

metro

... City, Crime, Courts

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Vandals evacuated bodies after explosion — Source

Eniola Akinkuotu nd Kunle Falayi

Many of the vandals who died at the scene of Saturday's pipeline explosion at Arepo, Ogun State, were evacuated by colleagues immediately after the incident, a source has said.

The source, who asked not to be named for security reasons, said pipeline vandals usually do not leave the bodies of their dead colleagues at the scene.

The source said, "Six canoes were found at the scene. They must have brought people there. Whenever a pipeline explosion occurs, the mode of operation is always to get the casualty out of the scene as soon as possible.

"The three bodies found probably sank at the time, which was why their colleagues could not recover them and evacuate them immediately. The number of those who died in the explosion could be very high."

PUNCH Metro learnt on Monday that the bodies of the dead vandals found floating in the creeks were retrieved and taken for burial in Majidu, Ikorodu Road, by emergency officials late on Sunday.

Spokesperson for the National Emergency Management Agency, Ibrahim Farinloye, also said the fire had been put out on Sunday evening.

He explained that the damaged pipeline had been repaired while the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation had even repaired some of the pipelines through it.

Farinloye explained that there was a pipeline explosion at Ije-Dodo, Ojo Local Government Area, on Monday, the same spot where a huge explosion had occurred on December 18, 2012.

"The pipeline was vandalised at two points. The people of 7th Avenue would have been in serious danger if the fuel coming out resulted in a fire outbreak," he said.

He, however, explained that the vandalised pipeline was being repaired.

On Monday, emergency workers had done their works at the damaged pipeline at Arepo while NNPC officials had finished their repairs. All that remained at the scene were security agents stationed on the way to the creeks.

Although there were unconfirmed reports that vandals who died at the scene numbered about 30, only three bodies were found at the scene on Sunday.

Meanwhile, hoodlums have vandalised another pipeline belonging to the NNPC in Epe area of Lagos State.

The hoodlums were said to have ruptured the pipeline and scooped some petrol before fleeing.

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps however recovered 111 kegs of petrol which were left behind by the vandals.

The commandant, NSCDC, Lagos State Command, Shem Obafaiye, said the petrol was recovered on Sunday night. He said NSCDC operatives were able to discover the goods through surveillance in the area.

He said, "We got information and I mobilised our men to come on duty and when they came last night they called me that the vandals ran away when they saw them coming. However, they were able to recover 111 jerrycans of petrol."

Obafaiye said it had become necessary for security to be beefed up around oil pipelines and urged members of the public to continue to report cases of pipeline vandalism in their area to the appropriate authorities.

"There is something called community policing and we have to go back to it. It will involve baales, chiefs and leaders of the community. They will be charged with the responsibility of overseeing every activity going on these pipelines," he said.

Six policemen, w Lagos

Eniola Akinkuotu

At least six policemen were killed in separate robbery incidents in different parts of Lagos over the weekend, PUNCH Metro has learnt.

The policemen, it was learnt, were killed during robbery operations.

Also, a mother of four, Lateefah Oyinloye, was killed during one of such incidents.

It was learnt that the robberies occurred in Ajah, Aguda and Oyingbo areas of the state between Saturday and Sunday.

Our correspondent, who visited Oyingbo on Monday, learnt that a robbery occurred on Redemption Way.

It was learnt that a police corporal, identified only as Morooof, was killed alongside Oyinloye.

Our correspondent told PUNCH Metro that the robbers, numbering about eight, stormed her home around 1:30am on Saturday and robbed her family.

She said, "Around 1:30am, some armed robbers jumped over

my fence and entered the house. They robbed us all and riddled the entire house with bullets.

"Two of the robbers stood guard outside the compound while six stayed inside and ransacked the house. One of the robbers wore a mask while the others didn't.

"They locked me and my husband inside the toilet and

opened fire on the door. Luckily, no one in my house was killed."

A resident, who craved anonymity, said while the robbers were trying to escape, they sighted a

policeman in a patrol vehicle and opened fire on him.

He said Oyinloye, who was in a taxi at the time, was killed by a bullet.

He said, "Policemen from Denton Station usually



Seven killed in Akwa

Etim Ekpimah, Uyo

Seven persons have been killed and five declared missing over a land dispute between Enwang and Uko-Ntege in Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Two of those killed, PUNCH Metro learnt, were from neighbouring communities of Ofi and Akprakpran respectively. They were said to be going to Ibaka, another neighbouring community, when they were ambushed and killed by one of the warring communities.

Also, a youth identified simply as Ekuwem from Orukim Uda community was also said to have been abducted by youths suspected to be from Enwang and has not been seen since January 4 when the crisis erupted.

Apart from the casualties, Enwang and Uko-Ntege communities lost properties estimated at millions of naira.

PUNCH Metro authoritatively learnt that no fewer than 37 persons sustained varying degrees of

injuries with eight of them under critical condition.

A victim from Uko-Ntege, Nse Ntuen, said Enwang youths invaded Uko-Ntege with some people in army uniform, overran the community and destroyed everything in sight.

"Enwang youths took us by surprise. The soldiers they came with, we thought were for peaceful mission. Before we knew it, there was wanton destruction in our community," Ntuen said.

Another victim from Enwang, Mr. Etim Edet, said he came back to meet his home vandalised, adding that he had since abandoned home.

He said, "I was not around when youths from Uko-Ntege entered Enwang and started killing people, destroying houses. I only came back to see my house vandalised.

"All of us from this area have left our community for fear

of attack from Uko-Ntege. These are bullets injury I had from a previous attack by Uko-Ntege's youths."

A community leader in Uko-Ntege, Mr. Etim Effiong, said the matter was a long standing dispute, adding the crisis was actually a problem between two families in Uko-Ntege and Enwang.

"The problem is a long standing problem. This case is not always between the entire Uko-Ntege and the entire Enwang community.

"There is a particular family called Uko-Akai, that is, in Uko-Ntege, and there is another, Uko-Akai, at Uko-Akpan, Enwang.

"These two villages are of the same parents. The other faction of Uko-Akai in Uko-Ntege migrated to Enwang and lives there. These ones at Enwang now rejected them.

"Even within them, they are bearing the same family names like Otu, Udo-oyo, Akene, and Antai. Both of them are sharing these family names.

"The people of Uko-Ntege said those at Enwang have a right to be farming at Uko-Ntege because the place is no longer their ancestral home.

"There are five families in Uko Akpan, it is only the family which migrated from Uko-Ntege (Uko-Akai) that farm in Uko-Ntege territory.

"Every year there must be a problem: this case had been settled in courts in 1909, 1927, 2009/2010 restraining them from coming into Uko-Ntege land."

All attempts to speak to Enwang leaders proved abortive as they keep shifting their appointment date given to our correspondent.

When contacted, the Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Etim Dickson, said he was in Abuja. He told our correspondent that he had called the commandant to verify the issue, but the command was not aware of the incident.

He said, "I'm in Abuja."

Mixed reactions have continued to trail the evacuation of victims of the fire outbreak that destroyed houses, shops and properties at the Okobaba area of Lagos last Tuesday.

While some victims of the fire incident expressed dissatisfaction, others commended the Lagos State

Mixed reactions trail evacuation of fire outbreak victims

Sodiq Oyeleke

Government for the provision of a relief camp.

The General Manager, Lagos State Emergency Management Agency, Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu,

said on Monday that a camp had been opened at Agbowo for the victims

But one of the displaced people, Mrs. Ayoka Salako, said their means of livelihood should be given priority.

"This (Okobaba) is where I gave birth to all my children. So, it is not possible for them to relocate me to Agbowo, a town that I don't know," she said.

Another resident, Idowu Shittu, who expressed dissatisfaction

about the relief camp, appealed to the government to provide a means of transportation for the displaced people.

However, a resident, Muftau Bakare, commended the action of the government, adding that the camp would satisfy their temporary needs.

Woman killed in robberies

come to our street to raid a joint in the area. A team of policemen had gone on the usual raid but the police corporal (Moroofo) remained in the vehicle.

"Unluckily for him,

the robbers saw him and immediately opened fire. Oyinloye was in a taxi at the time and was on her way home when she was hit by a bullet."

Our correspondent observed bullet holes on parked vehicles on the street as well as the gate of Orerun's house.

Oyinloye's daughter, Bashirat, who wept as she spoke, said her mother sold drinks and usually closed late.

She said, "My mum sells spirits at Obalende and

usually closes late at night. She usually comes home in a taxi. She was killed in the taxi.

"The matter has been reported to Denton Police Station but her corpse has not been released to us. We need to bury her quickly because we are Muslims."

A family member, who craved anonymity, however lamented that the policemen demanded N34,000 before the corpse would be released.

"The policemen asked for N34,000 for embalment and other expenses but we

are negotiating with them to collect N20,000," she said.

When contacted, telephone of the spokesperson for the state police command, Ngozi Braide, did not go through.

A Divisional Police Officer, who craved anonymity, however confirmed the death of five policemen.

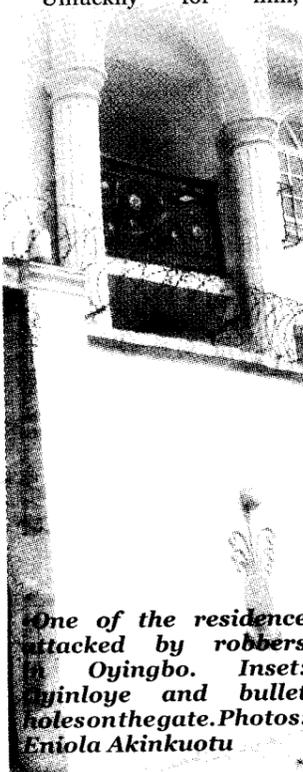
He said, "Four policemen were killed at Ajah while one was killed at Oyingbo. I am not aware of that of Aguda.

"We had a meeting with the Commissioner of Police today (Monday) and security will be beefed up."

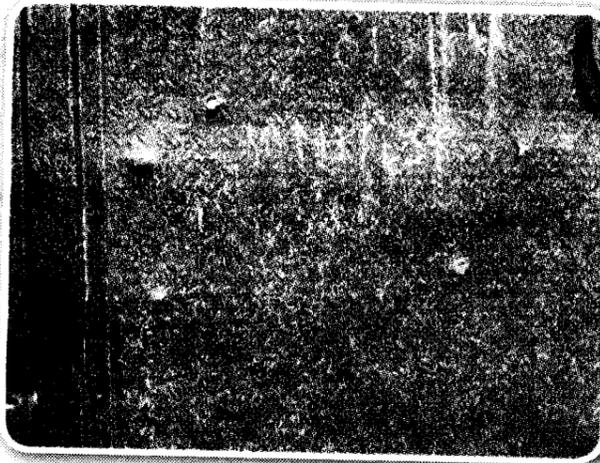
The senior officer said the policemen killed in Ajah were ambushed in a patrol van by the robbers.

He said, "The area commander received a distress call and ordered his men to the scene. On their way there, the robbers came out from the bush and opened fire on them.

The four of them in the vehicle were killed. Co-incidentally, a traffic policeman and a civilian were within the area at that time. They were also killed."



One of the residence attacked by robbers in Oyingbo. Inset: Oyinloye and bullet holes on the gate. Photos: Eniola Akinkuotu



A vandalised house. Inset: Ntuen with pellet wounds

We suspect slain doctor was assassinated -Police



Eniola Akinkuotu and Temitayo Famutimi

The Lagos State Police Command has said Irawo Adamolekun, the 27-year-old medical doctor, who was killed on Friday by a gunman in Lagos traffic, might have been assassinated.

The spokesperson for the state police command, Ngozi Braide, told one of our correspondents on the telephone that contrary to initial reports, the motive of his killer might not have been robbery.

Braide said, "The doctor was shot in the head while driving on Anthony end of Ikorodu Road. The Divisional Police Officer, Somolu said there was no

heavy traffic at that time and the doctor's car did not stop at that point but kept on moving.

"We suspect that he may have been assassinated but investigations are ongoing. We observed blood on the passenger seat and we observed that he was shot in the head. His telephone was also missing."

She however lamented that investigations had been difficult because no one was willing to make statements, saying even the relatives of the deceased had yet to come forward.

Braide said, "No one has agreed to make statements. We even visited the hospital, Osuntuyi Medical Centre, where he worked but the doctor on duty refused to make statement. The doctor said only the Chief Medical Director could attend to us.

"The relatives too have not come to the station. It was some soldiers that called the station to say that they knew him and that they were going to the mortuary to take his corpse."

She urged members of the public to come forward with vital information that could help the police with investigation, assuring them that their identities would be protected.

Meanwhile, family and friends of Adamolekun will on Wednesday hold a candle light procession in his honour.

A cousin of the deceased, who craved anonymity, told PUNCH Metro that the procession would begin from Military Hospital, Ikoyi and end at Falomo, Ikoyi.

In a related development, the Federal Civil Service Club, Ikoyi, Lagos, has joined in the mourning of Adamolekun.

The club pasted a cardboard on the wall of its entrance announcing the death of Adamolekun who was a member of the club.

The words written on the obituary stated, "Dr. Irawo Adamolekun, Member Lawn Tennis Section with Club Membership Number 4075, RIP."

Efforts to contact the family of the deceased were unsuccessful as one of our correspondents, who visited the residential quarters of the Military Hospital, Ikoyi, was turned by two soldiers at the gate.

PUNCH Metro learnt that Irawo's father, a colonel attached to the military hospital.

Ibom land dispute



Ntuen's pellet wounds



A vandalised house. Inset: Ntuen with pellet wounds

have called the command to verify the issue, but they are not aware."

But a source at Mbo Police Division said the police did try to bring the situation under

control but were hampered by lack of enough personnel and firearms.

"Joint task forces have been deployed in the two affected communities to assist us. You

can see them around; we can assure the indigenes of full protection," he said.

A former transitional chairman, Mbo LGA, Mr. Okpo Ekere, was shot on

the stomach on May 20, 2012 when he went to broker peace between the two warring communities of Ebughu and Effiat (all in Mbo LGA) following the killings

of Ebughu men by youths suspected to be from Effiat.

Ekere eventually died on July 26, 2012 in Saudia Arabia while on his way to India for treatment in an air ambulance hired by state government.