



# 6 dead, 23 others injured in Lagos gas explosion

... as Gunmen kill 2 chiefs, 3 others in Taraba; kidnap traditional ruler in Abuja

By Kingsley Omonobi,

State, gunmen reportedly killed two village heads, the chairman of a vigilante group and two other persons.

The traditional rulers killed were Garba Dangari, the village head of Bilango 1 and Sarki Ali, the village head of Bilango 2. The bandits also abducted five children in the area before escaping into neighbouring Plateau State.

The bandits, numbering 30, armed with AK-47, invaded the two communities and killed the village heads of Bilango 1 and Bilango 2 in Old Muri chiefdom around midnight on Monday.

The bandits, suspected to be kidnappers, were said to be on a vengeance mission over the killing of their colleagues by hunters and vigilante in the area.

The bandits, it was gathered, killed the traditional rulers in their palaces and also killed the chairman of the vigilante in the community, as well as the secretaries of the two rulers.

## Police search for Abuja kidnappers

Meanwhile, the police and Joint Security Team have intensified manhunt for the kidnappers of Rubochi traditional ruler in Abuja.

The FCT Police Command has said its operatives working in conjunction with the joint security team against kidnapping have mobilised to Rubochi and surrounding communities in pursuit of the kidnappers, who abducted the traditional ruler of the FCT community, Ibrahim Pada.

FCT Police Commissioner, Bala Ciroma, who confirmed that the Command received a complaint of the kidnapping, said the joint security team had intensified the manhunt for the abductors, while seeking to rescue the victim and was combing suspected hideouts.

It was gathered that the kidnapping of Pada in Abuja, in the early hours of Wednesday, was resisted by two of his sons, who got injured.

According to a resident of the village of Rubochi, who spoke to newsmen, the men wielding sophisticated weapons stormed the compound of the chief through the fence and forced him out of the bedroom, before taking him away.

The eyewitness said: "It was while the chief's two sons tried to prevent the kidnappers from taking away their father away that one of the gunmen used a machete to inflict injuries on them."

A member of the family, who preferred anonymity, said phone contact was established with the kidnappers around 8:34a.m., on Wednesday.

"In fact, the chief himself spoke with some of his family members this morning (yesterday), but the kidnappers are yet to negotiate for ransom," he said.

Remains of the gas explosion.

officials of the fire service and Lagos State Emergency Management Agency LASEMA were still at the scene.

## Eyewitness

A resident, Salako Joke, revealed that three corpses were evacuated, while two were removed this yesterday.

Joke said: "The two bodies that were discovered this morning

(yesterday) were that of a little girl and a man, who wanted to rescue the girl.

"Because of the seriousness of the incident, most of the hospital within the locality rejected victims, who were later taken to Cbagada General Hospital."

Confirming the incident, Director-General of LASEMA, Dr. Olufemi Oke-Osanyintolu, said two people died in the gas explosion with 23 others injured.

He said when LASEMA officials arrived at the scene of the incident, they discovered that a gas cylinder store had exploded as a result of leakage.

He added: "Further investigations at the scene revealed that the fire ignited as a result of a phone call by an unidentified resident.

"This spread to other nearby shops and a bungalow behind the shops. Unfortunately, two children (a male and a female) lost their lives and there were other 23 casualties who sustained multiple burns.

"All the casualties have been evacuated to the Burnt Unit, Cbagada General Hospital."

Oke-Osanyintolu said the remains of one of the two bodies, identified as Damilare Afolabi, had been bagged by LASEMA Response Team, LRT, and handed over to the family.

He, however, said the entire area had been cordoned off and that post-disaster assessment was ongoing.

## In Taraba

In a separate incident in Taraba

## Women protest against Catholic Bishop of Ogoja

By Emma Una

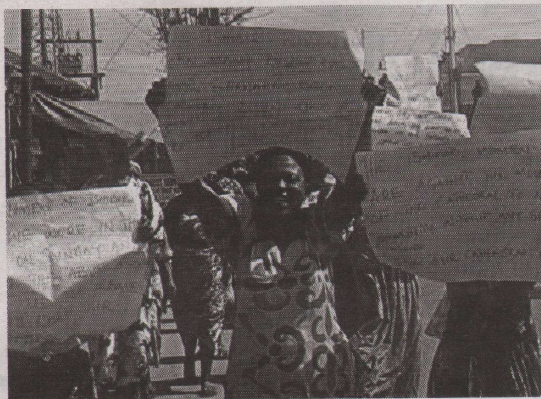
CALABAR—CATHOLIC women of the ArchDiocese of Ogoja, yesterday, took to the streets of the town to protest and demand the removal of the bishop of the diocese, Most Rev Dr Donatus Eder Akpan, following his plans to relocate the cathedral.

Tens of women, led by Mrs Garforishor Daniel, chanted songs as they marched round major streets in Ogoja, calling for the removal of Bishop Akpan from the Diocese.

They chanted: "Bishop Akpan go, you must go. We are tired of you, please go. Akpan go, go and leave our cathedral alone."

Mrs Daniel said the women are aggrieved over the planned relocation of the cathedral from Igoli to Ndok Junction at Abakpa, a distance of five kilometres, which the women said is too far since the bulk of the worshippers are resident in Igoli.

Their leader said: "Most of those who worship in the cathedral are resident at Igoli and



The protesters

taking it to Abakpa means our having to pay transport fare to Abakpa. Some of us go to the church three times a day beginning with morning prayers and so the decision is not favourable to us."

The women claimed there is hardship in the land and movement of the cathedral would inflict more pain on them, as they

would be forced to pay transport fare to and from the church daily.

Efforts to speak with Bishop Akpan did not yield result, but a Reverend Father in the diocese said the women were sponsored.

He warned that those behind the action "should repent or by the time the foundation is laid, some of them would see the wrath of God."