

Vanguard

Vandals kill 9 DSS operatives in Arepo

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* As bodies of policemen earlier killed still missing

By Evelyn Usman, Bose Adelaja & Ifeanyi Okolie

LAGOS—Nine operatives of the Department of State Services, DSS, were on Tuesday night shot dead by vandals at Konu, a border between Arepo in Ogun State and Ikorodu, Lagos State, even as scores of persons have been declared missing as a result of the attack on the area.



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/DSS-OPEARTIVES-e1433970231484.jpg>)

At press time, no one could ascertain the command the operatives were from.

The activities of the vandals spilled over to Oke-Oko, Ikorodu area of Lagos State as residents deserted the community, following an attack by the vandals, suspected to be militants.

The incident occurred around 5pm on Tuesday, and left an unidentified number of persons missing. Unconfirmed report said the killing of the DSS operatives occurred less than six hours, after seven other security operatives were allegedly killed at the Ishawo area of Ikorodu by suspected vandals.

Killing DSS operatives, policemen

The killing of the DSS operatives occurred barely three weeks after four policemen were shot dead by vandals at Ikorodu area of Lagos, with their bodies suspected to have been taken away by the vandals still missing.

Vanguard gathered that the over 20 vandals, clad in black shirts and trousers, with red bands tied round their heads, stormed Arepo creeks where they broke a pipeline belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC.

They reportedly loaded over eight trucks with petroleum product siphoned from the pipelines, while their members drove the trucks through Konu.

There were, however, different accounts on to how the DSS operatives were killed as a version of the account had it that the operatives who acted on a tip off, stormed Konu to effect the arrest of the vandals and the trucks load of petroleum product.

Ambush

The DSS operatives reportedly ran into the ambush laid by the vandals who opened fire on them, killing nine on the spot.

Another account had it that the operatives had gone to Ikorodu to attend the social wake-keep of one of their colleagues but had fire opened on them by the vandals who thought they were in the area to arrest them.

The exact number of operatives that left for the operation could, however, not be ascertained last night but Vanguard gathered that the vehicle they rode in to the area was still at the spot at about 1pm yesterday.

It could also not be ascertained whether the bodies of the slain operatives were taken away by their assailants.

Vanguard was reliably informed that vandals suspected to be militants have taken over Arepo creeks and have dared security operatives to come and dislodge them.

It was also gathered that aside yesterday's killing, other security operatives have been killed, with their bodies taken to the creeks where they are buried in shallow graves.

Appeal to Ogun govt

At the moment, residents of Konu are appealing to Ogun State government to nip activities of vandals in the bud to prevent the problem from spinning out of control.

A resident who spoke on condition of anonymity, said: "Yesterday's shots was like a theatre of war. Though we are used to gun shots around this area, it has never been like this in recent times.

"There is no night that we don't see tankers driving in and out through this route. Most times, some of them would drive the trucks, while other will follow behind in different cars.

Sporadic gun shots

"They usually announce their arrival with sporadic gunshots, while others will just hang around making phone calls. But nobody dares to challenge them. If you do, they descend on you and ask if the oil belongs to your father. At times, they will even kill the person. So, we are living in fear."

Spokesman of Lagos State police command, Joe Offor, could not state exactly who were killed but simply stated that the sounds of gun shots were heard by policemen attached to Owutu.

"We don't know whether anyone was killed, we do not know whether any DSS operative was also killed. What we know is that there were skirmishes in that area yesterday (Tuesday) night," he said.

Efforts to reach his Ogun State counterpart, Muiyiwa Adejobi, failed as calls were being diverted.

Also efforts to reach spokesman of Lagos State command of DSS, Mr Ade, could not also go through.

Sources at the DSS, however, gave a conflicting figure on the number of those who lost their lives. While some put the number at six, others said they were five. DSS sources, however, stated that those killed were policemen and not their personnel.