

11 Killed in Foiled Ibadan Jailbreak

Eleven prisoners were feared killed in an early morning bloody confrontation yesterday between prisoners at Agodi Federal Prisons, Ibadan and warders who wanted to take a head count of inmates in the awaiting trial cell.

The State Comptroller of Prisons, Mrs. Muareen Omeili, and Oyo State Commissioner of Police, Prince Udom Ekpoudom, claimed that eight

From Tunde Sanni

in Ibadan

inmates fell to the firepower of the security agencies while 18 others sustained gunshots injury while trying to escape from prison.

Already, the Comptroller-General of Prisons, Mr. Sola Ogundipe, is in the state capital to assess the situation and get first hand report on the

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incident.

Sources at the University College Hospital (UCH), however, confirmed that eleven dead bodies were deposited at the mortuary while twenty-two injured inmates with bullet wounds were receiving treatment.

Among those injured are eight staff of the prison who are now lying critically ill at the hospital.

Sources at the prisons told THISDAY that trouble started around 6 am shortly after the warders opened the gate. No sooner had they opened the gate than the inmates swooped on them.

The confrontation was on the heels of complaints of alleged poor medical treatment over which the prisoners had earlier attempted a jail break. The revolt was believed to have been led by one suspect nicknamed Sanponna.

The prisoners' anger, sources hinted, stemmed from their alarm that one of them whose name was not disclosed had died as a result of poor health care facilities at the prison.

All the inmates were said to have come out to participate in the revolt, armed with sharp objects after which they went to another cell where they broke the iron-gate to free some other inmates to support them.

The inmates later went to the female yard to demand for mobile phones and handsets. Eight of the prisons staff were

reportedly stabbed by the inmates in the ensuing scuffle.

The prison, one of the oldest in the country, has capacity for 500 prisoners but has 680 inmates at present, consisting 612 awaiting trial men and seven awaiting trial women. There were also 60 condemned male prisoners and one female.

The prison premises were completely overturned by the prisoners while traces of blood dotted some parts of the prison.

Window louvers were smashed; offices upturned and everywhere littered with oil and food items.

Part of the equipment destroyed in the fracas included the close circuit television installed by the prison authorities.

All the equipment in the clinic, kitchen, store and tailor's workshop were destroyed with bags of beans torn and gallons of palm oil broken.

Omeili was visibly shaken while her officials were rattled.

Blood stains, spent tear-gas canisters, knives, spades, bags of beans, plates, padlocks, drugs were seen all over the place when THISDAY visited the prison around 3.30pm.

At the far end of the prison, there was a drilled hole in the fence with blood-stained blanket.

Armed mobile policemen were standing at the other side of the fence to ensure that no inmates escaped through the drilled hole.

The State Comptroller of

Prisons instructed her men not to allow journalists entry into the prison yard, leading to the officials attack on an Assistant News Editor with the *Tribune* titles, Mr. Tope Abiola, whose plea was violently rebuffed by the warders.

Omeili who later caved in to newsmen's inquisitiveness confirmed that the confrontation started around 7 am when the inmates complained that one of them who was sick had died due to poor medical attention.

"But it is not true that the inmate had died. He is still alive. They went wild and went into our workshop and kitchen, took tools used to cook their food and other sharp objects and stabbed some of my men. They also went into the clinic and scattered the drugs we use

for their treatment.

"It is not true that they are not well fed. They are all well fed. Look at the bags of food-stuffs they scattered in the kitchen. And we take adequate care of their health. The drugs they scattered there are the ones we use for them. We thank God that none of them escaped. My men are up to the task", she said.

The comptroller disclosed that the inmates who were armed with dangerous weapons held the officials hostage for an hour before the intervention of policemen from the state Police Command Eleyele.

"From the preliminary reports, the inmates believed there was no adequate medical care for them and importantly they thought one of them who was hospitalized at the week-

end was dead that was why they revolted this morning and damaged properties and attempted to escape after over powering the officials," she said.

Speaking during the assessment of the prison, the Commissioner of Police, Prince Udom Ekpoudon said, "there was an attempted jail break and police authorities were invited and we halted it. If they had escaped, the prison authorities and the police would have been in serious trouble.

"I don't want people to speculate this type of thing. Thank God the prison authorities called us on time and we responded swiftly.

"They destroyed properties, injured prisons staff and drilled holes into the walls with the aim of escaping but none of them escaped."

CRUDE OIL PRICE TO CRASH Cont'd from

sis in the Niger Delta which has often resulted in production shut-in.

The communique issued at the end of the conference observed that "the high demand winter season necessitates keeping the market adequately supplied.

"To this end, the conference decided to increase the volume of crude supplied to the market by OPEC Member Countries (excluding Angola and Iraq) by 500,000 b/d, effective 1 November 2007," it said.

The conference also noted that ongoing "tightness" in the US products market continues to

affect the level of product stocks and prices, and reaffirmed its long standing commitment to ensuring sound supply fundamentals at all times and to offering an adequate level of spare capacity for the world at large.

"The conference also recorded the readiness of member countries to swiftly respond to any developments which might jeopardise oil market stability and their interests. For this purpose, in addition to the organisation vigilantly monitoring supply/demand fundamentals, the conference agreed to reassess the market situation at its 146th (Extraordinary) Meeting, to be

held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on December 5, 2007."

The conference also elected Dr. Chakib Khelil, Minister of Energy and Mines of Algeria and Head of its Delegation, as President of the Conference for one year, with effect from 1 January 2008, and Mr. Desiderio da Graça Verissimo e Costa, Minister of Petroleum of Angola and Head of its Delegation, as Alternate President, for the same period.

It appointed Dr. Falah J. Alamri, Governor for Iraq, as Chairman of the Board of Governors for the year 2008, and, Ms. Siham A. Razzouqi,