

Ekiti emergency rule: Policemen withdrawn

• Three killed, police station burnt in Ise-Ekiti

THE anti-riot policemen drafted to Ekiti State in the wake of the state of emergency declared two weeks ago have been withdrawn.

The state police command is still investigating last week's torching of a police station in Ise-Ekiti over the death of three persons carried by a commercial motorcyclist who refused to give money to some policemen in the town.

The Nation noticed the withdrawal of the armed policemen from Ado-Ekiti yesterday as they no longer stood guard in places where they had been

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keeping watch the since emergency rule was slammed on the state on October 19 by President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The policemen who used to be on Ado-Ikere Road were not there yesterday morning. Another detachment stationed at the Old Garage was not at their duty posts.

The Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) which used to patrol the streets of Ado-Ekiti, and believed to have been drafted in from Akure, was

also absent at the Old Garage junction where it was stationed since the start of the emergency rule.

It was not clear as of press time whether the withdrawal was sequel to unending complaints from the people over the alleged extortion by the policemen, most especially at Olujoda junction and the front of Pope John Paul Catholic Centre, all on Ado-Ikere Road.

The extortion was usually done in the morning and evening as motorists usually part with various amounts of money.

Commercial vehicle drivers are the worst-hit.

The state police command's spokesman, Mr Umar Babangida, told our reporter on phone that he was in Abuja but noted that a directive might have come from "above" for the policemen to be withdrawn.

He also told *The Nation* that the command was yet to conclude investigation into last week's attack on a police station by an angry mob protesting the death of the three persons.

An *okada* commercial motorcycle rider who had

earlier given N20 bribe to some policemen was reportedly stopped again on his return for another "toll" but he refused. One of the policemen threw a barricade on his path, forcing the motorcycle to crash, killing the three persons on the motorcycle.

The youths of the town went on the rampage and burnt down the police station in a fit of rage. They chased away policemen from the town.

But Babangida told our reporter that the command was yet to conclude its investigations.