

Protest erupts in Edo over killing as residents sack livestock traders

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CP Monday Agbonika

• HURIWA criticises govt's response to insecurity

Angry residents of Ekpoma in Esan West Local Council of Edo State on Saturday disrupted activities at the [livestock market in the university community](#), driving away traders and slaughtering goats in protest over the killing of a youth by suspected kidnappers.

The protest, which followed the discovery of the youth's body in nearby bushes on Friday night, led to the suspension of commercial activities in the area. Campaign billboards for the 2027 general elections were also pulled down by protesters.

Videos that circulated on social media yesterday showed youths storming the livestock market, chasing away traders and killing goats belonging to them. Cows were also seen wandering onto a major road as traders fled, with some residents reportedly beating the animals, while slaughtered goats were dragged away.

A resident, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the protest was triggered by growing anger over insecurity in Ekpoma, particularly the rising cases of kidnapping.

According to the resident, the situation has prevented farmers from accessing their farms and has created [widespread fear among community](#) members.

Reacting to the incident, the Edo State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Kassim Afegbua, condemned the violence and appealed for calm to prevent reprisals in other parts of the state. He disclosed that Governor Monday Okpebholo was in Ekpoma to address residents and de-escalate tensions, describing the incident as a spontaneous and senseless mob action.

In a statement issued by his Chief Press Secretary, Patrick Ebojele, the governor assured residents of the state of his administration's commitment to the safety and security of lives and property. He said ongoing security measures were already yielding results in the fight against kidnapping, cultism and other crimes.

The governor added that his administration had invested heavily in modern security equipment, intelligence gathering and inter-agency collaboration, stressing that security operations were ongoing across the state.

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He cautioned that security matters were sensitive and not always suitable for public debate, as premature disclosures could undermine operations. While affirming citizens' constitutional right to peaceful protest, he warned against attempts to exploit public anger to destabilise the state.

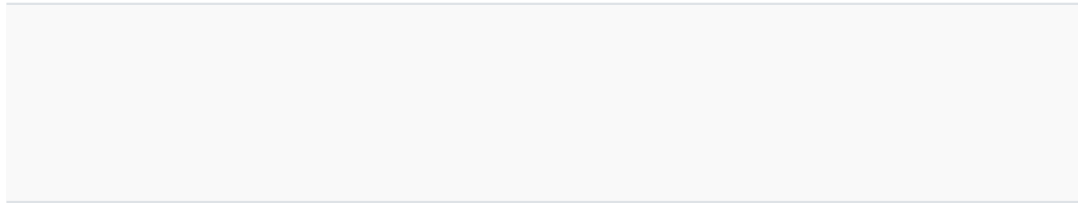
Earlier, the Public Relations Officer of the Edo State Police Command, Eno Ikoedem, said the police were on top of the security situation in Ekpoma, adding that the state Commissioner of Police, Monday Agbonika, was already in the town. He disclosed that nine persons kidnapped on Friday were rescued unhurt after the deployment of the Eagle Combat Drone Unit alongside local hunters.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) commended residents of Ekpoma in Edo State for staging peaceful demonstrations against rising insecurity, marked by what it described as incessant and unprecedented cases of kidnapping for ransom.

The group denounced attacks by terrorists on schoolchildren and farming communities in northern Nigeria, criticising the government for focusing on next year's elections and the re-election of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu amid what it described as the near collapse of the nation's economy.

HURIWA warned that no amount of armed attacks on protesters by government-backed forces would stop impending protests if poor governance continues in the country.

The group also criticised President Tinubu for directing security chiefs to pursue terrorists who invaded a Catholic boarding school in Niger State for a second time, killing more than 40 people and abducting dozens of others from the school and surrounding community.



It said the government responds weakly to terrorist attacks, even as armed groups continue to expand their operations [against soft targets such as schools](#) and markets.

In a statement by its National Coordinator, Emmanuel Nnadozie Onwubiko, HURIWA predicted a nationwide civil protest due to escalating security challenges, noting that citizens could be compelled to organise demonstrations larger than those witnessed during the 2020 protests against police brutality.

The group stressed that good governance and the protection of lives and property constitute the primary constitutional responsibility of political office holders, urging them to prioritise these duties over political ambitions.