

Again, unknown gunmen raze Abia police station, kill two cops in A'lbom

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- **Speak up against activities of secessionists, Osinbajo tells Southeast leaders**
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In yet a continuation of unrestrained attacks on security facilities in the Southeast and South-south regions, unknown gunmen yesterday evening attacked Nkporo police station in Ohafia local government area of Abia State, razing the main building of the station.

The arsonists also released some suspects in detention during the attack, and burnt exhibits, including motorcycles and cars at the station, leaving many residents of the area frightened.

It was gathered that no life was lost during the attack. Efforts to get the reaction of the state police spokesman, Geoffrey Ogbonna, were unsuccessful. He didn't pick calls or respond to text messages.

Nkporo is the hometown of Abia Deputy Governor, Ude Oko Chukwu. This is coming barely a week after police station at Uzuakoli in Bende Local Government Area of the state was attacked by hoodlums.



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In Akwa Ibom State, gunmen on Tuesday evening killed two policemen at a checkpoint at Urua Inyang in Ika local government area. The hoodlums stormed the checkpoint on several motorcycles and attacked policemen at the checkpoint. The hoodlums then carted away rifles and burnt down the police van.

One of the slain cops is a female police officer identified as Esther Akpan, a police corporal.

She was killed alongside a police special constabulary, Isonuyo Paul.

Akwa Ibom Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Odiko Macdon, confirmed the incident to newsmen yesterday. He said: "On Tuesday, around 7:00p.m., some armed men on motorcycles heading towards Ika Divisional Headquarters vicinity, armed with AK-47 and other dangerous weapons with the intent to attack the division and set it ablaze met stiff resistance as the Divisional Police Officer and other officers on ground fought gallantly and repelled the attackers.

"But unfortunately, before heading towards the station to attack it, they ambushed and killed a woman Police Corporal, Esther Akpan who had just closed from duty and was on her way home in company of a police Special Constabulary, Isonuyo Effiong Paul," he added.

The latest killing brings to five policemen killed in the line of duty in Akwa Ibom by gunmen while four others were declared missing in the last two weeks.

The police in Anambra State have also confirmed an attack on some naval ratings at a checkpoint near Enamel Ware Junction on Onitsha-Owerri highway on Tuesday. The PPRO, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga, who declined comment on whether there was any casualty, said efforts were ongoing to apprehend those behind the attack.

An eyewitness said the gunmen arrived at the checkpoint in a black SUV and slowed down on getting to the military checkpoint when one of the gunmen opened fire on the naval personnel, killed one and injured two who were later rushed to a nearby hospital.

He said some naval personnel stationed within the area quickly engaged the gunmen and succeeded in killing three of them, adding that the hoodlums carried their dead colleagues into their waiting vehicle and sped off to an unknown direction.

Similarly, the Chairman Senate Committee on Local and Foreign Debts, Clifford Ordia, has narrated how he escaped suspected bandits attack on his convoy along the Okene-Lokoja-Abuja road twice same day on Monday. He said his personal vehicle was riddled with bullets though he was lucky to have escaped unhurt.

The Senator representing Edo Central Senatorial District said during the exchange of gunfire between the criminals and security officers attached to him, three policemen sustained bullet wounds. He said one of the wounded policemen is in a critical condition, but responding to treatment in one of the hospitals in Abuja.

He called on the Federal Government to urgently restructure the security architecture, lamenting that no one is safe anymore. He said something urgent must be done to restore order to every part of the country and protect the lives of Nigerians.

EBONYI State has imposed a curfew from 8:00p.m. to 6:00a.m. at all entry and exit points with neighbouring states. It also banned all social events such as wake-keep and nightclubbing from 6:00p.m., warning that defaulters will be fined N1 million. This is coming a day after Rivers State implemented same night curfew on all its land borders.

Governor David Umahi announced the order on Wednesday while briefing reporters after the state Executive Council meeting. He also ordered all native doctors to register with security agencies in the state immediately. The governor said traditional medicine dealers should also register with the Ministry of Health. He warned that anybody who fails to adhere to the directive will be prosecuted.

Umahi exonerated the security arm of the proscribed secessionist group, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Eastern Security Network (ESN), from recent attacks on security agencies in the state.

On Tuesday, the Ebonyi State Commissioner for Infrastructure Development, Engr. Fidelis Nweze, narrowly escaped gun attack as he abandoned his vehicle and ran into the bush leaving his SUV at the mercy of gunmen who shot sporadically in all directions. The incident happened at the site of a proposed international airport in the state.

The gunmen were feared to have targeted the governor, who was scheduled for an inspection visit to the airport. It was gathered that the gunmen stormed the airport site around 3:30p.m. but missed their target as the governor failed to turn up.



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A source told newsmen that the heavily armed men came on seven motorcycles and two vehicles. “On getting to the site, they opened fire, but God averted their bullets from hitting the Commissioner, whom on suspecting the movement of the motorcycles, ran to the nearby bush and took cover, leaving behind his SUV.

“The gunmen then broke into the SUV and made away with the Commissioner’s laptop, architectural plan documents and money. They shot repeatedly into the air and took over the site for some time waiting for the arrival of the governor,” the source said.

After waiting for some time for the governor, the armed men left the scene and invaded a nearby commercial bank (name withheld) at Onueke, where they robbed, leaving two policemen dead.

IN the face of escalating attacks, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo has charged political elites in the Southeast geopolitical zone to speak up against the activities of troublemakers in the region. Speaking during an interactive session with Anambra State All Progressive Congress (APC) governorship aspirants in Abuja, he argued that the measure is required to curtail ongoing mayhem in the region.

Expressing concern over the appalling level of insecurity in the country, he called for concerted effort to nip the menace in the bud. According to him: “What is going on in the Southeast and various parts of the country, at the end of the day the leaders would determine what happens in any society, particularly the political elites.

“It is the political elites that would determine what would take place. If you keep quiet and hope that things would just get normalised, we may be wrong and we may find ourselves heading into something much worse than we are seeing today.

“I served in the United Nations, in Somalia, in Mogadishu in 1994. I spent a year and half. I also spent a bit of time in Rwanda. What I found especially in Somalia and I will tell a story that I have repeated several times. In 1981 as a young lecturer I just started teaching in November of that year when a conference held in the University of Lagos.

“It was a conference on prison reforms. Three judges from Somalia attended that conference, they were justices of the Supreme Court at the time. I remember them very well because they were the only one that came from the non-Commonwealth, non-common law country because they practiced continental system in Somalia.

“In 1994, I was in a camp where the World Food Programme was feeding people, you could see long line of people with bowls waiting to take some food. There was an elderly man I saw who looked like one of those justices I met in the Lagos conference. I walked up to him and he told me he was the one. Here he was standing on a queue with a bowl in the hand waiting for food.

“The thing about these kinds of conflicts in this part of the world is that the wars never end. Anyone who thinks he has some monies stored up somewhere will eventually be worn out. Anyone who thinks he can go hide somewhere, won't even find a place to hide. In the end, everyone would suffer. We cannot afford a war in this country. And if the political elites don't speak up, we endanger ourselves, we endanger the future of our country.”

SENATOR Enyinnaya Abaribe, the Senate Minority Leader, has said that if nothing is done urgently to solve the problems of insecurity and bloodletting, the country may soon disintegrate. Speaking as the keynote speaker at the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Owerri Branch, 2021 Law Week holding in Owerri, yesterday, Enyinnaya who is representing Abia South Senatorial District, also backed the call for restructuring of the country.

In his words, “nations have problems and no nation can solve all of its problems. Not solving the major problem leads to what we have outlined above that happened to USSR, Czechslovakia and others. If Nigeria does not solve its major problem, I have no doubt that it will follow the way of above nations. History repeats itself to those who do not learn from it.

“The major difference will be that, while above nations were able to part mostly without bloodshed, we do not know the extent of conflagration and bloodshed that will befall this country. If we take into cognizance the unfortunate bloodletting going on in different parts of this country today, your guess is as good as mine what may happen if we do not resolve the existential issues of Nigeria today to our mutual benefit.”

He also blamed Nigeria's problems on what he called Ethnic Triumphalism, which he described, “as a feeling by one group or faction that it is superior to other groups and a deliberate effort made to subjugate all other ethnic groups in Nigeria.”



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He said: “Under the watch of the present government, Fulani militia are on a mission of conquest all over Nigeria. By infiltrating and trying to take over every region of this country, we have had to witness killings of natives, women raped, farmlands destroyed, kidnappings of citizens all over the country and forest forcefully occupied.”

MEANWHILE, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye, has asked Nigerians of all tribes and tongues to pray for the country and the rest of the world. Taking to his Twitter page yesterday, Adeboye begged God to show mercy on Nigeria and heal Africa's most populous country.

“Keep praying for Nigeria and the rest of the world in these difficult times. It is our prayer that God will have mercy on Nigeria and heal our land in Jesus' Name,” he said.

His call followed series of attacks in the country, ranging from kidnapping to banditry, terrorism to militancy, cultism to calls for secession among several others.

Insecurity in the country seems to have worsened with gunmen attacking security formations in the country. In the past week, at least 239 people were killed and 44 others kidnapped in separate violent incidents across the country, mostly by armed non-state actors.

