

Gunmen kill village head, abduct retired Customs officer in Osun

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File: Kayode Egbetokun

By Bola Bamigbola

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A community on the Osun–Kwara boundary, Ora, was thrown into panic on Monday following a fatal attack by suspected gunmen.

PUNCH Metro learnt on Tuesday that the attack claimed the life of a village head, identified simply as Dennis, while a retired Customs officer, Emmanuel Owolabi, was abducted.

Residents who spoke with our correspondent said the abduction threw the community into panic, with people fleeing in different directions as the assailants escaped into the bush with the victim.

The victim's wife, Titilayo, told *PUNCH Metro* that the incident occurred in front of Owolabi's house on Akisa Road, Ora, Osun State, a few minutes before 7pm.

Narrating the incident, Titilayo said her husband had visited her shop shortly after she closed for the day.

While he headed to another location in the town, she returned home to prepare dinner.

She said that after finishing the meal and while waiting for her husband, she heard gunshots at the entrance to their compound.

“When I closed my shop around 6:30pm, my husband came around and asked me to go home. When I got home, I cooked and was about to serve my children their food when I heard a gunshot.

“I initially thought the shots were from hunters who sometimes come around, but the gunshots became sporadic. Later, I heard my husband’s voice outside our fence,” she said.

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She added, “I didn’t know he was being held by bandits. I went out to check what was happening.

“One of the gunmen jumped over the fence into our compound. Those I saw were young boys. I knelt and spoke Hausa to him because they were speaking Hausa. Instead of responding, he started beating me.

“He asked me for money. While all this was going on, they were firing shots. The next thing I heard was the sound of a motorcycle conveying my husband towards the bush.

“The two gunmen in our compound then jumped over the fence into the bush and fled. My husband is a retired customs officer. People should help us bring him back home safely,” Titilayo said.

Sources in the community who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the incident also said that while fleeing the area, the gunmen shot dead a village chief, identified simply as Dennis, who was returning

from his farm.

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When contacted on Tuesday, the Osun State Police Command spokesperson, Abiodun Ojelabi, confirmed the incident.

Ojelabi, however, said more deployment had been made to comb the bush in the area.

“Immediately after the incident happened yesterday, police operatives and other volunteers chased after the gunmen.

“We are working hard to rescue the victim. One person was shot, but not in Osun. Where they killed him falls within Kwara State,” he said.