

Rivers: Gunmen kill five policemen, kidnap naval officer, rating

May 10, 2016



Inspector-General of Police, Solomon Arase

Chukwudi Akasike, Friday Amobi, and Port Harcourt

FIVE policemen, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Nasiru Halidu, were on Monday killed by unknown gunmen in Okobe, Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The policemen, who were heading to 30 PMF (Police Mobile Force) in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, at the end of their special mission in Yobe State were ambushed by the hoodlums at about 3am.

It was gathered that the hoodlums took the policemen unawares and opened fire, killing all the five cops, who were occupants of a police van.

The hoodlums, it was gathered, thereafter made away with the guns of the deceased policemen.

The hoodlums were said to have left the scene immediately after their operation that ostensibly did not last up to 10 minutes.

A stray bullet was said to have hit a conductor attached to a tanker driver. Tanker drivers usually sleep over in Okobe before continuing their journey to their destinations.

“One of my coursemates, a DSP; his name is Nasiru Halidu, was among those ambushed and killed by the hoodlums. He was among the police officers and men, who went on a special duty in Yobe State.

“They were going back to Yenagoa after ending their special assignment. It was at Okobe in Ahoada West, along the East-West Road, that the incident happened,” a police source lamented.

The incident was said to have caused pandemonium in the community as some indigenes of the area had begun to leave to avoid being arrested.

Confirming the incident, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Ahmad Muhammad, said the hoodlums laid ambush for the policemen that were travelling back to Yenagoa.

He dismissed claims in some quarters that the policemen were involved in a shoot-out with some members of a cult group, insisting that the policemen were not attached to the Rivers State Police Command.

Muhammad, who was almost in tears, explained that the attack occurred in the wee hours of Monday, adding that all the policemen, who were occupants of a vehicle, died.

“It is not true that they (policemen) were involved in a shoot-out with cult members. The truth is that they were coming from Yobe State after their special assignment and they were ambushed in Okobe, Ahoada West LGA.

“They (policemen) were from 30 PMF and were going back to their base in Yenagoa when the incident happened. It has nothing to do with the any shoot-out.

“We are deeply pained by the senseless and barbaric killing of our colleagues attached to 30 PMF, Yenagoa, who were ambushed in the early hours of today (Monday) at Okobe enroute Yenagoa.

“Today’s tragedy again demonstrated the enormous calamities we face and witness in the course of our job. We put our lives on the line every day to confront crime and violence in our communities.

“We will stop at nothing to bring the perpetrators of this dastardly act to justice,” Muhammad added.

Meanwhile, a naval officer and a rating have been kidnapped by unknown gunmen in Rumuji axis of Emohua Local Government Area of the state.

The officer and the rating, whose name could not be ascertained immediately, were said to be on their way to Sapele in Delta State before they were waylaid and taken away by the unknown gunmen.

The incident, according to a source, occurred at about 4pm on Monday.

A navy source, who confirmed the abduction of the officer and the rating, told *The PUNCH* that the duo’s whereabouts had not been ascertained.

The source explained that a call had since been put across to the naval base of the victims while the search for them had started.

“I received a call today (on Monday) and was told that a naval officer and a rating were kidnapped. The officer and the rating were on their way to Sapele when they were abducted in Emohua.

“Their (officer and rating) command is not in Rivers State. It is in Delta State and I have put a call across to tell them about the development, but no response yet,” the navy source added.

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