

13 killed in Ibadan jail break

By Ola Ajayi

IBADAN — NO fewer than 13 inmates of the Agodi Prisons, Ibadan laid dead, yesterday, after the police opened fire on rioting prisoners as they made to break jail. Fourteen other inmates and eight prison officials were seriously injured in the violence.

The prisons authorities confirmed eight deaths. They said the victims were awaiting trial.

The inmates were said to be protesting alleged poor medical facilities in the prisons.

Trouble started at about 6 a.m when prison officials went to the Awaiting Trial Cell to take the routine head count of the suspects. As soon as they opened the gate, the inmates descended on the prison officials. The confrontation was allegedly led by a suspect nicknamed "Sanponna".

The protesting inmates then proceeded to the kitchen and seized every weapon in sight to arm themselves. Afterwards, they headed for another cell where they broke the iron gate to free the inmates to support them. They later went to the female yard. Meanwhile, some other ward

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GOLDEN EAGLETS ARRIVE: From left: Lukman Haruna, captain of World Cup-winning Golden Eaglets; Governor Babatunde Fashola (SAN) of Lagos State; and Chrisantus Macauley, winner of the Golden Boot and Silver Ball, at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja on arrival from South Korea. Photo: Shola Oyelese.

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for treatment. The dead ones have been evacuated to the mortuary.

"The protesting inmates broke into the store and tailoring workshop to cart away knives and scissors which they used to attack the staff. We are using the knives to cook food for them.

"Most of the drugs we use in treating the inmates were destroyed. We have doctors, nurses, psychologists and all other medical people who come to treat them. They broke into the Clinic, laid their hands on all the drugs and scattered them. It was probably because of the protest that brought out all the drugs, because aside from that, I don't see why they should bring out the drugs being used to treat them and scatter them all over."

On allegations of poor medical treatment and poor feeding, she said: "It is not true. They are well fed. Look at the bags of food-stuff 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."

Another prison official, Mr. Olanrele Joseph, Deputy Comptroller in Charge, when conducting journalists round the premises said: "They broke into the carpentry workshop and the close circuit television installed by the prison authorities was destroyed. We use it to monitor what is going on in the cells right from the office. All the equipment in the clinic, kitchen, store and tailor's workshop were destroyed. Bags of beans were torn

and gallons of palm oil broken. Look at the knives they took from the kitchen.

"When the trouble could not be managed by the warders, they invited the policemen to help them put the inmates at bay," he said.

Vanguard gathered that the inmates had been complaining of poor medical attention to the prison authorities in the last two weeks, but nothing was done to address the problem. At the time of filing this report, a green ambulance bus was driven into the

premises after all journalists had been ordered to leave.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ekpoudom Udom, who was at the prison to assess the situation said: "The prison authorities called us on time and we responded. Though the inmates drilled holes with the aim of escaping, none of them escaped. If they had escaped, the police and the prison authorities would have been in trouble."

Agodi Prisons built for 500 inmates has 680 prisoners. Six hundred and nineteen are awaiting trial while 61 are convicts.

Police didn't declare

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ments. 'The petition that formed the basis for the invitation was sent to the EFCC, ICPC and the Police. When I was told that Akala said he had written to the EFCC and again a copy of the petition was passed on to me by a newspaper that wanted my reaction, I decided to do a full reaction, a reply which I forwarded to the EFCC that my attention had been drawn to the petition by the Oyo State government. So, when I got to the Police for the chat, they gave me sheets to respond. I simply gave them the response I had forwarded to the EFCC on the matter, but they insisted on my writing a fresh response. I did that for two hours. After that I had to answer questions on the statement. They asked: 'Did you convert the money to personal use?' I replied that I had already said we used it

with us standing surety for them. We were released about midnight.

"The truth is that I came back from abroad myself. If I was running away or had the intent of running away, I would not have come back," he said.

According to him, "when you compare our earnings to spending, we were left with barely N200 million which we considered insufficient for capital projects. We decided to tackle the issue of roads in Ibadan, we wanted the Ibadan circular road in place, and we had commissioned the design in 2004, completed the design in 2005 and put it in the 2006 budget. We also decided to work on the waterworks and roads in different parts of the state to be dualised.

"We, at the same time, had the model school scheme which we held very dear and wanted done. But, government hadn't the kind of money to fund the projects.