

Gunmen kill cleric, abduct worshippers in Ekiti church invasion

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File photo: Ekiti State map

By Abiodun Nejo

The police in Ekiti State said on Wednesday that they had begun moves to secure the release of worshippers kidnapped on Tuesday night at Eda Oniyo Ekiti, the headquarters of Ilejemeje Local Government Area of the state.

The bandits, who attacked a Christ Apostolic Church on the outskirts of the town during a programme at about 8:30pm on Tuesday, shot the pastor dead and whisked away a yet-to-be-determined number of worshippers.

PUNCH Metro gathered on Wednesday that the incident threw the community into panic as residents gathered in groups to discuss the situation and growing security concerns in the area, which shares a border with Obbo

Aiyegunle in Kwara State.

Sources in Eda Oniyo, who did not want to be mentioned because of the sensitive nature of the incident, said the heavily armed attackers, who came in large numbers, operated for several minutes, shot the pastor dead, and abducted an unspecified number of victims into a nearby forest.

One of the sources said, ‘The invaders were many. They killed the pastor and took away some worshippers. We cannot state the exact number yet. Efforts to account for those missing have begun. The community is in a state of panic for now.’”

The state Commissioner of Police, Michael Falade, has ordered a thorough investigation and a manhunt for the suspected gunmen who carried out the attack.

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The state Police Public Relations Officer, Sunday Abutu, disclosed this in a statement in Ado Ekiti on Wednesday morning.

Abutu stated, “The police, in collaboration with the Nigerian Army, the Amotekun Corps, the Agro Marshal, vigilantes, and local hunters, have commenced aggressive bush-combing operations and a manhunt for the perpetrators in order to ensure the rescue of the victims and the arrest and prosecution of the culprits.

“A preliminary investigation revealed that on April 28, 2026, while church members were holding their all-night prayers on the outskirts of the town, a group of yet-to-be-identified gunmen numbering about five attacked the worshippers, fatally shot the pastor, and abducted some of the church members.

“The Commissioner of Police calls for calm as necessary steps are being taken to address the situation and prevent a recurrence.

“Members of the public are advised to remain security conscious and vigilant and promptly report any suspicious persons or groups within their environment to the police and other security agencies for necessary action,” he added.

The police spokesperson also urged members of the public, especially religious leaders, to strictly adhere to the state government’s earlier directive that all gatherings, particularly late-night gatherings, should not be held without the knowledge of the police to ensure adequate security before, during, and after such events.