

Two killed as police, vigilantes engage gunmen in Anambra

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The Commissioner of Police in Anambra State, Ikioye Orutugu

Two persons were killed yesterday when security forces engaged in a gun duel with armed hoodlums at Oko and the Ekwulobia flyover in Anambra State.

A security vehicle belonging to the Anambra State Vigilante Group was also burnt during the incident, while one AK-47 rifle, one automatic pump-action gun, and four vehicles were recovered at the scene of the attack.

The Guardian learnt that an armed criminal gang invaded the area yesterday morning, shooting indiscriminately and snatching valuables from unsuspecting residents. An earlier security alert had warned members of the public to avoid the area, as residents and road users fled for safety amid intense gunfire.

Viral videos circulated on social media showed thick smoke billowing from one of the locations and a dead body being loaded into a tricycle. A voice in the background was heard lamenting the killing of an innocent resident.

A security team led by the Anambra Police was later deployed to contain the situation. Confirming the development yesterday, the spokesperson for the command, Tochukwu Ikenga, said the security team had successfully repelled the attackers but regretted the loss of two innocent civilians.

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He also confirmed the recovery of four vehicles: a red Toyota Camry with registration number ENU 58 SC, a custom-coloured Mercedes-Benz GLK without registration, a gold Lexus 330 with registration number ENU 815 AP, and an ash-coloured Toyota Highlander with registration number GDD 517 RW.

“The armed criminals, without provocation, opened fire indiscriminately under the Ekwulobia flyover. In response, the Joint Security Team engaged the hoodlums in a fierce gun battle. Regrettably, two innocent members of the public were killed, and a brown Toyota Sienna vehicle, reportedly belonging to the Anambra State Vigilante Group, was set ablaze,” Ikenga stated.

He said the bodies of the deceased had been recovered and deposited in the morgue. Ikenga also confirmed an attack on the Oko Divisional Police Headquarters, noting that the officers on duty repelled the assault.

He said no casualties were recorded at the station and assured that the Joint Security Team had launched a manhunt for the assailants. He added that, on the directive of the Commissioner of Police, Ikioye Orutuogu, adequate security measures had been put in place and advised residents to remain calm.