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Two policemen feared dead in battle with militants

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No Comments



•RRS Commander Olatunji Disu deploying drone to track the movement of the fleeing militants


•**DPO, others injured**

•**Militants' leader's house, Ijaw shrine destroyed**

Gunfires echoed in Igando, Lagos, yesterday as policemen battled militants on the waterway.

Two policemen were feared killed and scores of persons, including the Igando Divisional Police Officer (DPO), and four of his men wounded.

The militants were said to have fled with their injured colleagues when they came under heavy fire.



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The over 15 militants invaded Ewedogbon community in Igando through the river leading to Totowu, harassing residents and boat passengers.

On being confronted by police, they were said to have returned to reinforce.

They returned hours later and were again confronted by the police.

The Nation learnt that the DPO and his injured men have been hospitalised.

Some residents told our reporter on phone that sporadic gunshots still rang out about 1.30pm in Moshe and Totowu waterside communities.

The streets were deserted; many remained indoors as the police and soldiers moved in to restore calm.

A resident, who works with the state government, lamented that the militants' action is forcing many to relocate from their homes.

He said: "As I was dressing up to leave for work this morning, I got a call from a junior colleague that I should change my route because there was a gun battle between the police and militants and one policeman was killed in the process. Now I have to pay N2000 to get to work instead of N100".

He said the that trouble started few months ago when militants began attacking residents on the

waterway.

“They rob us on the boat daily and constantly harass our women. But the situation grew from bad to worse on Friday when they attacked Moshe village and killed a guard, who was a member of Oodua People’s Congress (OPC).

“All through the weekend, we lived in fear because those that left their homes came back with sad tales of how the militants attacked nine boats on the waterway.”

He praised the government, noting that though the communities affected are in Ogun, only the Lagos government has been supporting them through their ordeal.

Earlier, a resident of Ewedogbon community sent a Save Our Soul (SOS) via social media to the police and the government to quickly act as the militants were on the rampage.

“Please help us call emergency lines right now, Ewedogbon area of Igando, LASU Road is on war. Niger Delta militants are killing people right now. No one can call or go out. I am an eyewitness, please, help us spread the information,” the resident said in an urgent WhatsApp message sent around 8am.

According to him, the policemen who came to the area have run away as the militants had occupied everywhere.

“The police that came have run back, the militants have occupied everywhere right now in Ewedogbon. They just broke our house’s main gate right now,” he said.

A top police officer said the police were aware of the invasion, saying that policemen have been drafted to the area to secure lives and properties.

The Nation learnt that Rapid Response Squad (RRS) operatives stormed the community with four Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs) and six patrol vans.

A policeman attached to RRS told The Nation that the operatives chased the militants away.

“We (RRS operatives) arrived on the scene around 6:30am and chased them away. They have escaped with their boats, but some of them escaped with bullets’ wounds. They were many, they are close to twenty. We don’t know where they came from,” he said.

RRS, it was learnt, deployed drone to trace the militants’ movement as they ran through the waterway which leads to some communities including Totowu, Agbara and Kuto among others.



RRS operatives, in their bullet proof vans, bullet proof jackets and weapons, later drove into the small community leading to the river to see if they could get any of the militants.

Also, helicopters were seen hovering over the community.

The militants were said to have macheted a man on Monday night prior to the invasion.

A police source said angry residents burnt a three-bedroom flat built by some militants in the community after the police chased them away.

“They (militants) have been there since Monday due to the fact that some of them live in that community. They have buildings there,” he said.

He added that two RRS APCs have been stationed in the area for protection.

Police spokesperson Dolapo Badmos, a Superintendent (SP), said the police were aware of the invasion and that everything was under control as policemen had been drafted to the area.

She said the officers foiled an attempt by unknown gunmen to attack Igando Community.

“Some group of people invaded the Igando area in the early hours of today (Tuesday). Our operatives positioned in strategic places in the community, were alerted and they swiftly moved in and foiled the attack. Right now, normalcy has returned to the community,” Badmos said.

Two suspected militants, who attempted to attack the community on July 3, were arrested; three guns and ammunition were recovered from them.

An eyewitness said the militants, who identified themselves as Ijaw, were singing as they attacked the community.

According to him, the fracas followed a disagreement between a commercial motorcyclist Okada rider and one of the armed men. The militants were said to have refused to pay Okada man, a ride. An argument ensued. and the Okada man reportedly stoned them.

ing him to leave, and the chairman reportedly stated that

A policeman told people were seen fleeing the community last night.

A man said he was warned by a militants not to start the generator for The Call prayer yesterday morning.

“It was around 5am in the morning when I wanted to put on the generator to call for morning prayer. I just saw one very young boy warning me not to start the generator if I like my life. Even though he was small, I respected myself because what he was carrying is older than my father. I didn’t initially know because he wore a big sweater reaching his knees.”

The Chairman of Canoe Operators Association at Isuti waterside Alhaji Nurudeen Olorunjemi said the militants have been terrorising the community for months. He said they usually intercepted canoes, robbed people and threw them into the water.

He said: “We stopped operating since they killed a Mopol (Mobile Policeman) here on June 8 because we are not secured. Many canoe operators have died. The people living by the water have fled since then. Business is no longer as usual. Before, old women from Ogun State bring farm produce to sell. In the whole of this area nobody sleeps here. So we beg the government to help deploy men here for our safety.”

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