

# Militants return to Ishawo, kill four policemen, one army captain

## • Lagos commiserates with police, families, vows to go after culprits

By Odita Sunday

**A**GAIN, some daredevil gunmen yesterday stormed the Ishawo area of Ikorodu, Lagos State and unleashed mayhem, killing five policemen and two soldiers.

In a deadly ambush, the militants, who had taken the security forces by surprise, struck at Woodland Estate, near the Ishawo creeks and engaged the security personnel in a gun duel.

It was not unclear as at press time if there were any casualties on the part of the militants, although security agencies were said to have reinforced and stormed the area.

Meanwhile, the resurgence of gunmen invasion into Ishawo community has become worrisome for residents, who often bear the brunt of the ruthless attacks and killings.

According to the residents, the militants raided their homes, armed with dangerous weapons and carted away whatever valuable they could lay their hands on.

A resident, Atoba Faleye, said the militants seemed to have an upper hand over security agents in the area, adding that in some cases, they are left to protect themselves.

He said: "When the military and police jointly chased out the militants from Ishawo last

did not imagine that they would come back with full force. So sad there was no contingency plan put in place for a counter-attack. The security forces relaxed their guards and we are the ones paying the price now. We are now living in fear."

When contacted, the Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Olarinde Famous-Cole, confirmed the incident, but said the actual casualty figure was six. According to a statement signed by Lagos police boss, Fatai Owoseni, four policemen and one Nigerian Army Captain were killed in the fracas.

"Around 1:00a.m. on Sunday, the police received a distress call that a group of militants and kidnappers had entered Owutu-Isawo in Ikorodu through the thick swampy forest surrounding the area.

"They were reported to have kidnapped some residents. In response, the police and the army immediately mobilised personnel to the area, where the kidnapped victims were rescued.

"Sadly, however, five of the gallant and patriotic officers lost their lives during the rescue operation. One of them was a Nigerian Army Captain while the remaining four were policemen. One of the residents also died," he said.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State government on Sunday commiserated with the families of four police officers and one Army Captain, who lost their lives.

In a reaction issued by the state's Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Steve Ayorinde, government described the incident as unfortunate, but insisted that it would only strengthen its re-

solve to root crime and criminalities out of the state.

The statement said Governor Akinwunmi Ambode was deeply touched and condoled with the families and loved ones of the departed officers.

"The governor, however, assures the police and general public of his support and commitment to rid the state of every form of militancy, kidnappings, and illegal waterfront shanties that harbour criminals," Ayorinde said.

Specifically, the state government stressed that the unfortunate incident in Ishawo had further reinforced its resolve to go after criminal elements and their collaborators who are using coastal areas and illegal waterfront settlements as havens or escape routes to perpetrate evil and criminal activities.

