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Calabar jailbreak: Eight inmates feared dead

FEBRUARY 23, 2015 BY MUDIAGA AFFE 0 COMMENTS

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Calabar Prison; broken wall of the prison

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There are indications that eight inmates may have died following the gun duel that ensued when prisoners attempted jailbreak at the Calabar Prison on Friday.

The inmates had at about 11am on the day disarmed two warders and successfully gained access to the prison's armoury where they got 53 rifles with which they carried out their unsuccessful operation.

PUNCH Metro exclusively learnt from a reliable source on Saturday that eight inmates died after sustaining bullet wounds during the battle that lasted over 40 minutes.

They were said to have been buried at the Eyo-Ita end of the Hawkins Cemetery in the Calabar South area.

It was also learnt that the two warders, who sustained serious injuries during the fracas, had died.

"Eight of the inmates were buried this morning. They died from injuries they sustained during the gun duel on Friday. They have been buried at the Hawkins Cemetery in Calabar South. Two warders also died," he said.

Shortly after the incident on Friday, the state Controller of Prisons, Mr. Clement Udosen, said no death was immediately recorded, but confirmed that there were fatalities.

He had said, "Two cells of about 70 persons in each cell organised themselves and overpowered the prison staff and rushed to the armoury and seized the rifles. They subsequently went back firing at the staff.

"In that confusion, they broke other cells and the whole yard was filled with inmates. They carried what they could get to break the fence. They were all rounded up and nobody escaped.

"Most of those injured are the inmates. Three members of our staff were wounded and one rushed to the hospital."

Trouble started on Friday when the prisoners pretended to be quarrelling and fighting shortly after they were brought out from their cells to take their bath.

Two warders that had approached them to find out what was happening, were disarmed by the inmates before they moved the armoury.

The prisoners broke part of the prison's fence, creating a hole to aid their escape, but the armed military men surrounding the prison foiled their plans.

A top official of the facility, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said about "17 hardened criminals" were brought to the prisons a few weeks back, adding that none of them escaped during the incident.

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He said, "The people that did this job are high level criminals. Some hardened drug barons, kidnappers and ex-militants were brought here two weeks ago. We knew we had a heavy task at hand. We have been watching them, but we thought the attack would come from outside."

"We were happy none of those hardened criminals escaped. Seventeen of them were brought two weeks ago."

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