

Herdsman kill two, set Amotekun vehicle ablaze in Ondo

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• The burnt Amotekun vehicle in Ondo on Thursday.

By Yinka Adeniran, Ibadan

At least two people lost their lives on Thursday when suspected herders attacked operatives of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, also known as Amotekun Corps.

The incident occurred at Ago Sanusi, along Ute Road, Owo local government area (LGA) of the state.

It was gathered that a farmer whose name was given as Lanre had earlier been abducted by the suspected herders and his corpse was later found with his right and left hands cut off.

After discovering Lanre's corpse, farmers in the area called on Amotekun operatives for intervention.

Operatives of the security outfit got to the scene and were also attacked by the suspected herdsmen.

Sources say that a member of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria who joined the Amotekun in the operation was shot in the head.

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Also, the head of operations of security outfit in Owo, identified as Oluwasesan Adebayo, was reported missing after the attack.

Adebayo Ayeni, public relations officer of the Amotekun Corps, confirmed the incident in a statement.

He said: "Men of Ondo State Security Network Agency has again made another major breakthrough in their bid to get rid of criminal elements in Ondo State.

"This cartel were piling up arms and ammunition to invade the entire state while masquerading as herders and using the forest as kidnappers den for negotiation and ransom, illegal mining activities and cultivation of Indian hemp.

"The security outfits in conjunction with the police, the army and other security agencies in the state however smoked them out of the forest, after it was discovered that the bandits had killed a farmer and a member of the vigilante group in the area.

"They also went to the village where an Amotekun vehicle was parked and set it ablaze."

Police shoot Amotekun operative for arresting herder who destroyed farms

The Oyo State Security Network codenamed Amotekun Corps on Friday alleged the shooting of its operatives by a police officer following the arrest, by Amotekun, of a herder whose cows allegedly destroyed a farm.

One of the Amotekun operatives was said to have been hit and was receiving treatment in a hospital.

Trouble was said to have started when the herder's cows strayed into a farm in Gambari settlement in Surulere Local Government Area of the state.

The cows were said to have eaten up some of the crops in the farm which left the farmer fuming with anger.

The farmer was said to have gone to Amotekun to lodge a complaint, following which the suspected herder was arrested.

But when the matter was taken to a nearby police station, the police officers there got angry and queried the right of Amotekun to arrest the herder.

The police there and then arrested the Amotekun operative.

On hearing what happened to his men, the Amotekun leader in the zone rushed to the police station with a view to resolving the issue with the police.

However, the situation soon took a twist as an argument ensued between both sides.

The exchange of hot words was said to have filtered into the ears of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) who snatched a gun and fired some shots, with one of the Amotekun men hit on the legs.

He was rushed to a medical facility in the area for treatment.

Narrating the incident, the leader of the Amotekun Corps in the area, Mr Araoye Sikirulai, said: "Yesterday, some Amotekun officers arrested some herders, and instead of the police taking over and detaining the herders, they detained Amotekun officers.

"There was a complaint from a farmer that the herders invaded his farm with cows and that the farm was destroyed at Gambari area yesterday (Thursday), and we started our investigation into the matter.

"But, this morning (Friday) at around 10:30, we got persistent calls from one of our officers, named Jenyo, who was the one who went to arrest the Fulani herder that invaded the farm.

"He called to inform us that he had been arrested and detained by the police and that he had not been released since yesterday, but we told him to be patient and stay with them (police).

"But around 11 am, he still told us that he was still with them there; that he was detained. Two of them were detained named Jenyo and Olatunji Mayowa.

“Then we decided to go to the station. When we got there, Jenyo was allowed to come and talk to us outside, but one of our operatives that we went together was again arrested and detained for no just cause.

“The police accused us that we have no right to arrest any herder even after invading any farm, that it is only armed robbers that Amotekun are empowered to arrest and not herders that invade farmlands.

“About seven operatives from Surulere went to the police station.

“On getting to the station, the station guard that we met asked us to surrender our guns, but I refused. Then I told all those who had guns with them to stay outside under the tree while those of us without arm would go inside to talk to the DPO.

“I engaged the station guard that I needed to see the DPO and while we were still talking, because I can't even recognise the DPO, he just came out of the station in anger, saying he heard that we said we wanted to come and kill all the police officers. He just snatched a gun and as we were standing in a circle and started spraying bullets.

“We even thought he was only trying to scare us or that he was just joking until we saw that bullet had hit one of our men on the leg.

“We were seven standing there and talking before the DPO rushed out and sprayed. Thereafter, we had to rush the personnel into the van. Then they came back again to arrest another operative, took our motorcycle and then detained the officer.

“They also collected the gun from the operative, and when they opened it, they saw it was empty because we went there without loading any of the guns in our hands.

“That was when they arrested Olarinde Ezekiah. He had already taken cover but they had to threaten him with gunshot before he stayed back and he was arrested.

“The police shot at least seven rounds before they got to him and caught him. He was not caught at the police station, because the moment the DPO started spraying the gun, some officers had given some space.

“So, he was pursued and arrested. They said they didn't recognise us and what was it that we were doing?”

The State Commandant of Amotekun, Col Olayinka Olayanju (rtd) confirmed the incident.

He said: Amotekun operatives from Surulere Local Government went to arrest Fulani, along the line, one of the Fulani called the police and the police came and arrested three officers.

“Immediately the information reached their coordinator and they went to the police station. The DPO didn’t even listen to them; he just started shooting our people.

“Unfortunately, one of the officers was shut in the leg. Immediately, he was rushed down to the teaching hospital.”

Efforts to get the reaction of the police yielded no result as calls and messages sent to the spokesman’s line was yet to be returned at the time of filing this report.

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