

**METRO PLUS**

# Abia places N1m bounty on police station attackers, cops' killers

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## Sunday Aborisade, Ogbonnaya Ikokwu and Sunday Nwakanma

The Abia State Government has condemned the attack on and burning of the Abayi Police Station in Aba by yet-to-be identified gunmen in the early hours of Tuesday.

Sources disclosed that no fewer than two policemen might have lost their lives following the early morning invasion of the station located at the World Bank Housing Estate, Aba.

According to a police source, the incident occurred around 2am and the station was set on fire, while other sources said there was stiff resistance by policemen, who were later overpowered by the hoodlums.

The police armoury in the division was alleged to have been looted, while the PPRO confirmed that many vehicles parked at the station were burnt to ashes.

The names of the cops reportedly killed during the attack were given simply as Sergeant Emmanuel and ASP Vincent.

In a statement by the Commissioner for Information, Chief John Okiyi-Kalu, the government stated that it was determined to pay the sum of N1m for any information that would lead to the recovery of the stolen arms and/or arrest of the suspects involved in the attack.

He added that such information would be treated with the utmost secrecy it deserved.

The state government assured members of the public that it was working with security agencies to fish out the perpetrators and bring them to justice as quickly as possible.

It added that no part of Abia would be ceded to criminals operating under any guise and “we will not spare any resource in ensuring that the perpetrators of this dastardly act are brought to justice in the no distant time and the stolen arms and ammunition recovered completely.”

The statement read in part, “Sadly, the arms these hoodlums have carted away from law enforcement agents will most likely be used against innocent citizens. Government, therefore, calls on citizens to avail law enforcement agencies with vital information that will lead to the arrest of the criminals and the recovery of these arms.

“Consequently, the government hereby imposes a ban on keke/okada operations between 7pm and 7am in all major cities of the state starting from today, February 23, 2021.

“Once again, we call for total vigilance and prompt information from citizens to ensure the arrest and prosecution of the hoodlums. We call on banks and other vulnerable institutions to fortify security around their places of business, while strongly advising all security formations in the state to remain on red alert until the situation is fully pacified.

“Law-abiding citizens and visitors are advised to go about their normal businesses, while maintaining vigilance as measures have been put in place to ensure their safety.”

Meanwhile, the Abia State Police Command, on Tuesday, confirmed the burning of its station at Abayi Aba by gunmen, who invaded the station.

The Police Public Relations Officer, Geoffrey Ogbonna, said an officer was among the casualties on both sides.

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Meanwhile, the Senate Minority Leader, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, has condemned the destruction of the Abayi Police Station by hoodlums.

Abaribe, in a statement by his Media Adviser, Uchenna Awom, also lamented the reported killing of two policemen in the mayhem.

The lawmaker called on the police and other security agencies to quickly apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Abaribe, who expressed shock by the unwarranted attack, said resort to violence of such magnitude was unprecedented, most heart-rending and must be stopped immediately.

He was quoted as saying, “I do not think there is any reason whatsoever to warrant this animalistic resort to killing, destruction or violence in any form.

“Most condemnable by every discerning mind is the dangerous affront at every turn on the lives of our police officers and security agents, who toil and go through most horrendous and excruciating experience everyday for the safety of lives and properties of Nigerians.

“I am pained by this dastardly act and I urge the security agencies to apply all available resources to bring the hoodlums to justice.”

Abaribe condoled with the officers and men of the Abia State Police Command on the unfortunate incident.

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