked a police station in Aba, killed two police officers, took police arms, and burnt the station.²⁴⁷
- On 1 February 2021, gunmen attacked the Umuoba police station in Isiala North LGA, killing an inspector and injured a policewoman. The gunmen also burnt the station, and the vehicles parked at the premises and took police arms.²⁴⁸

In Ebonyi state, the government stated that over ten police stations were destroyed in the state during the #EndSARS protests in October 2020.²⁴⁹ On 21 October 2020, hoodlums pretending to be a part of the #EndSARS protests launched attacks on various police stations in the wake of the protests.²⁵⁰ On 30 June 2023, 24 suspects were paraded by the Ebonyi state police command over attacks on police stations and killing of police officials.²⁵¹ On 17 October 2023, two police officers who were on patrol at Nwofe road in Izzi LGA were killed by “unknown gunmen”.²⁵²

In Enugu state, on 25 May 2021, gunmen attacked a police station in Iwollo Oghe, Ezeagu LGA, killed four policemen and burnt down the station.²⁵³ On 8 October 2021, gunmen attacked Aguobu Owa police station in Ezeagu LGA.²⁵⁴ On 17 June 2022, gunmen killed police personnel attached to Nsukka division at a checkpoint at Umeano junction, Nsukka.²⁵⁵

242 Punch, “Another police station attacked in Abia”, 10 May 2021, <https://punchng.com/another-police-station-attacked-in-abia>

243 Nation (Nigeria), “Gunmen raze Abia police station”, 28 April 2021, <https://thenationonline.ng/breaking-gunmen-raze-abia-police-station>

244 Vanguard, “Tension mounts in Imo, Abia, Rivers”, 9 April 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/04/insecurity-tension-mounts-in-imo-abia-rivers>

245 CBS News, “Gunmen blast into Nigerian prison and free 1,800 inmates”, 6 April 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nigeria-prison-break-owerri-1800-inmates-escape-in-attack>

246 CNN, “Nigeria’s President Buhari describes prison break which freed nearly 2,000 inmates as ‘act of terrorism’”, 6 April 2021, <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/06/africa/owerri-nigeria-prison-overrun-intl/index.html>

247 Daily Trust, “Gunmen killed two police officers in Abia, set police station on fire”, 23 February 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/breaking-hoodlums-attack-police-station-in-aba-kill-two-officers>

248 Cable, “Hoodlums attack police station in Abia, kill inspector”, 2 February 2021, <https://www.thecable.ng/hoodlums-attack-police-station-in-abia-kill-inspector>

249 Guardian (Nigeria), “End SARS: Ebonyi government reconstructs ten damaged police stations – Umahi”, 11 August 2022, <https://guardian.ng/news/end-sars-ebonyi-govt-reconstructs-10-damaged-police-stations-umahi>

250 Nation (Nigeria), “#EndSARS: How hoodlums killed two policemen, destroyed seven police stations in Ebonyi”, 29 October 2020, <https://thenationonline.ng/endsars-how-hoodlums-killed-2-policemen-destroyed-7-police-stations-in-ebonyi/>

251 Daily Post, “Twelve suspects responsible for killing of police officers, INEC staff paraded in Ebonyi”, 30 June 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/06/30/12-suspects-responsible-for-killing-of-police-officers-inec-staff-paraded-in-ebonyi>

252 Daily Post, “Police confirm killing of two police officers by gunmen in Ebonyi”, 17 November 2023, <https://dailypost.ng/2023/11/17/police-confirm-killing-of-two-officers-by-gunmen-in-ebonyi>

253 Vanguard, “Again, gunmen kill four police officers, burn down station in Enugu”, 25 May 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/05/breaking-again-gunmen-kill-4-police-officers-burn-down-station-in-enugu>

254 Vanguard, “Unknown gunmen shoot policeman, attack police station in Enugu”, 9 October 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/unknown-gunmen-shoot-policeman-attack-police-station-in-enugu>

255 Vanguard, “Unknown gunmen shoot policeman, attack police station in Enugu”, 9 October 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/unknown-gunmen-shoot-policeman-attack-police-station-in-enugu>

3. UNGOVERNED SPACES IN THE SOUTH-EAST

“Ungoverned spaces” refer to locations unreached by the government, hence becoming vulnerable to non-state armed groups.²⁵⁶

The spread of terror across Nigeria results from limited governance structures in rural locations. Currently, in South-East Nigeria, the activities of the IPOB, cult groups, and “unknown gunmen”, and a thriving drug business “are pushing many locations in the region into an ungoverned status.”²⁵⁷ While formal and informal security arrangements strive to maintain stability in the region, many locations remain vulnerable to criminal gangs.

In Imo state, many communities could be described as “ungoverned spaces” due to the activities of non-state actors who have taken total control of the communities.

Amnesty International research reveals that Agwa, Izombe and their neighbouring communities in Oguta LGA of Imo state have been overrun by gunmen who now “govern” these communities.

3.1 THE GUNMEN’S REIGN IN AGWA COMMUNITY

Agwa clan in Oguta LGA of Imo state is made up of six autonomous communities: Obudi, Mgbala, Ubah, Mba-no, Uworie-Umukpo, and Umuefeke. Naturally blessed with good soil for farming, oil, minerals, and human resources, the Agwa clan plays host to oil companies. The Agwa clan has a population of over 200,000, with four traditional rulers, locally known as *Eze*. Until recent years, life was very peaceful and enjoyable in Agwa clan. People from other communities came to Agwa to eat fresh farm food, and drink fresh palm wine and leave at the end of the day. People also came to buy farm produce from the famous Ogbo-Afo market.

However, the insecurity in Agwa and its environs has continued to rise for over four years. A resident who witnessed attacks and fled from the town told Amnesty International in Owerri that over 500 people have been killed in Agwa since 2000. Amnesty International’s research shows that residents of Agwa community have fled their homes after gunmen unleashed a reign of terror, killing people and burning houses.

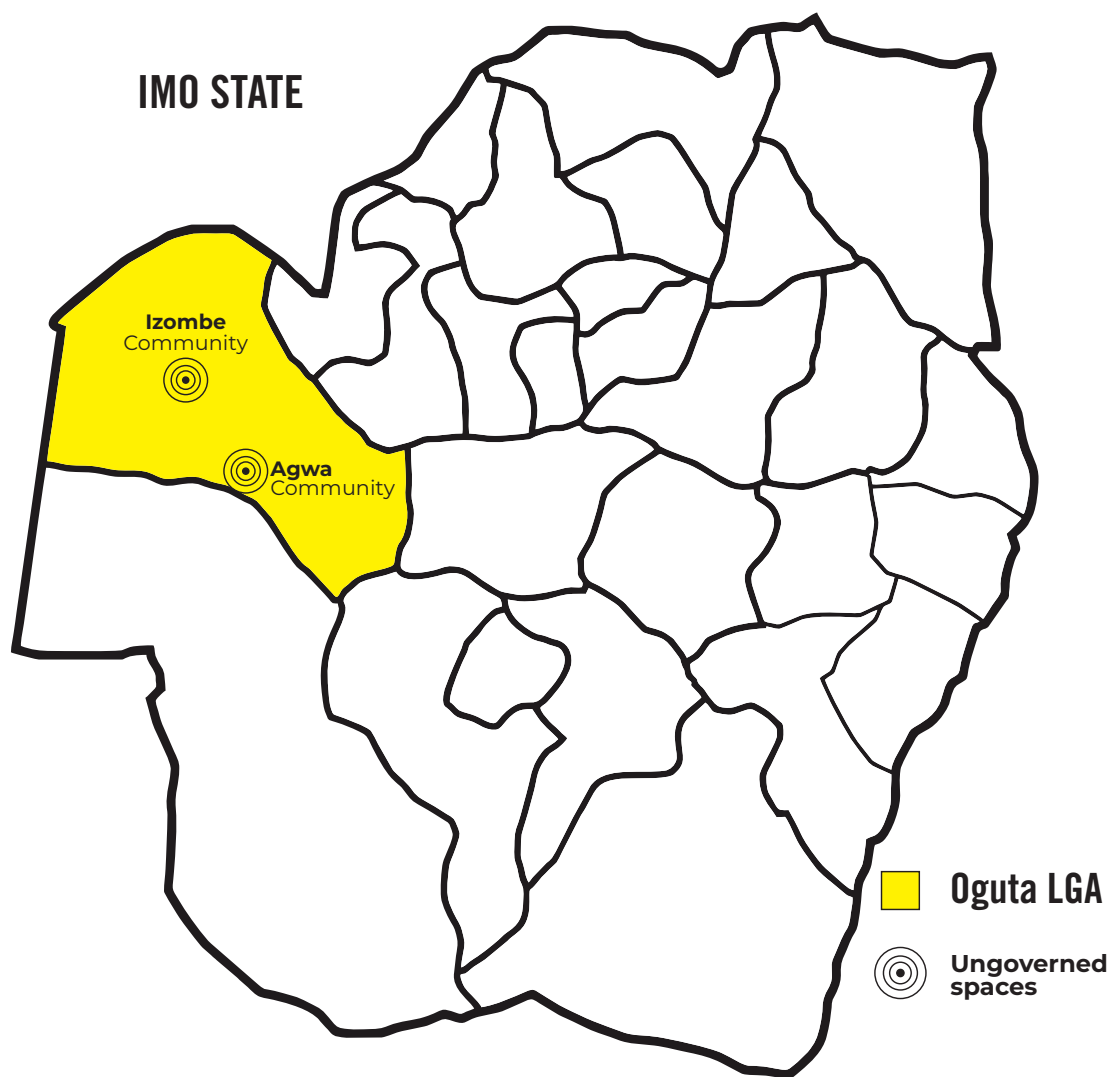
About eight years ago, policemen and soldiers were stationed in Agwa to curb insecurity at that time. To further curb the insecurity, a divisional police headquarters was built in Agwa in 2020. The clan also set up a central vigilante group. However, the local vigilante office located at Mgbala community and the Agwa divisional police headquarters situated at Obudi have since been burnt down by the gunmen. People have been gathering their belongings and fleeing their homes ever since. All four traditional rulers left their palaces and relocated to Owerri, the Imo state capital city, owing to the insecurity in the clan.

A resident who had fled from the town confirmed that now the gunmen are in total control of Agwa clan:

“The gunmen move from one place to another, killing and disturbing the peace of the community. Virtually every young person has left the town. If they tell you not to go out, you cannot go out. The four *Ezes* [traditional rulers] in the clan have deserted

²⁵⁶ Nextier Security, Peace and Development (SPD), “Nigeria: Disconnected spaces”, 12 September 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/disconnected-spaces>

²⁵⁷ Nextier SPD, “Nigeria: Disconnected spaces”, 12 September 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/disconnected-spaces>



their domains for fear of being killed by the gunmen.”

The people were unable to go to their farms because the gunmen operated from the bushes. The gunmen impose illegal levies on farmers and business owners, as a form of extortion. On one occasion, they declared a “clean-up exercise” at Obudi Agwa community. Most churches stopped holding religious services, while schools were shut down.

The economy of Agwa is built around the popular Ogbo-Afo market. According to testimonies from residents, the gunmen would kill a person, cut off his head, and place it strategically at the market to demonstrate their authority. The market has since been deserted as people feared coming there.

Since early March 2022, attacks have become more frequent, yet they have not been covered in the media and have not received attention from the Federal Government.

Amnesty International research shows that since 2022, Agwa has become like a ghost town. A resident who had fled from Agwa confirmed to Amnesty International in Owerri that about 70% of men and young boys have fled Agwa for fear of being killed by the gunmen. The few who are still there live in constant fear. Once it is close to 6pm, young people will look for hiding places to sleep. They can no longer sleep in their homes for fear of being attacked at night.

Amnesty International research shows that gunmen operating in Mgbala Agwa community had earlier earmarked several prominent persons from the community for elimination, to enable them to continue to have a free rein. On 2 January 2021, the gunmen attacked the traditional Prime Minister of Mgbala Agwa community, a retired military personnel, in his home. His security aides repelled the attack, apprehended one of the gunmen and took him to the police station in Owerri.

On 1 April 2023, the gunmen killed Chukwuemeka David, a local furniture maker, at Obudi Agwa. A resident, Udeme, confirmed to Amnesty International in Owerri the brutal manner in which the gunmen operate in Agwa:

“Chukwuemeka David, a furniture maker, was called for a job. He went to take measurements. Unfortunately, the gunmen were around. He tried to escape. But the gunmen were on the route through which he was trying to escape from. They shot at him and demanded his motorcycle keys. He gave it to them and afterwards, they shot at him five more times. He died on the spot.”

THE KILLING OF CHRIS KPATUMA



Chris Kpatuma before his killing.

According to residents, Chris Kpatuma, a retired senior police officer and lawyer from Mgbala Agwa, was instrumental in curbing the activities of the gunmen in Agwa. While still in active service, he usually came into the clan with security agents to arrest some of the gunmen. About eight years ago, policemen and soldiers were stationed in Agwa to reduce the insecurity at that time. However, since Chris Kpatuma retired in 2018, the security situation in Agwa worsened.

In July 2020, Chris Kpatuma visited Mgbala Agwa to spend the weekend in his country home. In the morning,

as he was driving out of his home, the gunmen, known community members, came on a motorbike. One of them was heard saying: "I am going to kill you today". He sped off to escape from the attackers. They fired a gun, and the shot hit and dented his car. The attack was reported to the police station and some of the gunmen were arrested. They were facing court trial for attempted murder and were being held at the Owerri prison. During the Owerri jail break of 5 April 2021,²⁵⁸ they escaped and returned to Agwa clan.

On 1 February 2022, Chris Kpatuma visited his hometown, Mgbala Agwa to render pro bono legal service to a woman whose son was killed by the cultists in the village. It was late to return to his base in Owerri, so he decided to spend the night at his country home. He drove to his house. Whilst still at the entrance, a group of the cult boys, numbering over thirty, swarmed upon him, released several gunshots, and began to beat him. They abducted him and took him into the bush. They shot at his leg to demobilize him. Thereafter, they put him on their motorbike and carried him to the bush where they decapitated his body. Afterwards, they brought back his lifeless body and dumped it in front of his compound.

An eyewitness told Amnesty International that after killing Chris Kpatuma, the gunmen went into the larger family compound, locally known as "nkparata" and led the deceased's family members by gunpoint to where his body lay, and boastfully proclaimed "Here lies the corpse of your brother!". According to an eyewitness, the gunmen were not masked, and their faces were exposed. They are well known people, with some of them from Mgbala Agwa and other communities in Agwa clan.

Amnesty International research shows that during the attack there was no response from security agents. An eyewitness told Amnesty International in Owerri:

"During the attack on Chris Kpatuma, there was no reaction from the villagers. The gunshots were so loud that people were scared, and everybody ran for cover. The gunshots gave the impression that the gunmen had superior weapons. Even the local vigilante could not respond to them. The police could not do anything during the attack."

THE KILLING OF HRH EZE IGNATIUS ASOR OF OBUDI AGWA AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITY



HRH Eze Ignatius Asor before his killing.

On 14 November 2022, local gunmen operating in Agwa killed the traditional ruler of Obudi Agwa autonomous community, HRH Eze Ignatius Asor, and two of his chiefs, in his palace in Obudi Agwa.

A resident who has fled the community narrated the incidence to Amnesty International in Owerri:

"On 14 November 2022, while HRH Eze Ignatius Asor was in his palace with two visitors, a group of men, numbering about 30 or thereabout, came in Sienna cars and other smaller buses, and swooped into the palace. Unfortunately, the Eze was not upstairs, he was in front of the palace hall. The gunmen swooped into the palace with guns. The palace hall is not too far from the gate."

²⁵⁸ Sky News, "Nigeria prison break: More than 1,800 inmates escape after gunmen attack jail", 6 April 2021, <https://news.sky.com/story/nigeria-prison-break-more-than-1800-inmates-escape-after-gunmen-attack-jail-12267362?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>

So, immediately they came into the compound, the king had no way of escape as he was in an open space. He was shot dead by the gunmen. While they were shooting him, they were shouting “Eze [king], you will live forever!”. They shot him with over sixteen bullets, even after he died, they kept on shooting him. They killed the Eze alongside his two visitors. A report was made, and the police took the corpse to the Federal Medical Centre Owerri. There was an autopsy report that showed that even when the Eze was presumed to have died, there were still traces of bullets in his body system. Since it was a close-range shooting, the bullet has been moving from one part of the body to another. It was an AK-47 and a pump action.”

Another eyewitness to the killing of the monarch narrated a similar version of the crime to Amnesty International:

“On 14 November 2022, I was in my house, and we started hearing gunshots, everyone was very scared. About 30 to 35 gunmen came with a Toyota Sienna vehicle, some 18-seater buses, motorbikes and some keke [tricycles]. They drove to the palace. The gates were locked, but they entered through a shop on the palace fence. The king was sitting outside the palace with three people; they shot him and two others. Some of the gunmen covered their faces, others did not. After the shootings and killing of Eze Ignatius Asor, they come out to tell people to go and carry their king, that they have killed him. After the attackers left, people tramped into the palace, even though the family did not allow people to see the king’s corpse or take pictures. The corpse is still at the mortuary... An autopsy was done. Since the killing, the police have arrested about four persons and charged them to court.”

Another eyewitness informed Amnesty International that the killers of Eze Ignatius Asor used sophisticated weapons:

“His killing happened on a Monday morning when he was attending to his normal routine as the traditional ruler in the palace. A group of boys came and shot him. There were three other casualties during the attack. They came with sophisticated weapons, but I cannot decipher the type of gun they carried. I could recognize AK-47s among the guns.”

A day after the killing of Eze Ignatius Asor, former President Muhammadu Buhari made a pronouncement that those behind the killing would be brought to book.²⁵⁹ The former President gave an order to security agencies to arrest the suspected perpetrators. The police investigated the murder but did not disclose the outcome of their investigation.

The police and the army sometimes come to Agwa to attack the gunmen, who are known residents. Their houses were destroyed, and the gunmen ran away from their base in the Uba community of Agwa clan.

A resident who had fled from the town told Amnesty International that the Nigerian authorities have not paid adequate attention to the killings in Agwa:

“Whatever the government is doing is not enough and there is no adequate attention to the killings. Most of these killings are not reported on television, radio, or newspapers. When the killings take place, the families would bury their loved ones, sometimes within six hours of the death, and move on with their lives. A lot of people are very scared. I was able to grant this interview because my name would not be mentioned in any publication. If it does, my house will be burnt tonight by the gunmen and my family members will be killed. I find it difficult coming.”

Following the killing of Eze Asor, the gunmen reconverged and continued killing more people in the community. Five months after his death, his palace was invaded again by the gunmen. His widow’s shop was razed, and the gunmen carted away all the goods in it.

3.1.1. POLICE STATION AND LOCAL VIGILANTE OVERRUN BY GUNMEN

Following the high level of insecurity in the clan and the spate of killings, Agwa clan set up a central local vigilante in 2022 with its office in Mgbala Agwa. The vigilante swung into action to restore sanity in the clan. The local vigilante had operational problems as it was not well-funded. The gunmen were more powerful than the vigilantes. The vigilante had locally made guns: The gunmen had AK-47s. This made it easy for the gunmen to overpower the vigilante operatives.

On 1 April 2023, the gunmen burnt the vigilante office and carted away their guns. The gunmen went to the houses of all the vigilante members and burnt them. The gunmen killed a vigilante operative in Mgbala community, and another one was killed in Umuekpu community. The remaining vigilante operatives fled from

259 BBC News, “Nigeria’s President Buhari vows to punish killers of local chief in Imo state”, 15 November 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-63633877>

the clan.

On 5 August 2022, the gunmen raided the Agwa police division, burnt it down and killed four police officers on duty (two women and two men). A resident who had fled from the community told Amnesty International in Owerri:

“Upon the killing of the police officers, the police authorities came to the palace of the traditional ruler to oversee the levels of damage and destruction at the police station. The king was asked to make a formal report to the state government, which he did. Thereafter the insecurity continued unabated. Everyone lives in fear. The Eze was frequently visiting the government house for updates on the investigation. But unfortunately, he did not get adequate attention, and no arrests were made.”

3.1.2 LACK OF ADEQUATE RESPONSE FROM AUTHORITIES

There is no security force presence in Agwa. A resident of Agwa who fled the clan confirmed the present security situation to Amnesty International in Owerri:

“Presently, people cannot freely enter Agwa. Most men have fled the town, although some women and children are still in the town but are living in fear. The local vigilantes established by the community have been chased away from the community by the gunmen; some of their houses have been burnt. The gunmen are totally in charge of the community presently. Sometimes, you will see them wearing military uniforms and parading the town freely.”

Most of the gunmen are from Agwa and its neighbouring communities of Ejemkwuru and Izombe. The faces of the attackers are seen. They do not wear masks. They are well known people in the community. They attack from within and outside the community. They are organized and take instructions from their leaders. The leaders are known in the community. The gunmen operate in a guerilla-warfare manner, with sophisticated ammunition. Most of the victims of the attacks are people in their early and late thirties.

An Agwa resident who fled from the clan for fear of being killed by the gunmen, told Amnesty International in Owerri:

“The attackers usually came to attack from inside the bush where they camp. They have killed so many people from Agwa clan. Formerly, the gunmen operated only in Obudi and Uba autonomous communities of Agwa, but now they have taken over every part of Agwa clan, which is made up of ten towns and four autonomous communities. The traditional rulers and other community leaders have all deserted the clan. One must see a corpse every day. The most challenging aspect is that people are afraid to talk. You do not know who you are talking to, whether the person is an informant to the gunmen. When you talk, your name will be given to the gunmen. The attackers are not “unknown gunmen”. They are erroneously called “unknown gunmen”. “Unknown gunmen” are people you do not know, but they are known. They are community boys who escaped during the Owerri jail break of 5 April 2021. They broke out, mobilized their colleagues and brought them into our community. Presently, over 90% of people living in Agwa, especially men, have fled the clan. The Agwa clan has been deserted. The gunmen are not armed robbers. But now, they have started going to peoples’ houses and harassing them. They oversee the communities now; they go to peoples’ houses and collect anything that pleases them. They have overpowered the Agwa police division. The police have fled the community, all the police officers have run away.”

Amnesty International’s research shows that the community has tried on several occasions to dialogue with the gunmen and that the gunmen operating in Agwa are known to residents. A local resident who has since fled the clan confirmed to Amnesty International that the gunmen are known individuals from Agwa.

“It is not that the community does not know these groups of people. They are not unknown gunmen, they are known gunmen, because when the police came on that 15 of August 2022, they went to some of the family houses of the gunmen and burnt the houses.”

A resident of Izombe who had fled from the town told Amnesty International in Owerri:

“We know the gunmen. They are people from our communities. Some are from Izombe, Agwa and Orlu. They seized the opportunity afforded by the conflict to rob people and kill innocent people”.

Similarly, a resident of Agwa confirmed in Owerri that the gunmen operating in the community are not unknown gunmen but known members of the community:

“In the Agwa clan, we know the gunmen. They are not unknown gunmen, they are known. They are not masked. They do not hide their faces.”

On 5 April 2021, an armed group attacked the Owerri prison facility and broke the prison administrative block with explosives, entered the prison yard and released over 1,844 prison inmates. A resident of Agwa who had fled from the town spoke to Amnesty International in Owerri:

“There were criminals who were killing people and collecting their properties in Agwa. The police came into the matter about four years ago and some of them were arrested, prosecuted, and convicted. They were held in prison, but unfortunately during the Owerri jail break of 2021, a lot of them escaped and reconverged in Agwa. Since that jail break, the community has not known peace. They started killing anyone they target. The gunmen are known individuals from the community.”

An Agwa resident who had fled from the clan confirmed to Amnesty International in Owerri that the community has made several pleas to the authorities on the insecurity but there has been no meaningful response from the government:

“We do not understand the silence of the government, and what they intend to achieve with the manner Agwa is boiling every day. There is no government response in terms of sending the police to the community. We are at the mercy of the attackers.”

According to local resident who had fled from the clan, Agwa needs a constant military presence:

“The community needs a joint task force, only the police cannot do the job, we need the army and police, even the DSS [Department of State Services] for intelligence gathering. If the gunmen are given a serious challenge, they will leave the community. Anytime security agents come to the community, all the gunmen run inside the bush. The government should establish an army joint task force in the community.”

3.2 THE GUNMEN’S REIGN IN IZOMBE COMMUNITY

“...the gunmen drove into our compound on two motorbikes and asked: “Where is X?” Her parents could not utter a word because if they say she is not around, they will kill both the parents and their target. They went into the house, dragged the girl out, and shot her dead and left. She was buried immediately. The gunmen said X gave a rival group information of their whereabouts ...”

Amnesty International interview with Izombe community member

Izombe is an oil-producing community in Oguta LGA of Imo. Gunmen have mounted several attacks on the community over the last five years, with youths being the target of attacks. The gunmen operate for hours in the daytime, unchecked. They break into people’s homes and shops, carry out their goods, and set their buildings on fire. The people live in fear, and residents can no longer visit Izombe as their houses have been destroyed in the crossfire between the military and the gunmen. Many elderly people who are survivors of the violence have been abandoned by their children who are scared that they may fall prey to the gunmen if they try to visit them.²⁶⁰

A resident of Izombe who had fled the community informed Amnesty International in Owerri:

“Some boys came up and said they were IPOB and the people who support Biafra were hailing them, and those that were not buying into it were against them. Gradually, they began snatching motorbikes and theft increased in the Izombe community. The gunmen constitute their own government and are deciding what happens in the community. They kill who they want to kill, leave

²⁶⁰ HumAngle, “Izombe: The violence turning Imo community into a ghost town”, 19 July 2023, <https://humanglemedia.com/izombe-the-violence-turning-imo-community-into-a-ghost-town>

alive who they want to leave alive, and this continues with nobody saying anything. Then Ebube Agu comes into the community to compound the problem. They did not come to solve the security challenges. What they do is steal from traders and POS [point of sale] operators, beat them, steal their goods. They will loot and burn one's shop. They come in and shoot innocent people. The community has not been at peace since those military reprisal attacks [of October 2021]. People have deserted the community; our neighbouring communities are also unsafe. It appears the government has no say in what happens at Izombe.”

Amnesty International's research shows that the gunmen have formed a camp at Ubah Agwa/Izombe tropical rainforest in Oguta LGA from where they unleash attacks on Izombe and other neighbouring communities, including Agwa, Ejemekwuru, Awa, Akabor, Mgbele and Ogbaku. These communities have continued to experience abuse and violations of human rights due to activities of the Umu Oma militant group, Ebube Agu, the Imo state-backed security outfit, and security operatives. Izombe, Oguta town, Awa and Egbema all face a high rate of insecurity, with constant attacks by gunmen. The Agwa militants sometimes camp in Izombe, Oguta town, Awa or Egbema.

According to media reports, between 7-19 June 2023, about 50 persons were killed and over 170 buildings were set ablaze in Izombe by the combined operations of the Umu Oma militant group, the Imo state Ebube Agu security outfit, and soldiers.²⁶¹ The figure does not include the over 150 buildings the military burnt in Izombe in October 2021 in reprisal attacks over the killing of two soldiers and a resident following a clash involving security operatives and youths suspected to be involved in oil bunkering in Izombe community.²⁶²

A resident of Izombe who had fled from the community confirmed the spate of killings by gunmen in Izombe to Amnesty International in Owerri, the Imo state capital city:

“The youths that have been killed [in Izombe] are up to 80 and they did not die from open attacks. The gunmen would pick them, kill them, and drop their bodies somewhere. They come on motorbikes, pick somebody up, and the next day, you will see the dead body somewhere. If I add up the dead bodies that were brought from the bushes, and the people that were taken and killed, and the people that died from harassment, we will have over 80.”

As a result of the high level of insecurity, Izombe has gradually been deserted as many have fled the community. Amnesty International's research shows that traditional institutions no longer exist in Izombe and its neighbouring communities. On 25 May 2023, gunmen killed Victor Ijioma, the traditional ruler of Orsu Obodo and set his corpse ablaze at Umuamaka junction in Izombe town. Presently, no one oversees the communities to provide leadership. Izombe previously had a police station, but it has been deserted, and no police personnel remain, following attacks on the station by the gunmen. Additionally, the gunmen attacked the local vigilante office and killed all the vigilante operatives.

Amnesty International's research indicates that there appears to be a supremacy war between various armed groups operating within the Agwa-Izombe axis. Whenever each of the faction sight each other, they kill the other. If they get information about someone talking to the other group, they abduct and kill the person, calling them a spy. In January 2023, a leader of one of the groups was killed in Izombe by the rival group. The group that lost its leader retreated into the bush in Agwa, regrouped and returned to terrorize the community, killing people daily. A resident who had fled from Izombe community following the horrific killing of her young female family member for allegedly acting as a spy for a rival armed group narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Owerri:

“The gunmen drove into our compound in two motorbikes and asked: “Where is X?” Her parents could not utter a word because if they say she is not around, they will kill both the parents and their target. They went into the house, called the girl out and shot her dead and left. She was buried immediately. The gunmen said X gave the rival group information of the whereabouts of her boyfriend, their slain leader, that was why they killed her. They really do not verify facts. They act based on what their informants tell them. Now, if you have an enemy who wants to deal with you, he will tell them that you are a spy, and they will come and abduct you.”

261 Vanguard, “170 buildings set ablaze, 50 persons killed in Imo – Igbo youth leader alleges”, 25 June 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/06/170-buildings-set-ablaze-50-persons-killed-in-imo-igbo-youth-leader-alleges>

262 Vanguard, “Oil bunkering: three feared dead, houses burnt as soldiers raid Imo community”, 8 October 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/10/oil-bunkering-3-feared-dead-houses-burnt-as-soldiers-raid-imo-community>; Cable, “‘Acts of savagery’ — Imo panel submits report on Izombe mayhem”, 8 September 2022, <https://www.thecable.ng/acts-of-savagery-imo-panel-submits-report-on-izombe-mayhem>

3.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE GUNMEN'S REIGN IN AGWA AND IZOMBE

On the socioeconomic impact of the insecurity, a resident of Izombe familiar with the situation narrated to Amnesty International the harsh economic situation people in the affected communities are experiencing:

“Due to the security situation in Izombe community, there is hunger and suffering. People have left their homes for other communities and are living like slaves. Doing any sort of business in our communities is no longer tenable. When one displays her wares, the gunmen would come and pick the ones they want or forcibly take one’s money. Our lives are not safe, our properties are not safe. Farmlands have been deserted; this is usually the time of the year for farming, but nobody is going home [to Izombe] to farm. If you go to a farm and they see you in the bushes they will kill you there, so people are afraid. The government should investigate this problem because it is getting worse, and lives are being lost. There is no sign that this is going to stop. The people of the community are tired. We want to go home and carry on with our businesses, but it is impossible. The job of the government is to protect lives and properties, and they should take responsibility, come to our aid, and intervene.”

The schools in the community have been shut down, depriving the children of the right to education. An Agwa resident who has fled the community confirmed that the insecurity has negatively impacted education, noting that students no longer attend Agwa Secondary School – the only government secondary school in the clan. The teachers, most of whom were posted to the school from other communities, no longer attend classes to teach the students for fear of being killed. Similarly, the primary schools in Agwa are all shut down.

The insecurity in Agwa halted economic activity in the community. The gunmen placed human heads at the market square, which contributed to stifling buying and selling. Also, the gunmen reinforced the sit-at-home order, restraining people from carrying out their economic activities on Mondays. People who would have returned to develop the community could no longer do so. Infrastructure development was also brought to a standstill. An ongoing electrification project was stalled as the contractors pulled out because of the high rate of insecurity.

Amnesty International’s findings show that there are a number of root causes behind the rise of the gunmen operating in Agwa and its neighbouring communities. There is significant youth unemployment in Agwa and its sister communities. Another factor is the dearth of education among the youth. Most young people do not take education seriously as a sizable number of them dropped out of school. Poverty is another contributor. Local people are farmers, but there are no motorable roads to transport farm produce to urban markets. Moreso, there is no infrastructure in Agwa. The ongoing electrification of Agwa by the oil companies operating in the area was stalled by the insecurity. Amnesty International was told that if there was electricity in Agwa, most of the boys who cannot pursue formal education could learn vocational skills capable of turning them away from crime.

In recent times, the Imo state police command, through the effort of some personalities in Agwa, has embarked on the reconstruction of the Agwa police divisional headquarters. The aim is to restore security in the community, thereby paving the way for the people to return to their homes. One of the four traditional rulers from Agwa who has since fled the community summed up the security situation in the town during the flag-off of the reconstruction of the destroyed Agwa police station:

“Why you did not see people here is because of fear, they are afraid. The few people you have seen here now are because they have seen the police, otherwise, here is a deserted area. So, we will continue to beg the police to give us a continuous visit - parading this area. We need an armoured car to be placed here to put fear into these people [gunmen]. They are more [powerful] than us. We cannot say [or do] everything [to them].”

3.4 CULT KILLINGS IN SEVERAL COMMUNITIES

“In Anambra state, cultists are daily killing each other and several innocent people. Cultists have killed over 22 persons in Obosi... In Ebenebe, they killed 21 funeral guests in a day.”

Amnesty International interview with South-East community traditional ruler

- On 26 November 2022, cultists killed six persons during a supremacy clash with a rival cult group along Zik's Avenue, Awka.²⁶³
- On 1 January 2023, five persons were killed in cult-related attacks, following clashes by rival cult groups in Okpuno and Ifite Awka, and Obosi communities.²⁶⁴
- On 2 January 2023, cultists killed Ikechukwu Okolo, the president-general of Obosi community in Idemili North LGA.²⁶⁵
- On 8 January 2023, Nonso Okoye was killed as rival cult groups clashed at Nkpor Agu community in Idemili North LGA.²⁶⁶
- On 13 January 2023, police killed a cult group leader in Nkpor community in Idemili North LGA.²⁶⁷
- On 20 January 2023, 10 female students were raped and robbed when gunmen invaded six off-campus hostels at Ifite, near Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.²⁶⁸
- On 4 April 2023, cultists shot and killed a commercial tricycle rider near Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.²⁶⁹

This phenomenon also exists in Imo state where cult groups have committed crimes in recent years. For example:

- On 20 February 2021, 23-year-old Tobeche Duru was killed during a cult clash at Agwa community in Oguta LGA.²⁷⁰
- On 2 February 2022, a cult group killed a retired Assistant Commissioner of Police, Christian Kpatuma, at his residence in Mgbala Agwa community in Oguta LGA.²⁷¹
- On 8 February 2022, cultists killed seven persons during an attack at Mmaahu community in Ohaji/Egbema LGA.²⁷²

263 Premium Times, “Six persons dead in Anambra cult clash”, 27 November 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/567793-six-persons-dead-in-anambra-cult-clash.html>

264 Cable, “Five killed in ‘cult-related attacks’ on New Year’s Day in Anambra”, 3 January 2023, <https://www.thecable.ng/five-killed-in-cult-related-attacks-in-anambra-communities>

265 Punch, “Monarch decries cult-related killings in Anambra community”, 5 January 2023, <https://punchng.com/monarch-decries-cult-related-killings-in-anambra-community>

266 Nation (Nigeria), “Suspected cultists kill, dismember man in Anambra”, 9 January 2023, <https://thenationonlineng.net/suspected-cultists-kill-dismember-man-in-anambra>

267 Premium Times, “Police kill cult leader, arrest two others in Anambra”, 14 January 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/575707-police-kill-cult-leader-arrest-two-others-in-anambra.html>

268 Punch, “Robbers invade Anambra students’ hostel, rape, rob victims”, 21 January 2023, <https://punchng.com/robbers-invade-anambra-students-hostel-rape-rob-victims>

269 This Day, “Suspected cultists kill tricycle operator in Awka”, 5 January 2023, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/01/05/suspected-cultists-kill-tricycle-operator-in-awka>

270 Punch, “Twenty-three-year-old arrested for allegedly killing man during Imo cult clash”, 25 February 2021, <https://punchng.com/23-year-old-arrested-for-allegedly-killing-man-during-imo-cult-clash>

271 Sahara Reporters, “Panic in Imo community as suspected cult members kill retired police chief”, 2 February 2022, <https://sahareporters.com/2022/02/02/panic-imo-community-suspected-cult-members-kill-retired-police-chief>

272 Vanguard, “How police, army allegedly abducted, killed IPOB protestors in Abia – Kanu’s lawyer”, 1 April 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/04/how-police-army-allegedly-abducted-killed-ipob-protesters-in-abia-kanu-lawyer>

- On 12 February 2022, one person was killed during a cult clash at Akalovo Emekuku community in Owerri North LGA.²⁷³

VICTIMS OF OBOSI CULT KILLINGS



Victims of Obosi cult killings.

In Obosi community of Anambra state, over 22 people have been killed over cult-related clashes. Cultism is a major contributor to the insecurity in the South-East as many of the gunmen engage in cultism.

Amnesty International's research shows that the major cause of insecurity in Obosi and its neighbouring communities is the activities of different cult groups who operate in the communities unchecked. Many people have been killed in cultism-related cases in Obosi, Awka, Onitsha, Ogidi and Umuiji communities of Anambra state. HRH Chidubem Iweka (Eze Iweka III) confirmed this to Amnesty International in Obosi:

"In Obosi and other nearby communities, cult groups are killing each other, killing innocent people. Some days ago, cultists killed 3 people in one day. In Awka, 7 people were killed in one day, in Ebenebe, in an hour, 21 people were shot dead; guests who went for a funeral, which is terrible. Obosi Town Union President General, Ikechukwu Okolo, was murdered in cold blood by suspected cultists in a gang-styled attack. So many of our young men have been killed. The government must do something. Two brothers, who hitherto lived peacefully, now kill each other because they belong to different cult groups. Most of the youths in their 30s, said since I have been advising them to quit cultism, I should be their patron. They formed an anti-cult organization and had a big rally with over 250 boys to say, 'No to Cultism'. I asked the police to give them support. The unrepentant cultists among them started killing those who renounced cultism. The cultists came to me to grant them amnesty and give them eight million naira; I called a security meeting with the Divisional Police Officer and the Anti-Cult Police. I told them I do not have the power to grant amnesty to criminals or even pay eight million naira to every one of them. I guess out of annoyance, they killed the President General of Obosi Development Union, Chief Ikechukwu Okolo, on 2 January 2023. Two other people were also killed in Obosi by the cultists that same day."

3.5 DRUG BUSINESSES

Amnesty International's findings further indicate that another cause of the insecurity in Obosi and its neighbouring communities is a thriving drug business that has lasted for decades. Many of the youths have taken to drugs and there are many drug dealers. HRH Chidubem Iweka (Eze Iweka III), the traditional ruler of Obosi community in Idemili North LGA of Anambra state, told Amnesty International in Obosi the impact of the insecurity in the South-East in his domain:

"The insecurity in the South-East is affecting us directly and has taken a turn for the worse in the past few years. We are very affected in Obosi kingdom, and it is affecting our youths in many ways – abduction, robbery, drug abuse, other social vices. Many of our youths here need work, they need to be engaged in vocational training. A young man whose mother is sick and whose father is probably late may succumb to peer pressure from a friend who offers a criminal act as an option."

"The biggest problem we have in Obosi is heroin, cocaine, and a meta-vitamin locally called mkpuru mmiri. Thirty-nine years ago, the cocaine business was introduced in Obosi. Obosi has been tagged the gateway to drugs in the South-East. Although this is preposterous, it is the truth. The cocaine business attracts deadly criminals from all over to this town and it increases

273 Nigerian Tribune, "One killed in cult clash in Imo", 13 February 2022, <https://tribuneonlineeng.com/one-killed-in-cult-clash-in-imo>

criminality. That is why I want to use this opportunity to call on General Mohammed Buba Marwa, the head of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), to help us take Obosi town out of this mess. Wherever there are hard drugs, there is crime, I call it the grandmother of crime. Junkies, petty thieves, criminals with their guns roam the town. The government must help us. I wrote a proposal to Governor Charles Soludo [of Anambra state]. If the government goes along with the idea I proposed, it will drastically reduce cultism and drug-dealing in Anambra state. Most young men will say no to cultism.”

4. SIT-AT-HOME ORDER AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS

On 5 July 2023, gunmen attacked a community primary school in Enugu West, beating teachers and pupils writing examinations with whips for defying the Monday sit-at-home order.

Amnesty International research



The IPOB issued a “sit-at-home order” in the South-East region on 9 August 2021,²⁷⁴ to protest Nnamdi Kanu’s extraordinary rendition from Kenya in June 2021 and his continued detention. Ihunanya, a resident of Awo-Oma in Imo state told Amnesty International that:

274 Cable, “Self-determination and the IPOB sit-at-home-tactic”, 29 September 2021, <https://www.thecable.ng/self-determination-and-the-ipob-sit-at-home-tactic> ; Amnesty International, “Nigeria: At least 115 people killed by security forces in four months in country’s Southeast”, 5 August 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/nigeria-at-least-115-people-killed-by-security-forces-in-four-months-in-countrys-southeast>

“In Imo state, residents strictly observe sit-at-home every Monday. We do not go out. So, from Sunday evening till Monday, everywhere will be calm, you will not see a soul moving around the road. Then on Mondays, there is no bus service from Owerri to Orlu. If you go to Orlu and other parts of the state. If you are seen on the road, you are on your own.”

Mondays have unofficially become public holidays in the South-East. Apart from Mondays, IPOB also declares any day Nnamdi Kanu appears in court a *sit-at-home day*.²⁷⁵

4.1 DECLARATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE SIT-AT-HOME ORDER

Amnesty International’s research findings suggest that IPOB intended to use the sit-at-home order to put pressure on the Nigerian government to release its leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who is standing trial for alleged treasonable felony and terrorism. However, the enforcement of the sit-at-home order has led to several human rights violations throughout the South-East.

Akpu, a 31-year-old IPOB member resident in Enugu told Amnesty International:

“All we [IPOB] are doing, and every [one] of our exercises[s], is backed up by the United Nations Charter’s provisions] on self-determination.”²⁷⁶

Jaamike, a 37-year-old resident of Onicha-Ugboeze community in Ebonyi state told Amnesty International:

“At the initial time that we started the sit-at-home, it made the Federal Government allow people to visit Nnamdi Kanu. That is one of the impacts. We just observed the sit-at-home only on one Monday, before the IPOB leadership ordered for its stoppage. But it is quite unfortunate that criminals have capitalized on the sit-at-home order, using it against our people, even after it was stopped. Criminals are using sit-at-home as a pretext to kill, maim, steal, abduct people, and even snatch vehicles from people. The criminals call themselves [Biafra] Autopilot. Their leader is someone called Simon Ekpa, who lives in Finland.”

Dabelu, an IPOB member resident in Enugu, while explaining the purpose of IPOB’s sit-at-home order, noted that its enforcement has been taken over by gunmen. He told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Since Nnamdi Kanu was extraordinarily renditioned from Kenya, a lot of issues have been taking place. The leadership of IPOB set up the sit-at-home, and after observing it for just one day on 8 August 2021, they issued a press statement cancelling it. It was made clear in the press statement by IPOB spokesperson, Mazi Emma Powerful, that the sit-at-home order was cancelled. IPOB was no longer interested in the sit-at-home, so they were urging people to come out and go about their activities without fear. But of course, this is a complex issue. The government is against IPOB, and they were trying to see that the international community tags IPOB a terrorist organization. It was clear that blackmail came in, even though IPOB said we are no longer part of the sit-at-home, it continued. Subsequently, people started enforcing it, killing the people. IPOB is fighting for the rights of Biafrans. There is no way they will start killing the people they want to liberate.”

IPOB claims it has called off the sit-at-home order, yet there have been cases of people in markets being beaten by gunmen for defying the order, with their goods and wares being destroyed.

Amnesty International research

While IPOB contends that it has called off its sit-at-home order, Amnesty International has monitored videos of traders in markets being beaten for defying the order, with their wares destroyed, as well as videos of schoolteachers and pupils being beaten with whips, for attending schools on a Monday, in defiance of the order. For instance, on 8 July 2023, gunmen shot sporadically in the air in Owerri town of Imo state, declaring

275 Nigerian Tribune, “The South-East and IPOB’s sit-at-home conundrum”, 1 June 2022, <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/the-south-east-and-ipobs-sit-at-home-conundrum>

276 UN General Assembly (UNGA), Resolution 637: *The Right of Peoples and Nations to Self-Determination*, adopted on 16 December 1952, UN Doc. A/RES/637.

that “everyone must sit at home”.²⁷⁷ Again, on 4 July 2023, gunmen attacked a market in Ishieke Abakaliki in Ebonyi state, destroying businesses and goods, shooting at commercial motorcycle riders (locally known as *okada*), *destroying vehicles and scaring other pedestrians away, while enforcing the sit-at-home order*.²⁷⁸

But Ejeziela, an IPOB member resident in Aba, Abia state, told Amnesty International:

“Those enforcing sit-at-home, on the circulating videos, beating schoolteachers and market women, destroying their goods, are not IPOB members. I can authoritatively tell you that IPOB has nothing to do with the forceful enforcement of sit-at-home. IPOB is completely against it. There have been series of press releases disassociating IPOB from violence.”

Kaluntam, a 45-year-old trader at Ariara International Market Aba, Abia state told Amnesty International:

“Sit-at-home has been cancelled by the IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu for two years now. It is no longer in operation. But some people – the haters of freedom – the so-called Simon Ekpa group, want to use the opportunity to commit crimes. Simon Ekpa is not a member of IPOB. He has his own security organization. Let Mazi Nnamdi Kanu be released, and all these violence will be no more.”

Omalu, a 38-year-old resident of Aba, Abia state, told Amnesty International:

“The sit at home, after it was done once by IPOB, then, there was a clamour that it should be stopped because it could cause unrest”.

Nduru, an IPOB member, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“[Simon Ekpa] has been making threats that Monday sit-at-home must continue whether the people like it or not. Simon Ekpa uses social media to threaten anyone that will come out on Mondays. Recently, a pregnant woman was shot and killed at New Market Enugu whilst Simon Ekpa’s group was enforcing the sit-at-home order. Someone is sponsoring Simon Ekpa because the Federal Government is not serious about arresting him.”

The attempts to enforce the sit-at-home order in the South-East have led to several human rights abuses.

Udara, an IPOB member resident in Aba, Abia State, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“The enforcement of the sit-at-home order in Abia state has been very violent. The infiltrator is the guy in Finland called Simon Ekpa. There are some boys he settles. You know people are hungry. From our investigations, he is working with some boys on the outskirts of Nkpor [in Anambra state]. They want to cause unrest in the South-East. In all sincerity, I can tell you that IPOB has nothing to do with sit-at-home and its attendant human rights violations. Authoritatively, I am telling you the whole truth, we [IPOB] do not have anything to do with sit-at-home order. I am a bona fide member of IPOB, and I am proud of it.”

Amnesty International’s findings indicate that Simon Ekpa is a Nigerian Finnish lawyer and political activist who gained visibility after he became the lead broadcaster for Radio Biafra after the arrest of the IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu. He is known for allegedly inciting violence in South-Eastern Nigeria through his broadcasts and sit-at-home orders.²⁷⁹ On 11 July 2023, Ekpa declared a sit-at-home order for two weeks – from 31 July 2023 to 14 August 2023 – to demand “the immediate and unconditional release of Nnamdi Kanu who remains detained at the DSS facility in Abuja”.²⁸⁰

Igwekala, a resident of Eziana in Onicha LGA, Ebonyi state, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Those enforcing sit-at-home and brutalizing and killing people are group led by Simon Ekpa. Simon Ekpa, to the best of my knowledge, he is not a member of IPOB. An IPOB member cannot be killing his people in this manner. They now brandish guns; how did they get the guns? Those guns are expensive. And the people carrying it cannot afford it. Who is giving them?”

On 23 July 2023, the leadership of Igbo sociocultural group Ohanaeze Ndigbo called on the people of the South-East to prevent further disruptions and put an end to the activities of Simon Ekpa. They offered a bounty of 500,000 US dollars for anyone who can provide useful information leading to his capture and subsequent

277 Sir Lablu Official, Twitter post: “IPOB terrorists enforcing the sit-at-home order”, 9 July 2023, <https://twitter.com/stfreakingkezy/status/1678143041436110850?s=48&t=Uk8BD3Bzeinyoq1PlgMyoQ>

278 Postsubman, Twitter post: “IPOB captured enforcing the sit at home in the South East”, 5 July 2023, <https://twitter.com/postsubman/status/1676497130649792513?s=48&t=Uk8BD3Bzeinyoq1PlgMyoQ>

279 Punch, “Five things to know about Simon Ekpa”, 23 February 2023, <https://punchng.com/five-things-to-know-about-simon-ekpa>

280 Guardian (Nigeria), “Nnamdi Kanu: IPOB to declare two-week sit-at-home in Lagos, says Simon Ekpa”, 13 July 2023, <https://guardian.ng/news/nnamdi-kanu-ipob-to-declare-two-week-sit-at-home-in-lagos-says-simon-ekpa>

arrest. The group called on residents in the South-East to prevent further violence as it disrupts economic and social activities and threatens peace and stability.²⁸¹

On 21 November 2024, Simon Ekpa and 4 other persons were arrested in Finland by the Finnish police.²⁸² According to reports, Simon Ekpa was arrested for “contributing to violence and crimes against civilians in South-Eastern Nigeria and financing terrorism.” Simon Ekpa’s trial was ongoing at the time of writing.²⁸³

Amnesty International’s research indicates that as most residents in the South-East began to resist the Monday sit-at-home order, enforcers, locally referred to as “unknown gunmen”, began killing and maiming people, and destroying their goods and properties, in a bid to force compliance. This also led to clashes between law enforcement agents and the gunmen, leading to deaths on both sides. The situation made the South-East one of the most unsafe and insecure regions in Nigeria.

XY, a lawyer conversant with the South-East context told Amnesty International:

“When Nnamdi Kanu was arrested by the Nigerian government, abducted, and brought back to Nigeria, IPOB acted in anger; they were not happy with the way Nnamdi Kanu was treated and kidnapped and smuggled into the country. The IPOB leadership declared the sit-at-home on Mondays. When that sit-at-home was declared by IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu informed IPOB to call it off because criminals will hijack the process and capitalize on it to cause mayhem in the South-East. So, IPOB quickly called it off. Of course, some people were waiting for such an opportunity to act. And then one Simon Ekpa in Finland, who was looking for an opportunity to launch himself into limelight, saw it as an opportunity to get involved, and started giving orders that people should continue to observe the sit-at-home.”

Akputa, a 31-year-old resident of Okwu community in Enugu state, told Amnesty International:

“Sit-at-home started sometime in October 2021, because of Nnamdi Kanu’s detention and trial. IPOB started sit-at-home at the period the Nigerian government refused to bring Nnamdi Kanu to court. The DSS agents did not allow his lawyers, relations, or doctors to pay him visits at the DSS headquarters in Abuja. Sit-at-home was a form of civil disobedience, a form of protest. The IPOB leadership, known as the Directorate of State, instituted sit-at-home. But not up to a week, sit-at-home was cancelled. The IPOB leadership issued a press statement published in Vanguard and Leadership newspapers and in local and international media. The press release, which was signed by Emma Powerful, the IPOB spokesperson, indicated that IPOB has not been involved in the enforcement of the sit-at-home order since calling off the order.”

Ugobueze, a 37-year-old resident of Onicha-Ugboeze in Ebonyi state told Amnesty International that the leadership of IPOB used the sit-at-home order to send a message to the Nigerian authorities whenever Nnamdi Kanu’s case was to come up in court:

“Sit-at-home in the South-East started when our leader, Nnamdi Kanu, was extraordinarily renditioned from Kenya to Nigeria. And when access was denied to anyone seeking to visit him in DSS dungeon, the IPOB leadership decided to use sit-at-home to send a message to the Federal Government that we are not happy with the extraordinary rendition of our leader, and the denial of access to him. There is no genuine IPOB member that will force someone to sit-at-home, kill or destroy anyone’s property.”

Nnadimma, another IPOB member resident in Aba, Abia state, told Amnesty International that:

“The fear factor from the sit-at-home order has compelled compliance. What seems to have portrayed Simon Ekpa as having a large network of followers can be attributed to the fact that people who are not opportune to be members of IPOB, when they hear Simon Ekpa talking, they pledge allegiance to him. IPOB did not want to accept hooligans as members. Before you can be admitted as a member of IPOB, we scrutinize to know the kind of person you are or how you reason.”

Also, Ezumezu, a resident of Nkalafor in Andufe Nchara community in Ebonyi state, told Amnesty International in Enugu that those forcefully enforcing the sit-at-home order were worsening the security situation in Ebonyi state, and that the enforcement of sit-at-home has severely affected the people. According to Udumma, a resident of Onicha-Ugboeze community in Ebonyi state:

“Criminals have capitalized on the sit-at-home order, using it against our people, even after it was stopped. So, criminals are still using sit-at-home as a pretext to kill, maim, steal, abduct people, and even snatch vehicle from people.”

281 Tribune, “Sit-at-home: Ohanaeze places \$500,000 bounty on Simon Ekpa”, 23 July 2023, <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/sit-at-home-ohanaeze-places-500000-bounty-on-simon-ekpa/>

282 Premium Times, “Pro-Biafra agitator Simon Ekpa arrested in Finland”, 21 November 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/756014-updated-pro-biafra-agitator-simon-ekpa-arrested-in-finland.html>

283 Vanguard, “Simon Ekpa’s offense not bailable – Finnish Police”, 2 December 2024, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/12/simon-ekpas-offense-not-bailable-finnish-police/>

Additionally, Ugoeze, a 35-year-old, resident of Aba, Abia state confirmed that the Monday sit-at-home is causing a lot of problems in Abia state:

“Our people are being kidnapped in the guise of enforcing sit-at-home. One of my friends was abducted about three months ago. So, this sit-at-home issue has caused a big problem of insecurity in Abia state.”

XY told Amnesty International:

“Those forcefully enforcing the sit-at-home order are people operating under the guise of IPOB. Before now, there were criminals that operate as kidnappers and armed robbers in the South-East. Now, the vacuum created by Nnamdi Kanu’s temporarily exit from the struggle is causing a lot of confusion. Criminals and cultists would gang up, go to a bush, and establish a camp. Another group will go to another bush and establish another camp. So, they start looking for ammunition to enable them to operate. They are not IPOB members and have no business or connection whatsoever with IPOB.”

XZ, an IPOB member, told Amnesty International in Enugu that IPOB has issued several statements that it is not behind the continued enforcement of the sit-at-home order. According to him:

“Recently there have been fliers and banners that IPOB and Nnamdi Kanu have declared no more sit-at-home, that every Monday shall be ‘economic empowerment day’. This was boldly written in fliers and banners posted in major streets in the South-East.”

However, IPOB’s continued denial of responsibility for the human rights abuses caused by the forceful enforcement of the sit-at-home order raises the question: Who are the individuals enforcing the sit-at-home order across the South-East, particularly in the rural areas?

On 30 May 2024, gunmen suspected to be IPOB/ESN forces enforcing the sit-at-home order attacked a military checkpoint in Obikabia Junction in Aba, Abia state and killed 5 soldiers, seized their rifles and burnt two patrol vans.²⁸⁴ IPOB had earlier announced that there would be a sit-at-home on 30 May across the South-east in commemoration of “Biafra Heroes Day”.²⁸⁵

4.2 SIT-AT-HOME AND ITS IMPACT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Amnesty International’s research indicates that Mondays are still widely observed as sit-at-home days in the South-East and that the sit-at-home enforcement has negatively impacted the business and education sectors in the South-East, particularly in the rural areas. Many residents are sympathetic to IPOB’s cause, afraid of disobeying their orders or do not trust security agencies to protect them on Mondays.²⁸⁶ Hence, the sit-at-home orders still meet widespread compliance on Mondays, and the attendant human rights abuses continues unabated. Even when the government tells people to come out on Mondays, people are afraid to do so. The few times they obeyed the government and came out, there were human rights abuses of residents by gunmen and the authorities could not provide adequate security to protect them. Therefore, people are resigned to sitting at home on Mondays. In fact, in most communities in the South-East, residents have adopted Mondays for sports, social engagement and prayer meetings in their neighbourhoods.

In Awka, the Anambra state capital, Monday sit-at-home is observed minimally, with security operatives guarding government employees and thus allowing them to go to work, even though they are afraid of attacks.

Throughout the South-East, the vast majority of schools and markets are closed on Mondays, although some schools in the capital cities are open on Mondays.²⁸⁷ In many cases, gunmen have attacked traders, commuters, teachers, and students who flout the sit-at-home order. Gunmen have killed scores of people and set fire to goods being sold or transported. Hotels, restaurants, and related businesses are shut down for

284 Premium Times, “Gunmen kill soldiers in South-East Nigeria, burn patrol vehicle”, 30 May 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/699097-gunmen-kill-soldiers-in-south-east-nigeria-burn-patrol-vehicle.html>

285 Punch, “IPOB insists on May 30 sit-at-home in South-East”, 28 May 2024, <https://punchng.com/ipob-insists-on-may-30-sit-at-home-in-south-east>

286 Nextier SPD, “Nigeria: Disconnected spaces”, 12 September 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/disconnected-spaces>

287 Punch, “South-East groans under IPOB sit-at-home, secessionists’ order grounds businesses, schools, others”, 14 August 2021, <https://punchng.com/south-east-groans-under-ipob-sit-at-home-secessionists-order-grounds-businesses-schools-others>

defying the sit-at-home order.²⁸⁸

The activities of IPOB/ESN forces in enforcing the sit-at-home order infringes the right to life as provided under section 33 of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended]²⁸⁹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,²⁹⁰ as well as the right to work and the right to education guaranteed under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²⁹¹

4.2.1 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Notwithstanding the denial of responsibility on the part of IPOB, the sit-at-home order continues to have dire consequences for the economy of the South-East and that of Nigeria at large. The South-East is a strategic industrial, manufacturing, and trading hub; it is a major player in Nigeria's economic growth. However, commercial activities across all sectors of the economy are ground to a halt on the sit-at-home days. Ekeke, a 45-year-old trader at Ariara International Market Aba, Abia state told Amnesty International:

“Goods no longer move freely [in the South-East] because of the sit-at-home on Mondays.”

In 2021, Chukwuma Soludo, a former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, stated that an estimated 19.6 billion Nigerian naira (11.5% of Anambra state's 2022 budget) is lost in Anambra alone during sit-at-home days.²⁹² Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu state indicated that the state loses over 10 billion Nigerian naira from the economic activities which ought to have happened in the state every Monday because of the sit-at-home order.²⁹³

Obiadika, a 37-year-old resident of Onicha-Ugboeze, Ebonyi state told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“The enforcement of sit-at-home on Mondays has affected my work, business, movement, and income. On Mondays we do not go to work, for fear of the unknown, because these people use arms to force people to sit at home. If you are a tricycle rider, they can burn your tricycle. I was personally affected; they snatched my car last month.”

According to a report from the International Centre for Investigative Reporting, over 12.215 billion US dollars (approximately 5.375 trillion Nigerian naira) has been lost to the sit-at-home by micro-businesses from September 2021 to December 2022.²⁹⁴

Transportation is indispensable to the economy in the South-East, as residents – who are mostly traders – need to move their goods and services. To this end, a civil society leader in the South-East told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Sit-at-home paralyses economic life, but it is also a form of civil disobedience. Economically speaking, the sit-at-home has never been beneficial and cannot be beneficial. However, ideologically speaking, sit-at-home is 100% beneficial. Though it has not led to the release of Nnamdi Kanu, but in a way, it is a step-by-step process. The Nigerian authorities listen when the people sit at home on Mondays.”

Amnesty International supports civil disobedience as a non-violent way to raise awareness, express dissent, or bring about change. Civil disobedience can involve a single person or large groups of people. For example, a group may block a building or refuse to comply with laws that violate human rights. However, in exercising

288 Premium Times, “How IPOB's sit-at-home order is destroying businesses in Nigeria's South-East”, 17 May 2022, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-east/530317-special-report-how-ipobs-sit-at-home-order-is-destroying-businesses-in-nigerias-south-east.html?tztc=1>

289 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Chapter 4, Section 41, <https://nigerian-constitution.com/chapter-4-section-41-right-to-freedom-of-movement>

290 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 6.

291 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 6 (on the right to work) and Article 13 (on the right to education).

292 Sahara Reporters, “Anambra loses N19.6 billion during any sit-at-home day – Governorship candidate, Soludo laments”, 2 October 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/10/02/anambra-loses-n196billion-during-any-sit-home-day-%E2%80%93-governorship-candidate-soludo-laments>

293 Channels TV, “Sit-At-Home: We Lose Over N10bn Every Monday – Gov Mbah”, 14 July 2023, <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/07/14/sit-at-home-we-lose-over-n10bn-every-monday-gov-mbah/>

294 International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), “South-East Nigeria pays heavy price for Monday sit-at-home exercise – Part I”, 16 January 2023, <https://www.icirnigeria.org/south-east-nigeria-pays-heavy-price-for-monday-sit-at-home-exercise-part-1>

the right to civil disobedience, nobody should be forced or threatened, and the state needs to ensure social cushioning for people suffering economic, social and cultural harm and must guarantee the right to education by ensuring pupils do not miss school.

4.2.2 IMPACT ON RIGHT TO EDUCATION

According to Amnesty International's findings, most schools are shut on sit-at-home days. The sit-at-home order has disrupted the academic calendar across all levels of education, as schools are unable to complete educational activities during the allocated time.

A 2022 survey indicates that Anambra and Enugu states have also experienced a decline in school enrolment.²⁹⁵

The few schools that open in defiance of the order are attacked and, in some cases, students have been prevented from taking national examinations. For example:

- On 5 July 2023, gunmen attacked a community primary school in Enugu West, beating teachers and pupils writing examinations with whips for defying the Monday sit-at-home order.²⁹⁶
- On 11 September 2021,²⁹⁷ there was an attack on the Comprehensive Secondary School Nkume in Njaba LGA of Imo state: Students were dispersed and prevented from sitting for the West African Examination Council (WAEC) examinations.

In November 2021, Anambra state government announced the adoption of Saturdays as a school day to substitute for Mondays, to avoid the harassment of pupils and school authorities by IPOB/ESN supporters enforcing the sit-at-home order.²⁹⁸

4.3 GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO STOP OBSERVANCE OF SIT-AT-HOME

On 2 June 2023, the Enugu State Government declared an end to sit-at-home in the state, noting the sit-at-home order was restricting creativity, entrepreneurship, and productivity in the state.²⁹⁹ The Governor, Peter Mbah, assured the people of improved security around the state,³⁰⁰ but shops and businesses remain shut on Mondays as the people feared being attacked.

Subsequently, on Monday 18 July 2023, the Enugu State Government sealed two commercial banks and 107 shops for allegedly observing an "illegal sit-at-home order" in the state.³⁰¹ On 26 July 2023, traders at the Ogbete Main Market in Enugu protested the sealing of their shops by the government over their continued observance of the sit-at-home order. However, the police used excessive force to disperse the protesters, killing one unidentified person, with several other protesters injured.³⁰²

Akpuchi, an Enugu resident, told Amnesty International that Governor Peter Mba tried to force people to come

295 National Bureau of Statistics, *2021 Nigeria Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241209>

296 Sir Lablu Official, Twitter post: "IPOB/ESN invaded a primary school in Enugu-West, Enugu state today", 5 July 2023, <https://twitter.com/stfreakingkezy/status/1676609317238128640?s=48&t=Uk8BD3Bzeiynoq1PlgMyoQ>

298 Al Jazeera, "Nigeria: Separatist leader to appear in court for treason trial", 9 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/9/nigeria-ipob-leader-nnamdi-kanu-appear-court>

299 Independent, "Enugu stakeholders commend Governor Mbah's order on sit-at-home practice", 10 June 2023, <https://independent.ng/enugu-stateholders-commend-gov-mbahs-order-on-sit-at-home-practice>

300 Punch, "Sit-at-home: Enugu governor seals unopened businesses", 25 July 2023, <https://punchng.com/sit-at-home-enugu-gov-seals-unopened-businesses>

301 Premium Times, "Enugu government seals two banks, 107 shops for obeying IPOB's sit-at-home order", 26 July 2023, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/611959-enugu-govt-seals-two-banks-107-shops-for-obeying-ipobs-sit-at-home-order.html>

302 Channels TV, "Sit-at-home: One feared killed as Enugu traders protest sealing of shops", 26 July 2023, <https://www.channelstv.com/2023/07/26/sit-at-home-one-feared-killed-as-enugu-traders-protest-sealing-of-shops>

out on Mondays, and because of this, one innocent person died. A lot of people were injured as the police opened fire on people protesting sealing of their shops by the government.

Nzeka, an Enugu resident and a survivor of police attack for defying the sit-at-home order, on the directive of the Enugu State Government, told Amnesty International:

“The sit-at-home every Monday is endangering lives. I was shot in my thigh at Ogbete market in Enugu during the protests over the directive from the Enugu state governor to traders to open their shops on Mondays or their shops will be sealed. The doctor says I need surgery on my thighs. My family has already spent a lot of money on my treatment and there is no money left.”

XXY, a federal lawmaker from the South-East told Amnesty International in Abuja:

“If the people say that they are sitting at home because they are drawing attention to the release of Nnamdi Kanu, then, the government should listen to the interests of the people they are leading. The government should make a bold move towards addressing the issues of Nnamdi Kanu and especially as it has to do with the side of the law which has favoured him. There have been judgments of Federal High Court Umuahia and other higher courts that have ruled in his favour. The law is now on the side of the agitation for his release. So, before you condemn those who are enforcing and not enforcing the sit-a-home order, the government will be asked the question: “Why are you disobeying the law? Why not address the legal issues so that when you release him in obedience to the orders of the court, then those trying to enforce sit-a-home will have no legal justification for their own action.” Whether it is Simon Ekpa’s [so-called Biafra Auto Pilot group], or any of the diverse groups that have emerged, criminal elements have hijacked the struggle and are hiding under that to achieve their ulterior motives. The key issue is: “What is the government doing to address the illegal detention of Nnamdi Kanu, as a show of good faith towards addressing the issue of sit-at-home?”

5. THE EBUBE AGU RESPONSE

On 11 April 2021, the five South-East governors announced the formation of South-East joint security outfit code-named “Ebube Agu”. The Ebube Agu militia have committed several human rights violations – torture, enforced disappearance, burning of homes, and extrajudicial executions

Amnesty International research

5.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EBUBE AGU MILITIA

On 11 April 2021, at the first South-East security summit in Owerri, the five governors of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo, announced the setting up of the South-East security outfit code-named “Ebube Agu”, to support the efforts of security agencies to curb insecurity. “Ebube Agu” is an Igbo phrase meaning “the fearsome aura of the leopard”. Ebube Agu has become available to the state governors who wish to use them as the private army of their administration.³⁰³

The launch of the Ebube Agu security outfit by South-East governors was not followed up by the enactment of supportive laws to establish the outfit in each of the states, with a clause to network with one another.³⁰⁴ Moreover, there is no standard operational structure and a sustainable funding mechanism for its operation. The security outfit were not physically established in the entire five states of the South-East. Three of the five states already have vigilante outfits: Anambra state has the Anambra Vigilante Services, Abia state has Abia Vigilante Services, while Enugu state has the Forest Guards. Imo and Ebonyi states are the only states where Ebube Agu became operational.

In Anambra state, the Anambra Vigilante Services was established by the Anambra State Vigilante Services Law, 2000. The law was amended in 2004 and is now called the Anambra State Vigilante Group Law, 2004. The Anambra State Vigilante Services is empowered to assist the Nigerian police to perform its constitutional duties of protecting lives and properties. They are however expected to hand over arrested suspected criminals to the police because they are not empowered to detain.³⁰⁵

303 Nextier SPD, “Policy weekly: Ebubeagu regional security outfit in South-East Nigeria – Reasons for the discontents”, 12-19 September 2022, https://thenextier.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/20220912_SPD_Weekly_Ebubeagu-Regional-Security-Outfit-in-South-East-Nigeria-Reasons-for-the-Discontents.pdf

304 Nextier SPD, “Policy weekly: Ebubeagu regional security outfit in South-East Nigeria – Reasons for the discontents”, 12-19 September 2022, https://thenextier.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/20220912_SPD_Weekly_Ebubeagu-Regional-Security-Outfit-in-South-East-Nigeria-Reasons-for-the-Discontents.pdf

305 Stephen Chikwendu and others, “The role of vigilante service groups in crime control for sustainable development in Anam-

In 2009, the Abia State House of Assembly passed a law authorizing the setting up of a reformed Abia State Vigilante Services under the supervision of the police.³⁰⁶ This law replaced the Abia State Vigilante Services Law, 2008.

In 2006, Enugu state enacted the Enugu State Neighbourhood Association and Watch Group Law establishing the vigilante group in that state.³⁰⁷ Nwala, an Enugu resident told Amnesty International that Ebube Agu operatives are not prominent in Enugu, Anambra, and Abia states. Amnesty International found that the activities of Ebube Agu operatives are more pronounced in Ebonyi and Imo states.

Amnesty International's research indicates that Ebube Agu operatives were inaugurated without essential security training on human rights and international standards on the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials. The security outfit has faced several allegations of human right abuses, torture and extrajudicial executions.

Nkpa, an Onitsha resident told Amnesty International in Enugu:

"Ebube Agu have been seen killing and ravaging communities and burning people's property. There are several cases of women that have been rendered childless or widowed. Several people have been rendered homeless by Ebube Agu."

Ekwe, a 30-year-old trader told Amnesty International in Owerri that the state-backed Ebube Agu security outfit has abducted many young people in the South-East whose whereabouts remain unknown:

"Ebube Agu [operatives] and the Nigerian police work together to intimidate the people. Nowhere in the South-East is safe. Sometimes they may not even ask questions, they just abduct you."

According to Anuri, people abducted by Ebube Agu operatives are usually accused of being IPOB members. He stated:

"Anyone found in possession of the Biafra flag is arrested, and the person may not be a member of IPOB. The government makes use of [both] the DSS and Ebube Agu because the Ebube Agu people, most of the time, know the victims and survivors very well because they all live in the same community. Hence, the DSS usually comes at night with Ebube Agu men."

Amnesty International research shows that in Ebonyi and Imo states, the Ebube Agu security outfit has been used as a tool to harass and intimidate perceived opponents and critics of the state governments. The leader of a civil society organization in Enugu told Amnesty International that Ebube Agu is pro-government, and the killings by Ebube Agu operatives are to protect the interest of the government. Okike, an Abakaliki resident, informed Amnesty International in Enugu:

"Ebube Agu was established by the South-East governors to protect the governors' interest and attack people that are against them, especially Imo state and Ebonyi states... Ebube Agu is a political arm, a militia of the governors. In Imo and Ebonyi states, they are using Ebube Agu to arrest a lot of people."

bra state, South-East Nigeria", October 2016, Greener Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 6, Issue 3, <http://doi.org/10.15580/GJSS.2016.3.101416161>

306 Vanguard, "Understanding Abia's security situation", 5 July 2009, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/07/understanding-abias-security-situation>

307 Stephen Chikwendu and others, "The role of vigilante service groups in crime control for sustainable development in Anambra state, South-East Nigeria", October 2016, Greener Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 6, Issue 3, <http://doi.org/10.15580/GJSS.2016.3.101416161>

EBUBE AGU MILITIA



Ebubeagu security operatives

source: <https://punchng.com/ebonyi-giving-ebubeagu-a-bad-name/>

5.2 VIOLATIONS BY EBUBE AGU IN EBONYI STATE

“... during our [IPOB] meeting on 16 May 2021, Ebube Agu arrived at the meeting and shot at me with a gun... They took an iron rod and started beating me, breaking my hands...”

Amnesty International interview with an IPOB member in Enugu

5.2.1 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Amnesty International has monitored several cases of human rights violations by the Ebube Agu security operatives in Ebonyi state. On 9 September 2021, a stray bullet from an operative of Ebube Agu security outfit killed the daughter of a traditional ruler in Onicha Igboeze community in the Onicha LGA of Ebonyi state.³⁰⁸ On 18 October 2021, four persons were killed and many others injured by Ebube Agu operatives in Amasiri community in Afikpo North LGA of Ebonyi state.³⁰⁹ Tobe, a 37-year-old resident of Onicha Igboeze community in Onicha LGA, Ebonyi state, informed Amnesty International that the Ebonyi state government introduced Ebube Agu and has been using it to suppress people, especially the opposition. Tobe claimed anyone who criticizes the state government is either forcibly disappeared, abducted, or dealt with by Ebube Agu operatives.

ZZ, an IPOB member resident in Ebonyi state bemoaned the constant harassment of IPOB members by Ebube Agu security operatives:

“Ebube Agu will invite police to go to the house of a member of IPOB. They will burn the house. They have burnt many people’s houses, some of them [IPOB members] have been arrested, some killed. They do not allow anybody to give them food. They will starve to death. Immediately after the person dies, they will carry him out and bury him. One of our members from Okpoto community just died there. They brought him out and throw [sic] him away.”

A commercial motorcyclist and father of seven from Nkalafor community in Ndufu-Achara district of Ikwo LGA of Ebonyi state informed Amnesty International about the insecurity in Ikwo LGA, Ebonyi state, because of the

³⁰⁸ Sahara Reporters, “Stray bullet from South-Eastern Nigeria security outfit, Ebube Agu, kills traditional ruler’s daughter In Ebonyi”, 9 September 2021, <https://saharareporters.com/2021/09/09/stray-bullet-southeastern-nigeria-security-outfit-ebube-agu-kills-traditional-rulers>

³⁰⁹ Nation (Nigeria), “Four killed, others injured in Ebonyi community”, 18 October 2021, <https://thenationonlineeng.net/four-killed-others-injured-in-ebonyi-community>

activities of Ebube Agu security operatives:

“During our IPOB meeting on 16 May 2021, Ebube Agu operatives arrived at the meeting venue and shot at me with a gun, but the pistol locked. They took an iron rod and started beating me, breaking my hands, collected my laptop, phone and some documents that I use in meetings. They also beat up the IPOB coordinator and damaged his vehicle. They broke his hand also and collected some of our members’ phones. When they thought that they had killed me, they left. After an hour, I regained consciousness. Later, they regrouped and returned around 3am and abducted about thirty people.”

Nduru, a resident of Ezicama community in Onicha LGA of Ebonyi state told Amnesty International that Ebube Agu operatives serve as revenue collectors for the Ebonyi state government and threatening the lives of those who fail to pay:

“Ebube Agu operatives are being used to collect revenues for the government. If the government revenue collectors get to your shop, serve you a notice and you fail to pay, they will call Ebube Agu to come and collect the money. And [when] they come, you try to defend yourself, then you have called for trouble, which may result to shooting and killing and destruction of properties.”

5.2.2 ABUCTIONS, TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Oguama, a father of five and mobile phone accessories seller from Amudo community in Ezza South LGA of Ebonyi state told Amnesty International how he was abducted and tortured by Ebube Agu operatives in Abakaliki:

“Ebube Agu operatives came in their numbers to my place of business, started shooting in the air and took me away. I was badly brutalized. They blindfolded me and went to two separate locations. Then, they took me to Ebonyi Hotels, which is the third location. One of them gave an order that they should remove the blindfold. They started torturing me. They said I am one of the “unknown gunmen” that vandalize government facilities and killed security personnel. I told them it is not true. One of them said that they should torture me until I admit that I am one of “unknown gunmen”. I told them that even if they kill me, that I can never accept being an “unknown gunman” as I do not know anything about the “unknown gunmen” ... If I remove my clothes, you will see the bruises, they are scares from the torture. I was hospitalized for 20 days. In those 20 days, I could not eat. I did not wear clothes on my body for 21 days because of the bruises and wounds I got from the torture. We are suffering and dying for what we do not know anything about.”

Following reports of human rights abuses – including extortion, arbitrary arrest, and illegal use of firearms – by



operatives of Ebube Agu, on 14 February 2023, a Federal High Court in Abakaliki, Ebonyi state, disbanded Ebube Agu in Ebonyi state. The court ordered the Ebonyi state government to pay a fine of 50,000,000 Nigerian naira to Abia Onyike, an opposition politician in the state, who was abducted and tortured by Ebube Agu operatives in November 2022.³¹⁰ On 21 February 2023, then Ebonyi state governor, David Umahi, stated that four persons lost their lives following the disbandment of Ebube Agu by the court.³¹¹ XX, a lawyer familiar with the South-East context informed Amnesty International that:

“The Ebube Agu security outfit in Ebonyi state was disbanded by a Federal High Court when the activities of Ebube Agu were challenged before a Federal High Court in Ebonyi state. The court disbanded Ebube Agu because its activities are contrary to the provisions of the law. Anybody wearing the uniform of Ebube Agu in Ebonyi state is an outlaw.”

However, Amnesty International found that notwithstanding the court order and outcry from the people concerning the abuses of their human rights by Ebube Agu operatives in Ebonyi state, the state-backed security outfit continues to operate freely in the state. To this end, an Ebonyi state resident told Amnesty International in Enugu that:

“Those who can help should please make haste to help us because in Ebonyi, the government has stifled freedom of expression and assembly. I want to call for help on behalf of the women that have been turned to widows and for the children that have been turned to orphans. We really need help.”

5.3 VIOLATIONS BY EBUBE AGU OPERATIVES IN IMO STATE

5.3.1 EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Amnesty International research shows that Orlu, Orsu, Okigwe, Ideator and other communities in Imo state have been under serious attacks by Ebube Agu security operatives. On 30 December 2021, six people were killed and one person was injured when a team of soldiers and Ebube Agu operatives raided Umutanzi community in Orlu LGA, Imo state.³¹² Again, on 18 July 2022, Ebube Agu operatives killed 14 youths at Awo-Omamma in Oru East LGA of Imo State.³¹³ Amnesty International found that the Ebube Agu security outfit was being used to harass perceived opponents and critics of the Imo state government.

WYX, the 86-year-old father of Ozioma Otumegwu, one of the 14 youths killed by Ebube Agu operatives, narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My son went for a marriage ceremony at Awo-Omamma and the Ebube Agu people traced them to the ceremony and shot him and 13 others to death. They said they were “unknown gunmen”. They did nothing. I have buried my son, Ozioma Otumegwu. He was born in 1986. He is the child that I know would have taken care of me. I had great hope in him but since Ebube Agu killed him, I have lost all hope.”

Oma, a 27-year-old farmer and mother of four resident in Agwa community in Oguta LGA of Imo state told Amnesty International how her husband was killed over alleged membership of IPOB/ESN:

“Ebube Agu killed my husband, 28-year-old Uzoma Ohamara on 18 February 2003. I gave birth and he visited me in the hospital. Upon my discharge from the hospital, I was told that my husband has been killed. He was killed at Izombe by Ebube Agu people. He was beheaded and burnt. I do not know where he was buried. They also burnt our house, including the house of my husband’s younger brother, and the house of my neighbour; three houses were burnt. I need assistance in the training of my four children. How I wish that his children could know and enjoy their father’s care.”

Nkoli, a 36-year-old trader and mother of four resident in Amandugba in Isu LGA of Imo state narrated how her husband, Christopher Agwu, was killed by state security agents over alleged membership of IPOB:

310 Punch, “Court disbands Ebubeagu in Ebonyi, fines govt N50 million”, 15 February 2023, <https://punchng.com/court-disbands-ebubeagu-in-ebonyi-fines-govt-n50m>

311 Vanguard, “Four killed after disbandment of Ebubeagu — Umahi”, 21 February 2023, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/02/four-killed-after-disbandment-of-ebubeagu-umahi-2>

312 Nation (Nigeria), “Imo: Six killed as soldiers, Ebubeagu raid Orlu community”, 1 January 2022, <https://thenationonlineng.net/imo-six-killed-as-soldiers-ebubeagu-raid-orlu-community>

313 Nigerian Tribune, “Police react as ‘Ebube Agu’ allegedly shoot dead 14 youths in Imo”, 19 July 2022, <https://tribuneonlineng.com/police-react-as-ebube-agu-allegedly-shot-dead-14-youths-in-imo>

“On 9 August 2020, my husband, Christopher Agwu, went for IPOB meeting at Isu and was killed by Ebube Agu. The government should stop Ebube Agu activities so that peace can return to the South-East.”

Eringa, a 45-year-old farmer resident in Umuefeke community of Agwa in Oguta LGA of Imo state, narrated the manner his nephews were killed by Ebube Agu operatives over alleged membership of IPOB/ESN, while sobbing uncontrollably:

“My nephew, Chimaobi Akukwe from Uba community of Agwa returned to the village in February 2023. The Ebube Agu people came and accused him of being an ESN commander and beheaded him and burnt his house. They left his headless corpse. The Ebube Agu people also arrested Chidera Aruma, my brother’s son. They carried him into their vehicle and took him to the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Imo State Police Command (Tiger Base Police Unit, Owerri) where he was shot dead. They said they were IPOB members. The one beheaded had twins, two boys but Chidera was a 20-year-old young boy. We buried the one who was beheaded. But Chidera’s corpse is with the Tiger Base Police Unit. We need help because we have suffered a lot in our community, Agwa. Now we are all on the run for safety as they will just come in with armoured car and kill indiscriminately. Please if you know how to help, please kindly help us.”

On 14 February 2023, Praise Dino Ajiero from Izombe was arrested at Ejemekwuru by state-backed Ebube Agu security operatives and taken to the Tiger Base police unit, over alleged membership of IPOB. Since then, his whereabouts had remained unknown. His septuagenarian father informed Amnesty International in Enugu that he suspected his son had been killed in detention at Tiger Base:

“Anywhere we went searching for him, we were chased away by the police who told us never to return. We received information from people that have contact with the police that he has been wasted [killed]. I am empty; I am sick; I am helpless.”

5.3.2 FORCED EVICTIONS, DESTRUCTION OF HOMES AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

“My husband was accused of being an ESN member. Ebube Agu operatives came to our compound and burnt the five buildings there.”

Amnesty International interview with a South-East community member

Amnesty International’s research shows that houses were been burnt in the South-East by state agents and Ebube Agu security operatives in response to the insecurity in the community. According to research, over 1,400 houses were destroyed between January 2021 and June 2023 in Imo state.³¹⁴ In Agwa community in Oguta LGA of Imo state, at least 20 houses have been burnt by security agents and Ebube Agu security operatives since 2022. The houses were burnt by government security operatives and Ebube Agu security operatives because the owners or occupiers of the houses were either linked to IPOB membership or an armed group. Amnesty International spoke with several persons whose homes were destroyed by Ebube Agu security operatives over alleged membership or association with IPOB or gunmen.

Egoulo, a 76-year-old resident of Amurie Omanze in Isu LGA of Imo state, narrated the harrowing experience of the destruction of his home by Ebube Agu operatives over alleged membership of IPOB:

“On 23 February 2022, I attended morning mass and by 6.50am the service was over. I received a call that my house is under attack and in flames, including my brother’s house. The Ebube Agu people set the houses ablaze. I started asking and wondering what I did, or what my offence was because there was no one at home. My son was not around. I lost money, goods, and other valuables. My brother’s one-story building was also burnt, and he suffered a heart attack because of it and died. The way they [Ebube Agu] destroy property and kill people is bad.”

Ndukaku, a resident of Amurie Omanze Isu LGA Imo state, whose father died from a heart attack following

314 Sahara Reporters, “One thousand civilians killed, 1,400 houses razed within 30 months under Governor Uzodinma in Imo”, 2 July 2023, https://saharareporters.com/2023/07/02/1000-civilians-killed-1400-houses-razed-within-30-months-under-governor-uzodinma-imo/?utm_source=operamini&utm_medium=feednews&utm_campaign=operamini_feednews

the burning of his building by Ebube Agu security operatives over alleged membership of IPOB, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“The incident [arson] happened on 23 February 2022 in Amurie Omanze in Isu LGA of Imo state. On that day, 12 other houses were burnt by the Ebube Agu people. We are innocent ... As I speak, my father’s corpse is in the mortuary, and we are planning to bury him. We are now tenants. We are looking for a suitable location for the burial ceremony.”

Nkolika, a 50-year-old widow and mother of six resident in Ibiaso Egbe in Oru West LGA of Imo state informed Amnesty International how her home was destroyed by state security agents over alleged membership of IPOB:

“On 31 May 2023, a team of Ebube Agu people, the army and police came in their uniforms and burnt my house at 3am. They destroyed everything in my house; a 4-bedroom bungalow. The chairs, upholstery, TV, speakers, and 6 beds were among the properties burnt. They broke in and I noticed their presence and raised the alarm; they brought fuel and sprayed it on our parlour. We had a narrow escape through our back gate. A motorcycle I use to go to the farm and market was also burnt. I am living in my relative’s house now.”

Anuli, a 35-year-old mother of two resident in Ibiaso Egbe in Oru West LGA of Imo state told Amnesty International how her home was burnt by Ebube Agu operatives:

“On 17 June 2023 at about 1:30am, a team of Ebube Agu, police and the army invaded our house, dragged us out – myself, my father, my brother who is about to wed, his best man, everybody in the house – started beating us mercilessly with whips and guns butts. They sprayed our house with petrol and set it ablaze. Vehicles, foams, everything went in flames. N150,000 cash I came with for purchases got completely burnt; my catering materials, items and tools, iPhone and other phones remain lost till this very moment. We have nowhere to live now ... The group that came were Ebube Agu, police, and the army. I saw them clearly. They came in their black upon black uniforms. They claimed our offence is that my dad [who] is the king of the community, supports IPOB. The day the incident happened, my father, Eric Chukwuemeka Nleta (60 years), and my brother, Collins Justice Nleta (37 years) and Divine Nnaemeka Nleta (30 years) were arrested by Ebube Agu. Since then, we have not seen them. I have gone to the Ebube Agu office and their camps in Uli and Mgbidi but could not find them.”



Home of an IPOB member destroyed by security agents in Amurie Omanze in Isu LGA of Imo state

In yet another case of destruction of home by Ebube Agu security operatives, Nkoli, a 39-year-old mother of three resident in Amakohia-Ubi in Owerri West LGA of Imo state told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My husband was accused of making charms for ESN members. Ebube Agu people stormed our family compound and burnt the entire place. They burnt our house, carried three vehicles and four of my husband’s relatives. Five different buildings, including upstairs, were burnt down. My husband has had to go into hiding. Whenever I see personnel of the Tiger Base police unit], I go into hiding.”

Amalinze, a 48-year-old resident of Amurie Omanze in Isu LGA of Imo spoke to Amnesty International concerning the destruction of his home, and the disappearance of his son by Ebube Agu security operatives:

“In February 2022, I went out on my motorcycle and on returning; while approaching my compound, I observed smoke coming out from the compound. On reaching home, I saw that my house had been burnt down. All the property in my house got burnt, including my wife’s motorcycle that she uses to carry goods to the market, other people’s motorcycles that are parked in the

compound [for repair], everything got destroyed. I was told that Ebube Agu came to my house looking for my son (Chiwueze Udemba) and was responsible for the destruction of my home. They [Ebube Agu] eventually found him, picked him up and went away with him. Since then, I have never set my eyes on him. All his phone numbers are not going. Since February 2022, when this incident happened, we have been searching for him. We have not heard anything about him.”

ATTACK ON IKENGA IMO UGOCHINYERE IKEAGWUONU’S HOME

Ugochinyere Ikeagwuonu (Ikenga Imo), an opposition federal lawmaker from Umukekwo Akokwa in Ideato North LGA of Imo, representing Ideato North and Ideato South in the Nigerian House of Representatives, told Amnesty International in Abuja harrowing details of attacks at his home in Akokwa by Ebube Agu and other state-backed security operatives:

“On 14 January 2023, at about 1pm, I was in my home at Umukekwo Akokwa community in Imo state. I was meeting with people during my campaign to represent Ideato North and Ideato South in the Nigerian House of Representatives. My supporters called from Obiohia junction to inform me that they saw armed men in a Highlander vehicle asking for the direction to Akokwa, my hometown. Initially, I was not concerned because they did not specifically ask for my house address, but I later received phone calls from Orie-Akokwa that those men were asking for the direction my house.

“The attackers ran into my uncle who was on a bus that had my campaign banner and logo. They started beating him. They shot him and were stabbing him, forcing him to show them my location. When they got close to my compound gate, my uncle refused to move further as he sensed that they might be a hit squad sent to kill me. So, as they were struggling with my uncle, people alerted me. Quickly, I moved away from the hall inside the compound where I was holding a meeting. The brief delay caused by the struggle with my uncle could be described as my saving-grace. As the attackers were struggling with my uncle, I saw the ash-coloured Highlander with other vehicles driving towards the gate. I told my police orderly to stop them. He opened fire into the air, but the vehicles did not stop. I spotted a young man wearing a jean trouser from a distance open fire at me, but the bullet hit the edge of the gate. I ran back inside the house and hid. The attackers drove inside the compound and saw a man wearing a chieftaincy regalia and shot him, presuming him to be my father. His name is Chief Ihejirika from Umuezeaga Akokwa.

“Then, the attackers opened fire all over the compound, burnt four houses, killed three people, and injured several others. They set explosives in the front house and burnt about 38 cars and 50 motorcycles I intended to use for a youth empowerment programme. The attack lasted for about 40 minutes. Then they shot at my uncle again and began to leave in a hurry.

“When I came out from my hiding place after the attackers left, I saw the vehicles burning, some were still exploding. I also saw the corpses of Chief Ihejirika and my uncle. The torched vehicles were about 38 while the motorcycles were about 50, but some of them were not completely burnt. We have been able to bury two of those killed in my house, but my uncle has not been buried. We have resolved to bury him in January 2024.

“While they were leaving hurriedly, one of the attackers’ vehicles, a Highlander, got stuck in a ditch and they transferred their guns and explosives into another vehicle and set the Highlander ablaze. We got the plate number of the Highlander and traced the vehicle’s owner. The vehicle was snatched from the owner in Owerri by men in Ebube Agu uniform. We reported this to the police and the police carried out an investigation but did not make the report public. Again, on 7 February 2023, armed state security operatives, together with Ebube Agu operatives and the state security agents invaded my house, asking: “Where is Ikenga?” Thankfully, I was not home this time around. This event was captured by closed-circuit television (CCTV). I submitted all this evidence to the Nigeria police, but nothing has been done about it.”

ATTACK ON IFEANYI EJIOFOR’S HOME

Ifeanyi Ejiofor, IPOB and Nnamdi Kanu’s lawyer, told Amnesty International of the attacks at his home and neighbourhood by state security agents and Ebube Agu security operatives:

“The South-East insecurity is being created by both state and non-state actors. My house in Oraifite community in Ekwusigbo LGA of Anambra state was invaded on 2 December 2019 by a combined team of the police, military, and the civil defense. They came in the morning; I was not in the house then. I got a call that my house has been invaded. The military came with about a truckload of soldiers from the Onitsha cantonment. They were well-armed. They burnt about 15 houses in my neighbourhood. There is a building that has about 18 lock-up shops, they set the entire shops ablaze. In my home, they burnt about 5 houses and killed four people.

“I got judgement against the authorities in 2020; the court declared the invasion of my house unlawful. On 6 June 2020, my home in Oraifite [Anambra state] was invaded again by state agents at about 2am. They took away my stewards, killed my

personal assistant, and burnt his body together with my vehicle. About 20 to 30 security agents were involved in the attack. From the CCTV, one could see them clearly, when they trooped inside my house. Some of them scaled through the fence and opened the gate from the inside. The essence of the attacks is possibly to break me, so I will pull out from defending IPOB and Nnamdi Kanu.”

5.3.3 EXTORTION

Onyema, a 54-year-old resident of Umudibi Ekwe in Isu LGA of Imo state narrated a harrowing tale of extortion by Ebube Agu security operatives, after they arrested five of his children:

“On 6 June 2022 around 1pm, my children took my vehicle to the mechanic. They did not know that Ebube Agu security operatives were following them. Suddenly, Ebube Agu opened fire at them. They kept firing until all the tyres of the vehicle were deflated, and the vehicle tumbled into the bush. One of my children opened a door to run away, they shot him in the leg. They [Ebube Agu] surrounded them, arrested them, moved them to their own vehicle and carried them to the Ebube Agu camp at Njaba. They got my phone number from my children’s phones. They later released them.

“Since then, Ebube Agu operatives began to call me every night. I ran away with my children. I sleep in the bush with my children. For about two months, I did not sleep in my house. People ran away from my house, nobody comes to visit me anymore because of Ebube Agu. Nobody wants to enter their hands.

“One afternoon, two people came into my office. I asked them to sit down but I was monitoring them because I do not know their faces. They removed their caps and asked me if I knew them. They were Ebube Agu security operatives. They told me to give them N1,500,000. I do not know what to do. Where do I get that kind of money? They said if I report to my friends, they will make my life worse. I rallied round and got N1,300,000. They were still hanging around my office. They came into my office again and asked for the money and I gave it to them. Since then, they keep threatening me, asking for more money.”

Similarly, Nduka, a resident of Akpawfu community in Nkanu East LGA of Enugu state, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

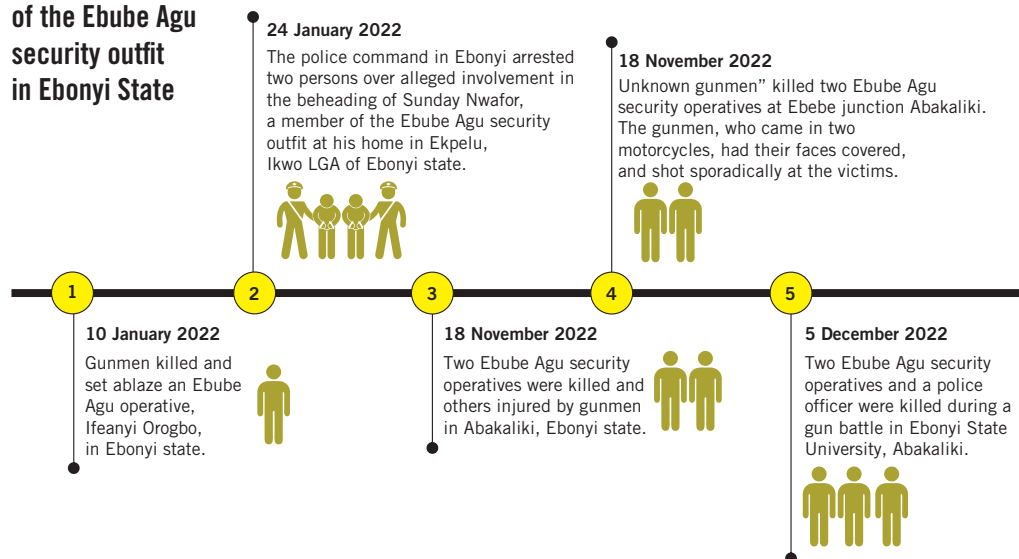
“My relative had an encounter with Ebube Agu. He came from Lagos. Ebube Agu arrested him because of the way he was dressed, as he was driving in his car. They took N1,000,000 from him. They took him to private building and detained him there until the wife sent another N1,000,000 to them before he was released.”

Beyond the human rights violations by Ebube Agu operatives in the South-East, Amnesty International research shows that local vigilantes formed by several communities have also abused human rights. Ebulie, resident of Ihiala community in Anambra state, told Amnesty International in Asaba of human rights violations by the local vigilantes in Ihiala LGA:

“The local vigilantes carry out massive abuses of human rights. There was a time when the local vigilante in Ihiala arrested and held about 80 innocent people in their local prison for profit-making. People paid various sums of money to bail out their relatives from the vigilante’s prison. The “unknown gunmen” came and broke down the prison and freed everyone. The local vigilantes are not a solution to the insecurity. They are committing crimes and involved in corrupt practices thereby compounding the problem.”

Amnesty International’s research shows that while the Ebube Agu security outfit faces several allegations of human rights violations – including torture and other ill-treatment, extortion, extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings – there are also reported reprisals against operatives of the security outfit, particularly in Ebonyi state. For example:

Reprisals against operatives of the Ebube Agu security outfit in Ebonyi State



6. NIGERIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

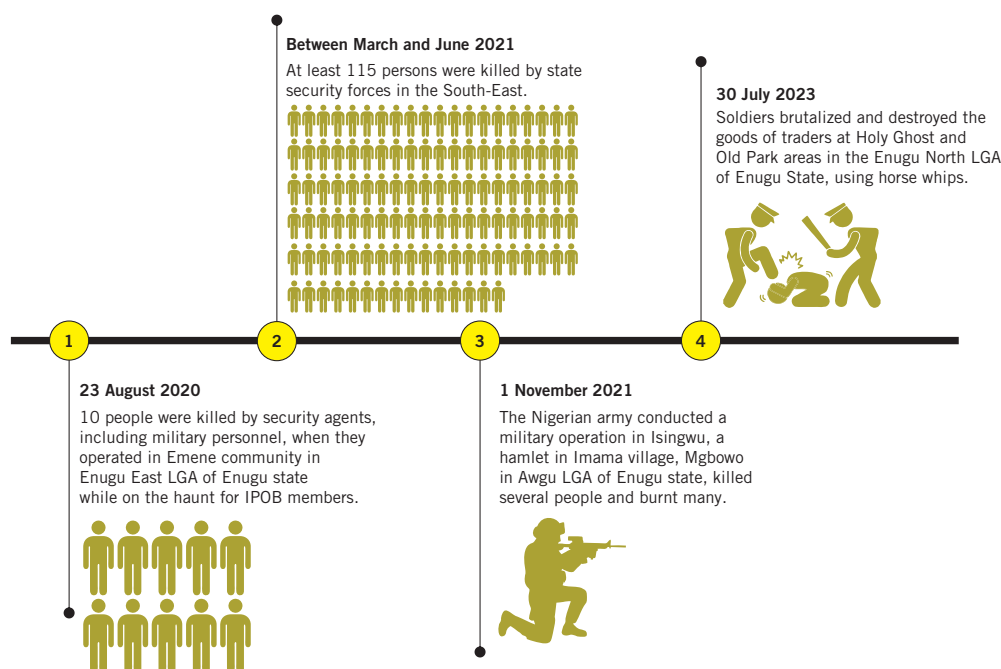
6.1 MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS TO THE SOUTH-EAST

Amnesty International's research shows that the military has been deployed to the South-East many times to address rising security challenges in the region. From 27 November to 27 December 2016, a military operation code-named "Operation Python Dance" or "Operation Egwu Eke" was launched by the Nigerian army in the South-East to address the rising wave of crime and insecurity in the region.³¹⁵ On 8 September 2017, the [then] Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, disclosed that "Operation Python Dance II" will take place in the South-East from 15 September 2017 to 14 October 2017.³¹⁶ Again, on 31 October 2023, the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher G. Musa, announced the establishment of another military operation code-named "Operation Udo Ka" to "flush banditry and end the sit-at-home menace in the South-East."³¹⁷ There have also been reported cases of military invasion in several communities in the South-East in relation to the activities of IPOB/ESN.

Amnesty International found that the activities of the military during these operations across the five states in the South-East have led to human rights violations.

In Enugu state, the military has carried out several attacks in response to the activities of IPOB/ESN:

Federal Government's response in Enugu



315 Guardian (Nigeria), "Army ends Operation Python Dance in South-East", 26 December 2016, <https://guardian.ng/news/army-ends-operation-python-dance-in-south-east>

316 Vanguard, "Insecurity: Buratai confirms Operation Python Dance II in South-East", 9 September 2017, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/09/insecurity-army-begins-operation-python-dance-ii-south-east>

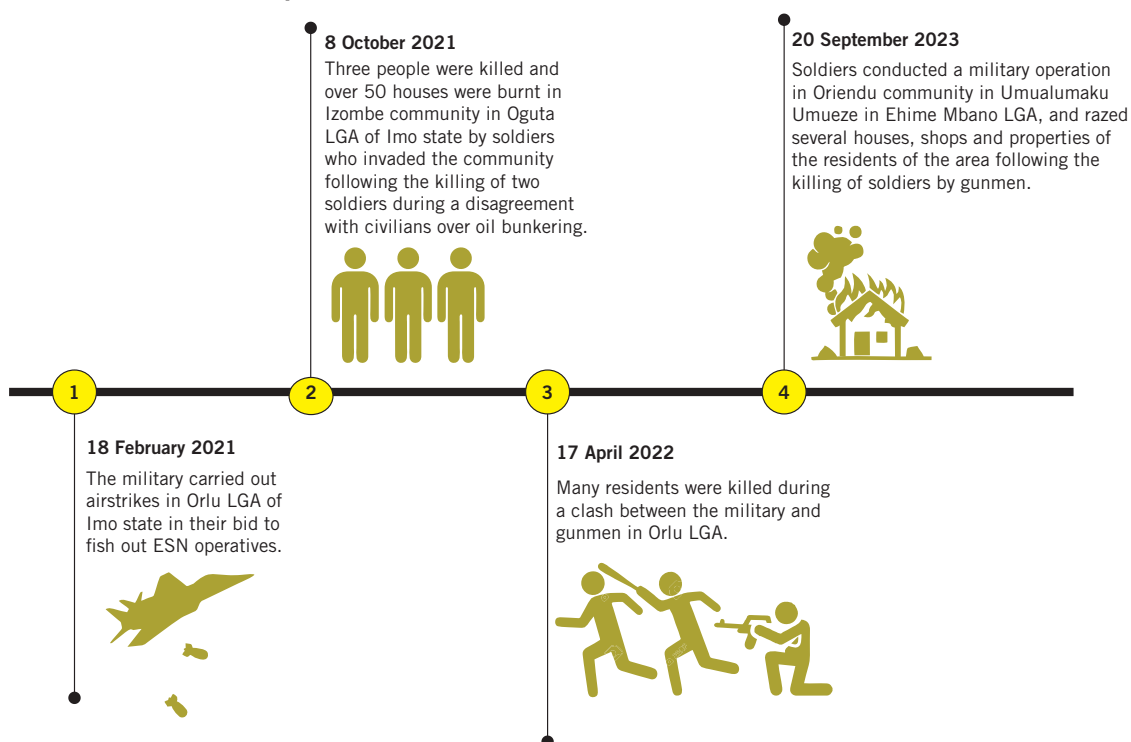
317 This Day, "Military begins 'Operation Udoka' to end banditry, sit-at-home in South-East", 30 October 2023, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/10/30/military-begins-operation-udoka-to-end-banditry-sit-at-home-in-south-east>

Of particular interest is the military operation from 24 - 25 December 2021 in Akpofu community in Nkanu East LGA of Enugu state where the ESN were alleged to have a camp.³¹⁸ Udaraocha, a resident of Akpofu community who witnessed the invasion, informed Amnesty International in Enugu:

“The military said that there was an ESN camp in Akpofu community. But then if there was a camp, they ought to look for the camp. It is not about coming into the community and arresting anybody they see. If you are a young boy or a young girl, you will be arrested. Or if you are not arrested, you will be shot. There was a man on his sickbed, they took him away, and days later we heard that the man died. He could not take it anymore. They established a military checkpoint, half a kilometre into the entrance of the community. When people get there, you are made to alight from your vehicle, raise your hands up and pass. The arrested youths have not been found till date.”

In Imo state, there have been several military operations in response to the activities of IPOB/ESN in the state. Orlu town and its neighbouring communities have been the worst hit by military attacks and airstrikes.

Federal Government's response in Imo State



Eringa, a 39-year-old resident of Izombe community told an Amnesty International in Owerri how the military invaded Izombe in a reprisal attack over the killing of two soldiers by gunmen:

“The insecurity in Izombe has been ongoing for over four years. The ongoing attacks which started on 8 October 2021 have not ended till date. The invasion started at about 10am. We heard loud shouts, with people crying and running up and down. A boy has been shot by a military officer. Since the military was involved, I rushed to pick up my children from school. On my way back, I saw a group of community boys mishandling two military men whom they had arrested and had taken their army uniforms and boots and guns. Immediately I got home, I got the information that they had killed those two military men. I have attended training on early warnings, so I packed a few things, took my children, and fled from the community. When I got to a nearby community, I received information that army tankers and army vehicles were coming in large numbers, moving to my village, Umuokwu in Izombe community.

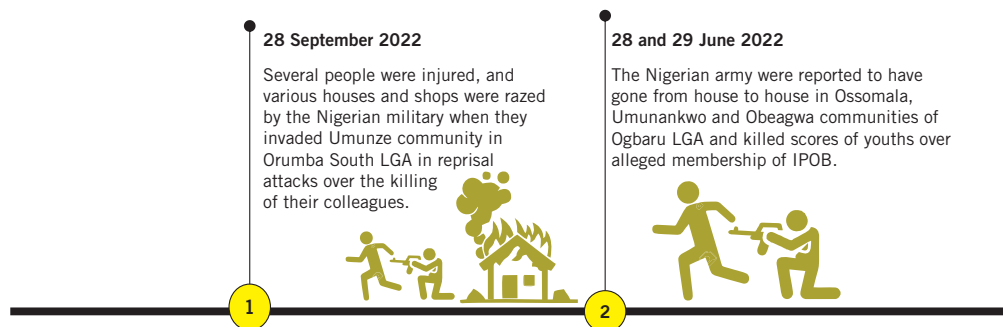
“When the military arrived in Izombe, they started burning houses and destroying properties. The people were running into the bushes. They destroyed houses that were far away from where the incident happened. They reinforced and continued from the

318 Daily Trust “Army raids Enugu community in search of IPOB members”, 26 December 2021, <https://dailytrust.com/army-raids-enugu-community-in-search-of-ipob-members/>

morning hours till about 7pm. We could see smoke from burning buildings everywhere. Over fifty buildings were burnt. A lot of people lost their lives, not only from the gunshot, or the attack by the military, but some people fainted and died, especially the elderly because their houses were burnt.”

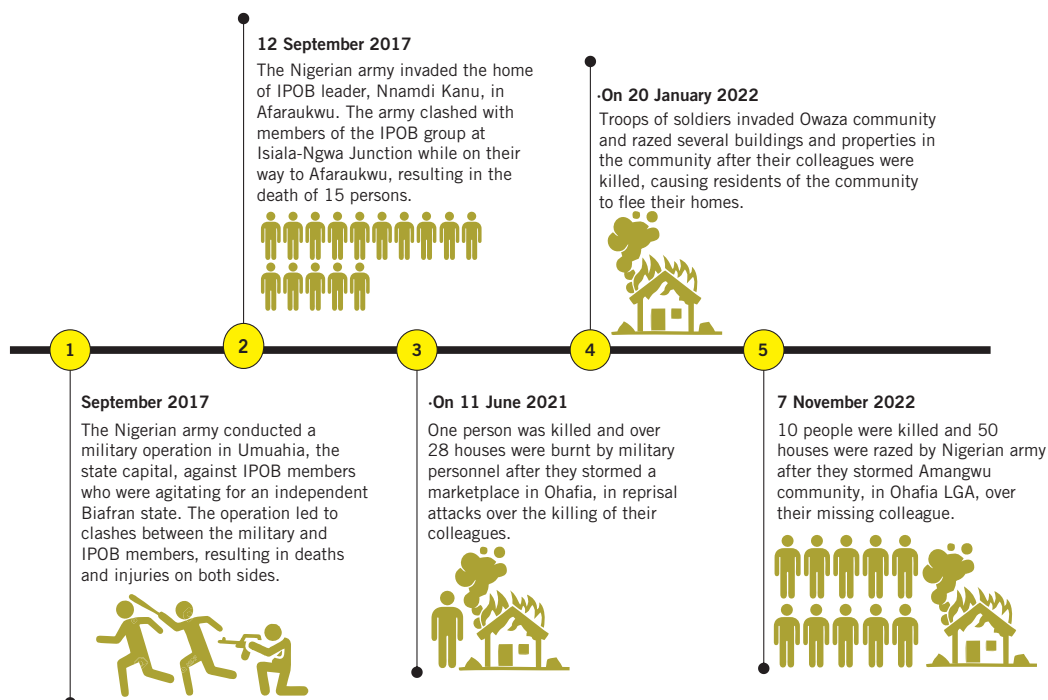
Anambra state has also witnessed its fair share of military operation in response to the activities of IPOB/ESN in the state which led to human rights violations. For example:

Reprisals against operatives of the security outfit in Anambra State



Abia state has experienced military attacks on several occasions in response to the activities of IPOB/ESN, leading to loss of lives and property. For example:

Federal Government's response



In Ebonyi state, on 19 December 2022, Nigerian army troops invaded Nkalaha community in Ishielu LGA and sacked residents of the community.³¹⁹ On 12 December 2022, a woman was hit by a stray bullet when soldiers invaded Obeagu community in Ishielu LGA, shooting sporadically, while burning several houses.³²⁰

319 Sahara Reporters, “Nigerian Army troops invade another community in Ebonyi as residents now flee from both herdsmen, soldiers”, 20 December 2022, <https://saharareporters.com/2022/12/20/exclusive-nigerian-army-troops-invade-another-community-ebonyi-residents-now-flee-both>

320 Punch, “Panic as soldiers invade Ebonyi community, burn houses”, 12 December 2022, <https://punchng.com/just-in-panic-as-soldiers-invade-ebonyi-community-burn-houses>

6.1.1 AIRSTRIKES

The Nigerian military has on many occasions resorted to conducting airstrikes as it struggles to tame the insecurity in South-East Nigeria. The airstrikes, which the military claimed targeted IPOB/ESN members and their camps/locations, often hit civilian communities and populations, destroying civilian communities and killing dozens. The military claimed they acted based on credible intelligence that IPOB/ESN forces had perfected plans to disrupt civil activities in Anambra state and other states in the South-East from their camp at Mother Valley Orsumughu.

These attacks included:

- On 14 February 2021, a Nigerian airforce helicopter gunship was deployed to support a pre-emptive assault on an ESN enclave in the Orlu and Orsu border areas of Imo and Anambra states.³²¹ The Nigerian airforce said the operation was initiated to counter an imminent threat of escalation.
- On 21 May 2021, the Nigerian military resumed airstrikes in Imo state, targeting IPOB/ESN members.³²² The military bombardment took place in Amuzi and Odenkwume communities in Ihitte/Uboma LGA and some neighbouring communities in the area.
- On 11 August 2023, the Nigerian military carried out an air strike on a suspected IPOB/ESN camp in Orsumoghu in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state.³²³
- On 26 September 2023, the Nigerian Airforce carried out several strikes on IPOB/ESN locations at Mother Valley Orsumughu in Ihiala LGA of Anambra state and at Aku Ihube in Okigwe LGA of Imo state.³²⁴

6.2 CLAMPDOWNS ON IPOB SUPPORTERS



321 Daily Post, “Orlu: Air strikes in Imo villages as Nigeria military search for ESN operatives [videos]”, 18 February 2021, <https://dailypost.ng/2021/02/18/breaking-orlu-air-strikes-in-imo-villages-as-nigeria-military-search-for-esn-operatives-videos>

322 Punch, “Ohanaeze, IPOB kick as military resumes airstrikes in Imo”, 22 May 2021, <https://punchng.com/ohanaeze-ipob-kick-as-military-resumes-airstrikes-in-imo>

323 Leadership, “NAF hits terrorists, IPOB camps, illegal refining sites”, <https://leadership.ng/naf-hits-terrorists-ipob-camps-illegal-refining-sites>

324 Premium Times, “Nigerian Air Force bombs suspected IPOB hideouts in South-East”, 27 September 2023, <https://www.premium-timesng.com/news/top-news/628882-nigerian-air-force-bombs-suspected-ipob-hideouts-in-south-east.html>

The Nigerian authorities have continued to clampdown on IPOB supporters, years after the Nkpor massacre of 2016. In this incident, the Nigerian army gunned down at least 40 unarmed people and injured 50 others ahead of planned pro-Biafran commemoration events in Onitsha.³²⁵ Subsequently, at least 115 people were killed by security forces in four months in the South-East over alleged membership of IPOB.³²⁶

Uruaku, a 30-year-old trader and father of one, resident in Fegge community in Onitsha Anambra state, one of the surviving victims of the Nkpor massacre of 30 May 2016, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“I still have the bullet the Nigerian army fired at me on 30 May 2016. We had no sticks, no stones, no machetes, but were just having a remembrance ceremony of our brothers and sisters that lost their lives during the Nigerian civil war [6 July 1967 – 15 January 1970]. Then an order was given [by the military, to shoot us,] which resulted in injuries and the loss of lives. Many people working around Nkpor junction lost their lives and were buried in the army barracks in Onitsha. Many people were killed, people who had no stones, nor cutlass nor batons on them; harmless. If the video of the incident is released, you will see the army intentionally shooting and killing people for nothing.”

Akwara, a 30-year-old artisan and father of five, another survivor of the Nkpor massacre of 30 May 2016, recounted the abuse of right to life by the military to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 30 May 2016, I was shot by military men during the Nkpor massacre. I am one of them [IPOB members]. I witnessed that day. Many people died on that day, about 150. The government did not treat survivors. I was treated by IPOB members.”

JYXX, an IPOB member resident in Onitsha informed Amnesty International in Enugu that the crisis has impacted his freedom of movement:

“I am on their [Nigerian authorities’] wanted list. I went into hiding and had to relocate to the village, and on getting to the village I do not go outside, to ensure that I am alive. I do not know why I am a wanted person. However, my observation is that they are after [IPOB] youths and once you are caught, it is either you are killed or incarcerated.”

Since 2016, Amnesty International has documented several other cases of unlawful killings, extrajudicial executions, excessive use of force, unlawful attacks, torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and unfair trials of suspected IPOB members.

6.2.1 EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, ARBITRARY DETENTION AND TORTURE

“... the police hit me several times on the waist with a baton. Even while in prison, my body was still shaking because of the torture. I have just returned from the orthopaedic hospital.”

Amnesty International interview with an IPOB member, a survivor of torture

David Ejimofo was killed by suspected security agents in Nnewi, Anambra state on 8 August 2021 over alleged membership of IPOB. His 37-year-old widow, a mother of three, recounted the circumstances leading to her husband’s death to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Security agents killed my husband at the Nnewi roundabout on 8 August 2021. On that fateful day, he was going to visit his friend. He was shot dead at the Nnewi roundabout. Since then, the children and I have been in serious hunger. I have been unable to pay the house rent. My business has collapsed. My children are out of school now. I want support for my children.”

Egwu, a 38-year-old Enugu resident informed Amnesty International how he was tortured by the police while in detention over alleged IPOB membership:

325 Amnesty International, “Nigeria: Killing of unarmed pro-Biafra supporters by military must be urgently investigated”, 10 June 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2016/06/nigeria-killing-of-unarmed-pro-biafra-supporters-by-military-must-be-urgently-investigated>

326 Amnesty International, “Nigeria: At least 115 people killed by security forces in four months in country’s Southeast”, 5 August 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/nigeria-at-least-115-people-killed-by-security-forces-in-four-months-in-countrys-southeast>

“In November 2017, I was arrested at my residence in Achara Layout, Enugu by the Nigerian police for being a member of IPOB. I was arrested alongside four other members of IPOB. We were taken to the MTD Garki police station, where I was tortured. I was beaten with belts, and a gun head. In the evening, I was tear-gassed, liquid tear gas was poured on my face, eye, nose, and inside my mouth. I could no longer see. They threw me inside their Hilux, the four of us, we are taken away in the night. They took us to Anti-Kidnapping Squad Enugu. There, I was under torture every morning, no food, nobody knew where we were for two months. We ate what relatives of other inmates brought for them and they gave us a little. After two months, they took us to court. That was when our people knew where we were. We were granted bail by the court and released. But unfortunately, one of us, Ebube Chukwuedum, died in detention due to the serious torture. They later dropped the case [against us].”

Likewise, Ogini, a resident of Akpofu community in Enugu state, narrated to Amnesty International in Enugu how he was arrested and unlawfully detained over alleged membership of IPOB:

“Sometime in 2019, I and 140 others were going to Nsukka for a burial. When we got to an army checkpoint along Opi road, we were stopped for about three hours. They searched us and found hand bills that had the Biafra insignia. We were arrested and taken to 82 Division of the Nigerian army in Enugu. There, we experienced intimidation, harassment, and hunger; some of us were beaten. Eventually, we were taken to the Nigerian police. The police took us to the magistrate court, and we were remanded at the Enugu prisons where we spent about a month. I lost my job because of the detention.”

The clampdown on suspected IPOB supporters is still rife in Enugu state. On 29 May 2023, IPOB members – six women and several men – were arrested by the police at St. Hyacinth Catholic Church, Eke Obinagu in Emene, Enugu as they assembled for prayers in commemoration of fallen Biafrans who died during the Nigerian civil war. One of the women, Agafe, a 39-year-old resident of Aku community in Igboetiti LGA of Enugu state, narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 29 May 2023, I went to St. Hyacinth Catholic Church, Eke Obinagu in Emene, Enugu for prayers for our fallen heroes and those who died during the civil war. Around 11am, about ten police officers came with three vehicles and opened fire on us. We were about 150 people. Initially, I thought they were armed robbers. So many of us ran away, while others hid. They arrested six women and nine men. They beat us mercilessly. Now, I cannot sit properly due to the wounds and the injury. There were also three older men [arrested with us], they used their guns to hit them. They first took us to the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID). We spent a night there, without food or water. The next day, they transferred me and another woman to the Crack Squad [formerly, Special Armed Robbery Squad (SARS)]. They said that we are IPOB members. They took us to the magistrate court and charged us for treason and felony, unlawful possession of arms, illegal gathering... They did not recover any weapons from any of us. They did not go to our homes to conduct searches. We were remanded in prison for a month and three weeks before we were released on bail.”

Nkolika, one of the women survivors, informed Amnesty International

“What happened on 29 May 2023 was terrible. They injured my leg. I could not walk for three days. We went from court to prison. We lost everything and are now like people who are starting life afresh.”

Nduoma, one of the arrested women, noted that they lost valuable items and cash during the invasion of their meeting venue:

“On that day they arrested us, we lost many things. They carried our power generator. Our bags, phones and money were lost. My 30,000 naira and ATM card are still missing. I lost my job because of the incident.”

She confirmed to Amnesty International that she was tortured by the police while in detention:

“The police hit me several times on the waist with a baton. Even while in prison, my body was still shaking because of the torture. I have just returned from the orthopaedic hospital because of a spinal injury.”

Nkpulumma informed Amnesty International of the impact her arrest, detention and subsequent imprisonment over alleged IPOB membership on her business:

“When I returned from prison, I lost my business; I met nothing. My shop was empty. I started from square one.”

Similarly, Ekenendiwa, one of the men arrested alongside the women, whose commercial tricycle, locally known as *keke*, was burnt by the police during the clampdown, narrated how the incident has affected his family and business:

“The keke [commercial tricycle] is our means of livelihood, I do not have job, I am a graduate, but the government does

not care for me. So, I struggle on my own. The burnt keke is under hire purchase. I do not know what keke did to them that warranted them to set it ablaze. My family is going through challenging times. My wife and children are there, starving as we used to feed on the proceeds of my keke transportation business. As things are now, I do not have any other thing to do.”

In Imo state, there have been several cases of extrajudicial executions of suspected IPOB/ESN members by state security agents. Ezinwa, a 25-year-old mother of four, resident in Izombe community in Oguta LGA of Imo state, recounted the extrajudicial killing of her husband, Amuzienwa, over alleged membership of ESN. She told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 3 January 2023, the army killed my husband, an ESN member. He returned home to see his family, particularly his brother who was sick. He does not have a gun. He was traced to our home. They killed him and his brother’s wife in our house. They were shot dead. Their bodies were taken away by the army and their houses burnt. We never saw their corpses at all [sobs].”

Okechukwu Umendu, a 65-year-old farmer from Okwudo village in Mgbala Agwa community, Oguta LGA of Imo state, was killed on 18 June 2023 by security agents over alleged membership of IPOB/ESN. His 44-year-old widow, a mother of five, told Amnesty International:

“On Sunday, on 18 June 2023, when I came back from church, I saw my husband’s corpse on the corridor. He was shot by the armoured car people. He was seen walking along the road, and they shot him from behind. He had no gun with him. He was accused of ESN membership. ... the children, there is no help for them. How would they be trained? Now, I am carrying the responsibility alone, without help...” [sobs].

“I was four months pregnant ... The policeman hit his foot on my stomach ... my placenta came out. I was bleeding badly ... They did not take me to the hospital ...”

Amnesty International interview with an alleged IPOB member, a survivor of torture

Amaka, a 24-year-old resident of Emii Emekuku in Owerri North LGA of Imo state narrated harrowing experiences of torture and arbitrary detention she and her father experienced over alleged membership of IPOB. She told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“I was arrested on 17 May 2021. The Intelligence Response Team (IRT) squad came to my father’s house. They arrested me. My father asked them: “You are not wearing a uniform, who are you and where are you taking my daughter to?” They asked him to follow them if he really wanted to know. The reason they came for me was for me to show them my fiancé. There was a guy that wanted to marry me, and the guy is an IPOB member. They asked me to show them where he lives. So, I took them to the place. But he ran away, so they arrested me and my father instead.

“I was four months pregnant then. After beating and torturing my father and I, they took us to the Anti-Kidnapping Unit of the Imo State Police Command (Tiger Base). On reaching there, they started beating me, beating my father. They were aware of my pregnancy. They hit their foot on my stomach, my placenta came out. I was bleeding and they did not care. They brought one sharp object that looked like a bottle. The other man just tore my undies and was trying to forcefully insert that stuff inside my body. I was still bleeding badly. They did not take me to the hospital.

“... They took me to Shell Camp police station in Owerri. Majority of those held there were women. I spent one month there. They brought me back to Tiger Base. I spent yet another one month at Tiger Base and they transferred me to state CID Owerri. In August 2021, they transferred me to Abuja SARS headquarters. I did not know when they took me there as I had passed out. From there, they took me to the prison at Suleja in Niger state. That is where I started making calls and people came for my release. My father’s house was demolished by the IRT squad. Now, I am jobless and homeless. I really need help.”

Amaka further narrated how her 62-year-old father, was tortured to death while in detention because he could not disclose the whereabouts of his daughter’s fiancé, who was alleged to be an IPOB member:

“While torturing me and my father, my father sustained serious injuries on his leg. His leg started swelling up and burst. My father spent two weeks there and died because he had already decayed. He died there and they took his body away and when they were bringing him out, their hand was penetrating his decayed body.”

7. ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES OF IPOB SUPPORTERS

An enforced disappearance is the arrest, detention, abduction or other form of unauthorized deprivation of liberty of a person by a state, agents acting for the state, or persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the person's fate or whereabouts, placing him or her outside the protection of the law.

Enforced disappearances are serious violations of human rights and facilitate a range of other violations, including torture and extrajudicial executions. Enforced disappearances are explicitly prohibited under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICED), which entered into force on 23 December 2010, and which Nigeria acceded to on 27 July 2009. The ICED also imposes legal obligations on states to ensure all those responsible for enforced disappearances are brought to justice; to take a range of measures to prevent enforced disappearances, including by maintaining records of all persons deprived of liberty and guaranteeing that family members, lawyers and others have access to such information, including the ability to compel it through a prompt judicial procedure; and to guarantee and fulfil the rights of victims of enforced disappearance including the family members of those who have disappeared.³²⁷

Nigerian authorities have responded to the insecurity in the South-East by abducting suspected IPOB members and holding them in secret detention.³²⁸ Amnesty International's research shows that several people have been disappeared by security agents across the five states in the South-East over alleged membership of IPOB.

A resident of Obosi community in Idemili North LGA of Anambra state confirmed to Amnesty International that a spate of abductions of suspected IPOB members had occurred in the state. Similarly, a resident of Izzi LGA of Ebonyi state recounted several cases of enforced disappearances of suspected IPOB members in Ebonyi state. According to Amnesty International's research, the abductions usually took place between the hours of 2 a.m. and 3 a.m., with nobody able to account for the whereabouts of those abducted.

According to Amnesty International findings, persons found in possession of a Biafra flag or insignia were often arrested or abducted by the authorities, whether the person was a member of IPOB or not. State security agents teamed up with members of state-backed Ebube Agu militia, who understand local terrains, as they live in the same community as the suspected IPOB members. Ezeka, an IPOB member resident in Ebonyi state, informed Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Those abducted in Ebonyi state in May 2022 over membership of IPOB include Friday Okemili from Ozigbo village, Barrister Awoke from Edukwachi village, Wisdom Nwagbafu from Igbeagu village, Tochukwu Nwoke, and several others. Up till now, no one can give an account of their whereabouts. The abductors went to the homes of the friends of the victims and forced them to lead them to their homes. We searched for them but could not find them. We have gone in vain to police stations hoping they will be found there. The government has stifled freedom of expression and assembly in Ebonyi state. I want to call for help on behalf

327 See, for example, Amnesty International, *No Impunity for Enforced Disappearances: Checklist for Effective Implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* (Index: IOR 51/006/2011), 9 November 2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/IO51/006/2011/en>

328 Amnesty International, “Nigeria must show genuine commitment to ending enforced disappearances”, 30 August 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org.ng/2022/08/30/nigeria-must-show-genuine-commitment-to-ending-enforced-disappearances/>

of the women that have been turned to widows and the children that have been turned to orphans. We really need help.”

During three missions in the South-East, Amnesty International interviewed two survivors of enforced disappearance and 18 relatives of IPOB members who were seen being arrested by security forces or were in their detention, but their whereabouts are now unknown. In the first days or weeks following arrest or remand, families were sometimes allowed to visit their relatives in detention. Later, the police, DSS, military or state-backed Ebube Agu militia told people that their relatives have been “transferred”. In other instances, following a person’s arrest, the police, State Security Service (SSS), military or Ebube Agu simply denied any knowledge of their whereabouts.

Because there is no or limited access to military barracks, police stations and SSS detention facilities, families often do not know if their relative is still being held. The effects on families of enforced disappearances are profound. Relatives are left not knowing whether their loved ones are dead. Amnesty International is concerned that some of those missing may have been extrajudicially executed.

CASE 1: NWAOMA – A SURVIVOR OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Nwaoma, a 23-year-old Enugu resident, was abducted on 8 November 2021 by DSS operatives at 2am. She and her two siblings were taken from their home in Enugu. Her whereabouts was unknown for several months, until social media action led to Nigeria’s secret police, the DSS, charging her to court. She narrated her harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“The DSS operatives abducted me and my siblings at 2am on 8 November 2021. They said they were looking for an alleged friend of mine, an IPOB member. They asked me to bring him out. I did not know where he was. So, they arrested us. They denied us any connection with any of our relatives, nor told them wherever we were. They initially took us to a DSS facility in Enugu where they tortured us. They flogged the hell out of us ... they wounded us, using an iron rod. This is a part of the mark here... those two and these other two, too [pointing to several scars on her body].

“After six days of detention at the DSS facility in Enugu, they released my siblings and transferred me to the DSS headquarters in Abuja on the 14 November 2021. There, I experienced another set of torture. They held me captive there for about five months. Then, they transferred me to a military detention facility at Wawa Barracks, Kainji Dam, in Niger state. We were about 30, all arrested from the South-East for being IPOB members. They used wire and iron rods as instruments of torture, just to get words out of my mouth. They said that they have a lot of information they require from me. They were requesting for the identification of so many individuals, whom I did not know [sobs].

“The state of the detention facilities, both at the DSS and at the Kainji Dam Barracks, was poor. The size of the cell is 8 by 8; it is as small as it could be, and we had over five people in a cell. So, there is no space. If you are complaining of health issues, before they attend to you, it will take a long time. The toilet facilities were bad. They give us one sanitary pad once in two months. So, you keep managing yourself. That is really a pathetic experience. Going through such a situation is a terrible experience for anybody.

“While being detained at Kainji Dam, I met many other persons being held in connection to IPOB. I met Calista Ifedi. She was in custody in the same cell room as me. She is passing through a lot, health-wise. She had chronic high blood pressure, ulcer, and other health issues. Sometimes, she bleeds from the mouth; her health is deteriorating. When she remembers her kids she left at home, she cries a lot.

“I was detained at Kainji Dam military barracks till October 2022 and was taken back to the DSS headquarters, Abuja. On 19 October 2022, I was charged at a Federal High Court in Abuja, with three-count charges. The first is that I operate IPOB’s Facebook account. The second is that I am hiding an IPOB member. The third is that I admitted being an IPOB member. The trial judge granted me bail and asked the DSS to transfer me to Suleja Prison immediately. But the DSS held me for an additional 5 days before transferring me to Suleja Prison. Since then, I have been attending my trial from Enugu to Abuja at my own expense. When I came out from detention, I had to cure so many diseases. I had to go to many hospitals for check-ups and tests. I passed through a lot. I developed an ulcer during my prolonged detention at the DSS. I have truly passed through a lot. The DSS should stop these abductions.”

CASE 2: ONYEOCHA – A SURVIVOR OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Onyeocha, a 54-year-old woman resident in Lagos state was abducted by security operatives from her home in Lagos state on 28 June 2021 over alleged membership of IPOB. She was accused of working in the IPOB media department and providing money for the treatment of IPOB members shot by security agents. One of the lucky survivors of enforced disappearance, her whereabouts was unknown for over three months. She recounted her harrowing ordeal to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 28 June 2021, I was in my house in Lagos state. I did not know the IRT, led by Chief Superintendent of Police (CSP) Abba Kyari, were tracking me. On that fateful day, I wanted to talk to my car mechanic. I called him on the phone, and they [IRT squad] went to the car mechanic, arrested him, and told him to bring them to my house. The mechanic brought them. As I was opening the gate, they picked me up immediately. To handcuff me from behind, one of them kicked me and I fell. They handcuffed me and pushed me into a Tundra Jeep. There were four of them. They took me to the IRT office at Ikeja GRA.

“I was still in handcuffs when they took me to the commander there. As soon as I alighted from the vehicle, they started shouting that a terrorist has been caught: “We have caught the terrorist!” They asked me to make a statement. As I was trying to write my statement, they were with their guns all over me, threatening that they were going to shoot my legs, that anything they asked me, I should give them the answer they wanted. They were threatening me as I was writing the statement, asking me where Nnamdi Kanu was. I told him I did not know where he was. They insisted that I must tell them, that they were going to torture me if I did not tell them where Nnamdi Kanu was.

“They said I was giving money to a woman in Anambra state to give medical treatment to IPOB members that were shot. I said I did not know the woman. They started beating me up. As that was going on, there was jubilation all over in the station that Nnamdi Kanu had been caught. They started shouting: “Biafra women, we have got your boss, we have caught your boss!” I finished writing my statement under duress, with threats. Then, they took me to the cell. I was in the IRT Ikeja office for five days. I was not given food; I was not given water. I lived on the mercy of some inmates there who, when they were given food, gave me some. That was 28 June 2021. On 3 July 2021, they brought me out and said they were taking me to Abuja, that CSP Abba Kyari wanted to see me. There were four other IPOB members that had fled Imo state to Lagos. They were also picked up and all of us lumped into the vehicle. We arrived in Abuja around 5am. When we got there, Abba Kyari came out, saw us, started asking them if they had tortured us. He asked them to bring the woman from Onitsha who mentioned my name that I sent about N120,000 to her to provide medical treatment to IPOB members shot by security agents. The woman came out, she could not recognize me. They started beating her in my presence for saying she does not know me. She insisted she had not met me before.

“Abba Kyari asked them to move me to the torture chamber. As they were moving me towards the torture chamber, someone hit me with a long plank from behind. I fell flat on the ground. And three of them started hitting me. I was losing breath. They cut somewhere on my feet; blood was flowing. My two wrists started swelling up. I had a fracture here [pointing to her fractured wrist]. They were still beating me, continuous torture. Then they asked a woman to take me into the cell, because I could not move again. I was on the floor, helpless. The woman started dragging me on the floor to take me into the cell. In the cell, we were given food once a day, like the food you give to a 2-year-old child. There was no facility there, no provision of any toiletry of any form; there was no opportunity to change clothes. The clothes I wore, which they tortured me with, I still wore it. My two hands were already fractured. So, the other women there, bath me and wash my clothes, and I wear them wet, the clothes dry on my body.

“When Abba Kyari was indicted by the FBI, my family and friends discovered where I was been held. There was a bargain for me to either go to court or go home from there. They bargained for me to go home from the detention facility because the torture [fractures] would not let me attend court, considering my state of health. My family paid money. They took me straight from the place of detention to the Suleja Prison. They asked me to tell the prison officials that I am coming from the Apo High Court in Abuja. I was in Suleja Prison for five days. On the fifth day, I collapsed. They rushed me to the prison clinic. The doctor said my BP was over 200. He said my condition was critical. They immediately released me to my family. That was how I regained my freedom.”

CASE 3: SUNDAY IFEDI AND CALISTA IFEDI



Sunday Ifedi and Calista Ifedi

Sunday Ifedi and Calista Ifedi, a couple from Ezeagu community in Ezeagu LGA of Enugu state, were taken from their home in Enugu on 23 November 2021 by state security agents. For over four years now, their whereabouts have remained unknown. According to their 21-year-old daughter, the couple were taken by DSS officials to answer certain questions; they never returned. They were abducted because the DSS wanted to question them over alleged IPOB membership. She narrated the harrowing experience of the disappearance of her parents to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My father, Sunday Ifedi, is a furniture maker while my Mum, Calista Ifedi, is a teacher. They have three children. I am 21 years. The second one is 19, while the last one is 17. There is also our cousin who was living with us because her father is late. The DSS took my parents. We do not know where they are. I have not even heard from them. The last information I got is that my parents were taken to Abuja. When we got there, the DSS said we could not enter. Since my parents’ abduction, things have been exceedingly difficult for us. I had to drop out of school to engage in menial jobs so I can take care of my younger ones. I suddenly became both a mother and father. The government should please release my parents” [sobbing profusely].

However, Amnesty International research reveals that Calista Ifedi was last seen at the Wawa military barracks detention centre in Kainji Dam, Niger state. A survivor of enforced disappearance informed Amnesty International that while being held at the Wawa military barracks detention centre in Kainji Dam, Niger state, over alleged membership of IPOB, she met Calista Ifedi who was also being held in the same cell with her. According to the survivor, Calista Ifedi’s health had deteriorated in detention as she was battling chronic high blood pressure, ulcer, other health issues, including severe bleeding. Amidst her deteriorating health, she cries profusely whenever she remembers her children.

CASE 4: ANOCHIE FIDEL EZECHUKWU



Anochie Fidel Ezechukwu as he was last seen being taken away by security operatives on 2 August 2022.

Anochie Fidel Ezechukwu, a 52-year-old businessman, was abducted by state security agents on 2 August 2022, at about

4:30pm, from his business premises at Umudaraolisa Ehim village, Umunuko Ukpok, Nnewi South LGA, Anambra state. He has not been seen since then, and his whereabouts remains unknown, even as the Nigeria forces deny arresting him. His brother told Amnesty International:

“A combined group of security operatives came with a convoy of vehicles. They were shooting, and everybody was running. They entered his premises [Umudaraolisa Ehim village, Umunuko Ukpok, Nnewi South LGA, Anambra state], beat him up, tied his hands behind him and took him away. Since that day, we have not seen him, and we do not know where he is. We do not know where he was taken to, but his abductors posted his picture on the internet, where he was tied up on the ground, with wounds all over his body. One of the vehicles the abductors came with is NPF-555-NG.

“On 13 August 2022, we wrote a letter to those concerned with security in Anambra state, including the Commissioner Homeland Security. But all these letters did not yield any result, and we have not gotten any response to this date. There have been formal searches at the police stations and military barracks. His family had engaged lawyers who went to the Criminal Investigation Department in Awka and other police stations, but they denied having him in their custody. His family had also petitioned the Inspector General of Police in February 2023.

“Anochie Fidel Ezechukwu has never been declared wanted by the police or any other security agency. He has never committed any offence that took him to jail. He is carrying out his business legally. He is an active member of the Ukpok Improvement Union. He is a titled man and holds many offices in his community. He is a family person too; his wife is in the village, and they own an eatery and a bar in the village. We are pained because he was taken by government security agencies. They should not leave us in the dark. If they have killed my brother, they should let us know. In the Nigerian Constitution there is no room for extrajudicial killing. An arrested person must be brought before the court. His wife, and his 94-year-old mother keep asking everyone when he is going to return.”

CASE 5: HENRY IKECHUKWU



'Ikechukwu Henry

Ikechukwu Henry from Orlu in Imo state was abducted on 23 August 2021 from his residence at Garki Enugu at 2am by security agents over alleged membership of IPOB. His 27-year-old wife, a mother of one, narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“They [the abductors] were in military uniform, 10 to 15 men. They invaded our compound at about 2am. They started knocking on our door. I was not aware of those who were knocking. I usually wake up in the middle of the night to breastfeed my three-month-old baby. So, when I woke up, I was scared because of the knocks on the door. When I opened the door, I saw men in uniform. They had surrounded our house. They dragged me out and asked: “Where is Henry?” Before I could reply to them, they forced me out of the door and entered our house, searching for my husband. He was asleep. They dragged my husband outside and were slapping him. I shouted in shock. They told me that if I shout again, they will beat me. They asked me to put on my clothes that I will be going to the station with them. I asked them what we did. They say I will find out when I get to the station.

“They beat my husband so badly. They searched our house. They could not find anything. Then, they dragged us outside, my husband and I with my little baby. I did not have any clothing to cover the baby. I covered her with our bed sheet. We entered their Hilux vehicle. They drove off to Nigerian army 82 Division Enugu. When we got to 82 Division, it was about 4am. We stayed in the guard room till they were able to open the main building in the morning. Then they took us inside the main building and started interrogating us. They were asking me about my husband and his occupation. I told them that my husband is a caterer; he cooks for people during ceremonies. On the third day after his abduction, when I went to visit him, they told me that I should not come back to visit him, that he was no longer there as they had transferred him to Abuja. Then I asked them which place in Abuja they refused to tell me. Since 23 August 2021, when my husband was abducted, I have not seen him. We have been searching for him everywhere. I still go back to that 82 Division sometimes, but I do not know where to find him. Since then, I have not spoken with him. Sometimes I will call his phone number, but it is switched off. I have not seen him.

“All I want is for the government to release my husband, Henry Ikechukwu, wherever they have kept him. I really want to see him, and our little baby wants to see him because his absence has caused a lot of heartache to us, especially me and my baby, and his parents. The disappearance of my husband has really affected every area of my life, especially in taking care of my child’s welfare, feeding myself and my baby, and clothing. I have not really gotten myself as it has affected me both financially, emotionally, and otherwise. I have been finding everything difficult. And nobody knows whether he is dead or alive.”

CASE 6: EBERECHI UKAEGBU

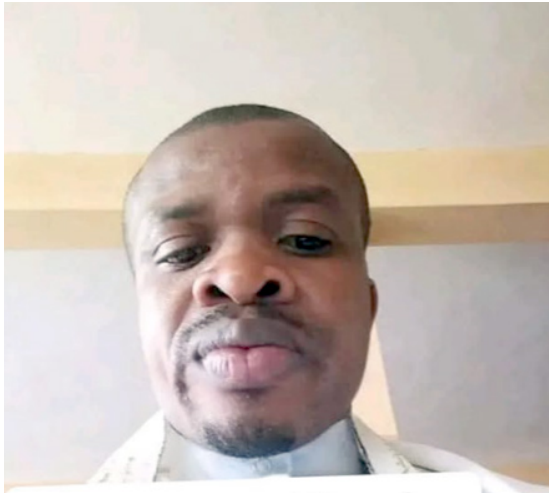


Eberechi Ukaegbu

Eberechi Ukaegbu was abducted from his residence in Alaukwu-Umuoma in Obingwa LGA of Abia state at about 1:30am by armed security agents over alleged membership of IPOB. He was about 50 years at the time of his abduction. His 38-year-old sister narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“They [security agents] came at night at about 1:30am, well-armed with AK47s, shouting: “Open the gate!” We were so frightened. No one could go and open the gate. They forcefully broke into the compound and took my brother. We have been to many places to search for him, we have gone to Aba in Abia state. We have gone to several police stations. They said they have no record of him. We have also been to the DSS office, and they said they have no record of such a person in their custody. My brother is married with 5 children. His wife and children are still in his residence. His family has been highly affected by his disappearance.”

CASE 7: TOCHUKWU IBELEME



Tochukwu Ibeleme

Tochukwu Ibeleme, a 25-year-old trader and father of three, was taken from his shop at Aba, Abia state on 15 June 2021 by security agents over alleged membership of IPOB. He has not been seen since. An eyewitness to the abduction narrated the event to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 15 June 2021, masked armed security agents came with a Hilux van, about seven in number. They did not ask for anything. They took him. We searched all the police stations within the vicinity but could not find him. We have not seen him from 2021 till today, I have not heard anything about him. I have been moving from one police station to the other. I do not know if Tochukwu Ibeleme is still alive.”

CASE 8: EMMANUEL IKECHUKWU



Emmanuel Ikechukwu

Emmanuel Ikechukwu, a photographer, and father of three, was abducted by suspected security agents from his shop at Aba-Ngwa-Ngwa Road in Aba, Abia state on 8 July 2021, over alleged membership of IPOB. Since then, he has not been seen. An Aba resident who witnessed the abduction, told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“Emmanuel Ikechukwu was my neighbour at my residence and my shop was close to his. As they [security agents] came that day [on 8 July 2021], they picked him up. I was there when it happened. He was abducted in the daytime, at about 3pm. They came in a vehicle, about six of them. They dressed like police officers, but I did not know really whether they are police officers. They covered their faces and were armed with AK47 guns.

“...we tried our best to locate where they kept him but to no avail. We have gone to police stations and prisons to check if he is there, but he was not found, and nobody has heard from him since then. He had a wife and three children as at the time he was taken.”

CASE 9: CHIDIEBERE LUKE ECHEFU



Chidiebere Luke Echefu

Chidiebere Luke Echefu, 47-year-old father of five from Umugwano Umuchekekwe in Onuimo LGA of Imo state, was abducted by security agents from his residence in Owerri, Imo state on 7 November 2021 at about 3am, over alleged membership of IPOB. Since his abduction, he has not been seen. His wife, a 41-year-old schoolteacher who witnessed his abduction, recounted the event to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My husband, Chidiebere Luke Echefu, was abducted from our residence in Owerri on 7 November 2021 at about 3am. About six men in uniform broke our flat door and entered our house. When my husband came out, the first thing they asked him is: “Where is your phone!?” My children were all panicky, so I left our room and went to their room to calm them down. They got the phone and started interrogating him. I said to them: “Sir, you have not even identified yourselves. Who are you? Why are you in our house?” They handcuffed him and whisked him away.

“We went to all the police stations in Owerri to search for him. They said he was not in their custody. We also went to the DSS office at Owerri, but they denied having him in their custody. On 2 January 2022, I received a call from a lawyer who told me he saw my husband at the DSS headquarters in Abuja. When we went there, the DSS denied having him in their custody in Abuja. Nobody has allowed me to see him since then.

“I was four months pregnant when he was abducted. The child is a year and four months now, but my husband has not seen the child, and they have not allowed any member of the family to have access to him. My family has been severely affected by my husband’s disappearance. He was the breadwinner of the family. I am just a private school teacher, and everybody knows how poorly a private teacher earns in Imo state. And I have five children. He was the breadwinner of the home, so life has not been the same. I earn N40,000 a month with a family of five children and myself to cater for. We vacated from the house we were living in because I could not afford to pay the rent any longer. I want them to release my husband to me as I am under severe hardship. My children are out of school.”

CASE 10: IFEANYICHUKWU ARINZE

Ifeanyichukwu Arinze, a 55-year-old father of five from Akokwa in Ideato North LGA of Imo state, was abducted on 7 November 2021 from his residence in Owerri, Imo state by state security agents over alleged membership of IPOB. His 40-year-old wife, who witnessed his abduction, narrated the harrowing experience to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My husband was abducted by security agents on 7 November 2021 from our home in Owerri, Imo state. It was around 2am. I do not know how they got into our flat. He came into my room wearing boxer shorts. I wanted to ask him: “Where are you going by this time of the night?” But when I turned, I saw at least about three security agents inside my room. I asked them: “Sir, please, is there any problem?” They said: “No, no, madam, relax. We are security people.” I tried to find out where they came from. They said I should not make noise, because if I make noise, I will get my husband into more trouble. They took him. Assuming he did not come inside my room, I would not have known he had been abducted.

“None of us have seen or heard from him since that night. I do not know if he is still alive. At the time of his abduction, I was five months pregnant with my daughter. Life has been so difficult, even the children’s schooling has become exceedingly difficult. We do not have light at home because I cannot afford the electricity bill. I cannot pay our rent. I am begging, let the government please release my husband. His mother has been sick since his abduction, crying over her son. Whenever I go out, the children keep saying: “Mummy, please come back with our daddy.” I am pleading that they should release him as soon as possible so that he can see his family.”

CASE 11: KINGSLEY ONYEMAFOR

Kingsley Onyemafor, a 38-year-old air-conditioner repairer, was abducted on 25 February 2021 by suspected security agents at Cherubim Junction Orji in Owerri, Imo state, over alleged membership of IPOB. His whereabouts has remained unknown since then. His wife narrated her unsuccessful efforts to find her husband to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“We have been to the state CID and several other places of detention to search for him, but they said he is not with them. His phone number is no longer going through. I want my husband to return and see his child. Since the incident, I’ve neither rested nor known peace. It is because of this matter, that his father died; his mother is always sick because of too much thinking about her son. I am begging them to release him so I can see my husband. [sobbing]. Since that 25 February 2021 till now, I have not heard from him; I do not know if he is alive or if they have killed him.”

CASE 12: UCHE OKEKE

Uche Okeke, 26, was disappeared by suspected state security agents from his home in Ohaji Egbema in Imo state on 24 May 2021, at about 5pm, over alleged membership of IPOB. Since that day, he has not been seen. His wife told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“It happened on 24 May 2021. They came and carried my husband. They said he is an IPOB member. Up till now, I have not seen him. I have gone to several police stations to check if I will see him, but I have not seen him. I have searched everywhere but I have not seen him since then. Three years now. I have three children. It has not been easy at all. I really want to know where he is. If in any police station, they should mention it.”

CASE 13: SAMUEL ONU

Samuel Onu, a father of two, from Uboro in Ohaozara LGA of Ebonyi state, resident in Okigwe, Imo state, was abducted in Okigwe on 22 February 2021 by security agents over alleged membership of IPOB. His whereabouts remain unknown. His wife told Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 22 February 2021, security agents went to my husband’s former boss’ shop. They had my husband’s phone number in their exercise book. They asked the man whether he knew Samuel Onu. He said: “Yes, he was my apprentice, but he is now doing his own business.” They told him to call my husband. The man called my husband. My husband went to his boss’ shop. They told my husband that there is an investigation they want him to help them with, and that he will come back in 30 minutes time. They took him away. We went to the Imo state police headquarters at Owerri to search for him. They told us it was the IRT squad that arrested him. Since then, we do not know where he is. We do not know if he is dead or alive. I want the government to tell us if he is dead or alive. If he is dead, they should show us where they buried him, and if he is alive, they should please release him.”

CASE 14: CHUKWUEMEKA CHARLES NWANYA

Chukwuemeka Charles Nwanya from Amuri Amanze community in Isu LGA of Imo state was abducted by members of state-backed Ebube Agu security outfit at Isu in January 2022, over alleged membership of IPOB. His whereabouts remain unknown. His 30-year-old wife, a mother of four, told Amnesty International in Enugu of the harrowing experience:

“He was riding his motorcycle. They [Ebube Agu operatives] chased him until they caught him. They first set his motorcycle ablaze before taking him away. We went to Ebube Agu office to look for him, but the Ebube Agu officials chased us away. They threatened to arrest us if we ever came to inquire about him. The reason for the arrest of my husband is that they accused him of being a member of IPOB. Since January 2022, I have not set my eyes on my husband. I cannot say if he is alive or dead [sobs]. Since his abduction, I have been suffering. I am now a petty street hawker. I have four children. Our house is dilapidated and falling.”

CASE 15: UCHE MGBOLOGWU

Uche Mgbologwu was abducted on 14 January 2022 by the state-backed Ebube Agu security operatives at Amuri Omanze in Isu LGA, Imo state, over alleged membership of IPOB. His wife narrated the traumatic situation to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“My husband, Uche Mgbologwu, was abducted at Amuri Omanze on 14 January 2022. They [Ebube Agu operatives] saw him on the way and held him. His clothes got torn and they saw Biafra insignia on his necklace which made them believe he was an IPOB member. Those who knew him came to inform me at home but before I could get there, he had been taken away. The next day, I went to the state CID Owerri to search for him. When we got there, I was chased away. One week later, I went there again only to be told that there was no Uche Mgbologwu in their custody. After two weeks I returned there to inquire again. They asked me his name and what he did. I told them. They said he was not with them. I do not know where my husband is now, and no one has heard from him nor knows his whereabouts. I had four children, but I lost my last baby I was nursing. Because of this matter, my last child died on 19 February 2023.”

CASE 16: CLETUS NWACHUKWU EGOLE, CHINEDU NWACHUKWU EGOLE AND CHINONSO ANYANWU

Cletus Nwachukwu Egeole was arrested by state security agents on 13 February 2021 at Ubaha Okporo Community in Orlu LGA, Imo state, over alleged membership of IPOB. Cletus Egeole's 48-year-old wife, a mother of nine, narrated her ordeal and the disappearance of her husband, his brother Chinedu Nwachukwu Egeole, and her cousin Chinonso Anyanwu, to Amnesty International in Enugu:

“On 13 February 2021, the IRT squad came to arrest my husband and I at our home in Ubaha Okporo at around 4pm. They said we are members of IPOB. My husband's name is Cletus Nwachukwu Egeole, a reverend gentleman. They arrested us and took us to Owerri. They also set the five houses in our compound ablaze – a maternity clinic, hospital, chemist shop, and a church. We were taken to the state CID [Criminal Investigation Department] office in Owerri and held there for two weeks. On 30 March 2021, we were taken – in two buses at night – to the IRT office in Abuja. When we got to Abuja, the women were separated from the men. The women were taken to divisional police headquarters, Garki, Abuja, while the men remained in the IRT office. We were held at Garki until we were asked to provide surety to stand for our bail. I gave them my husband's younger brother, Chinedu Nwachukwu Egeole's contact. I did not know it was a ploy to arrest him too. Sometime in May 2021, the IRT went to Port Harcourt and arrested him while he was ministering in the church [sobs].

“On 8 June 2022, I was taken to court and released on bail. I do not know where my husband and his brother are now. We do not even know if they are dead or alive. I have not heard anything about them, I have no information about them. My cousin, Chinonso Anyanwu, was also arrested by the IRT squad, and nobody knows where he is till today. It has not been easy for me to take care of our nine children [sobbing]. All I do now is to work as a labourer. Where we are living now is at the mercy of someone who offered us an uncompleted building, without doors and windows. We use our clothes to cover the doors and the windows. Things have fallen apart for us. Chinedu Nwachukwu Egeole's wife has been sick due to the shock of her husband's disappearance.”

8. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

8.1 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS AND TORTURE BY DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES AND MILITIAS

Nigeria has the obligations to respect, protect, promote and fulfil human rights, as defined under domestic law and international human rights law.

“Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly, no person shall be subjected to torture, or to inhuman or degrading treatment.”

Section 34(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended)

Nigerian authorities shall respect, protect, promote and fulfil the right to life. The right to life is protected, among others, by Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Nigeria on 29 July 1993, which provides that “every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life”; and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), ratified by Nigeria on 22 July 1983, which states that “human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.”

This means that, under national and international human rights law, Nigerian defence and security forces are prohibited from killing or executing anyone in the South-East region. Lethal force can only be used as a means of last resort, when strictly necessary to protect themselves or others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury. It also means that Nigerian authorities should take all possible measures to protect the population, and prevent other actors, such as armed groups, criminal groups or militias, from killing people.

The state shall also provide protection from torture and other ill-treatment as guaranteed under Article 4 of the ACHPR, under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT),³²⁹ ratified by Nigeria on 28 June 2001, and under international customary law. It must also ensure respect of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).³³⁰

Nigerian authorities must also protect women from violence and discrimination according to the rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Nigeria on 23 April 1984,³³¹ and the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), ratified by Nigeria on 16 December 2004.³³²

8.2 RIGHT TO LIFE AND SECURITY

The authorities have an obligation to investigate allegations of human rights violations and abuses, such as murders by gunmen or unlawful killings by the army, and extrajudicial executions by the state-backed Ebube

329 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Convention against Torture).

330 UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules).

331 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

332 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

Agu security outfit, and to bring to justice those suspected of being responsible for such crimes, violations and abuses. This justice process must include fair trials: those accused must be brought before independent, impartial and competent tribunals. Victims of these violations and abuses have a right to truth, justice and reparations.

These rights and obligations are guaranteed under Articles 7 and 26 of the African Charter, Articles 2 and 14 of the ICCPR and other provisions of international law, including the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law,³³³ the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa,³³⁴ as well as the Constitution of Nigeria.

“States must ensure that no one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention, and that arrest, detention or imprisonment shall only be carried out strictly in accordance with the provisions of the law and by competent officials or persons authorized for that purpose, pursuant to a warrant, on reasonable suspicion or for probable cause.”

Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa, Principle M(1)(b)

Under Nigerian law, notably under the Criminal Code,³³⁵ one can be prosecuted for “murder or manslaughter” (section 315), “assault occasioning death” (section 355), “unlawful arrest” (section 7 and 6(2) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015), “torture” (section 2(2) Anti-Torture Act 2017),³³⁶ “unlawful possession of arms” (section 428), “invasion of residence” (sections 81, 412, 413), “threatening violence” (section 86), and other crimes relevant for the purpose of this report.

In addition, Nigerian authorities must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association for everyone, including members of the IPOB. These rights and obligations are guaranteed under Article 19(2) of the ICCPR and Article 9 of the African Charter. The Constitution of Nigeria guarantees “freedom of assemble and association” under section 40. Also, section 41(1) of the Constitution provides “freedom of movement”. The Nigerian authorities must respect these rights, refrain from targeting people who peacefully exercise those rights and protect them from violence, threats and harassment by non-state actors.

8.3 ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTION

Nigerian authorities thus shall respect and protect the right to liberty and security of every individual and must refrain from arresting and detaining a person solely because they express a political opinion or participate in a protest against the authorities. Article 9(1) of the ICCPR reads:

“Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law.”

Similarly, Article 6 of the African Charter provides:

“Every individual shall have the right to liberty and to the security of his person. No one may be deprived of his freedom except for reasons and conditions previously laid down by law. In particular, no one may be arbitrarily arrested and detained.”

333 UNGA, Resolution 60/147: *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*, adopted on 16 December 2005, UN Doc. A/Res/60/147.

334 African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, *Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa*, adopted on 29 May 2003.

335 Criminal Code Act, Cap C38 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natleg-bod/1916/en/65684>

336 Nigeria, Anti-Torture Act, 2017, <https://policehumanrightsresources.org/content/uploads/2019/10/Anti-Torture-Act-2017.pdf?x96812>. Under Section 2(2) of the Anti-Torture Act, secret detention places, solitary confinement, incommunicado or other similar forms of detention, where torture may be carried on are prohibited. Any confession, admission or statement obtained as a result of torture shall not be invoked.

8.4 RIGHT TO WORK AND AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The enforcement of the sit-at-home order violates the right to freedom of movement enshrined in section 41(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as well as Article 12 of ICCPR and Article 12 of the ACHPR.

The inhumane treatments being meted out to people who defy the sit-at-home order violates their right to the dignity of the human person as enshrined under Article 7 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the ACHPR. It also violates section 34 of the Nigerian Constitution, which stipulates that every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and that a person shall not be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The order also violates a range of economic and social rights as guaranteed by the ICESCR including the right to work (Article 6); standard of living (Article 11) and education (Article 13). At the same time the failure of the state to provide sufficient social protection to enable those unable to work and/or earn a livelihood to enjoy an adequate standard of living violates the right to social security under Article 9 ICESCR and the right to food under Article 11. These rights and the right to movement and the right to treatment with dignity and respect, are fundamental to the enjoyment of the right to life.³³⁷

Similarly, the forceful closure of schools in deference to the sit-at-home order violates the right to education, enshrined under Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),³³⁸ as well as article 17 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Students are unable to attend schools and lack access to what should be provided if even the core minimum obligations of states in relation to the right to education were being provided. These core minimum obligations must be implemented even during times of conflict.³³⁹

8.5 DESTRUCTION OF HOMES AND FORCED EVICTIONS

The destruction of homes and forced eviction of residents without adequate legal safeguards violates a range of human rights. The ICESCR, to which Nigeria acceded in 1993, recognizes the right to "an adequate standard of living ... including adequate ... housing."³⁴⁰ The ICCPR protects the right to the protection of the law against arbitrary or unlawful interference with a person's privacy, family or home.³⁴¹ The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has also affirmed that such forced evictions contravene the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, in particular, Articles 14 and 16 on the right to property and the right to health, and Article 18(1) on the state's duty to protect the family.³⁴² General Comment No. 4 and General Comment No. 7 reinforce the obligation on states to guarantee the right to adequate housing and to stop forced evictions.³⁴³

8.6 ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICED), to which Nigeria acceded on 27 July 2009, affirms the absolute prohibition of all acts of enforced disappearances. The treaty defines Enforced Disappearance as "the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the state or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or

337 UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), CCPR General Comment No. 6: Article 6 (Right to Life), 30 April 1982, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/261/15/pdf/g1926115.pdf>

338 United Nations: "Convention on the Rights of the Child." Treaty Series, vol. 1577, Nov. 1989, p. 3, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/09/19900902%2003-14%20AM/Ch_IV_11p.pdf

339 UN CESCR, General Comment 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Article 11(1)), 13 December 1991, UN Doc. E/1992/23.

340 ICESCR, Article 11. See also, for example, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), General Comment 7: The Right to Adequate Housing (Article 11(1)): Forced Evictions, 20 May 1997; UN CESCR, General Comment 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Article 11(1)), 13 December 1991, UN Doc. E/1992/23.

341 ICCPR, Article 17.

342 African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Social and Economic Rights Action Center (SERAC) and Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) v. Nigeria, Communication 155/96, 27 October 2001, paras 59-63.

343 UN CESCR, General Comment 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Article 11(1)), 13 December 1991, UN Doc. E/1992/23.

acquiescence of the state, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.” The treaty requires the Nigerian authorities to ensure that enforced disappearance constitutes an offence under Nigeria’s criminal law, punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account its extreme seriousness, and to investigate all cases of disappearances and bring those responsible to justice. In particular, state parties to the ICED must take measures to hold responsible persons who commit, order, solicit or induce an enforced disappearance; people who attempt to do so; and people who are accomplice to or participate in enforced disappearance.

Again, states must ensure that “exceptional circumstance” defences are not available in relation to the crime of enforced disappearance. Superiors are responsible if they knew or could have known that officers under their authority were committing an enforced disappearance; or if they failed to take measures to prevent an enforced disappearance or report to competent authorities. Family members and other interested persons have rights under the ICED to receive prompt access to information about the fate and whereabouts of anyone deprived of liberty by any authorities of the state on any grounds. Not only are the authorities required by the ICED to provide the information, but states must also ensure that judicial remedies are available to family members, lawyers and other interested persons to force the authorities to provide such information if it is initially denied or refused. States must also ensure that persons deprived of their liberty are released in a manner permitting reliable verification that they have actually been released.³⁴⁴

344 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Convention on Enforced Disappearance), Articles 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 17-22.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International makes the following recommendations:

TO THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES

- **Immediately end the unlawful attacks, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions** of people solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression or peaceful assembly, or because of their identity;
- **Conduct prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into all allegations** of violations and abuses of human rights in the context of the violence in the South-East region, by all actors including the military, paramilitary groups, such as Ebube Agu, IPOB/ESN forces and gunmen, and bring those suspected to be responsible to justice in civilian courts in proceedings that conform to international fair trial standards, without recourse to the death penalty, and make all findings of the investigations public;
- **Ensure that all victims** of violations and abuses of human rights are **provided with access to justice and effective remedies** including measures of restitution, compensation, satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition, and appropriate medical care, health services and rehabilitation;
- Effectively **guarantee the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly**, in accordance with the Nigerian Constitution, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- **Protect people against unlawful attacks**, including by taking all necessary legal measures to guarantee their safety and security and protect their life and property;
- Urgently **implement safeguards against unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions** by including taking immediate measures to end unlawful arrests, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances;
- **Ensure that enforced disappearance constitutes a criminal offence** in line with Nigeria's international obligations under the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Promptly **recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances** to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of victims or other states parties to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance to which Nigeria is a state party;
- **Ensure that arrests and detention are conducted in line with international human rights standards and domestic law**, and that all security forces are trained on these norms. Ensure that there are sufficient, recognizable and precise grounds for arrest. A suspect must only be arrested if there is a reasonable suspicion that he or she may have committed a crime;
- Assure the families of all persons arrested or detained by the various actors in South-East Nigeria that immediate measures will be taken to **investigate and notify them of the fate, whereabouts and legal status of their relatives**, including whether they are alive or not and if they are alive, where they are detained and on what charges;
- Ensure that those involved in the search for victims of enforced disappearance, notably the relatives of

forcibly disappeared detainees, are **protected against ill-treatment, intimidation, reprisal, arrests and enforced disappearance**;

- **Ensure that the Anti-Torture Act is implemented** fully and effectively across Nigeria and issue a clear public directive to all members of the police, military and other security forces, that torture and other ill-treatment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. **Ensure that statements and other information or materials obtained through torture and other ill-treatment are not used as evidence in courts.** And include such prohibitions in professional training programmes for police, soldiers, judges, prosecutors and lawyers;
- **Ensure that the National Committee on Torture is adequately empowered and funded** to carry out its functions including conducting periodic visits and inspections of places of detention. The Committee should have access to all places of detention, including military and DSS detention facilities, “preventive” detention centres, the premises of the security services and all prisons. During inspections, the Committee must be able to interview detainees in private. Inspection reports must be published;
- **Ensure that those who have engaged in conduct amounting to complicity** in unlawful acts of paramilitary groups, such as Ebube Agu, ESN forces and gunmen, **are impartially, independently, thoroughly, transparently and effectively investigated** and held to account in a court of law, whether they be politicians, or private individuals;
- **Make the declaration under Article 34(6) of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights** establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, which allows individuals and NGOs to directly bring cases to the court.
- **Prohibit all destruction of homes and forced evictions in law and in practice, and ensure any eviction and demolitions do not amount to collective punishment** and hold perpetrators to account;
- **Ensure anybody who is rendered homeless as a result of an eviction is provided with timely adequate alternative accommodation** and other necessary immediate relief and support, including **cash transfers and humanitarian assistance**;
- **Ensure that no student is denied access to education as a result of the sit-at-home order.** If students and teachers are unable to access schools **develop and implement innovative ways for them to continue accessing learning remotely**;
- **Protect students, teachers and other staff and school buildings from attacks** during conflict in line with the **Safe Schools Declaration** endorsed by Nigeria;
- **Ensure that there is timely and adequate social protection for all those impacted by the sit-at-home order** to provide them with an adequate standard of living. Social protection should encompass both adequate levels of social security benefits and other appropriate in-kind benefits.

TO THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- Introduce or amend existing legislation to **bring national law into line with international human rights standards.** Specifically:
 - **Bring the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act, 2022 into line with international human rights standards,** removing the provisions on the death penalty and providing that an individual may only be arrested on reasonable suspicion of having committed a criminal offence; that all individuals must be promptly brought before a court and charged with a recognizable criminal offence; and that law enforcement officers (including the military and the DSS when exercising such a function) may only use force when strictly necessary and to the minimum extent required under the circumstances;
 - **Ensure that torture is criminalized** within the domestic legal system in compliance with the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and punishable by sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the practice.
 - **Ensure that domestic law criminalizes enforced disappearances** in compliance with the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and

punishable by sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the practice.

TO THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

- Continue to monitor and regularly seek access to all places of detention in Nigeria, and regularly report on the legality of and conditions in detention and make public the findings of any report;
- Thoroughly, transparently and effectively investigate all allegations of human rights violations and abuses contained in this report and ensure that those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice in fair trials and victims and their families are provided with access to justice and effective remedies.

TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

- Monitor the human rights situation in the South-East region of Nigeria and publicly condemn human rights violations and abuses committed by Nigerian defence and security forces, militias and armed separatists;
- Publicly call on the government of Nigeria to initiate thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in South-East Nigeria, and to bring to justice those suspected to be responsible in fair trials and to ensure access to justice and effective remedies to victims and their families.

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

- Publicly condemn human rights violations and abuses committed by Nigerian defence and security forces, militias and armed separatists in South-East Nigeria;
- Publicly call on the government of Nigeria to conduct thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into allegations of human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the South-East region, and to bring to justice those suspected to be responsible in fair trials and to ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims and their families.

ANNEXTURES I

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
NIGERIA

www.amnesty.org.ng

e: info@amnesty.org.ng
t: (234)-909 086 6666

34 Colorado Close,
off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way,
Maitama,
Abuja FCT



Reference: AIN/0085/101/24

His Excellency Alex Chioma Otti
The Executive Governor of Abia State
Abia State Governor's Office
Library Avenue, Umuahia
Abia State, Nigeria

12 April 2024



Dear Governor Alex Otti,

REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

Amnesty International is currently preparing a report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria. The report is based on our extensive research since 2022. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a number of sources, including during three visits to the southeastern parts of Nigeria.

Our research covers violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence; IPOB/ESN forces, "unknown gunmen," cult groups, Nigeria's military, vigilante group members, and the state-backed para-military outfit commonly referred to as the "Ebube-Agu." The human rights abuse/violations documented by our researchers include, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, internal displacements, suppression of the right to freedom of movement (enforced sit-at-home order), human rights abuses by the state-backed Ebube-Agu militia, the excessive use of force and clampdown on suspected IPOB members, torture and other ill-treatment military reprisal attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention by Ebube-Agu militia, and internal displacements/communities being controlled by bandits, etc.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights are being violated in the process of the sit-at-home order in the Southeast.

Amnesty International believes that states have the primary responsibility to promote, respect and protect the human rights guaranteed under the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) and human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Nigeria is a state party. We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the Southeast to allow us to consider the information in our research findings.

Amnesty International Nigeria would like to request for an appointment to meet with you (or your designated representative) at your convenient date and time in the second week of May 2024 to discuss the violence in the

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

southeastern parts of Nigeria, especially in Abia state. This would offer us an opportunity to discuss with you our research findings and obtain the position of the government on the findings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our researcher, Maurice Canice, on **0908 659 4869** or via email at **maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng** to confirm your availability to meet and an indication of your date and preferred time.

Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish at the end.

Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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Maitama,
Abuja FCT

www.amnesty.org.ng



Reference: AIN/0086/101/24

His Excellency Chukwuma C. Soludo
The Executive Governor of Anambra State
Anambra State Governor's Office
Onitsha – Enugu Express Way
Awka, Anambra State
Nigeria

12 April 2024



Dear Governor Chukwuma Soludo,

REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

Amnesty International is currently preparing a report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria. The report is based on our extensive research since 2022. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a number of sources, including during three visits to the southeastern parts of Nigeria.

Our research covers violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence; IPOB/ESN forces, "unknown gunmen," cult groups, Nigeria's military, vigilante group members, and the state-backed para-military outfit commonly referred to as the "Ebube-Agu." The human rights abuse/violations documented by our researchers include, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, internal displacements, suppression of the right to freedom of movement (enforced sit-at-home order), human rights abuses by the state-backed Ebube-Agu militia, the excessive use of force and clampdown on suspected IPOB members, torture and other ill-treatment, military reprisal attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention by Ebube-Agu militia, and internal displacements/communities being controlled by bandits, etc.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights are being violated in the process of the sit-at-home order in the Southeast.

Amnesty International believes that states have the primary responsibility to promote, respect and protect the human rights guaranteed under the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) and human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Nigeria is a state party. We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the Southeast to allow us to consider the information in our research findings.

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southeastern parts of Nigeria, especially in Anambra state. This would offer us an opportunity to discuss with you our research findings and obtain the position of the government on the findings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our researcher, Maurice Canice, on **0908 659 4869** or via email at **maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng** to confirm your availability to meet and an indication of your date and preferred time.

Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

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2

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Abuja FCT



www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0087/101/24

His Excellency Francis Nwifuru
The Executive Governor of Ebonyi State
Ebonyi State Governor's Office
Abakaliki, Ebonyi State
Nigeria

12 April 2024



Dear Governor Francis Nwifuru,

REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

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southeastern parts of Nigeria, especially in Ebonyi state. This would offer us an opportunity to discuss with you our research findings and obtain the position of the government on the findings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our researcher, Maurice Canice, on **0908 659 4869** or via email at **maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng** to confirm your availability to meet and an indication of your date and preferred time.

Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

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34 Colorado Close,
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Maitama,
Abuja FCT



www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0088/101/24

His Excellency Peter Ndubisi Mbah
The Executive Governor of Enugu State
Enugu State Governor's Office
Enugu, Enugu State
Nigeria

12 April 2024

Original Copy Collected
by Nebo Innocent
19/04/24

Dear Governor Peter Mbah,

REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

Amnesty International is currently preparing a report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria. The report is based on our extensive research since 2022. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a number of sources, including during three visits to the southeastern parts of Nigeria.

Our research covers violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence; IPOB/ESN forces, "unknown gunmen," cult groups, Nigeria's military, vigilante group members, and the state-backed para-military outfit commonly referred to as the "Ebube-Agu." The human rights abuse/violations documented by our researchers include, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, internal displacements, suppression of the right to freedom of movement (enforced sit-at-home order), human rights abuses by the state-backed Ebube-Agu militia, the excessive use of force and clampdown on suspected IPOB members, torture and other ill-treatment, military reprisal attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention by Ebube-Agu militia, and internal displacements/communities being controlled by bandits, etc.

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Amnesty International Nigeria would like to request for an appointment to meet with you (or your designated representative) at your convenient date and time in the third week of May 2024 to discuss the violence in the

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Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

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Abuja FCT

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Reference: AIN/0087/101/24

His Excellency,
Senator Hope Uzodinma,
The Executive Governor of Imo State
Imo state Government House (Douglas
House)
Owerri, Imo State
Nigeria

12 April 2024



Dear Governor Hope Uzodinma,

REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

Amnesty International is currently preparing a report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria. The report is based on our extensive research since 2022. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a number of sources, including during three visits to the southeastern parts of Nigeria.

Our research covers violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence; IPOB/ESN forces, "unknown gunmen," cult groups, Nigeria's military, vigilante group members, and the state-backed para-military outfit commonly referred to as the "Ebube-Agu." The human rights abuse/violations documented by our researchers include, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, internal displacements, suppression of the right to freedom of movement (enforced sit-at-home order), human rights abuses by the state-backed Ebube-Agu militia, the excessive use of force and clampdown on suspected IPOB members, torture and other ill-treatment military reprisal attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention by Ebube-Agu militia, and internal displacements/communities being controlled by bandits, etc.

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Amnesty International believes that states have the primary responsibility to promote, respect and protect the human rights guaranteed under the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) and human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Nigeria is a state party. We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the Southeast to allow us to consider the information in our research findings.

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

Amnesty International Nigeria would like to request for an appointment to meet with you (or your designated representative) at your convenient date and time in the third week of May 2024 to discuss the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria, especially in Imo state. This would offer us an opportunity to discuss with you our research findings and obtain the position of the government on the findings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our researcher, Maurice Canice, on **0908 659 4869** or via email at **maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng** to confirm your availability to meet and an indication of your date and preferred time.

Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

www.amnesty.org.ng

2

ANNEXTURES II

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34 Colorado Close,
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Maitama,
Abuja FCT

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Reference: AIN/0001/101/25

Kayode Egbetokun
The Inspector General of Police
Force Headquarters
Louis Edet House
Shehu Shagari Way
Central Business District, Area 11
Abuja, Nigeria

28 January 2025



Dear Inspector General of Police,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, a global human rights movement with more than 10 million members and supporters worldwide who work to ensure the protection of human rights, to notify you that our organization is investigating rising violence in South-East Nigeria from 2021 to 2024.

To enable us to understand the spiraling violence in the South-East, we are requesting your response to the following questions:

1. How many policemen have been killed in violence in the South-East from 2021 to 2024?
2. How many police stations were burnt down or destroyed and the locations where these incidents happened - the state, the local government areas, etc.?
3. How many people are in custody of the police in connection with the rising violence in the South-East?

We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the South-East to allow us to consider the information in our research. To this end, we are seeking the assistance of the police with any useful information that would enable us to properly understand the complexities of the violence in the South-East.

To enable us include the information from your office in the report, we would be grateful for your responses by 15 February 2025, via email at maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng. You can also contact us during working hours on **090 9086 6666**.

We would also be pleased to discuss the research and broader human rights issues with you or your office at your convenience.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

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Abuja FCT

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL 

www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0016/101/25

Mr Adeola Oluwatosin Ajayi
Director General
Department of State Services
DSS HQ, 1 Maitama Avenue
P.M.B 253 Abuja, Nigeria

05 February 2025

*Original copy
Received by me
Ella E
6/2/25*

Dear Director General DSS,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, a global human rights movement with more than 10 million members and supporters worldwide who work to ensure the protection of human rights, to notify you that our organization is investigating rising violence in South-East Nigeria from 2021 to 2024.

To enable us to understand the spiraling violence in the South-East, we are requesting your response to the question below:

How many people are in custody of the Department of State Services (DSS) in connection with the rising violence in the South-East?

We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the South-East to allow us to consider the information in our research. To this end, we are seeking the assistance of the DSS with any useful information that would enable us to properly understand the complexities of the violence in the South-East.

To enable us include the information from your office in the report, we would be grateful for your response by 19 February 2025, via email at maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng. You can also contact us during working hours on 090 9086 6666.

We would also be pleased to discuss the research and broader human rights issues with you or your office at your convenience.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria, Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

Reference: AIN/0002/101/25

Lt. Gen. Olufemi Oluyede
Chief of Army Staff
Nigerian Army Headquarters
Area 7, Garki, Abuja
FCT, Nigeria

28 January 2025



Dear Chief of Army Staff,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, a global human rights movement with more than 10 million members and supporters worldwide who work to ensure the protection of human rights, to notify you that our organization is investigating rising violence in South-East Nigeria from 2021 to 2024.

To enable us to understand the spiraling violence in the South-East, we are requesting your response to the following questions:

1. How many soldiers have been killed in the violence in the South-East from 2021 to 2024?
2. How many military bases or equipment were burnt down or destroyed and the locations where these incidents happened - the state, the local government areas, etc.?
3. How many people are in custody of the military in connection with the rising violence in the South-East?

We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the South-East to allow us to consider the information in our research. To this end, we are seeking the assistance of the Army with any useful information that would enable us to properly understand the complexities of the violence in the South-East.

To enable us include the information from your office in the report, we would be grateful for your responses by 15 February 2025, via email at maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng. You can also contact us during working hours on 090 086 6666.

We would also be pleased to discuss the research and broader human rights issues with you or your office at your convenience.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

Cc: Chief of Defence Staff

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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INTERNATIONAL



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Reference: AIN/0012/101/25

General Christopher Gwabin Musa OFR
The Chief of Defence Staff
Nigerian Armed Forces
Defence Headquarters
Garki, Abuja

03 February 2025



Dear Chief of Defence Staff,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International, a global human rights movement with more than 10 million members and supporters worldwide who work to ensure the protection of human rights, to notify you that our organization is investigating rising violence in South-East Nigeria from 2021 to 2024.

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Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

ANNEXTURES III

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
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t: (234)-909 086 6666

34 Colorado Close,
off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way,
Maitama,
Abuja FCT



www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0085/102/24

His Excellency Alex Chioma Otti
The Executive Governor of Abia State
Abia State Governor's Office
Library Avenue, Umuahia
Abia State, Nigeria

25 November 2024



Dear Governor Alex Otti,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International to follow up on our letter with Ref. No. AIN/0085/101/24 to your Excellency, which was received by your office on 22 April 2024, in relation to the above subject matter. The referenced letter is herein attached for ease of reference.

Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

Amnesty International is currently preparing a report on human rights violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence in the southeastern parts of Nigeria. The report is based on our extensive research since 2022. Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a number of sources, including during three visits to the southeastern part of Nigeria.

Our research covers violations and abuses committed in the context of the violence; IPOB/ESN forces, "unknown gunmen," cult groups, Nigeria's military, vigilante group members, and the state-backed para-military outfit commonly referred to as the "Ebube-Agu." The human rights abuse/violations documented by our researchers include, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings, internal displacements, suppression of the right to freedom of movement (enforced sit-at-home order), human rights abuses by the state-backed Ebube-Agu militia, the excessive use of force and clampdown on suspected IPOB members, torture and other ill-treatment military reprisal attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention by Ebube-Agu militia, and internal displacements/communities being controlled by bandits, etc.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights are being violated in the process of the sit-at-home order in the Southeast. Amnesty International believes that states have the primary responsibility to promote, respect and protect the human rights guaranteed under the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) and human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Nigeria is a state party. We require your input and clarifications on the situation in the Southeast to allow us to consider the information in our research findings.

Amnesty International Nigeria would like to request for an appointment to meet with you (or your designated representative) at your convenient date and time in November or December 2024 to discuss the violence in the

Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Social Justice of Amnesty International Nigeria. Registered address: 34 Colorado Close, off Thames Street, off Alvan Ikoku Way, Maitama, Abuja FCT, Nigeria. Registration number: 73222.

southeastern parts of Nigeria, especially in Abia state. This would offer us an opportunity to discuss with you our research findings and obtain the position of the government on the findings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our researcher, Maurice Canice, on **0908 659 4869** or via email at **maurice.canice@amnesty.org.ng** to confirm your availability to meet and an indication of your date and preferred time.

Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

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Abuja FCT



www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0086/102/24

His Excellency Chukwuma C. Soludo
The Executive Governor of Anambra State
Anambra State Governor's Office
Onitsha – Enugu Express Way
Awka, Anambra State
Nigeria



25 November 2024

Dear Governor Chukwuma Soludo,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International to follow up on our letter with Ref. No. AIN/0086/101/24 to your Excellency, which was received by your office on 23 April 2024, in relation to the above subject matter. The referenced letter is herein attached for ease of reference.

Amnesty International, which is a global movement of more than 10 million people who take injustice personally. We campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all. We have sections, offices, and entities in over 150 countries.

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Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

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Abuja FCT



www.amnesty.org.ng

Reference: AIN/0087/102/24

His Excellency Francis Nwifuru
The Executive Governor of Ebonyi State
Ebonyi State Governor's Office
Abakaliki, Ebonyi State
Nigeria

25 November 2024

Dear Governor Francis Nwifuru,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International to follow up on our letter with Ref. No. AIN/0087/101/24 to your Excellency, which was received by your office on 22 April 2024, in relation to the above subject matter. The referenced letter is herein attached for ease of reference.

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Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria



Uguru F.C. (Mrs)

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Reference: AIN/0088/102/24

His Excellency Peter Ndubisi Mbah
The Executive Governor of Enugu State
Enugu State Governor's Office
Enugu, Enugu State
Nigeria

25 November 2024

Original Copy Received
by Nebo Innocent
28/11/24

Dear Governor Peter Mbah,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

I am writing on behalf of Amnesty International to follow up on our letter with Ref. No. AIN/0088/101/24 to your Excellency, which was received by your office on 19 April 2024, in relation to the above subject matter. The referenced letter is herein attached for ease of reference.

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Reference: AIN/0089/102/24

His Excellency, Senator Hope Uzodinma
The Executive Governor of Imo State
Imo state Government House (Douglas
House)
Owerri, Imo State
Nigeria

25 November 2024



Dear Governor Hope Uzodinma,

RE: REQUEST FOR A MEETING WITH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES IN RELATION TO THE VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHEAST

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Please accept the assurances of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a long horizontal line that ends in a small loop.

Isa Sanusi
Director, Amnesty International Nigeria

www.amnesty.org.ng

2

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
IS A GLOBAL MOVEMENT
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.
WHEN INJUSTICE HAPPENS
TO ONE PERSON, IT
MATTERS TO US ALL.**

CONTACT US



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A DECADE OF IMPUNITY

ATTACKS AND UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

Since 2021, there have been increases in human rights violations and abuses and serious crimes under domestic law against the population in South-East Nigeria. Those suspected to be responsible for these crimes include members of the defence and security forces, IPOB/ESN forces, and various non-state actors, including the so-called “unknown gunmen,” cult groups, vigilante group members, and the state-backed paramilitary outfit commonly referred to as “Ebube Agu”.

According to available data, between January 2021 and June 2023, 1,844 people were killed in the South-East region, with deaths arising as a result of protests, violent clashes, abductions, mob violence, secessionist groups, riots, and electoral violence. As at the time of writing this report, the killings continued.

IPOB issued a sit-at-home order in the South-East on 9 August 2021, and it has been enforced with a heavy hand. This has led to violations of residents’ rights to freedom of movement, life, and education.

There have been increased attacks by gunmen, leading to the killing of security agents and residents. Gunmen have turned some communities into “ungoverned spaces” by sacking constituted authorities, displacing residents, and taking total control of communities.

Index: **AFR 44/9363/2025**.

AUGUST 2025

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