

Commotion as policemen, soldiers clash in Abia

Ogbonnaya Ikokwu

THERE was commotion on Monday morning in Umuahia, the capital of Abia State, when policemen attached to the Railway Police Station manhandled an unidentified army captain for allegedly parking his 18-seater Mitsubishi bus close to the fence of the station.

An eyewitness, who does not want his name on print, said the Divisional Police Officer attached to the station was driving into the station in his white Toyota Highlander SUV car when he spotted the bus and ordered the owner to park the vehicle properly.

The DPO had insisted that the army captain's vehicle was blocking his way.

The source said when the driver of the bus came out dressed in ash colour native attire, he greeted the DPO and quickly wanted to move his bus, but the police officer ordered him to come closer and explain why he should block his way to the station.

He said, "The man continued to plead with the police officer who was fiercely angry and also refused to allow him to remove his bus, ordering his men to arrest the man.

"Then the man told him he was a captain in the Nigerian army, but he insisted that he must obey his orders first."

When Southern City News visited the police station, residents who owned business around the place, were seen pleading on behalf of the soldier, but the DPO would not listen.

"The DPO was shouting on top of his voice, saying, 'he (army captain) must obey my arrest order. You people should tell him to obey my arrest order, you must obey my arrest, you said you are a captain, you must tell me how many wars you have fought'.

"The officer boasted he had fought in three states invaded by Boko Haram; Bornu, Adamawa and Yobe before coming here. He said the army captain must show him his identity card and ordered that he (army captain) should be dragged into the cell," the eyewitness said.

It was learnt that the situation created panic around the railway area as shop owners closed their shops to avoid been hit by stray bullet as the policemen began to shoot sporadically into the air.

But the drama became messier when four soldiers arrived at the police station in about 20 minutes time and discovered that the man who was beaten by the police was actually an army captain.

One of them was heard saying, "I thought it was even a junior officer," as he ordered another policeman to call the DPO.

In less than 15 minutes, four Hilux vans fully loaded with soldiers landed at the police station, just as the soldiers expressed anger at what happened to their boss.

They later took the DPO away and another police officer with them to their base, after giving them the beating of their life.

Efforts made to contact the state Police Public Relation Officers, Mr. Ezekiel Odeviotu, proved abortive, as he did not take calls put across to his mobile phone number.

Odeviotu later sent a text message to our correspondent, saying, I am in a meeting."

Enugu to privatise 17 moribund industries

*Holds two-day
investment summit in
April*

To drive sustainable economic growth in the face of dwindling allocation from the Federation Account, the Enugu State government yesterday, revealed plans to 'commercialise or privatise' 17 moribund industries.



Enugu State governor, Ugwuanji

The plan would top the list of discussions at a two-day investment summit tagged "Oganiru Enugu," billed to hold from April 12 to 14 in the state.

The industries, the state said, would be privatised or commercialised so that they could contribute to the state's IGR as well as provide employment to the teeming youths.

The Director General of the Enugu State Investment Summit, Ike Chioke, who announced the plans in a press briefing, said some of the industries to be affected are Hotel Presidential, Niger Steel Company, Sunrise Flour Mill and Enugu Vegetable Oil Limited.

Others are Adarice Company, United Palm Produce, Premier Cashew Industries, Aluminum Factory, Obe, Ikenga Hotels, Nsukka and among others.

Noting that the summit would be a 'talk show,' he said that the plan was to bring in investors from various parts of the world "to showcase the potentials available in the state in ten core areas of solid minerals and mining, power generation and distribution, agriculture and agricultural processing, tourism and hospitality and health tourism development.

Others, according to him, are "ICT/media and entertainment, free trade zone, manufacturing and industrial parks as well as real estate and tertiary education."

He said that the state was suitable for investments in the ten core areas, stressing that the idea was in line with Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi's promise to make the state an investment hub in Nigeria.

"The participants at the event will appraise sectors of interest to them as well as understand the state's strategic direction regarding those sectors. After conclusion of the investment summit, we expect participants to drive investments in the sector of focus for the state", he said.

Chioke, who is a member of the Enugu State Economic Committee inaugurated last, noted that there was no better way of attracting development in the state unless there was a deliberate plan to look inwards and put the state on the production line.

He said that the ten key identified sectors have potential to yield revenue to the state if well harnessed, stressing that it would also boost the activities of the small and medium enterprises (SME's).

He said that part of the funding for the summit has already been provided by the DFID, stressing that government would involve more private individuals and organisations, so as to achieve its desires.

He added that the summit, which is expected to attract several foreigners, was an outcome of the recent visit to Dublin by the governor and some members of the Economic team.



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Support me to move Ubulu-Uku forward - 15-year-old Obi Akaeze I

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Newly-crowned heir-apparent of slain HRM, Obi Edward Ofulue III of Ubulu-Uku kingdom, in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, HRM Agbogidi Chukwuka Noah, Akaeze I, has appealed to his people and Deltans for support as he charts a new course for his kingdom.



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The 15-year-old monarch, who ascended his fathers' throne last week, made the plea when he paid a visit to Governor Ifeanyi Okowa at the Government House, Asaba on Tuesday.

Obi Akaeze I was accompanied on the visit by the Chairman of the Ubulu-Uku Council, Chief Isaac Anwuzia; the Regent, Prince Anthony Ofulue; his siblings, relatives and Palace Chiefs.

The handsome monarch thanked Governor Okowa, the government and people of Delta State for the immense show of love during the trying times of his Kingdom caused by the dastardly a suction and subsequent murder of his late father last month.

He called for support to enable him succeed as the new Obi of Ubulu-Uku, being a teenager who is still in school.

Governor Okowa, while addressing the Obi and his guests, lauded the Ubulu-Uku people for the peaceful and successful emergence of the monarch.

Okowa bserved that though the manner with which the immediate past monarch, HRM Edward Ofulue III, joined his ancestors was condemnable, the successful emergence of HRM Agbogidi Akaeze I was a signal that Ubulu-Uku kingdom was on the part of progress.

He noted that the new Obi was still in school, hence the appointment of a Regent, adding that the Delta State government would give him, members of his family and his kingdom all necessary support.

Governor Okowa advised the Obi to be conscious of the fact that while he continues his studies abroad, his people and members of his kingdom would be waiting earnestly for his return to apply his academic experience in leading them.

"We want to encourage you to know that as you study, you have your people back home that you would have to administer their culture and customs as their royal father and we hope that soon, you will be through with your studies and bring your experience to bear on the administration of your Kingdom," the governor said.

He assured the people of Ubulu-Uku kingdom that the killers of Obi Ofulue III would face the wrath of the law, adding that arrests have been made while security agencies are upbeat to nab other fleeing suspects.

It will be recalled that HRM Obi Ofulue III, the late Obi, was kidnapped on January 5 only for his reminds to be found some weeks after at a bush path along Umunede