

250 inmates escape as gunmen kill two soldiers in Kabba prison

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NO fewer than 250 inmates, yesterday, escaped from Kabba Correctional centre in Kogi State following an attack on the facility by unknown gunmen. It was also gathered that four soldiers mounting a road-block before the facility were allegedly killed with one injured.

The soldiers were said to have mounted a routine check point at 50 metres before the custodial facility situated along Lokoja- Okebukun-Kabba highway, when the hoodlums rained bullets on them before invading the prison.

An eyewitness said the gunmen also sprayed bullets on an uncompleted building where the soldiers normally hibernate before breaking into the correctional centre and releasing over 100 inmates.

According to the witness, some of the correctional officers on guard were seriously injured while one of the soldiers, who attempted to flee, was also hit in the leg. A source also confirmed that an unspecified number of the prisoners were rearrested at about 8.00a.m., on Monday beside Kudon hotel, Kabba, when they tried to board a vehicle to Ilorin.

It was also learnt that the Controller of the Correctional Centre along with the state security adviser, Jerry Omodara have visited the facility for on-spot assessment.

Confirming the incident, Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone 8, Ayuba Edeh, said the State Commissioner of Police and other heads of security agencies have swung into action to do an assessment of the cause of the break.

Also confirming the attack, Minister of Interior, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola, said he has been briefed by the Controller General of the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS), Haliru Nababa, on the unfortunate attack on Kabba Medium Security Custodial Centre, in Kabba, Kogi State, by yet to be identified gunmen.

According to him, security officers on duty, which consisted of 15 Soldiers, 10 Police Officers and 10 armed guards of the NCoS tried to repel the attack. Aregbesola, in a statement by his media adviser, Sola Fasure, regretted that two officers of the Correctional Service were yet to be accounted for, while one soldier and a policeman lost their lives during the attack.

He said: "The Kabba Custodial facility had 294 inmates as at the time of the attack, many of

HURRIWA urges Nababa's sack over security breach



Aregbesola

whom escaped after the gunmen used explosives to destroy three sides of the perimeter fence. However, there remain 28 inmates who didn't escape. Some have also voluntarily returned to the facility as at this morning.

"The Controller General of the Nigeria Correctional Service, Haliru Nababa, is currently monitoring the situation. A tour of the facility is also ongoing.

"A Crisis Response Centre has been activated and a Special Task Force mobilised to recapture escaped inmates whilst an Inter-Agency Security Task Force is already on the trail of the gunmen who attacked the facility. The public is advised to stay calm as the situation is under control."

Aregbesola assured that security forces will find the attack-



Nababa

ers and bring them to justice. According to him, no stone would be left unturned to bring the escapees back to custody.

He said the ministry is also putting INTERPOL on notice with their details, in case any of them attempt to flee outside the country. "We urge the people, especially the communities around the custodial facility, to be vigilant and report any strange and suspicious persons or activities to the nearest law enforcement agency. "To the fleeing inmates, escaping from lawful custody is a serious criminal offence. Law enforcement agencies and citizens are lawfully empowered to use all necessary means to arrest and bring you to justice. "You should therefore know

what you are up against. You will however be eligible for mitigation if you willfully surrender yourselves at the nearest law enforcement office. "The Nigeria Correctional Service shall not be cowed by elements seeking to compromise the security of our nation; we shall deal with this situation with absolute resolve," the statement added.

MEANWHILE, civil rights advocacy group, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURRIWA), has urged President Muhammadu Buhari to sack the Comptroller-General of the Nigerian Correctional Centre, Alhaji Haliru Nababa over the disgraceful jailbreak.

The sack, the group said, will be in the interest of building a befitting legacy of decisiveness and discipline in the correctional centre.

Describing the jail-break as a grave threat to Nigeria's national security, the group said dismissing head of the nation's prisons for failing to effectively secure all the Nigerian Correctional Centres long after he assumed office in February against the backdrops of incessant jailbreaks that have happened in the last twelve months, will send a strong message to his appointees that indiscipline, dereliction of duty and all forms of show-of-shame would not be tolerated.