

6 policemen, 2 expatriates, 5 others killed in Imo, Kogi, Taraba attacks

● 3 foreigners, 23 farmers abducted

● IPOB responsible for Imo attack - Police

● Security forces launch manhunt for perpetrators

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Six police officers, two expatriates and five others have been killed in separate attacks by suspected bandits and members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Imo, Kogi and Taraba states.

1 In Imo, gunmen said to be members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN), the militant wing of the outlawed IPOB, attacked the Agwa divisional police headquarters in Oguta Local Government Area on Friday night, killing four policemen and razing part of the station.

Among the victims were two male officers and their two female colleagues, whose bodies were set ablaze.

Daily Trust on Sunday learnt that one of the slain officers had spent only two weeks in the force.

It was learnt that a vehicle belonging to the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the division and other vehicles were burnt during the attack.

Daily Trust on Sunday also reports that two suspects escaped from detention during the attack.

The gunmen, on the same night, also invaded the house of a resident identified as Ejike, shot him and his wife, before fleeing. The man died on the spot.

Our correspondent gathered that the gunmen struck between 10pm and 11pm, using a tipper and two sienna cars.

The Imo State police command, in a statement signed by its public relations officer, CSP Michael Abattam on Saturday, confirmed the attack and murder of the four officers.

"The hoodlums, who came in two vehicles, including a tipper, which they used in forcing the gate open to gain entrance into the station, shot sporadically, throwing improvised explosive devices and petrol bombs.

"The police gave the hoodlums a stiff resistance, engaging them in a gun duel. They were fatally hit, with a lot of casualties; and they retreated and escaped in their vehicles.

"The fire, which affected a parked private car and some motorcycles, was later put off, preventing it from causing more damage. Fortunately, the building was not affected.

"During the attack, two suspects in custody escaped and four gallant police officers paid the supreme price, while one rifle is yet to be recovered.

"Meanwhile, the area has been fortified with



Usman Baba Alkali

enough police operatives," he said.

Abattam said the commissioner of police in the state, Mohammed Ahmed Barde, had visited the scene of the incident and vowed that the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

"He enjoined them to report any person seen treating bullet wounds or hiding within their communities to the nearest police station or call the command's emergency control room numbers: 08034773600, 08098880197," the statement added.

2 policemen, 2 expatriates killed in Kogi
In Kogi, six persons, including two expatriates and two police inspectors were killed on Friday in an attack launched on their vehicles.

Also killed in the attack were two drivers of the expatriates, who were said to be working for the West Africa Ceramics Company based in Ajaokuta.

Three foreigners were also said to have been abducted in the process.

A source told Daily Trust on Sunday that the deceased police inspectors exchanged gunfire with the attackers for almost 30 minutes, but they were overpowered and killed when they ran out of ammunition.

The spokesman of the state police command, William Ovyie-Aya, confirmed the incident in a statement issued in Lokoja yesterday.

Ovyie-Aya explained that the six victims - two expatriates, two company drivers and two police inspectors - died in the exchange of fire with the hoodlums along the Lokoja-Ajaokuta road around

8pm on Friday.

He said the expatriates were being escorted by the police to the ceramic company that evening when the gunmen attacked them.

The police spokesperson said the area commander and a detachment of the military in the area had to be reinforced to the scene before the attackers fled.

Ovyie-Aya added that the commissioner of police in Kogi State, CP Edward Egbuka, had visited the scene for an on-the-spot assessment.

He said Egbuka equally ordered the deployment of additional operational assets, consisting of operatives of the Police Mobile Force, Counterterrorism Unit, Quick Response Unit and State Intelligence Bureau, in synergy with other security agencies, to restore normalcy in the area.

"The CP is assuring the public that the command is committed to working in synergy with other security agencies, as well as patriotic stakeholders, to make the state a safe place for all and sundry.

"He further asked the deputy commissioner in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) to commence investigations into the unfortunate incident so as to unravel the remote and immediate causes of the attack, with a view to bringing the perpetrators to book," the statement added.

Meanwhile, the Kogi State governor, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, has condemned the attack.

He said the police and other security agencies were combing the area to apprehend the perpetrators of the heinous act.

The Commissioner for Information and Communication in the state, Kingsley Fanwo said, "As government, we have the capacity to rise to the challenge to defend our people. Security has been beefed up around the area and the affected agency is cooperating with law enforcement agents to unravel the mystery behind the attack. We won't succumb to the violence of criminals. We have been defeating the criminals and we will defeat them again. Kogi is a no-go-area for criminals."

The government, however, pleaded with the federal government to resuscitate the Ajaokuta Steel Company Ltd, saying some of the abandoned facilities of the company were fast becoming a den

of criminals.

"We hereby urge the federal government to urgently resuscitate the Ajaokuta Steel Company Ltd as some of the abandoned facilities and structures in the town harbour criminal elements.

"Government should do something drastic about the resuscitation of the company to help keep off criminal elements," Fanwo stated.

3 farmers killed, 23 abducted in Taraba

Also, in Taraba, bandits went on rampage, killing three people and abducted 23 farmers in two separate attacks on Friday.

Daily Trust on Sunday learnt that the first incident occurred along the Garba-Chede-Mutumbiyu road, where a truck driver was killed and 13 persons abducted when bandits blocked the road about 3.40pm on Friday.

The second incident, it was further gathered, occurred along the Garba-Chede-Jalingo road, where two persons were killed and 10 traders abducted by bandits who blocked the road at 4.20pm, also on Friday.

Similarly, it was gathered that bandits blocked the Bali-Serti road on Thursday and abducted many travellers.

The latest attacks came few days after the killing of four persons and abduction of many at Jauro Manu Market, along the Mutumbiyu-Wukari road in Gassol Local Government Area of the state.

The bandits, operating on motorcycles, blocked the two roads and operated for many hours.

A farmer in Mutumbiyu town, Garba Sani, who confirmed the latest incident, said the bandits chased him and a tractor operator working on his farm.

He said the bandits, who rode on motorcycles, surrounded many farmers and chased them away, warning that they would kill any farmer they found.

The acting spokesperson of the Taraba police command, DSP Kwache Bajabu Gambo, stated in a text message that the police and other sister security agencies were battling the bandits in an effort to deal with the security situation in the state.

Gunmen overrun Imo community, burn shops, cars, houses

No fewer than 18 shops and seven vehicles were burnt by gunmen who invaded the Izombe community in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo state on Saturday.

The incident is coming few hours after IPOB members attacked the Agwa Divisional Police headquarters in the same local government area, killing four police officers.

Our correspondent gathered that the gunmen arrived the community Saturday morning, shooting sporadically.

Eye witness said that the gunmen, suspected to be members of Ebubeagu security outfit also went on looting spree.

The eye witness, who spoke on phone said, "They burnt vehicles, burnt about 18 locked-up shops, stalls, comprising pharmaceutical shop, spare parts stores, wine, assorted drinks shops, decoration, boutiques".

Our correspondent gathered that the incident threw the entire community into confusion as scamped for safety.

As of the time of filing this report, our correspondent gathered that the police were yet to arrive the community.