

# Gunmen kill Anglican catechist, abduct 2 others in Enugu

• CP storms Uzo Uwani, issues quit order to kidnappers, criminal elements

From Jude Chinedu, Enugu

**THE** Catechist of the All Saints Anglican Church, Onicha-Ebia, Ikem, Isi-Uzo Local Government Area of Enugu State, Chinaza Odumegwu, was yesterday shot dead by suspected Fulani kidnappers who have recently resumed activities in the area.

Also two persons, John Ede and his daughter were abducted at Umueje, Ikem-Eiti on Monday morning while they were working in their farm.

On Sunday night, bandits abducted Benedicta Abonyi at her home in Ikem-Uzo, behind Ikem General Hospital, but due to intense gun battle between a combined team of security operatives and the kidnappers, she was able to escape.

It was learnt that the slain Anglican catechist was attacked while he was in the farm with his son on Monday morning. While his son escaped with a gunshot wound on his leg, the Catechist died on the spot.

The son of the catechist is receiving treatment in a private hospital together with Benedicta Abonyi who had earlier escaped on Sunday night.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner of Police, Kanayo Uzuogbu, has issued an immediate quit order to remnants of kidnappers, hoodlums and other criminal elements in the state, saying they either leave town or face the wrath of the law enforcement agencies.

CP Uzuogbu stated that there would be no relenting in the effort to totally flush them out of the state.

He stated this when he led a team of battle tested police operatives to Adani in Uzo-Uwani LGA where two brothers, Mr. Ogbonna Fidelis Anene, aged 33, and Ogbonna John Onyeka, aged 25, were gruesomely murdered on their way going from the farm on Sunday.

While expressing sadness over the ugly incident, the CP assured the people of Adani that a crack squad had been sent after the perpetrators to ring them under the full weight of the law, while also reinforcing security in the border local government area.

He commended Governor Peter Mbah for his determination to rid the state of all criminal elements, noting that the governor's support and investment in security was responsible for the state's status as one of the safest federating units in the country.

The CP asked the natives to go about their lawful businesses, assuring of the resolve and cooperation of the security agencies to secure them both at home and in their farmlands.

He, however, appealed to the people to be vigilant and assist security agents with relevant information of any suspicious persons or criminal activities in their environment.

"The Enugu State under the watchful eyes of the administration of Peter Mbah and the Nigeria Police can never allow the perpetrators of this evil act to go scot free. The government is displeased with this ugly report and we shall ensure justice for the Ogbonna brothers. That is the Inspector General of Police's order.

"You can't stop going to farm be-

cause it is your means of livelihood, but we are guaranteeing your safety. We shall clamp down on these criminals. Enugu is already too hot for them, but we shall make it even hotter for them going forward. So, I urge you all to take heart and count on us for your ceaseless protections," the CP said.

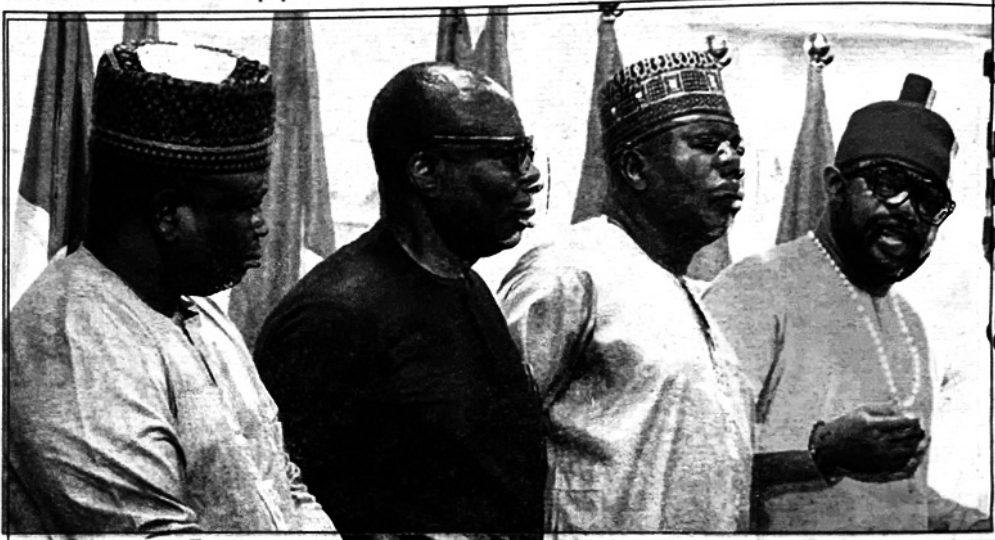
Meanwhile, the Town Union President General, Emmanuel Utazi, who spoke on behalf of the people, in company of Matthew Idu and Vincent Diugwu expressed delight over the visit of the Commissioner and his team, stating that Adani remained very peaceful people, who relate with everyone

and had never had any crisis with any community to warrant such murders.

While commending Governor Mbah for the drastic drop in violent crimes in the state he, however, urged the administration to pay extra attention to Uzo Uwani, being a vast border LGA made up of

sprawling farmlands.

"We are happy the Commissioner of Police is here in person to console us. We shall do exactly as you have said and shall continue our farming activities because we are counting on your assured safety and our governor's assurances," said PG Utazi.



Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lawmakers, Paul Shehu, Awaji-Inombek Abiante, Abdul Danga and Ikenga Ugochinyere, during a press conference by the coalition of opposition lawmakers in the House of Representatives on the state of PDP at the National Assembly, yesterday. Photo: Mudashiru Atanda

## Lagos-Calabar coastal highway: You're spreading falsehood, Presidency replies Atiku

From Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye, Abuja

**THE** Presidency has tackled former vice president, Atiku Abubakar, over his comment that the 700km Lagos-Calabar coastal Highway project had exposed the President Bola Tinubu administration's penchant for dubious and shady deals.

Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, in a statement, noted that Atiku, in his desperation to always want to hug the headlines as a self-appointed opposition leader, has allowed himself to be led into a blind alley again by his poorly informed aides.

Onanuga noted that in a press statement signed on his behalf by his media assistant, Paul Ibe, the Peoples Democratic Party's presidential candidate made false allusions, in his futile attempt, to denigrate and find faults in the audacious and transformational Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway project, recently inaugurated as

one of the signature projects of the President Tinubu-led administration.

"To Atiku's chagrin and utter disappointment, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway has been rightly praised for the huge economic impact it will create and how it will be a game-changer in improving the quality of life of Nigerians, especially the economy of the nine coastal states it will pass through. Importantly, the road will boost agricultural and tourism economy on a grand scale."

The Presidency accused Atiku of seeking to be a kill-joy, hence his engagement in what it called "red-herring" by raising ill-thought-out allegations that only exposed his inadequacies and those of his team in getting the basic facts on an issue he badly seeks to nail the government.

"We have decided, however, to respond to Atiku's misrepresentation of facts in matters of the coastal road if only to set the record straight so that unsuspecting Nigerians are not misled and mis-

informed. We owe it a sacred duty to ensure Atiku and his handlers do not continue to spread disinformation as they wallow in their politics of hatred.

"Contrary to the claims in Atiku's endorsed press statement, at no time did the administrations of former Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan award contracts for the construction of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway to any company at any varied and revised amount. So the question of costs comparison does not arise.

"The contract that was awarded was that of Lagos-Calabar Coastal rail. The rail was designed as part of the standard gauge national rail network. The contract was awarded on August 4, 2021 by the Federal Executive Council presided over by former Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, SAN at the cost of \$11.1 billion. The contract was to be completed in six years. The project didn't take off.

"The Lagos-Calabar Coastal

rail project has always been on the card. It was another testament of the failure of the previous PDP-led government that it could not get it off the ground in 16 years it held sway.

"The Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway and Lagos-Calabar Coastal rail are two distinct projects. It is unfortunate that the former Vice President is confused about the two projects.

"President Tinubu should be praised for having the courage to embark on this transformative project and not vilified as Atiku Abubakar unsuccessfully sought to do.

"We know there is nothing so sacred for Atiku Abubakar in the pursuit of his undying ambition to be President of Nigeria even in his advanced age.

"We, however, don't expect a former Vice President of Nigeria to continue to fan ill-will and engage in divisive politics in his twilight.

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## NOUN to confer doctorate degree on Innoson, others, at 13th convocation

From Fred Ezech, Abuja

**THE** National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), disclosed on Monday, that it will confer Doctorate Degree of Business Administration on Innocent Chukwuma, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing (IVM), nine years after the last doctorate degree was awarded.

Similarly, the university disclosed that Hajija Hafsat Abdulwahed, first female Novelist in northern Nigeria, was also selected for conferment of Doctor of Letters, at the 13th convocation of the

was recently appointed the new Chancellor of the university.

Prof. Peters confirmed that the awardees were chosen based on their track records, contributions to education, creativity, innovation and commitment to local contents. "The two awardees reflect the core values of NOUN which is centered on entrepreneurial ingenuity and content creativity, and we are very glad that they accepted to be honoured by the university."

A total of 22,175 students would graduate from across the 120 study centres across the country, with the faculty of social science producing the highest.