

Gunmen attack Ado-Ekiti prisons



•Officer killed

•49 freed

Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital, was yesterday thrown into panic, following the invasion of the Prisons, Ado-Ekiti by unknown gunmen.

The gunmen, in scores, invaded the facility at about 10.30 pm and operated unhindered till about 1.45 am yesterday.

As soon as they stormed the prisons, the gunmen detonated a bomb and launched an orgy of shootings that lasted for about 45 minutes.

By the time the smoke cleared, 49 inmates had disappeared. A prison official lay dead. Seven sniffer dogs also died.

But Governor Ayodele Fayose told reporters during his visit to the premises that over 300 inmates escaped.

The governor said he suspected collusion from “within” with the assailants.

The gunmen arrived in Hilux vans, shouting “Allahu Akbar”, “Allahu Akbar”, “Allahu Akbar” (God is great) and shooting.

Dynamites and Rocket-Propelled Launchers were believed to have been used to blow up the prisons.

Sources at the state command of the Nigerian Prisons Service (NPS) said the gunmen also set scores of inmates serving various jail terms and those on remand free. Some of them were re-arrested.

Spokesman of the NPS Ope Fatinikun said about 100 men at about 10pm on Sunday invaded the prison. He said one Prison officer was shot dead.

He said 49 inmates out of the 435 in the prison facility were set free by the assailants.

Fatinikun said the prison officer was shot dead by the vigilante who mistook him for one of the invaders.

Three other officers, according to him, sustained injuries and have been taken to an undisclosed hospital.

Fatinikun who could not confirm if the invaders were Boko Haram members, said the incident had been reported to the police and efforts were on to recapture the inmates still on the run

He added that seven dogs were slaughtered and three others wounded.

“I want to plea with people living in that area not to worry, as efforts are on to deal with the invaders and recapture the escaped prisoners”

A woman believed to be the wife of the slain officer was wailing uncontrollably yesterday as she was being led away from the scene.

The impact of the bombing on the facility which is located along Afao Road was felt in places like Adebayo, Oke-Ila, Fajuyi, Okesa and the Ekiti State University (EKSU) campus.

The loud bang of the bombing was deafening to the extent that inmates fled in various directions to escape being killed by the invading gunmen.

Reporters who learnt of the incident were denied entry into the facility which is being guarded by fully-armed security men.

The State Comptroller of Prisons, Mr. Kehinde Fadipe, described the incident as “both bombing and shooting”.

He dismissed insinuations in some quarters that members of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) carried out the attack in a bid to free their leader, Niyi Adedipe, who is on remand at the prisons for murder.

Fadipe said Adedipe was still inside the prison yard and did not make any attempt to escape.

A “breaking news” relayed on the state radio during a Yoruba newspaper review programme, “Lati Inu Aka”, alleged that the prison was attacked by All Progressives Congress (APC) thugs who wanted to set Adedipe free.

Adedipe is being held on remand in connection with the murder of a former Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Omolafe Aderiye.

The allegation enraged the opposition camp in the state who described it as another ploy by the People’s Democratic Party (PDP)-led administration to tarnish the name of the APC.

The state APC Publicity Secretary, Taiwo Olatubosun, in a telephone chat denied the involvement of his party in the attack on prisons wondering what will his party gain in launching an attack on the prisons.

“What shall we gain for doing that ? We cannot do such things. It is not in our character to do such things.

“Very soon the PDP and the governor will have to accuse God for running a clueless government and for their shortcoming.”

This is a figment of imagination of a clueless government and I want to ask, is it the APC that is in charge of the prison or the security of the state?

“It is the figment of their imagination that the APC is connected with the breaking of the prison. We don’t know anything about it.”

Ekiti State Governor Ayo Fayose condemned the attack on the Federal Prisons, saying those who perpetrated the attack will not know peace.

The governor stated this during the swearing-in of the Head of Service, Mr. Gbenga Faseluka and five Permanent Secretaries.

The permanent secretaries sworn in are Mr. Ademiloye Fasiku, Mr. Ayodeji Ajiboye, Mrs. Olabisi Akindele, Mr. Lawrence Babatope and Mr. Sunday Komolafe.

The immediate past Head of Service, Mr. Bunmi Famosaya, was sworn in as Special Adviser in the Office of the Governor.

Fayose described the gunmen who blew up the prisons as “evil people” regretting the escape of some prisoners during the attack.

He said, “We regret the jailbreak perpetrated by the evil people, which led to the escape of many inmates.

“I want you to know that I have the grace of God on me and whoever plans against us shall be destroyed. My prayer is that they will not know peace”.

The police said they were collaborating with the authorities of the prisons to arrest inmates who escaped.

Spokesman Victor Babayemi told reporters that Commissioner of Police Taiwo Lakanu personally led officers and men to the scene of the incident on learning about the attack.

Babayemi said the vicinity of the prisons had been cordoned off while security in and around the place had been tightened.

He added that some of the escapees were re-arrested while others still at large are being trailed.