

Insecurity: Protests rock Ondo, Oyo as youths block highway with corpses



—2 shot dead, 3 others abducted in Ondo —Protesters chase away Police boss
By Dayo Johnson & Adeola Badru AKURE — FOLLOWING the killing of two persons and the shooting of three abducted persons, angry residents of Akure North Council area in Ondo State, yesterday, blocked the Akure/Owo highway with corpses of those killed by gunmen. This came on a day that residents staged a protest over alleged cases of kidnapping, banditry and other criminal activities in Jobele, Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State, yesterday. The youths blocked the Ibadan–Oyo Road and disrupting both human and vehicular movement. This protest in Ondo State came barely 24 hours after the abduction of the Secretary of Okeluju Local Council Development Area under Akoko North West Local Council Area of the state, Joseph Aladesuyi. Aladesuyi and two others were abducted by the bandits on his farm in Ilu-Abo community, near the Akure Airport. Meanwhile, kidnapers of the LCDA scribe are demanding N100 million for his release. A source in the family said that kidnapers opened a line of communication with them by 7am on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the angry residents of Ilu-Abo, Kajola and Owode communities barricaded the highway to protest over what they termed the insensitivity of the authorities to attend to the incessant abduction and killing of the residents of the area. The angry protesters, who blocked the highway with the corpses of the victims, explained that gunmen again struck on Tuesday morning, killing two people and abducting three other members of the community. They vowed not to leave the road until Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa visited the area and addressed them on the security challenges in the communities. A mild drama, however, played out when the Ondo Police Commissioner, CP Adebowale Lawal, visited the community but was turned back by the angry protesters as they ignored his plea that they should allow free flow of traffic on the highway. They insisted that they would not vacate the road as their lives are in danger every time. Lawal pleaded with the residents that the security agencies, including Amotekun operatives and the Police, would ensure the safety of lives and properties and would beef up security in the communities. The demonstrators displayed placards with various inscriptions, such as ‘We Are Dying, Save Our Soul’, ‘Mr Governor, Please Assist Us’, ‘Our Children Are in Danger’, ‘We Cannot Go to Farms Again’, among others. They carried the corpses and chanted songs, demanding urgent government intervention in addressing the persistent insecurity in the communities near the Akure airport. Gridlock causes vehicular movement Their protest caused a heavy gridlock along the expressway connecting the southern parts of the country with the North, as they insisted that they would not allow vehicular movement along the road until the government addressed the unending security challenges confronting them in the communities. A local, who spoke with newsmen, lamented that kidnapping incidents had become frequent in the area, accusing the government of failing to take decisive action to protect lives and property. He said: “We are tired of this situation. Almost every day now, we hear about kidnappings around the airport road. On Monday, a Council Secretary was kidnapped, and today (yesterday), one person was killed, while three others have been taken away by gunmen. “The government is not doing anything to protect us. People are living in fear, and many farmers can no longer go to their farms. We cannot continue like this.” Abductors of LCDA scribe demand N100m Meanwhile, the abductors of Aladesuyi, who is the Managing Director of Jotina Farms, have insisted on collecting N100m ransom before his release. A family source said: “They (kidnappers) called this morning (yesterday). They asked us to bring N100 million before they would release him. They spoke very shortly and hastily during the call, and they did not even allow us to say much. “We have been worried since

yesterday, but the call has given us hope. We are still expecting that they will call because the money is a whole lot. “Our concern is more about his health at the moment because we were made to understand that when they (kidnappers) arrived on the farm, he was shot in one of his hands while they were dragging him.” We’ve arrested a kidnap kingpin — Police The Police Commissioner, during a visit to the traditional ruler of Ilu-Abo, Oba Olu Falae, assured him that efforts were made by security agencies to curb insecurity in the town. Lawal said that he would deploy additional policemen and tactical units to check the insecurity. Also, police detectives have arrested one Abdullahi Lawal, identified as the mastermind of a kidnapping incident in the Ikare-Akoko axis. The Command’s spokesperson, DSP JimohAbayomi, said: “Abdullahi Lawal managed to escape from the scene at the time, despite sustaining gunshot injuries during the encounter with police operatives. “Following his escape, the Command immediately placed the suspect on an intelligence watchlist, while intensive surveillance and discreet investigations were launched to track his movements and possible hideouts. “After months of sustained intelligence-led operations and coordinated efforts by security personnel, the suspect was successfully apprehended by police operatives in Ikare-Akoko. He has since made useful confessional statements and will be charged in court.” Protesters block Ibadan–Oyo road over kidnapping In a related development, tension gripped Jobele in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State, yesterday, as residents staged a protest over alleged cases of kidnapping, banditry and other criminal activities in the community, blocking the Ibadan–Oyo Road and disrupting both human and vehicular movement. The demonstrators decried the worsening security situation in the area and called on relevant security agencies to urgently intervene to safeguard lives and property. According to the protesters, suspected kidnappers invaded one of the communities along the axis on Monday. The angry protesters said: “On Monday, the suspected kidnappers invaded one of the communities along the axis. An attempt was made to kidnap a lady but she narrowly escaped by scaling the fence.” “Even though she narrowly escaped, she received a deep machete cut in one of her hands. This was not the first time that such an incident would happen in the area.” “We are not going to leave the road until our (residents’) safety is guaranteed by the relevant security agencies.” Meanwhile, Dolapo Awotunde of Ward 8, in a statement, revealed that Afijio Local Government Area had recorded no fewer than seven kidnapping incidents in recent times. Awotunde said: “It is no longer news that kidnapping has become rampant in Afijio Local Government Area, particularly in Jobele. “The community has recorded not less than seven kidnapping-related incidents in recent times, and sadly, another disturbing attack occurred between Saturday night and Sunday morning. “During the attack, a victim was brutally wounded by the perpetrators. The victim was rushed to the General Hospital and later referred to Ogbomoso for advanced treatment. “Unfortunately, one of his hands has been amputated due to the severity of the injuries sustained. “This development has caused serious outrage and concern among residents. In response, community members, including students, have blocked the Old Oyo–Ibadan Road and the major Ibadan–Oyo–Ogbomoso highway, demanding to know why the suspect was released and who ordered the release. “This situation raises serious concerns about the security of lives and property in Jobele and the surrounding communities.” We’re trying to restore normalcy —Oyo Police When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Ayanlade Olayinka, said: “The Commissioner of Police, Haruna, has sent both the Area Commander and the Divisional Police Officer to the spot to restore normalcy on the road.”

