

Police Nab Vandals With Stolen Tower Members, Hunters Kill 2 – TCN

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The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has expressed deep concern over the alarming rise in vandalism of transmission installations across the country.

The company said that between July 1st and August 11th, 2024, TCN installations have experienced numerous vandalism attacks in less than six weeks. These incidents, it said, are widespread, affecting every transmission region of TCN.

Also, on Wednesday, August 7th, 2024, security operatives apprehended vandals in a blue pick-up van loaded with sacks containing tower members and cables stolen from transmission towers along the Damboa/Maiduguri 132KV transmission line. The vandals were arrested by the Nigeria Police and are currently in custody at the Damboa Police Station. They will be transferred to the National Police Force Headquarters in Maiduguri.

The tower members and cables were stolen from the towers along the Damboa/Maiduguri 132kV transmission line, which is still under reconstruction due to a previous vandalism attack on the same line, the agency’s general manager, Public Affairs, Nddi Mbah, stated yesterday.

This growing threat, it said, urgently requires the cooperation of all citizens, particularly those in host communities where these installations are located. Increased vigilance from everyone is essential to combat this menace, as failure to do so will leave the power sector in a perpetual state of repairing damaged infrastructure.

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The company said it has consistently engaged security operatives, host communities, and local vigilante groups in response to this issue.

“However, it is crucial that everyone works together to curb or eliminate the increasing attempts by vandals to damage transmission lines and cables, while also ensuring that stolen items are not sold in our markets.

On August 11th, 2024, vandals attacked towers T377, T378, and T379 along the Gombe-Damaturu 330kV transmission line, which is undergoing rapid and urgent repair following a previous vandalism incident involving IEDs on towers T193 and T194. However, two of the vandals were killed by hunters at the Damaturu end of the line.

On August 3rd and 5th, 2024, vandals attacked towers along two transmission line routes under the Enugu Region of TCN. The first attack targeted tower T9 on the Apir-Aliede 330kV transmission line, and the second targeted tower T12 on the Apir-Otukpo-Yandev 123kV transmission line, both passing through Ikpayango Village. In response to the first incident, the local vigilante group acted promptly, preventing the vandals from stealing the skywire after it had been brought down.

Additionally, on August 5, 2024, vandals managed to cut off and steal the yellow phase conductor from towers T11 to T12 along the Apir-Otukpo-Yandev line, which caused a tripping of the 150MVA power transformer at the Apir Transmission Substation. TCN engineers responded swiftly by removing the remaining conductors on tower T11, allowing the continued supply of bulk electricity to Yandev, Otukpo, and Takum through the 132kV New Haven-Otukpo transmission line.

The TCN team has successfully sectionalised the affected towers to facilitate repairs. They have also stabilised both ends of the sectionalised network that supply power to Otukpo, Yandev, and Takum from the New Haven Substation while the 150MVA transformer has been tested and restored.

“On July 24, 2024, in the Osogbo Region, Tower T328 along the 330kV Osogbo-Ganmo line in the Oba-Oke area of Osogbo, Osun State, was vandalised. This incident caused severe structural damage to the tower, leaving it twisted and bent, with insulators at a dangerous angle of 65° to 70°. The damaged and bent tower T328 also affected towers T327 and T329 on either side.”

TCN noted that despite the precarious condition of T328, the cables remained supported by the bent towers, preventing power outage. The Osogbo Region of TCN has since carried out emergency repair work on the affected towers to prevent their collapse while awaiting permanent reconstruction of Tower T328.

“TCN has reported these incidents to security operatives, including the Military, Police, DSS, and Civil Defence. A visit was also made to the Oba of Oba-Oke to emphasise the need for

community collaboration in protecting installations within his domain. Additionally, more local vigilantes have been employed to monitor the facilities.

In the Benin Region of TCN, on July 19, 2024, tower T449 at Oluku Community along the Ihovbor/Benin 330kV transmission line was vandalised, with the three legs and supporting members cut off. TCN engineers swiftly carried out temporary repairs to prevent the tower's collapse.

On July 25, 2024, tower T72 along the Benin/Egbin 330kV transmission line, also in Oluku Community, Benin, was vandalised, with the four legs of the tower (B6N) cut off. TCN's engineers again reinforced the tower legs to prevent collapse.

In the Port Harcourt Region of TCN, vandals attacked Towers T98 and T99 along the Ahoada-Yenagoa 132kV line on July 29, 2024, causing them to collapse. These towers were located in the Igbogene Community of Bayelsa State.

On August 3, 2024, Tower T97 along the same line route also collapsed due to instability from the adjacent collapsed towers, compounded by storm and wind effects. Repair work has commenced, including cracking and clearing the affected tower bases to facilitate the complete reconstruction of the towers

Recently, transmission lines in the North East, under the Bauchi Region of TCN—stretching from the Jos 330kV Transmission Substation to Bauchi, through Gombe, Damaturu, and up to Maiduguri—have suffered multiple vandalism attacks at various points. Additionally, several other less severe acts of vandalism have also occurred.

“We reiterate the need for collective action against vandals of power installations of any kind and remain committed to working with communities and security agencies and vigilantes to safeguard power installations. The fight against vandalism remains pivotal to maintaining a stable power network,” the company said.