

Naira, fuel protest turns bloody as soldiers kill one in Ibadan



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The anti-fuel/naira scarcity protest in [Ibadan](#) turned bloody on its second day yesterday after one person was shot dead by security personnel.

Some hoodlums, according to the police in Ibadan, had attacked the security personnel while on patrol around Apata Junction Market.

Long queues at ATMs persisted across the country yesterday as the people raced against time to dispose of their old naira notes and collect new ones before the expiration of the February 10 deadline given by the Central Bank.

The police in Oyo and Kwara states said intelligence at their disposal suggested plots by some people to attack banks and public facilities over the lingering fuel/naira scarcity.

The Ibadan security team had embarked on the patrol to keep the peace following the eruption of protests in parts of the city on Friday.

However, one of the patrol teams ran into the hoodlums who were said to have perfected plans to molest residents, harass shop owners and loot shops.

On sighting the combined convoy of security, the suspected hoodlums allegedly began firing guns, hurling stones, sharp objects and other dangerous missiles at the security patrol.

Spokesperson for the Oyo State Police Command, Adewale Osifeso, a Superintendent of Police, who confirmed the development in a statement, said the team “arrested the situation with reasonable force in line with police standard operational procedure.”

According to him, only the calmness and professional conduct displayed by the security operatives prevented the provocation from claiming more lives.

He said: “The Oyo State Police Command wishes to unequivocally reassert its resolve to maintain the relative tranquility in the state despite pockets of protests witnessed in some parts of the metropolis under the capital.

“Recall the Command issued an advisory via a press release dated Friday 03/02/2023 with the intent to intimate residents about concluded plans of some criminal elements to destabilise and completely bring to a halt economic activities in the state by launching coordinated attacks on critical infrastructures to include INEC facilities, banks, correctional centres, religious centres, landmarks, recreational centres, shopping malls, business centres, public spaces and other places of interest under the guise of protesting the scarcity of fuel and paucity of cash for dispense at ATM machines and Point of Sales terminals.

“Consequent on the above stated, Oyo State Police Command in concert with relevant sister agencies embarked on high octane joint convoy patrols simultaneously across the nooks and crannies of the state with the sole purpose of ridding the environs of undesirable elements with sinister motives of hijacking the situation to make criminal proceeds.

“Today Saturday, 04/02/2023 at about 1015hrs, while embarking on series of confidence building patrols around different black spots and flash points, the joint convoy patrol comprising the police and other agencies ran into a band of hoodlums around Apata Junction Market, Apata Area under Ido Local Government Area.

“In a rather surprising event, the hoodlums, who had perfected plans to molest residents, harass shop owners and loot shops, on sighting the combined convoy of security, launched a series of unprovoked attacks by firing guns, hurling stones, sharp objects and other dangerous missiles at them.

“The trained officers, cautious of the level of casualties that might be recorded should they engage at the location, resorted to restraints and professionally took charge at the scene while arresting the situation with reasonable force in line with standard operational procedure.

“However, during the rage, an individual identified to have been a member of a vigilante group and who was reported to have died in the fiasco has since been deposited at a government hospital for post-mortem.

“Meanwhile normalcy has since returned to the area with heavy deployment of patrol teams and other tactical assets visibly on ground.”

Kwara police ‘uncover’ plot by hoodlums to attack banks

Also yesterday, the Kwara State Police Command said it had uncovered a plot by suspected hoodlums to attack banks in the state.

The command accordingly warned those hatching the plot to perish the thought, failing which they should be prepared to face the consequences.

Spokesperson for the command, Ajayi Okasanmi, said intelligence available to the command “indicates that hoodlums have perfected plans to replicate the lawlessness that was unleashed on some banks in some states of the country, owing to the crisis emanating from the Naira note swap that is ongoing in Nigeria at present, which the government is doing all within its power to normalise.”

Okasanmi said the command has “the capacity to deal ruthlessly with any lawbreaker” and warned criminals to “shelve any such dastardly idea.”

He said Police Commissioner Paul Odama “has ordered aggressive patrols of banks and other financial facilities across the length and breadth of the state, warning criminal elements in the state to change their minds as anyone arrested would be met with heavy consequences.”

Zulum to banks: Dispense new notes or we revoke your land

As long queues at ATMs across the country persist, Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum has threatened to revoke the land allocation of any bank refusing to release the new naira notes via ATMs and banking halls.

Zulum issued the directive on Friday in Maiduguri after visiting branches of banks to assess the problems faced by residents in trying to access new naira notes via long queues at ATMs.

“Any bank in Borno State that is not willing to ensure their ATMs are fully dispensing new naira notes cash to ease the suffering of our people, we will withdraw their land title immediately. We will only spare Banks with genuine constraints that are verifiable,” Zulum said.

The governor was unhappy seeing hundreds of people on the queues at a bank’s branch, with only one out of 10 ATMs dispensing cash.

“As you can see here, only less privileged people are queued up. I didn’t see rich people here. Many people are said to be here since 3 am, some could not even eat anything.

“The new naira note and even the old ones are not available and that is adversely affecting commercial activities in the state and people are suffering,” Zulum said.

He added: “We just released salaries of about N5 billion and the banks don’t have money. Some of the ATMs are not working. We don’t have any problem with the CBN policy or the withdrawal limit. They said individuals can only withdraw N20,000, but why can’t everyone have access to that N20,000?

“Yesterday I was in Gubio with a population of over 70,000 people, but it was impossible to source N100,000 in the entire local government, whether the new notes or the old notes.

“A ram that is worth N100,000 is now being sold for N35,000 because people are desperate for cash, and some wicked rich people are going to rural areas to exploit poor people.”

The Governor urged the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to ensure the availability of new notes at commercial banks for people to access their money.

Gov Abiodun suspends re-election campaign indefinitely

Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun yesterday suspended his political campaign until further notice.

The governor in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary, Kunle Somorin, said he took the decision to identify with the plight of the Ogun people who are faced with the twin challenge of fuel scarcity and naira swap.

While expressing his delight at the 47th anniversary of the creation of the state, the governor said that his administration shared the pains being currently experienced by the people in the state as a result of the redesigned naira notes swap and fuel scarcity.

According to him, the plight being endured by the people is a great sacrifice that can be offered by them for better Nigeria, disclosing that all efforts were being made to ease the

situation.

He said that “the issues of scarcity of fuel and new naira notes have been taken up with relevant authorities to make life easier and more meaningful for the people”.

“As an administration voted into office by the people, it will be insensitive to ignore the plight of the people and continue with the reelection campaigns when people cannot do businesses with their hard earned money and cannot get fuel.”

He however promised to continue with the campaign once the crises cease and normalcy returns to the economic activities of the people.

Senator Tofowomo seeks Emefiele’s arrest

The Senator representing Ondo South, Nicholas Tofowomo, wants the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor, Godwin Emefiele, arrested for allegedly disobeying a resolution of the Red Chamber of the National Assembly.

Senator Tofowomo said Emefiele’s action is the is now causing hardship for the generality of Nigerians.

He said: “By now the CBN governor should be in prison for disobeying the Senate and dishonouring its resolution thereby causing naira scarcity. We find it very difficult to have access to cash because Emefiele is lawless and proving very stubborn.

“As a sitting Senator, I was in the bank on Friday to apply for a little cash, but I didn’t get anything. My cheque was returned to me because the bank didn’t have enough new naira notes to pay customers.

“They told me they had paid out what they had for that day even though many customers were still inside the banking hall stranded and shouting.

“In my senatorial district, there are many unbanked residents. More than 300 communities do not have access to commercial banks. For the few with bank accounts, they will need to travel far to locate a bank.

“Thousands of residents are suffering now because they don’t have access to cash to feed their families and transact business. They submitted their old notes in line with the CBN directives by all means, but now, the CBN has failed to fulfill its part by providing new notes for them.

“Things wouldn’t have been this bad if Emefiele obeyed the Senate directive.

“This situation must be arrested immediately. Buhari should just sack Emefiele now to douse the tension for the sake of this election. Emefiele should go.

“People are already saying this is a plan to cause a crisis to cancel the election and install an interim government. I just hope this is not true.”