

Crime

Pauline Onyibe
YENAGOA

There is palpable tension and fear on the streets of Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital as unresolved killings from kidnapping, armed robbery and cultism have taken over city and even the hinterland.

Residents of the state seem to have resigned to fate as there is little they can do to put a stop to the senseless killings in the state, as residents can no longer sleep with their eyes closed.

Our correspondent gathered that the residents are worried because they do not know who will be kidnapped or killed by the cultist or armed robbers the next day as the security situation in the state seem to have gone out of hand.

Unresolved killings

Last week, residents of the state woke up to the news of the death of one Frank Oputu a very strong voice in the state, his life was cut short by yet to be identified gunmen and the deceased was known for his defence of the oppressed in the state.

The residents were still mourning the death of Oputu when the news of the death of one Famous Goibaro filtered into town, until his death he was a journalist with Glory FM. Till date the killer of the journalist are still walking free in town without being arrested by security agencies in the state.

These were few of the killings that are still waiting for the police and other security agencies to unmask for punishment.

The people's concern

The second vice president of Ijaw National Congress and member of community policing, Mr. Nengi James, reacting to the series of unresolved killings in the state said the government claimed they are doing alot to resolve the insecurity, but their efforts are yet to be felt by residents of the state.

James said the state government launched a security outfit code name 'Doo Akpo' and a community corp was signed into law, but yet to be implemented. But that if implemented people would be recruited and they would work in the state capital and the hinterland, because they know their community very well.

"If 'Doo Akpo' security outfit had been properly implemented; every community would have their community corp that will be under the control of the government and it will also complement the efforts of other security agencies in the state, because community policing starts from the grassroots.

"I once asked at a forum by Bayelsa residents about the state police, I was told if I didn't see that the state police will be worst if left in the hand of the government, given what is happening in Rivers State Where human beings are being treated like animals. How can a governor declare some body wanted? The same people will come and tell you that the young ones should vote for them. How can a police corporal or a police sergeant, or even an Assistants Superintendent of Police (ASP), have an

TAIWO JIMOH
COORDINATOR

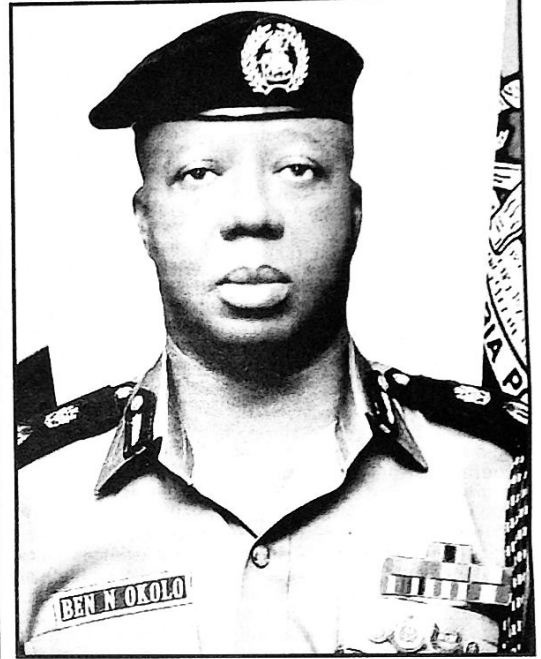
jimohtee75@gmail.com
07064530927

Worries over rising cases of unresolved killings in Bayelsa

●We're trying our best –police



Frank Oputu



Bayelsa CP Ben Okolo

estate, driving jeeps?"

He, however, said, if you go to a police station, you will be surprised who is the DPO and who is a constable. Some of these police constables are even richer than the DPOs. They are doing dirty works for some politicians. Why is unknown gunmen reigning without being challenged by the security agencies.

"Kidnappers and gunmen are everywhere killing people, which means that there is security failure in Nigeria and the state. Presently those who kill people are living a flamboyant life style. Most of the security men are into drugs, they take drugs, that is why I'm talking about mental capacity. There was a time I raised an alarm about police killing police. Some of these police officers are engaged in arms deal. Some are involved in kidnapping. They are involved in killings. Until those areas are also checked, there will be no headway. We are saying that the security apparatus has been infiltrated by clandestine group even security information is not being classified again.

"The security setup in the country has collapsed, even at the community level, people are afraid to give out information. There should be a serious security overhaul from the community level to the state level."

Others express worry

Also reacting to the story, Mr. Don Evarada, a security expert said, "It is very clear that we have failed in crime

fighting, in the sense that the crime fighting in this country has failed. It is not yielding any result anymore. That also brings to fore the situation where there is a very big gap between the citizens and security communities. Trust has been broken because the expectation of the people hasn't been met. The whole essence of crime fighting is to guaranty lives and properties, people are killed and communities destroyed. One thing is obvious; people will now go for self-help.

"Self-help is a situation where there is a failed system. It is not all about security operatives, leadership too has also failed, because while most security operatives don't seem to be functional, it is as a result of lack of political will. Security agencies in the country are controlled by the Federal Government and they failed to show leadership.

"If you look at those who are funding crime and criminality, they wanted to release names of those who are funding terrorism in the country, who are the people? Where are they? Who have been arrested? People are being killed in every part of the country, why have they not been arrested? Virtually every crime that is committed in every state the police and other security agencies are very much aware.

"In a situation where we see that there is a total refusal by the policing community to ensure that such perpetrators and miscreants are arrested and interrogated it is worrisome, when you are culpable punishment should be

given to deter other persons from engaging in the acts, but in this country it is regrettable.

"Most importantly every life matters and just like those who are kidnapping they are known. Why are they not arrested. It is a pity, that is why the international community always rates Nigeria as a country that is failing in the area of crime and criminality."

Police reassure

The Bayelsa State Police Public Relations Officer, Asinim Butswat in his reaction to the issues of the senseless killings in the state said it is not about how we can wriggle ourselves out of the situation. It is about how Nigerian system is, because there are so many cases that are yet to be solved.

He said there are so many murder cases that they have been able to resolve. "There are others that we have not been able to resolve, but that does not mean that we are not investigating them. There are cases that have not been resolved 20 years after. That is why I'm telling you. There are cases we have been able to solve and there are cases that we have not been able to solve.

"Come to our office and see murder cases in Okaka. There are prisoners in Okaka. Are we not the ones that are taking them there? Are there no murder suspects in Okaka. For Frank Oputu's case, we are still investigating, there is no country that is free of crime and criminality, they are only being managed."