

# Looting: IG orders police commanders to reclaim public space

**ADELANI ADEPEGBA,**  
**RAPHAEL EDE,**  
**TONY OKAFOR,**  
**GBENGA ODOGUN,**  
**ADEYINKA ADEDIPE,**  
**JAMES ABRAHAM,**  
**GODWIN ISENYO,**  
**JUSTIN TYOPUUSU,**  
**SUNDAY NWAKANMA,**  
**DAUD OLATUNJI and**  
**TUNDE OYEKOLA**

**F**OLLOWING widespread looting and arson by suspected hoodlums, the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, has ordered police commanders to immediately stop the descent into anarchy across the country. Adamu directed the immediate mobilisation of all police operational assets and resources to bring an end to the wanton violence, killings, looting and destruction of public and private property, and reclaim the public space from "criminal elements masquerading as protesters in some parts of the country".

According to a statement by the Force spokesman, DCP Frank Mba, the IG gave the order to all Assistant Inspectors-General of Police, Commissioners of Police, heads of police operational units, Squadron and Base Commanders in charge of Zonal/State/FCT commands, Police Mobile Force, Counter-Terrorism Unit and the Special Protection Unit, on October 24, 2020.

"In addition, CPs and heads of police formations in the various states have also been charged to mobilise their men and work in sync with the command CPs in the areas where they are domiciled, to dominate the public space and ensure peace and safety in the affected areas," the statement said.

It was titled, 'Reclaim the public space and restore normalcy, IG orders AIGs, CPs, CPs, others.'

Vandalism of public and private property and looting have been going on for the past five days with security forces unable to stop it.

In Abuja on Saturday, suspected hoodlums stormed the FCT Social Welfare Secretariat, Area 10, Garki, in an attempt to loot a COVID-19 warehouse in the area.

Police and other security personnel guarding the store fired gunshots and tear gas to deter the youths while the traders at the UTC market, Area 10, Garki, Abuja and residents of the area quaked with fear.

A graphic designer, Segun Stickers, said the UTC market and a big shopping plaza in the area were shut down following the incident.

"We are locked inside the UTC market. The police are firing gunshots and tear gas to stave off the attack by the hoodlums who were trying to loot the COVID-19 palliatives kept in a warehouse here."

"Many people were injured while trying to escape attack by the hoodlums and there is apprehension in the whole area," he said on the phone.

A similar situation was recorded in Bukuru, Jos South, Plateau State, on Saturday, where residents broke into warehouses where COVID-19 palliatives were stored.

Noting that 'enough is enough', the IG said the acts of lawlessness, disruption of public peace and order and wanton violence had resulted in indiscriminate looting of shops, malls and warehouses, damage to property and loss of lives.

He further directed the police strategic managers to personally lead and coordinate the operation and use all legitimate means to halt further descent into lawlessness and brigandage.

The statement read, "The Inspector-General of Police, M. A. Adamu, has ordered the immediate mobilisation of all police operational assets and resources to bring an end to the wanton violence, killings, looting and destruction of public and private property, and reclaim the public space from criminal elements masquerading as protesters in some parts of the country."

"The IGP gave the order to all Assistant Inspectors General of Police, Commissioners of Police, Heads of Police Operational Units, Squadron and Base Commanders in charge of Zonal/State/FCT Commands, the Police Mobile Force, Counter Terrorism Unit and the Special Protection Unit, today 24th October, 2020."

The police enjoined law-abiding citizens not to panic "but rather join forces with the police and other members of the law enforcement community to protect their communities from the criminal elements".

Adamu warned troublemakers not to test the collective will of the nation by coming out to cause any further breakdown of law and order.

**Four die as mobs jostle to steal gov palliatives in Enugu, Anambra**

No fewer than four persons were killed in Enugu and Anambra states on Saturday when a mob, comprising old and young people, moved to loot COVID-19 palliatives in their states.

In Enugu State, three persons were reported killed while one person died in Anambra.

In the past few days, residents and hoodlums in different states had stormed warehouses where the palliatives were stored, making away with stored food items.

In Enugu State, following some persons' post in the social media revealing where the COVID-19 palliatives in the state were stored, Queens Girls Secondary School, Ogui New

Layout, Enugu North Local Government Area of the state, many people defied the 24-hour curfew in the state and stormed the location.

An eyewitness, Ejike Omkaka, told one of our correspondents that security agents took over the school gate with their Armoured Personnel Carrier and its surroundings as early as 6am before the youths arrived in their numbers.

Omkaka added, "The security agents started shooting to scare people away, but the number of people there kept increasing. They even barricaded all the roads leading to the area to prevent reinforcement by the security agents. It was during the confrontation that the soldiers and policemen opened fire on the crowd."

"Three persons were killed instantly, including an attendant at a filling station at Nkponkiti Junction. Many others were injured. I helped in conveying seven people to the hospital. I was told other injured persons were taken to private hospitals but were rejected."

Another eyewitness, Ogechi Eze, also said he saw three corpses after the clash. He added, "I hope you have seen the pictures. One was said to have been shot in the head while two were shot in the chest. This was the same issue that triggered the #EndSARS protest."

The state Commissioner of Police, Ahmad Abdurrahman, and the Police Public Relations Officer, Daniel Ndukwe, did not answer their calls, neither did they respond to text messages sent to them as of the time of filing this report.

The Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, Col Aliyu Yusuf, could not be reached as his phone was switched off while the state Commissioner for Information, Mr Chidi Aroh, could also not be reached as his phone was switched off.

In Anambra State, six truckloads of food items reportedly meant to be distributed to flood victims in Anambra State were on Saturday intercepted by a mob.

The incident occurred in Awka, the state capital, resulting in the death of a man simply identified as Ala Owerri.

An eyewitness said, "The victim, who was a mechanic, jumped into a moving trailer to carry some food items. On getting to Aroma junction, he jumped out of the moving trailer but was crushed by the vehicle. He died instantly."

The state Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment, Don Adinuba, confirmed the incident, saying, "The state government would like to inform the public that four out of the six truckloads of foodstuffs meant for four local government areas submerged by flood which were attacked and

vandalised by miscreants today in Awka, but they have reached their destination."

**Hoodlums break govt warehouses in Edo, Plateau, Kaduna, others**

In Edo State, rampaging youths had a field day on Saturday when they stormed the warehouse on Medical Store Road, Uslu and made away with the food items there.

The youths, who had in the morning been prevented by military personnel from carrying out the act, later succeeded in breaking the shield mounted by the military and made away with the food items.

It was however learnt that one person fell and died while leaving the warehouse while a lady sustained injury on her and was helped out of the premises.

In Plateau State, the warehouse where COVID-19 palliatives were stored in Bukuru community, Jos South Local Government Area of the state was also looted by hoodlums. They were said to have broken into the premises around gam.

A resident, Haruna Jugul, who witnessed the looting said security agents initially tried to disperse the hoodlums when they stormed the warehouse but could not do much as the hoodlums resisted them.

It was learnt that the hoodlums also moved to another location at the JIB premises and looted the palliative store there.

The state Commissioner for Information, Dan Manjang, in a statement denied reports that the state hoarded the palliatives, saying the food items were delivered to the state by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Social Development and Disaster Management for distribution to beneficiaries in the state but that they had looted it before they could be shared to the beneficiaries.

In Kaduna State, hoodlums, mostly youths, in their hundreds broke into a warehouse located along Gwari Avenue in Barnawa in Kaduna South Local Government Area of the state and made away with food items meant to be shared to vulnerable persons as COVID-19 palliatives.

One of the youths who took part in the looting, said, "This is our money. This is our sweat. We are not thieves."

"We are hungry, how can they be hiding food when we are struggling to survive, Mr Luka Bonnat, another youth said as he left with his food items.

The food items taken away included noodles, rice, garri and sugar among others.

There were however reports that the warehouse belong to the Commissioner in charge of Planning and Budget Commission, Thomas Gyang, but he has since denied ownership of the property, saying the food items were

palliatives meant for Chikun local government.

"I went round and saw that they have broken into Kaduna South Local Government's own too. My concern is let there be no casualty," he added.

In Abia State, hoodlums broke into a private warehouse in Umuahia where they thought food items were stored. Just as the news spread that 'palliatives' were housed there, many people stormed the warehouse and made away with bags of rice and fertilizer.

The Commissioner for Information, John Okiyi Kalu, said the state had shared all the food items it bought and received as palliatives, adding that what was in the warehouse were bags of rice seedlings and bags of fertilizer.

In Taraba State, some youths on Saturday evening broke into one of the government-owned warehouses at the Veterinary Clinic in Jalingo, carting away food items.

As of 5:45pm hundreds of people were seen moving different food items, including noodles, salt, maize and others out of the premises.

Some of the youths who spoke to journalists said they decided to take possession of the items meant for them originally. "We are not hoodlums, but citizens of Taraba who have been waiting on the government to distribute the palliatives but to no avail," one of them said.

Meanwhile, in Kogi State, people in their hundreds stormed the COVID-19 palliatives distribution centre in Lokoja, the state capital, as early as 7am on Saturday to collect food items.

The state government had last week commenced the distribution of the palliatives, but some of the women there told Sunday PUNCH that they only responded to Governor Yahaya Bello's directive that the remaining items should be distributed to them.

The Commissioner for Information and Communication, Kingsley Fanwo, said, "The crowd who saw were there in response to the governor's directive that the remaining food items should be given to the people and the exercise has been going on without any hitch."

In Ogun State, News Agency of Nigeria reported that some hoodlums, mostly youths, besieged Magboro community and moved from house to house in search of warehouses that might be storing COVID-19 palliatives.

A resident, Mrs Grace Koleosho, told NAN that the hoodlums searched every corner of her house before leaving. A detachment of policemen were said to have dispersed them.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Egba Diocese, Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion,

Rev Emmanuel Adekunle, raised the alarm on Saturday over invasion of his residence by hoodlums in search of government palliatives.

The cleric appealed to the Ogun State Government to check the excesses of the hoodlums. He said if the persistent invasion of the Bishops' Court at Onikolobo area of Abeokuta, was not checked, it could lead to massive destruction of property on the premises.

In Kwara State, during the looting at the Ilorin Airport Cargo Terminal warehouse where COCAVID-19 Palliatives were stored, soldiers at the scene were seen in a viral video pleading with the people to take things easy and not rush. One of the soldiers was heard saying, "don't rush, do gently, the thing will go round, go peacefully and come out peacefully. No wahala, Please, don't spoil anything, Don't attack anybody, please, we are begging, please we are begging."

But the Commissioner of Police, Mr Kayode Egbetokun, speaking at a joint press conference by the security agencies in the state, stated that they acted on the intelligence they got that some miscreants planned to attack government facilities, but that the situation got out of control as the miscreants came out in thousands.

Egbetokun, who spoke on behalf of the all the agencies, including the Army, Air Force, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, State Security Services and Navy said, "Initially, we were able to stop them but by the time His Excellency (the governor) came, he looked at the situation and said open the gate of the warehouse for them."

He noted that some miscreants who took part in the looting of private shops and destruction of public property had been arrested.

Meanwhile, the Kwara State Area Command of the Nigeria Customs Service has said two of its officers were seriously injured during a gun duel with hoodlums who came to loot seized imported rice and razed its office at Irewolede area of Ilorin on Friday.

It pointed out that it seized 24 motorcycles and one tricycle from the miscreants. "

Saturday, October 24, 2020

**48 new cases of #COVID19Nigeria:**

Lagos	- 18
FCT	- 13
Kaduna	- 6
Rivers	- 5
Ogun	- 5
Ondo	- 1

**61,930 confirmed**  
**57,285 discharged**  
**1,129 deaths**

**CODE OF ETHICS**

We are guided by the of public trust and would best serve the Association

Have a story for us?

For more information