

Insurrection: 3 feared dead as Yoruba nation agitators invade Oyo Govt secretariat

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- Engage security operatives in gun duel, remove Nigerian flag, hoist Oodua nation flag
- Joint security operatives overpower them, arrest 20

By **Oluseye Ojo**



The hoisted Yoruba nation flag before its removal

Hell was let loose in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, yesterday morning when armed gunmen suspected to be Yoruba nation agitators, dressed in military camouflage, invaded the Oyo State Government Secretariat, with a view to hijacking the control of the secretariat.



Some of the arrested agitators

According to eyewitnesses, the invaders on arrival reportedly removed the flag of Nigeria in front of the Oyo State House of Assembly, and hoisted the Yoruba nation flag.

“They also moved to the entrance of the Governor’s Office with a view to gaining entry, but they were prevented by a very strong locked iron gate at the entrance. They also barked orders at the security personnel at the entrance of the Governor’s Office to open the gate so that they could enter. But the operatives did not answer them.

“In the process, the Executive Assistant to Governor Seyi Makinde on Security Matters, Mr Sunday Odukoya, a retired commissioner of police, rushed to the secretariat, to address the agitators,” the

source said.

Odukoya, who wore black polo top and brown combat knickers, bravely accosted and demanded to know their mission in the secretariat.

They were said to have responded by telling Odukoya that he does not have the locus standi to challenge them in Yoruba land.

“You cannot come to my house on Saturday and challenge me in my house,” Odukoya retorted, while the agitators barked at him that “they had declared Yoruba nation is no longer part of Nigeria since 2022.”

It was gathered that the altercation went violent and the agitators threatened to shoot the policemen that came with Odukoya.

But Odukoya was said to have boldly offered himself, challenging them to shoot him, and not the policemen because he was the one that invited the security personnel.

In the process, Odukoya courageously moved to the point, where the agitators hoisted the flag of Yoruba nation and removed it.

It was gathered that the agitators immediately opened fire and shot his leg, but something deflected the bullets and they fell off.

The Area Commander of Agodi Area Commad, Mrs F.T. Daniel, who led a team of policemen to the secretariat immediately the incident occurred, had to call for reinforcement.

According to the eyewitness: “When the Area Commander for Agodi arrived at the Secretariat, there were about 50 agitators at the entrance. But the police did not immediately know that they were agitators because they wore military camouflage.

“They even allowed her vehicle to enter the secretariat. But when she entered with her team, the group of agitators in front of the Governor’s Office, shouted at them. The agitators in front of the Governor’s Office should also be up to 50. They warned the police not to come close otherwise they would fire her. They told them that they did not come for the police. But the Area Commander did not ask her team to engage them immediately. Instead, she called for reinforcement.

“As the drama was still going on, security operatives from different security agencies stormed the secretariat from different directions, from the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Department of State Services

(DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Army, Amotekun Corps, and joint security outfit of the state government code-named Operation Burst.”

These security operatives reportedly exchanged gunfire with the agitators, who were said to be armed with new pump action and AK-47 rifles. But the combined security team eventually overpowered them, the source said.

Meanwhile, Odukoya, in a chat with the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Dr Wasiu Olatubosun, who came to secretariat based on what happened, explained that the incident was like a Nollywood movie and if he did not watch any Nollywood movie again, the one that happened at the secretariat on yesterday was enough.

When this reporter visited the secretariat, he could not access the main entrance for about two hours because of staccato of gunshots that rented the air. It was discovered that there was heavy presence of security operatives at the secretariat, as well as all the roads that lead to the secretariat. There were expended cannisters of teargas, and cartridges on the ground in front of the Governor’s Office.

It was also observed that there was no flag on the pole, on which the agitators removed the national flag of Nigeria and hoisted the Yoruba nation’s flag.

But the second poll, which has the flag of the Oyo State House of Assembly was not tampered with.

The Special Adviser to Governor Seyi Makinde on Security Matters, Mr Fatai Owoseni, who is a retired commissioner of police, assured: “I can tell you that Ibadan is calm and Oyo State is calm. Governor Seyi Makinde is on top of the situation.

“What I think happened is that some miscreants, probably on cheap drugs, had seized the opportunity of a function, being held at the Western Hall to come here as probably parts of the people holding the function, only for them to turn out to be hoodlums in camouflage.

“When they were challenged, they also challenged the security people. We thank God there is overwhelming presence of the security people. The Commissioner of Police and everyone came on time. You can see that they have been joined by military operation, Operation Burst, DSS, NSCDC, and Amotekun. They have overcome them.

“Why I said they were on cheap drug is that how would people come to the seat of government under the guise that they are Yoruba nation members, and come to take the rightful leadership of Yoruba land in the seat of government in Ibadan here?

“They have been overcome. They have been overwhelmingly dealt with. Arrests have been made. Of course, those of them that had the affront to also exchange in gun battle with the security people have also been dealt with appropriately.

“The situation is still an ongoing process. Some of them, we learnt, ran to different places. They are pulling out their camouflage to disguise. And some of them had attempted to take Okada and vehicles from civilians, but I can tell you that our security network, with the synergy that we have in place, they have been up to task.

“Of course, this is just a by-the-way thing. It could be likened to treasonable felony. This is an insurrection and, of course, no government will watch and allow some people on cheap drugs to do such a thing. Appropriate sanctions will be taken.”

Meanwhile, a government official said 16 agitators have been arrested in connection with the invasion.

He added that two among the arrested persons sustained gunshot injury. Later, two other persons were arrested, bringing the total of arrested persons as at Saturday afternoon to 18. But three among the agitators were feared dead.

The security team of the governor, however, allowed a wedding reception initially scheduled for the Western Hall beside the Oyo State House of Assembly Complex to hold, under strict security measure.

... Akintoye, Igboho, distance themselves from invasion

The Leader of Yoruba Nation Movement, Prof Banji Akintoye, and Yoruba nation activist, Chief Sunday Adeyemo, fondly called Igboho, have distanced themselves from the invasion of the Oyo State government secretariat.

The two of them said they were fighting for the freedom of Yoruba nation from Nigeria in an orderly and peaceful manner, and not in violent manner of taking over government property, hijacking control of government, and attacking of security operatives.

According to Akintoye, who accused another group of self-determination movement under the leadership of Mrs Dupe Onitiri, as the one behind the incident, said: “I am not connected. I have no contact and I do not know anything about Onitiri and her group. I don’t know what they are doing.

“I heard that they engaged in some sorts of insanity now in Ibadan. But that is entirely they, and has nothing to do with me, or with people like Chief Sunday Igboho, and others, who are working with me.

“We are the authentic Yoruba Nation Movement. We are not connected with anybody working with (herdsmen) to suppress the Yoruba people in Nigeria. That is what the Onitiri and the people behind her, whom we now know very clearly, working for (herdsmen) and the people financing her.

“We are the one fighting for Yoruba freedom from Nigeria, separation from Nigeria and we are going to win the war in God’s time, peacefully in an orderly manner. We will go on to build one of the most progressive countries on earth after that.”

Also speaking, Igboho said that he didn’t have a hand in the invasion, and asked for proper investigation to be carried out with a view to fishing out the people behind the attack and their sponsors.

According to Igboho, “Governor Seyi Makinde should carry out a thorough investigation to ascertain the motive of the invasion, and the people behind it should be arrested and prosecuted.”

Igboho reiterated his commitment to the peace and security of the Yoruba land, noting that he would never be part of anything whatsoever that could disturb the peace of the region.

“I don’t know anything about the incident, and I don’t know the people behind it. If I want to do anything or we want to do rally for the struggle of Yoruba nation, we would make public announcement of it. If we are the one, you would have heard or read it in the media. You would have heard it from Prof Banji Akintoye before today,” he said.

Oyo police confirm invasion, arrest of 20 suspects

Meanwhile, the Oyo State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of 20 suspects in connection with the invasion of Oyo State Government Secretariat by some armed Yoruba nation agitators yesterday.

The Police Public Relations in the state, Adewale Osifeso, in a statement, also said that the Commissioner of Police in the state, Adebola Hamsat, has ordered discreet investigation into the incident.

According to him, the agitators stormed the government secretariat at 9:15a.m., saying: “Today Saturday 13/04/2024 at about 0915hrs the valiant and eagle eyed operatives of the Oyo State Police Command in concert with some members of its sister agencies, successfully thwarted an attempt by hoodlums suspected to be members of the ‘Yoruba Nation Agitation Group’, driven by a separatist agenda, in an attempt to forcefully takeover the Oyo State Government Secretariat, Agodi, Ibadan.

“The suspects, who were on military camouflages came heavily armed in an unregistered Silver Coloured Nissan Urban Caravan Bus, containing cutlasses, pump action rifles, cartridges, assorted charms and an O’dua Nation agitation flag.

“Thankfully, they were overpowered and completely suppressed by officers and men of the command in concert with sister security agencies, who acted in swift response to intelligence gathered in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to the situation.

“In all, 20 suspects have been arrested in possession of three pump action guns, 291 live cartridges, two expended cartridges, 67 cutlasses, five bullet proof vest, six pair of boots, 10 megaphone (public address system), three Oodua Styles Beret Caps, seven belts, 11 Oodua Nation Army Camouflage Uniforms, one unregistered Nissan Urban Caravan Bus and three TVS motorcycles.

“While declaring this act as criminal, unpatriotic and a clear case of treasonable felony and terrorism, which would be meted with adequate sanctions under the laws of the land, the command assured the good citizens of Oyo State that it remains unwavering to the protection of their lives and property.

“Sequel to the above, the Commissioner of Police has detailed a highly powered investigation team led by the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department to

demystify circumstances surrounding the incident and as well expand the network of arrests through painstaking intelligence driven investigation.

“The Oyo State Police Command enjoins residents to be generous with information and cooperate with the Command in a bid to rid the state of criminal elements whose intent is to propagate their separatist agenda.

“More updates would be provided accordingly. If you see something, say something and the police will immediately do something.”



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