

4 cops killed, police stations burnt in Anambra, Ebonyi

From Titus Eleweke (Ankpa), Linos Efiang (Umuahia), Peter Moses (Abeokuta) & Boniface W. Ahmad (Mina)

Gunmen on Wednesday killed two police inspectors when they attacked the Obosi Police Station in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

The attack was launched around 11.30 pm, barely 24 hours after the newly appointed Commissioner of Police for the state, Christopher Adetokunbo Owolabi, resumed duty.

Credible sources said the two police inspectors were killed during a gun battle, while some AK47 rifles and a large quantity of ammunition were carted away.

Police officials called the masterminds of the latest attack in Anambra as "armed men", but security experts closely monitoring recent happenings in the South fingered the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the militant arm of the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

A source confided that the assailants had also freed all the suspected criminals locked in the cells at the police station before setting the facility on fire.

"There was a serious gunfight between the invaders and the police operatives at the station that lasted for several minutes... The two inspectors that died during the gun duel were targeted inside a non-functional filling station close to the police station.

"They were firing shots in a move to repel the gunmen from entering the police station but were overpowered," he said.

It was learnt that the attackers, armed with sophisticated weapons besieged the station in

a convoy of about ten vehicles.

A security source who does not want to be named said: "They opened fire while approaching the station and sustained the onslaught to the extent that they subdued the officers on ground, set the place ablaze and also burnt one patrol vehicle.

"This is not the first time they are doing this and it appears the South East is now the new battleground and a killing field that is seamlessly degenerating into a no-man's land.

"Miscreants are having a field day committing criminality and sadly, the governors and other prominent people are finding it difficult to call them out.

"The locals are also complicit in the terrible things happening in the South East... They don't want to expose the criminals. Government must act fast because, by the time they finish with police stations, they would start attacking other security operatives," he said.

Our correspondent reports that the police in Anambra have confirmed the killing of two of their personnel.

Spokesman for the command, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the new police commissioner had dispatched a tactical team for an on the spot assessment of the incident.

"The tactical team led by an assistant commissioner of police was equally told to identify and apprehend the hoodlums that perpetrated the attack," he said.

Ikenga, who said that the bodies of the deceased policemen have been deposited at a nearby morgue, said investigations into the matter had begun.

Similar attack in Ebonyi

Another policeman was killed when gunmen in the early hours

of Thursday invaded Obiozara Police Station in Ohazara Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

The gunmen, who drove in a similar manner as their partners in crime in Anambra invaded the station around 3 am and set the office of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and the admin building on fire.

A source within the area said that the main police station at the LGA was burnt down during the #EndSARS protest, forcing the officers and men of the division to be using a temporary shelter which was also burnt yesterday.

Ebonyi State Police spokesman, Loveth Odah, confirmed the incident in a statement on Thursday.

Preliminary information available to us showed that the students were moving in a minivan from Okigwe to Uburu between 7 pm and 8 pm when they ran into the armed gang who marched them into the nearby forest along with other yet-to-be-identified travellers.

Two of the students managed to escape from the hoodlums while others are still being held at a yet-to-be-identified location.

"We are working with the government of Imo State and relevant security agencies in both states to ensure the rescue of the abducted students and others," he said.

"No criminal operating within our environment will be allowed to escape justice as we take the job of protecting the lives and property of Abians and visitors to the state very seriously," the commissioner added.

Our correspondent reports that families of the abducted students were in distress and earnestly waiting to hear from the abductors.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer in the state, Abimbola Oyeyemi,

confirmed the incident.

Oyeyemi said the team was ambushed by gunmen through connivance with an insider.

He said the command had been on the matter and would ensure the perpetrators were brought to book and the victims rescued.

Abia varsity students kidnapped

An unknown number of students of Abia State University, Uturu, were abducted by gunmen on Wednesday night.

The students were taken hostage while travelling in a bus along Okigwe-Uturu Road.

Commissioner for Information in the state, John Kalu, confirmed the incident in a statement on Thursday.

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Our correspondent reports that families of the abducted students were in distress and earnestly waiting to hear from the abductors.

"Nobody can tell whether our children are even alive or not because their abductors have not said anything yet," one of the parents said.

"This is a trying moment for us and we are appealing to governments at the state and federal level to act fast," another parent said.

Bandits kill 7 persons in Niger

Seven people have been reportedly killed by bandits in Yangzali community in Magama Local Government Area of Niger State.

The bandits reportedly invaded the community in large numbers on motorcycles shooting sporadically in the direction of the hapless people.

It was gathered that before living the community, the bandits had destroyed properties and foodstuff.

The Chairman of Magama Local Government Area, Sullyanu Yahaya, who visited the community to commiserate with the people on the development, assured them that measures would be taken to improve the security situation in the area.

Attacks by bandits are now a common phenomenon in Niger as thousands of people have been displaced and dozens of communities deserted. Hundreds of women have turned widows while children have been orphaned and out of school.

Governor Abubakar Sani Bello had cried out severally for help which he said was not forthcoming the way it should.

He had also expressed fears that Abuja might likely be the next target if the needful was not done considering that all the contiguous state around the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are in dire straits.

Media Trust, Nigeria Health Watch partner on solution-based reportage

By Faruk Shuaib

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positive change and use them as a catalyst to bring wider positive change."

