

One killed as gunmen invade Opu Nembe community

From Julius Osahon, Yenagoa

ONE person was feared dead, while others got injured when armed men in multiple vehicles invaded Opu Nembe (Basambri) in Nembe Local Council of Bayelsa State.

The Guardian gathered that the invasion, which took place at about 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, threw the community into panic.

A source said the gunmen, who wore police uniform and facemasks, drove into the town in 24 Toyota Hilux vehicles and six coaster buses.

According to the source, the shooting was the fourth this year and residents are now living in fear without knowing when the next attack will come.

"This is the latest in a series of calculated armed invasions of the Opu Nembe area of the Nembe local government, since January 2023.

"The motive behind the attacks is not clear, but available information from the residents identified some perpetrators as gunmen in the payroll of a notorious warlord.

"He was accused of being

responsible for organising previous armed attacks, and has been at large following a ban placed on him in the community.

"He is also said to be a known associate of a prominent politician in the state, whose governorship ambition in the November election hints at politics as being the motive behind these incessant attacks of the Opu Nembe area," the source said.

Meanwhile, the state government has called for calm, stressing that it will continue to work with the police and sister agencies to ensure that the perpetrators of this dastardly act are brought to book.

Commissioner for Information, Orientation and Strategy, Ayibaina Duba, in a statement, said: "There is the suspicion that the attack on the community might not be unconnected with the upcoming November 11 gubernatorial elections in the state and the crude desire of some unpopular politicians to impose their will on voters.

"The state government wishes to enjoin the people of Bassambiri in Nembe Local Council and indeed



Gov. Diri

all residents of the state to remain calm as government will continue to work with the police and its sister agencies to ensure that the perpetrators of this dastardly act are brought to book.

"The state calls on the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to cause an immediate investigation aimed at unravelling the identity of these criminals, and their sponsors, who have continued to undermine public peace in Nembe.

"It is time to stop handling the tormentors of the Nembe people with kid gloves. The police high com-

mand must be on top of the situation without further delay."

Commiserating with the community, the member representing Brass-Nembe Federal Constituency, Marie

Ebikake, called on the military to immediately establish a permanent presence in the area to calm frayed nerves and dispel the air of fear and uncertainty among the people.

She called on IGP through the Commissioner of Police in the state, to identify those rogue police officers involved and prosecute them to act as deterrence.

Ebikake also appealed to the Directorate of State Service (DSS) to launch a detailed investigation of the incessant armed invasions and identify the sponsors.

She said the unwarranted mayhem must be addressed, as it is capable of causing total breakdown of law and order in the community.

She further appealed for the

immediate intervention of the state government to bring succour to the Opu Nembe people by providing relief materials and other forms of assistance to victims of the dastardly attack.

The lawmaker also called on the Nigerian Police and other security agencies to spring into action to arrest the situation in Opu Nembe and stop the madness and mayhem vented by the gunmen to quickly restore calm and peace to the area.

According to Ebikake: "Early morning situation reports today suggest that the area now bears a semblance of a ghost town with next to no profitable activities as many people are locked in or have hurried out of town for panic and fear of what might come next."

Lagos to clamp down on illegal car lots

By Eniola Daniel

LAGOS State Environment Land Special Offences Enforcement Unit, yesterday, said it has perfected plans to clampdown on car dealers that have converted road setbacks, walkways, lay-bys, gardens, and other spaces to car parks

dealer number plates to perpetrate criminal acts in the state, which they believe would not be traced to them as the vehicle used during the criminal act could be different from the vehicle it would be placed on the following day," he added. Jejeloye warned car dealers,

sale on the walkways, to either move them to proper car lots or have them impounded and their owners made to face the full wrath of the law.

He urged residents to report any infractions by car dealers to the agency through the dedicated lines