



**Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 May 2017**

**Is there COI that on 30th August 2015 members of IPOB gathered at Nkpor near Onitsha and marched, handing out leaflets about the Biafra movement, passing the following places Onitsha flyover bridge, Onitsha Army Barracks and Upper Iweka?**

**Is there COI that on 30th August 2015 during this same march that members of IPOB were fired at by a joint task force of the police and the navy using guns during which people were injured by gunshots and some people were killed by gunshots?**

**Is there COI that during this march on 30th August 2015 that members of IPOB were injured and hospitalised as a result of being injured by force used by the police and navy?**

**Is there COI that persons who organised this IPOB march on 30th August 2015 were arrested by the police following the march?**

A report published by Amnesty International, in a chapter titled “A Pattern of Excessive Use of Force”, refers to the shooting of IPOB members in Onitsha on 30 August 2015 as follows:

“One of the earliest shootings of IPOB members and supporters took place on 30 August 2015 in Onitsha, after IPOB members held a spontaneous march through the town early in the afternoon to distribute flyers about Biafra and talk to people about their cause. One man said: ‘We only had our bibles and flyers. No one was armed, we were so peaceful, and we didn’t even block the roads.’ Eyewitnesses said the first group of police officers they met were friendly and did not stop them. A military patrol also stopped to talk to them and took their flyers. At Uga junction however, a combined team of police, navy, army and civil defence personnel blocked the road with three Hilux vans and told those in front to turn around. According to eyewitnesses, the hundreds of marchers were not given enough time to organize themselves and turn around. The police and military shot teargas and live ammunition at the marchers, killing at least two and injuring 22.” (Amnesty International (25 November 2016) *Nigeria: 'Bullets were Raining Everywhere' Deadly Repression of Pro-Biafra Activists*, p.39)

A report on this incident from the Lagos-based newspaper Vanguard states:

“Three persons were feared dead and about twenty others wounded on Sunday when members of a new pro- Biafra group, the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) and security operatives engaged in a shootout in Onitsha. It was not clear what caused the trouble, but one of the injured persons, Mr. Chinwendu Ikechukwu said the group was carrying out an evangelism

programme on the need for people to embrace Biafra Republic in parts of Nkpor , Idemili North local government area after their routine meeting, adding that it was while they were on the street that security operatives opened fire on them. He said: 'On reaching Okpoko junction, we were accosted by a detachment of policemen who fired tear gas on our members numbering about 5000, but they later allowed us to go since we were non violent. However, on reaching Uga junction close to the Niger Bridge Head, the Naval men on duty there opened fire on us. In our defenseless state, three of our members were shot dead, while about twenty others sustained injuries. Even the police who initially allowed us to go later joined in shooting our members.'" (Vanguard (31 August 2015) *Nigeria: Three Feared Dead, 20 Wounded As Pro-Biafra Group, Security Agents Clash in Anambra*)

A report from Nigerian newspaper The Sun states:

"The Nigerian Navy, Central Naval Command (CNC) has denied the killing of some members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) by their operatives in Anambra State. The operational area of the CNC with headquarters in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State covers Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Anambra and Kogi states. The Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) CNC, Rear Admiral Stanley Ogoigbe, who debunked reports of the killings while briefing newsmen at the command headquarters yesterday, said it became necessary for him to personally clear the air on the rumoured killings, which he described as untrue. There had been reports of a clash between Naval personnel and MASSOB members, during which some people were allegedly killed. Ogoigbe said the Navy personnel only shot into the air to disperse a large number of MASSOB members who were on a protest march towards the Onitsha head bridge, noting that some protesting youths had already overrun the policemen on duty at the foot of the bridge. He said: 'No such act was ever committed. The MASSOB group was on a protest march. They overran the policemen that were on duty, and were coming towards the Navy personnel. As they approached, the Navy fired warning shots into the air to scare them away, and they all scampered. No-body died in the process.'" (The Sun Nigeria (6 September 2015) *Navy denies killing MASSOB members*)

A report from Vanguard, in a section headed "Peaceful procession turns bloody", states:

"Narrating what he termed as their ordeal in the hands of the naval ratings and policemen to his visiting officers, Okoye alleged that on the fateful day, their members numbering over 2,000 had converged at United Primary School, UPS, Nkpor in Idemili North Local Government Area, near Onitsha, Anambra State, penultimate Sunday morning for their quarterly prayer/orientation summit.

He alleged that after their prayers, they left for a peaceful procession which took them to Nkpor Junction down to Borromeo Roundabout and Zik's Inosi Onira Retreat and across the Onitsha Army Barracks upto Upper Iweka, distributing their flyers. He added that at Upper Iweka, some policemen confronted them and after explanations that they were on a peaceful procession, they allowed them to move ahead with the cops trailing them.

He alleged that on getting to Coca cola Bus-stop close to Premier Breweries Gate, a team of Naval personnel confronted them and an explanation was offered as to their mission. But the situation soon gave way to pandemonium when the Naval men allegedly opened fire, shooting into the crowd after one of them made a phone call.

He added that as they retreated to avoid being hit by bullets, the police team from Fegge Division which was trailing them, also opened fire and in addition to shooting teargas cannisters which forced the peaceful crowd to disperse with each person scampering to safety.” (Vanguard (29 September 2015) *Nigeria: Aftermath of Bloody Clash With Navy, Police - IPOB Draws Battle Line*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **References:**

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