

Gunmen Kill 4 Policemen, 45 Others In Edo, Benue

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Three mobile policemen were yesterday killed while another policeman was seriously injured as gunmen opened fire on them while they were resuming work at their duty post near Agor along the Igarra-Auchi Road in Edo State.

One of the assailants died of gunshot wounds while another sustained gunshot wounds and has been taken to an undisclosed hospital for treatment and interrogation even as six rifles recovered from them.

LEADERSHIP Friday gathered that the incident happened between 5:30 and 6 am close to the popular Agor market where the mobile policemen usually mount roadblock.

It was gathered that they established the checkpoint because of the activities of kidnappers in the area who comb the farm settlements in the area kidnapping and collecting ransom from hapless farmers.

It was gathered that while the policemen were driving in their car, another of their colleague was riding on a motorbike following the vehicle when the assailants who apparently laid

ambush opened fire on them but the one on bike was said to have engaged the assailants who fled into the bush with the four rifles of the policemen after killing them.

It was gathered that the vigilante were called for reinforcement who later combed the bush and traced the assailants to their hideout and recovered the four police rifles and another two belonging to the attackers.

Narrating the incident, the head of the vigilante group in the area, Ibukun Dogo said, "I got a call from the DPO around 6 am that his men were attacked and we quickly mobilized to the place and saw the lifeless bodies of the three officers. We saw blood markings on the ground into the bush and we trailed that suspects where we met two of them with gunshot injuries, one died from the gunshots while the other was taken away by the police to the hospital.

"We recovered the four police rifles and additional two in the area we found them. The suspect said they are from Okenne in Kogi State but we don't know their mission whether it is armed robbery or kidnapping they wanted to use the arms and ammunition for."

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in Edo State, Chidi Nwabuzor said the Command was yet to get the details of what happened.

Also, armed men suspected to be herdsmen attacked Omogidi community of Adoka district in Otukpo local government area of Benue State killing 46 farmers including 33 years old son of the council chairman and a police officer.

It was gathered from the locals that the heavily armed gunmen stormed the community at about 5pm when members of the community were returning from their farms and started shooting sporadically at anyone in sight killing 43 persons on the spot including women and children.

While confirming the attack and killings, the special adviser to governor Samuel Ortom on security Lt-Col. Paul Hembah (rtd) said, "Yes Omogidi community was attacked yesterday evening and as of this the casualty figure stand at 46."

According to the security adviser, "the casualty figure may be higher than 43 because as I speak to you, several persons are still missing in the community."

Also confirming the killings the council chairman of Otukpo LG Bako Eje, alleged

that herdsmen on Wednesday evening attack his community killing his 33 years old son and 45 others.

He informed that already, a combined team of security personnel have been deployed to the area and the situation is under control now, adding that it is unfortunate that the council chairman who is from the area also lost his son in the attack.

When contacted the police public relations officer (PPRO) Catherine Anene who confirmed the incident said eight corpses were recovered from the attack including a police officer.

She said, "More police teams have been deployed to the area to forestall further breakdown of law and order."

In his reaction, Ochi'Idoma, his royal majesty Agaba-Idu Elaigwu Odogbo in a letter invited all Idoma stakeholders for an emergency meeting titled, "We are in desperate times and under siege."

In the letter, the Ochi'Idoma also decried a situation where Idoma nation in the last few months has been invaded by marauders, who are going about killing people in their homes and farms with a demonstrated intention to sack people from their ancestral homes.