

# How killers planned Kwara Oba's murder in beer parlour

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Fresh facts have emerged that the killers of the Olukoro of Koro in the Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State, Oba Olusegun Aremu-Cole, perfected the murder plot in a pub, popularly called beer parlour, in the town.

Oba Aremu-Cole, a retired senior military officer, was shot dead on Thursday night by the assailants, who invaded his palace, and his wife and two natives who live near the palace were whisked away to an unknown destination.

He was crowned in 2017 and he would have been 66 this year as he was born in 1958.

It was gathered that the killers also lured a salesgirl at the pub to lead them to the palace, which is located in the area.

A source in Koro, who did not want his name in print, confided in *Saturday PUNCH* on Friday that when the assailants arrived in the town on Thursday evening, they settled in the pub to take some drinks.

The source stated, "After spending several hours at the relaxation centre and being good customers t, they now asked the salesgirl to lead them to the palace to pay obeisance to the monarch and discuss the progress of the town.

"The girl ignorantly led the three men to the palace to see the monarch and went back to continue her work at the joint."

Another native of Koro, Funsho Akorede, said the monarch had just returned from a journey and was relaxing when the gunmen

 Olukoro of Koro, Oba Olusegun Aremu-Cole

He added that following the killing, a team of soldiers had been dispatched to comb forests in Kwara and neighbouring Kogi and Ekiti states to smoke out the assailants.

The immediate junior brother to the monarch, Mr Adelaja Aremu, on Friday, narrated how gunmen killed the Oba.

Adelaja, who spoke in a telephone interview with *Saturday PUNCH*, noted that the assailants shot his brother dead for refusing to follow their orders to stand up and come with them.

He said, "I am his immediate younger brother and I live very close to the village. Immediately gunshots were heard in the palace, I was contacted and told the gunshots.

"They (gunmen) came into the palace and met him (the monarch) and asked him to stand up. They wanted to abduct him. He refused to get up, saying that nobody could command him like that. He refused to take orders from unknown people, so they shot in the air to scare him but he wasn't afraid.

"Of course, they knew that they met a stubborn person and that was how they shot him. This was what the houseboy told us. He (houseboy) bolted out of the palace through the back door when my brother was shot, but he saw all that transpired."

When asked if the family had been contacted over the abduction of the monarch's wife and the two other abductees, Adelaja stated, "The other two who were kidnapped are our neighbours because I live in the palace too anytime I am around. I can't disclose whether or not the kidnappers have contacted anyone, but we hope that the police will do their work."

Adelaja disclosed that this was not the first time bandits had terrorised residents of the town.

He added, "For me, I think it's the peculiar nature of our location. I try to farm at home and these bandits have been raiding our community and I have been calling the attention of the authorities to my encounters with them.

"When I had my first encounter with the bandits, I reported to the police but nothing happened. The second time I had an encounter with them, I informed the police again. Even when the All Progressives Congress women leader was killed by bandits

during electioneering, the governor came to see the late monarch, but nothing changed after he left.

“These bandits have camped themselves in certain areas and we are at their mercy because we don’t have people to speak for us. None of our people go to their farms anymore because bandits will go to farms and kill people.

“When they first raided my farm, they rustled the cattle in my ranch. I restocked and they returned in May last year and rustled 74 of my cattle again. They also attacked the man I hired to tend them and left him for dead on the farm.”

#### Abductors demand N100m

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Meanwhile, the abductors have demanded the payment of N100m for the monarch’s wife and the other persons kidnapped in Koro.

A family member of the monarch told *Saturday PUNCH* on Friday night that the abductors also gave a 48-hour deadline within which the money must be paid or they would kill the victims.

“They are asking for N100m ransom. They have said the money must be ready in 48 hours,” the source said.

Koro shares boundaries with Egbe in the Yagba West Local Government Area of Kogi State, and Irele/Oke Ako/Ipao/Oke Aiyedun and Ikole in Ekiti State. Indigenes of the communities share farm boundaries. Gunmen on Monday attacked three monarchs from the communities.

The attack led to the killing of the Onimojo of Imojo Ekiti in the Oye Local Government Area and the Elesun of Esun Ekiti in Ajoni, Ikole Local Government Area of Ekiti State, while the Alara of Ara in the Ikole Local Government Area of the state managed to escape when the gunmen accosted them and attempted to forcefully take them away while returning from a journey.

In confirming the incident on Thursday night, the Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, condemned the monarch’s killing and the abduction of his wife and another palace resident.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Rafiu Ajakaye, quoted AbdulRazaq as charging security agencies not to spare any resources to track down the perpetrators, free the spouse and others taken away, and bring them to book.

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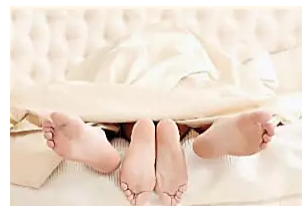
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“We will certainly get the perpetrators and ensure that this is their last crime against humanity. My profound condolences go to the people of Koro. Our hearts are broken, and we stand by them at this time and always,” the governor added.

### **Condemnation trails killing**

A former Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, expressed shock over the killing of Oba Aremu-Cole and the kidnap of his wife and another indigene of the town.

In a statement signed by his Press Officer on Local Matters, Abdulganiyu Abdulqadir, on Friday, Saraki condemned the killing, describing it as dastardly, inhuman, and unpardonable.

He condoled with the traditional council, the royal family, and the people of Koro over the loss, and prayed for the fortitude to bear the loss.

The former Senate President expressed concern over the worsening insecurity in Kwara State and charged the government to secure lives and property.

Saraki said, “It is disturbing to witness this level of carnage in a state that has always been a haven of peace and harmony.

“I commiserate with the Koro Traditional Council, the bereaved royal family, and the people of Koro community over this huge loss.

“While we continue to pray for the safe rescue of the abductees, we ask the government and security operatives to be up and doing, to ensure adequate security for the people in Kwara State.

“These criminals must be apprehended and made to face the full wrath of the law.”

The Chairman, All Progressives Congress in Kwara State, Prince Sunday Fagbemi, commiserated with the people of Koro on the sad incident.

Fagbemi said, “It was heartbroken to hear of the killing of the Olukoro of Koro in the Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State, Oba Retd. General Segun Aremu, this evening; the yet-to-be-identified gunmen also abducted his Olori and two other people at his palace.

“I offer my deepest condolences to the Kwara State Government, Ekiti Local Government, and the people of Koro community over this loss and unfortunate incident. I am optimistic and I call on all sons and daughters of Kwara State to join in prayers so that those behind the death, pain, and sorrow will not escape justice and people in their captivity will soon be set free.

“Once again, on behalf of all sons and daughters of Kwara South Senatorial District, I condemn this barbaric incident and pray that God allows the gentle soul of HRH rest in perfect peace.