

News

Residents express worry over killings in Ado-Ekiti

•As gunmen kill five persons in a week

Yomi Ayeleso | Ado-Ekiti

In the last few days, the people of Ekiti State, especially those in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital, have been in fear following the reported attacks leading to loss of lives.

Saturday Tribune observed that the killings, which appeared to be coordinated with a recognized pattern, might have been perpetrated by the same sets of assailants.

According to residents, the alleged gunmen, usually two or three on motorcycles, popularly called okada, attacked their victims in broad daylight.

At about 8am on Monday this week, residents of a community woke up to the killing of a middle-aged man, identified as Segun Omojajowo, around the Okesa area of the state capital. The deceased who was an official of the motorcycle's association in charge of giving out daily tickets to members was shot dead at close range by the assailants.

On Thursday, three persons were gunned down at different locations within the Ado-Ekiti metropolis. While a man identified as Alfa, a Point of Sales (PoS) operator was shot dead in his shop along the State Teaching Hospital road, with his money and other valuables carted away; the

two others were killed around Edemo and Oja-bisi areas of the community.

Last week, *Saturday Tribune* learned that a man was also gruesomely killed close to the Oluwemi Kayode Stadium, also in the metropolis.

These and many other criminal activities have made the residents of the state capital worry and fear that it might continue if not checked by the security agencies. Most frightening and worrying about these killings was that, apart from the fact that the deceased were killed during the day, they all happened in places described as busiest and difficult terrain for criminals to attack and escape without arrest.

Since the killings, commercial and social activities have been affected in the state capital as many people, especially business owners and residents hurriedly closed shops and returned home before 7pm.

While investigations from security sources revealed that some of the killings might be cult related, others also noted that the attacks might have been an armed robbery against PoS agents and operators in the state capital.

A security source said, "We are worried knowing fully well that the state has been peaceful lately. But the latest killings

call for concern. Don't forget that in recent weeks, PoS agents have been attacked around the state capital but these latest ones suggested cultism."

A 45-year old relative of one of the deceased, who identified himself as Tunde, said that the killings, among other reasons, might be connected to issues among some youth groups.

He said, "My relative who was killed was going about his business when he was shot dead. I can't say he was into cultism."

"We are in fear because we don't know what will happen and how they will operate. If you observe, in the last few days, people don't usually stay out beyond 7pm, even though these killings happened during the day."

"Nobody would have thought that these killings would happen in the state capital by people on motorcycles without being arrested. It causes concern and requires action from the state government."

On his part, a public affairs analyst, Bimbo Akinlade, said that the state government should be alive to its responsibilities in securing the people, adding that the recent killings call for serious and immediate action.

According to Akinlade, the

fact that the killings occurred in the state capital should send a strong signal to the government and that the state must be seen to be secured for investors and partners to have the confidence of investing in the state.

"The truth of the matter is that the government must do well to convince the people that they are truly in charge and can guarantee the security of lives and property of the residents. We can't move freely now because we don't know who is next and this should be a clear signal to the government. The Monday killing happened just very close to the entrance of the government house."

Reacting to the killings during a media chat on Friday, the state governor, Biodun Oyeibanji, said the killings were perpetrated by some "unscrupulous elements" in the state, adding that security agencies had swung into action and would bring the masterminds to justice.

Assuring that the situation is under control, the governor said he has directed all security agencies in the state to take immediate and decisive action against those responsible for the attacks, adding that the government is fully committed to addressing the situation.

The governor, who empha-

sised the need for vigilance and community cooperation, urged the youth to shun unlawful behaviours, emphasising that leadership opportunities await those who prepare themselves diligently.

Oyeibanji said, "What happened in the last few days is so unfortunate, we don't have that history in Ekiti State. This is a new development. We are on top of it, monitoring the situation and have the intelligence of those responsible."

"I have instructed the security agencies to go after them, they cannot turn Ekiti State into a haven of cult activities. I commiserate with the families of those who lost their loved ones. I also advise our young ones to desist from these nefarious activities."

"The state is one of the most secured states in the country — even in the most secure countries in the world, we have pockets of criminalities. We have to be on top of the situation. And I can assure you our government is on top of the situation."

"I urge our citizens and investors not to be discouraged by the development. We are working hard to rid the state of criminal and violent gangs, and I covet the support and cooperation of the citizens to achieve this."

But the state Commissioner of Police, Kunle Akinwale,

while revealing that the killings were related to cultism, assured residents that the perpetrators would soon be arrested.

Speaking through the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) DSP Sunday Abutu, the CP said, "In view of the recent ugly incidents in Ekiti State, particularly in Ado-Ekiti metropolis, where hoodlums suspected to be secret cult members fatally shot at innocent citizens, the Ekiti State Police Command wishes to inform the general public that necessary security measures have been put in place to ensure the arrest of the syndicates perpetrating this dastard act and to forestall further occurrence."

"We have a massive deployment of operatives from the tactical and intelligence units across the state, especially in Ado-Ekiti, in collaboration with other security agents including the local security outfits to ensure maximum protection of lives and properties of all citizens and the arrest of criminal elements."

"The command implores everyone to be security conscious, vigilant and assist the police and other security agents with credible and timely information that could aid in apprehending criminally minded persons in society."