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PORT HARCOURT

Gunmen kill 12 policemen, one woman in Rivers, Akwa Ibom

No fewer than 12 policemen were killed by gunmen in separate

attacks in River and Akwa Ibom State over the weekend.

The unknown gunmen killed seven police officers after launching three separate night attacks along the East/West Road in Emohua Local Government Area (LGA, Rivers State.

During the attacks, the gunmen burnt two patrol vehicles and destroyed C4I security checkpoint, similar to the recent attack gunmen launched along the Owerri/Port Harcourt Expressway, which claimed more than 10 lives.

The gunmen first attacked C4I Checkpoint located after Choba Bridge, not too far from the University of Port Harcourt, destroying it but killing no officer, before proceeding to Ogbakiri junction where they killed a police officer on duty.

They were said to have proceeded to Rumuji Police Station where they killed another officer beheading him and setting ablaze two patrol vehicles, after which they escaped through the Elele Alimini axis of the East West road.

Recall that Governor Nyesom Wike, as a measure to stall further attacks in the state had after that attack shut all land borders in the state from human and vehicular movements from 8 O'clock at night, but later declared dusk to dawn curfew across the state from 10 o'clock in the night till 6 o'clock the next morning.

According to sources, the gunmen wore security uniforms and disguised as officers of the Joint Task Force, and moved around with in a Hilux van.

Rivers State Police Command, which confirmed the attack, disclosed that the police lost five assault rifles in the incident.

The spokesman of the State Police Command, Nnamdi Omoni, (SP) in a statement said: "The Rivers State Police Command can confirm the unprovoked and mindless attack on Policemen and vehicles.

"The incident which led to the death of seven Policemen occurred last night at about 2030hrs, where unknown gunmen driven in two branded Hilux vans, attacked the special check point at Choba Bridge, where in a surprised attack, killed two Policemen on duty and set ablaze a private car belonging to one of the Policemen.

"A similar attack was launched at Rumuji Police

Station by the same hoodlums who killed two Policemen on duty and burnt a Police patrol vehicle. However, a stiff resistance by the Police prevented the hoodlums from gaining access into the Police Station. In the course of exchange of fire, two of the attackers were fatally wounded and died on the spot.

"The third attack at Elingbu Police Station was equally resisted by the Police, though three officers were killed in that attack but the serious fire engagement made them to abandon their bullet riddled Hilux van, while they escaped with various degrees of gunshot wounds with a snatched Sienna bus.

"The continued engagement by the Police, also forced them to abandon the Sienna car they were using to escape at the Refinery junction,

while their remnants again escaped with bullet wounds.

"In the meantime, the corpses of the fallen heroes have been evacuated and deposited in the mortuary, while the Commissioner of Police, CP. Eboka Friday, who led members of his management team and tactical Commanders to the respective scenes this morning for an on-the-spot assessment, has launched a serious manhunt for the perpetrators with a view to apprehending the culprits and bringing them to justice."

In a similar development, a dawn attack at the Divisional Police headquarters, Odoro Ikpe, Ini Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, left five men and a woman dead.

Chairman of the council, Mr. Israel Adaisin, who confirmed the incident in a statement on Saturday, blamed members of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) for the attack.

According to him, the gunmen invaded the divisional police station around 2:45 am and killed five police officers.

He said they also killed one woman, burnt several vehicles and destroyed other facilities.

He said eyewitnesses told him the gunmen, numbering more than 40, arrived the council headquarters in two buses and a Sienna car.

"They arrived Ini Local Government Area with sophisticated weapons, broke into the police facility at precisely 2:45am, killing five policemen on duty, burning of vehicles while inflicting injuries on others," he stressed.