

Gateway Poly Students On Edge Over 'Mysterious Deaths, Armed Robbery'

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Main gate of the polytechnic

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Recently, students of the Gateway Polytechnic (ICT), Sapaade, Ogun State, have been battling endless insecurity challenges including armed robbery, killing, rape, among others.

For the students, this is not the best of times. Criminals have been unleashing terror on the students living off-campus at Ode, Ipara and Isara, all adjoining communities to the Gateway Polytechnic (ICT), in Sapaade, Ogun State. Many of them have been robbed, raped, killed, kidnapped in the last three months.

And last week Tuesday, the students let out their anger and resorted to protest the latest attacks on their colleagues by armed men suspected to be robbers and cultists on Monday, October 20. The angry students said no fewer than two students were killed in the attack, while a lady was raped.

According to the students, who pleaded anonymity for security reasons, “the armed men usually invade students’ hostels at night to dispossess them of their phones, money and other belongings.

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“They raped some girls and even beat them up on Sunday. We can no longer sleep with eyes closed. These criminals will come to take our belongings and even force themselves on girls. It is getting too much. This must not continue,” they said, while displaying placards with different inscriptions.

Some of the inscriptions on their placards read “We need security”, “Say no to robbery”, “Students’ lives matter”.

Some images shared on the social media showed a body on the floor while four others with injuries were being attended to in a place that looks like a hospital.

Daily Trust Saturday reports that this incident occurred barely a month after suspected armed robbers raped four female students of the Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode, another state-owned institution.

It was gathered that the hoodlums at the early hours of Tuesday invaded hostels at Abapawa – an area off the campus – and carried out the heinous act.

Deputy Governor of the state, Engr Noimot Salako-Oyedele, alongside the Commissioner of Police, Alamutu Abiodun, and Commissioner of Education, Science and Technology, Prof Abayomi Arigbabu, visited the university following the rape incident.

Salako-Oyedele described the incident as “distressing and brutal.”

“I have visited the girls who are now being cared for and given the necessary support to heal from their trauma at the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at OSUTH.

“Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students is of utmost importance and I subsequently had a crucial meeting with the management and students of TASUED. I was joined by the Ogun State Commissioner for Police, Mr. Abiodun Alamutu and the Honourable Commissioner for Education, Prof. Abayomi Arigbabu, where we discussed concrete steps to bolster security measures and foster a safe environment on campus and the adjacent host community,” she said.

She quoted the CP to have promised to hunt down the perpetrators of the crime. However, no arrest has been made public.



■ Some of the students at the Gateway Polytechnic (ICT), Sapaade, Ogun State, protesting armed robbery and rape of their colleagues



■ Ammunition recovered from the scene of armed robbery

PHOTOS: Peter Moses



■ Protesters carrying placards

Endless insecurity at Gaposa

Aside from the recent protest, students of the Gateway Polytechnic (ICT), Sapaade, have grappled with series of attacks in the last four years.

In April 2021, the management of the institution ordered the shutdown of the institution over worsening insecurity around the school.

In a memo dated April 28, 2021, and signed by the Acting Registrar of the polytechnic, J. O. Popoola, the management ordered the students to proceed on a mid-semester break immediately until the security situation improves.

The students and lecturers at the institution were battling with incessant robbery attacks, rape, and other criminal activities from unidentified persons and there were growing agitations – a development which forced the management to shut the school.

The polytechnic was midway into its semester examination and the shutdown was expected to help security personnel in the state and those attached to the institution restore law and order.

The memo read: “In line with the decision of the management, all students are to proceed on a mid-semester break with effect from the close of work on Wednesday, 28th of April 2021.

“This is due to the security challenges around the students’ residences. Please note that the ongoing examination shall continue immediately the security situation improves.

“Meanwhile, all students should vacate their residences and go home. Any student that stays behind does so at his or her own risk.

“This is for your information and strict compliance.”

However, findings by our correspondent revealed that insecurity challenge had never improved around the institution, thereby putting students in perpetual fear and threats to their lives.

A student told *Daily Trust Saturday* that about seven rape cases have been recorded among the students admitted for the 2022/2023 academic session.

“At least, we have recorded seven rape cases in our set. The announcements were made by the students’ union leaders or the Dean of Student Affairs. However, they usually won’t mention names of the victims for obvious reason,” the student told our correspondent.

Following last week’s protest, the institution again announced a break and closed the institution to avoid breakdown of law and order.

The institution in a statement said the break announced few hours after protest rocked the institution was meant to address some agitations of the students.

“Similarly, management is also putting measures in place to address other key agitations of students,” a statement signed by Acting Registrar, J.O Popoola, said.

Students give government seven-day ultimatum

Shortly after last week’s protest, the Students Union Government gave the state government a seven-day ultimatum to address the security challenges.

The SUG President, Olatunji Idowu, in a statement said “In our pursuit of a swift resolution, we have communicated our concerns to the relevant authorities, giving them a 7-day ultimatum to take concrete actions towards enhancing security in our respective communities and hostels. The Students Union believes in the strength of unity and advocacy, and we are leveraging these principles to ensure the security lapses are urgently addressed.

“We appreciate the maturity, patience and resilience demonstrated by the students thus far. Your cooperation and understanding are pivotal as we navigate through these trying times together. We implore all students to remain calm, vigilant, and supportive of one another.”

Ogun CP meets students, denies rape cases

Speaking with *Daily Trust Saturday*, the Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alamutu, explained why the students’ communities are susceptible to attacks.

“That place is sort of an isolated area and I had the privilege to have served as DPO in that area. I am familiar with the area. We have deployed patrol in the area and they will forestall reoccurrence of any attack,” he said.

He said he had held a meeting with the students and assured them of their security and safety henceforth.

He said “What we record was armed robbery. Criminals devise new approach if other approaches failed. They have new strategies. That’s why we have also come up with other strategies. I assure you there would not be such incidents in that area again.”

Alamutu, however, denied cases of rape in the area.

“I doubt if such cases (of rape) would happen and go unreported.

“This is because any rape case cannot be handled at the Divisional level but transferred to the headquarters. We have not recorded any in that school. What we had was robbery. They have not recorded any rape in that axis. If it happened, where was it recorded?” he asked.

Police make U-turn, confirm rape cases

Despite denying that there were rape cases at the students’ communities, a statement from the Police Command on Tuesday confirmed arrest of three of the suspected armed robbers involved in an operation where they robbed and raped students of the polytechnic.

A statement signed by the command’s spokesperson, Omolola Odutola, on Tuesday, said the arrest was a “significant progress in apprehending suspected armed robbers raping and robbing female students around Ode Remo, and Ipara areas of Ogun State.

According to the police, the suspects at first denied, but a victim of their last robbery operation identified one out of the three-man gang of young men, terrorizing Gateway Polytechnic.

“In response to recent shooting incidents at Gateway Polytechnic, a proactive operation was conducted based on intelligence.

“On the 27th of November 2023, the Police, in collaboration with other security agencies, implemented a stop and search operation in Ode Remo and Ipara area. During the operation, a gang of three suspected armed young men were intercepted on a motorcycle.

“The suspects attempted to evade arrest by resorting to violent means to escape but were eventually apprehended.

“The suspects arrested have been profiled as Taiwo Oredoyin ‘M’ (27 years old), Taiwo Kuti ‘M’ (35 years old), and Folorunsho Saheed ‘M’ (36 years old), all belonging to Isara town in Ogun State.

“Upon conducting a search on them, police officers discovered one locally fabricated pistol with two live cartridges, as well as two Samsung phones, in their possessions,” the statement said.

The institution’s Head of Public Relations, Adedayo Folorunsho, failed to respond to enquiry from our correspondent. Calls and messages sent to her mobile phone were not responded to.