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14 suspects arrested over Arepo pipeline vandalism

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• Police launch counter-terrorism campaign

NO less than 14 suspected persons have been arrested with three assorted rifles in connection with last Thursday's petroleum products 'scooping' in which nine policemen were killed in Arepo/Abule Oba coastal communities at the boundary between Ogun and Ondo states.

Meanwhile, the Police High Command has initiated an aggressive educational campaign to create awareness among all citizens on how to participate in the fight against terror.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Frank Mba, while briefing newsmen Monday in Abuja, said the Command has 14 suspects in its custody who allegedly participated in the adventure, which resulted in the death of some policemen last week.

He stated that "three assorted rifles have been recovered from the suspects who are being interrogated, even as investigation is still on-going".

On the allegation that the pipeline vandals have more sophisticated weapons than the police, Mba said the difficulty of the terrain complicated the operation. He noted that the Marine Police could not access the area due to the shallow waters and the helicopters could not easily land because of the high-tension electricity wires, which criss-crossed the area.

"No machine propelled. Boat cannot access that place because of the shallow waters and our helicopters could not as well go near there because of the high tension cables and poles around there. So, it was not a question of superior gun-power", he said.

While launching the public enlightenment material yesterday, Mba said the campaign would witness massive distribution of information, education and communications (IEC) materials across all strata of the Nigerian society and it is expected to be sustained until every citizen of the country is well informed of their responsibilities in this age of terrorism.

"The public enlightenment materials, which are fact-sheets containing distress call numbers of the Police, the Department of State Services (DSS) and that of the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA), are carefully designed by the Police to educate the general public on their basic roles in the fight against terrorism and how to identify terrorists' subterfuge and other known modus operandi of criminals.

"This is expected to help in protecting citizens from falling victims to crimes, thereby improving overall sense of communal safety. Meanwhile, the fact-sheets have been translated into major Nigerian languages for wider reach. So far, the fact sheets have been translated into Fulfude, Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri and Yoruba languages", he noted.