

# Crime

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Students of the Gateway Polytechnic (ICT), Sapaade, Ogun State, are living in fear and battling endless security challenges, including armed robbery, killing and rape, among others by hoodlums suspected to be indigenes of the host communities.

For the students, this is not the best of times as criminals under the cover of the night visit students living off-campus at Ode, Ipara and Isara, all adjoining communities to the polytechnic with terror.

Many of the students have been robbed, raped, killed, kidnapped in the last three weeks and it seems there is no end in sight to their woes.

The students are helpless and defenseless against their attackers who come under the covers of night to operate.

It was learnt that the attacks against the students date back to April, 2021, when suspected armed robbers invaded several off-campus students' hostels, robbing them of money and other valuables.

The school was forced to shutdown to address the security challenges between students and indigenes of the host communities.

But, two years later, the attackers have returned with full force, visiting their wrath on the students while the lecturers are not also spared of the hoodlums constant attacks.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that, no fewer than three students have been killed, while several ladies were raped, in more than four attacks on students' hostels in the last three weeks.

The story is the same for students of Tai Solarin University of Education in faraway Omu-Ijebu in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of the state.

Meanwhile, about two months ago, some suspected armed robbers invaded students' hostels at Abapawa, an area off the campus of TASUED, raping four female students and robbing others of their valuables.

What is more worrisome is that even two months after the incident, no suspect has been arrested by the police in connection with the crime.

## Their experience

Narrating her near death ordeal to our correspondent, a National Diploma, ND 2 student of the ICT polytechnic, who pleaded anonymity, accused management of the institution and security agencies of failing in their responsibilities.

She attributed the attacks on them to what she described as envy for students by indigenes of the communities.

According to her, the flamboyant life style of students, particularly those into internet fraud has been a major cause of the attacks.

"I live in a room self-contained apartment off-campus, there are 20 of such apartments in my compound and each goes for N180,000 per annum.

"On a particular night, armed robbers broke into our compound, tied up our guard and robbed us.

"The robbers, about 10 in number were put on hoods to cover their faces. They came with cutlasses, axes, knives, cudgels and other dangerous weapons.

"They broke into many apartments and threatened to kill anyone who resists them. When they came into my room, they ordered me to lie down and they went away with my phone, money and other valuables.

"They stole generators, laptops, jewelries, phones and other electronic gadgets.

"Since the robbery incident, I have not returned to that house. I have been living with a course mate who stays in another community," she said.

The attack reached a crescendo, last Saturday when the hoodlums invaded an off-campus hostel of students in Larufi area of Ode, killing one and shooting nine others.

## How robbers terrorised Ogun poly students, killed 3, raped others

### • We're tired of incessant attack –students



Ogun State CP, Abiodun Alamutu

The deceased, simply identified as Segun, hails from Abeokuta, the state capital.

One of the students also told our correspondent that, the gun-wielding hoodlums invaded the students' hostels around 3am and unleashed terror on them.

In some of the viral video clips of the attack, our correspondent observed shattered doors, broken windows and walls riddled with bullets.

It was also gathered that the robbers used heavy stones to break some windows to force their way into the hostels.

"I heard a gunshot around 3am and when I woke up this morning, I was told they (hoodlums) shot nine students and one landlord. They were taken to the hospital, but one died.

"They stole a car in order to escape," one of the students told our correspondent.

A senior lecturer at the polytechnic confirmed the attack to our correspondent, saying six persons were shot and one died.

"According to the lecturer, I heard, the guy that was shot dead is not our student, he graduated last session hopefully expecting to come back for his HND next session," the lecturer said.

He described incessant attacks on students as unfortunate and blamed the state government for the attacks and not doing enough to curb the incessant hoodlums attacks.

"It is quite unfortunate that the government has deviated from the agreement between the state and citizens. Protection of lives and property are nothing to write home about in this country, especially in Sapaade and its environs," the lecturer said.

Another student who spoke to our correspondent disclosed that most of the hostels attacked are located in new sites where accommodation for students are relatively cheap.

According to her, about seven rape cases have been recorded among the students admitted for the 2022/2023 academic session.

"We are being targeted by armed robbers and both the school management and the police are doing nothing about this.

"Those who are lucky enough to be alive are those who do not resist the robbers, while girls who have nothing to offer the robbers are either beaten or gang-raped.

"At least we have recorded seven rape cases in our set. The announcement was made by the students' union leaders or the Dean of Student Affairs.

"However, they usually won't mention

names of the victims for obvious reason," the student told our correspondent.

## Call to end attacks

The student union of the polytechnic has passed a vote of no confidence on Governor Dapo Abiodun over the security challenges in the students' communities.

This is coming after several protests staged by the students to express their grievances over the situation.

A statement signed by the Student's Union Government (SUG), President, Olatunji Idowu Alexander, reads: "Sequel to the incessant robbery attack on the students of the Gateway ICT Polytechnic, Sapaade, the student's union and student leaders of Gateway ICT Polytechnic, Sapaade, is exhausted with what we describe as unattainable promises, miscalculated and undue priorities on insecurity by the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun and the security apparatus within the axis of Ipapa, Ode and Isara.

"As the student union body, we expect that the institution which is just a few minutes drive to the Governors personal residence should be dear to the heart of the Governor in providing adequate security for the environment.

"The students have lost confidence in the deliverables of the administration of Governor Dapo Abiodun as it concerns student's safety, they strongly condemn the absolute negligence and drastically too slow pace of responsibilities towards these concerns.

"The poor security system has resulted in cases of rape, theft, killing of students, robbery, assault and destruction of properties on campus and around. The learning conditions for students in the campus have become unbearable.

"In our pursuit of a swift resolution, we have communicated our concerns to the relevant authorities, giving them a seven-day ultimatum to take concrete actions towards enhancing security in our respective communities and hostels. The students union believes in the strength of unity and advocacy, and we are leveraging these principles to ensure the security lapses are urgently addressed.

"We appreciate the maturity, patience and resilience demonstrated by the students thus far. Your cooperation and understanding are pivotal as we navigate through these trying times together. We implore all students to remain calm, vigilant, and supportive of one another."

## School not doing enough

Despite several reports in the media about the crime in the school and protests by the students, the management of the polytechnic has remained silent over the incessant attacks on students.

When contacted, the institution's Head of Public Relations, Ms. Adedayo Folorunsho, declined comment on the attack.

She, however, said "the security agencies should be allowed to do their job."

## Police react

The State Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alamutu, said, "That place is sort of an isolated area and I had the privilege to have served as DPO in that area. I am familiar with the area. We have deployed patrol in the area and they will forestall recurrence of any attack," he said.

He said he had held a meeting with the students and assured them of their security and safety henceforth.

He said, "What we record was armed robbery. Criminals devise new approach if other approaches fail. They have new strategies. That's

why we have also come up with other strategies. I assure you there wouldn't be such incident in that area again."

Alamutu, however, denied cases of rape in the area.

"I doubt if such cases of rape would happen and go unreported.

"This is because any rape case cannot be handled at the Divisional level, but transferred to the headquarters. We have not recorded any in that school. What we had was robbery. They have not recorded any rape in that axis. If it has happened, where was it recorded?" He asked.

But, despite denying that there were cases of rape at the students' communities, a statement from the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the command, Omolola Odutola, confirmed arrest of three of the suspected armed robbers involved in an operation where they robbed and raped students of the polytechnic.

Odutola, on Tuesday, said the arrest was a "significant progress in apprehending suspected armed robbers raping and robbing female students around Ode Remo, and Ipapa areas of Ogun State.

According to the police, the suspects at first denied, but a victim of their last robbery operation identified one out of the three man gang of young men, terrorising Gateway Polytechnic.

The statement reads: "In response to recent shooting incidents at Gateway Polytechnic, a proactive operation was conducted based on intelligence.

"On the 27th of November, 2023, the Police, in collaboration with other security agencies, implemented a stop and search operation in Ode Remo and Ipapa area. During the operation, a gang of three suspected armed young men were intercepted on a motorcycle.

"The suspects attempted to evade arrest by resorting to violent means to escape, but were eventually apprehended.

"The suspects arrested are Taiwo Oredoyin 27, Taiwo Kuti 35 and Folorunsho Saheed 36, all of Isara town in the state.

"Upon conducting a search on them, police officers discovered one locally fabricated pistol with two live cartridges, as well as two Samsung phones, in their possessions."

## Management shuts school

The management of the polytechnic, on Monday, shutdown the school, following the incessant attacks by suspected armed robbers.

This is the second time the school would be forced to shut down in three weeks over the attacks.

The management directed the students to stay out of school for the next two weeks following the worsening insecurity around the polytechnic.

The school announced the suspension of physical lectures in an internal memo, signed by the Acting Registrar of the Polytechnic, J O Popoola, but however announced an online class for the students who just resumed for 2023/2024 academic session.

The memo which was sighted by our correspondent reads, "I have the directive of management to inform all students in the polytechnic that all physical lectures have been suspended on campus for the next two weeks.

"In view of this development, all students are to note that online lectures have commenced with immediate effect; therefore students are directed to join online classes in order to continue lectures for the current semester.

"To this end, all students are to steer clear the school premises till physical lectures resume again at a date that will be communicated soon."

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