

News

Gunmen on rampage in Enugu, Imo, Anambra, Kogi, kill 7, kidnap 2

●Kill 3 policemen, 2 others in Anambra ●Kill one, abduct 2 worshippers in Kogi ●Kill one student, injure 5 others in Imo ●Set ablaze INEC office in Enugu

By Boluwaji Obahopo, Omeiza Ajayi, Chimaobi Nwaiwu, Chinedu Adonu & Steve Oke

LOKOJA — Gunmen went on rampage in different parts of the country weekend, killing, maiming and destroying properties.

he said.

INEC office in Enugu set ablaze

In the Enugu attack, the arsonists set ablaze the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, office in Awgu Local Government Area.

A source revealed that the arsonists climbed through the perimeter fence to gain access into the building.

The fire which started in the early hours of yesterday, did substantial damage to the INEC office. Quick response of the Fire Service helped moderate the destruction.

The Fire Service Station in Ozalla was said to have responded quickly.

When contacted, the Public Relations Officer of INEC in Enugu State, Pius Eze, confirmed the incident, saying the commission is yet to know the extent of damage caused by the inferno.

Chief Fire Officer in Enugu State, Okwudili Ohia, who also confirmed the incident, said a distress call was received by the Enugu State Fire Service at about 1.30 a.m.

"As usual, when we received the distress call, our trucks and men at Ozalla Station quickly moved to the scene. We equally mobilised fire engines and fire fighters from Enugu metropolis. Our prompt intervention saved the entire complex as only one office room was affected in the raging fire before it was extinguished," he said.

The Police Public Relations Officer of Enugu command, Daniel Ndukwue, who also confirmed the incident, said the command had commenced investigation to unravel the mystery behind the fire.

"The State CID Enugu has commenced investigation to unravel the mystery behind the fire incident that occurred at INEC Office in Awgu LGA, in the early hours of today (yesterday) September 19, 2021. Further development will be communicated," he said.

Also confirming the incident yesterday, INEC National Commissioner and Chairman of Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, said in a statement issued in Abuja: "Our Resident Electoral Commissioner for Enugu State, Mr. Emeka Ononamadu, reported an attack on the INEC office in Awgu Local Government Area of the State.

"The building was set ablaze this morning (yesterday), September 19, 2021, resulting in extensive damage to mainly the stores section where election

materials are kept.

"Fortunately, all movable election materials had been evacuated following recent attacks on our offices in the state. There are no casualties in the incident.

"The identity or motives of attackers are unknown while the incident has been reported to the Nigeria Police Force for investigation.

"The Commission appreciates the prompt response of the security agencies comprising the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigerian Army, the Department of State Services (DSS) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, as well as the Enugu State Fire Service and the Awgu Local Government Neighbourhood Watch.

"This unfortunate incident is the first since the last attack on our facilities four months ago in May 2021."

Gunmen kill one student, injure 5 others in Imo

In Imo State, a student of Marist Comprehensive Academy, MCA, Uturu, Abia State, died of bullet wounds sustained, following an attack on their bus by bandits operating around nearby Ihube town in Okigwe Local Government Area of Imo State.

Doctors are currently battling to save the lives of five other students who sustained varying degrees of bullet wounds during the attack, according to the school source.

The students were said to be returning from a final religious competition of some Marist Brothers in Orlu, Imo State, on Saturday evening when they were attacked.

Speaking with our correspondent on phone yesterday, the principal of



From left, Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Ms Yeni Kuti and Vice-Chairman, Global Citizen Nigeria, Mr. Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede during the Global Citizen Live concert in honour of frontline and essential workers in the battle against COVID-19, at the Afrika Shrine, Ikeja, on Saturday, September 18, 2021.

the school, Rev. Brother Joachim Ezelulugo, described the incident as devastating.

He said the students were on their way back to the school after the trip to Orlu when herdsmen suddenly opened fire on their bus, inflicting bullet wounds on them.

The principal said parents of the wounded students had been contacted.

Meanwhile, a source gave the name of the dead student as Donald Edeh from Lagos Division.

Herdsmen menace had been on the increase around Uturu-Ihube-Okigwe axis as they have virtually taken over the hills and valleys of the area, taking undue advantage of the cashew plantation in the region as cover.

This attack is coming barely one month after gunmen suspected to be herdsmen abducted three lecturers of the nearby Abia State University, Uturu.

The bandits had also about three months ago, abducted unspecified number of passengers, including students of ABSU while traveling from Uturu to Okigwe.

Kabba church attacked, one killed, 2 worshippers abducted

The attack is coming barely seven days after the attack on the Federal minimum correctional centre and barely four days after three poultry farmers were abducted in their farm; all in the same community.

The gunmen were said to have attacked the church situated along the Express way of Kabba - Okene road around 8 am.

Among those kidnapped inside the church was the pioneer Provost, College of Education, Technical Kabba, J.O.T Oshadumo.

Eye-witness account said Oshadumo who worships regularly in the church after his retirement, was abducted inside the church during service.

The resident pastor of the church and another female worshiper were also said to have been kidnapped by the gunmen.

A source said a security man who is a staff of College

killed, 2 worshippers abducted

Meanwhile, gunmen yesterday attacked the ECWA church in Okedayo - Kabba, killed one person and abducted two other worshippers during church service.

The attack is coming barely seven days after the attack on the Federal minimum correctional centre and barely four days after three poultry farmers were abducted in their farm; all in the same community.

The gunmen were said to have attacked the church situated along the Express way of Kabba - Okene road around 8 am.

Among those kidnapped inside the church was the pioneer Provost, College of Education, Technical Kabba, J.O.T Oshadumo.

Eye-witness account said Oshadumo who worships regularly in the church after his retirement, was abducted inside the church during service.

The resident pastor of the church and another female worshiper were also said to have been kidnapped by the gunmen.

A source said a security man who is a staff of College

of Education, Technical, Kabba, whose name was simply given as Reuben, was shot dead while making efforts to defend the former provost.

Oshadumo's wife and a student of the COET were also shot by the gunmen and are currently receiving treatment at an undisclosed hospital in the community.

The pioneer provost who hails from Jege, Yagba East Local Government Area of Kogi State, retired from Federal College of Education, Okene, before he served as the pioneer provost, College of Education, Technical, Kabba.

The state Police Public Relations Officer, DSP William Aya, who confirmed the attack, however, said two and not three persons were kidnapped.

Residents of the community said they had for a while asked stakeholders in the community to engage the services of indigenous security guards to help in securing the community but lamented the dearth of mobilization.

A resident, Mr. Yomi Obaloro, had said that neighboring communities in Okunland had taken to this precautionary measure to forestall insecurity of lives and property, reiterating the need to do same in the entire Kabba land.

VAT war: OPS fears double payment, heads to court

Continues from Page 5

but also its sustainability.

"We are merely collecting agents in this matter and should not suffer while offering this pro-bono service. It is important to also note that at a time businesses are clamouring for streamlining and reduction of tax burdens, the ongoing challenge has the potential to make businesses pay double-VAT, in view of the demands of the FIRS and state governments for remittance of VAT, more so, as the deadline for remittance of VAT collection falls due on 21st of every month.

"Businesses as the collecting agents, are practically unclear on authority to remit to and without a clear path, this would further aggravate

the pain on businesses.

"It is a popular saying that 'where two elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers'. It is no longer news that Nigerian businesses have been battling with myriads of challenges, making survival of enterprises and ease of doing business in the country among the worst in this part of the world.

"Adding this current issue to accumulated issues facing Nigerian businesses would make survival of enterprises even tougher. We appreciate the Lagos and Rivers state governments for the platform created to engage organized businesses in the course of this controversy.

"We appeal that the FIRS and the states should also engage in the interest of enterprise competitiveness and national development.

We appeal that while the issue remains in the legal quarters, the Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS, and states should not throw organized businesses under the bus."

Amendments sought by FIRS at NASS dead on arrival — AKEREDOLU

Meanwhile, chairman of the Southern Governors' Forum, Rotimi Akeredolu, said yesterday that the amendments sought by the Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS, at the National Assembly on the controversial Value Added Tax is futile, dead on arrival.

Akeredolu, who said the amendments would be killed at the State Houses of

Assembly, spoke on 'Arise TV Sunday Talk Show' yesterday.

He said the law does not give power to the Federal Government to collect VAT and share to states, insisting that VAT should be under the state.

The governor said: "That's the position of the law. The FIRS seeking for amendment is a confirmation that they don't have the power. The amendment will be dead on arrival. Why seek an amendment to a constitution when the provision is so clear?"

"If the Federal Government was to collect VAT for states, it can only get percentage which the federal government can decide to share at FAAC.

"You can only collect VAT on behalf of the states and hand their money over to them. You can only take percentage for helping us to collect the money."

"The information is still sketchy. I will get back to you,"