

Osun Osogbo: Three feared dead as cultists invade ceremony

• Adams advocates adequate security for festival

Shina Abubakar, Osogbo

Three persons were reportedly feared dead and twelve others injured following violent clash between rival cult groups around the Osun-Osogbo ancient groove during the grand finale of the festival.

This is as the Aare Onakakanfo of Yorubaland, Iba Gani Adams frowned at the invasion of the Osun groove by cultists causing crisis with a view to tarnish the international status of the festival.

Identity of the victims and two of the injured persons were not ascertained as at the time of filing this report, but hoodlums were seen brandishing dangerous weapons disrupting activities creating panic among residents and tourists around Jaleymi and Isale-Osun.

The Office of Hunters and Forest Security Service located along the road was also attacked and vandalised as personnel were also injured during the attack.

Chairman, of the Hunter group, Ahmed Nureni said three dead bodies were sighted around the groove while ten members of the group were also injured.

"We sighted three dead bodies, though, we don't know their identities. Meanwhile our office at Jaleymi area was also vandalised and in the process ten personnel were injured", he said.

Addressing members of the Oodua People's Congress at Isale-Osun outside the groove, at a reception organised for him, Adams stressed the need for stakeholders to ensure adequate security for tourists and visitors to safeguard the sanctity of the spiritual festival.

"It is unfortunate that cultist and miscreants have taken advantage of the hospitality of the festival to create a platform for cult rivalry which Osun goddess

abhors and we must collectively stop the trend.

"This is an opportunity for Osun and Nigeria to attract tourism development. Osun-Osogbo is renowned globally and we must protect and project it to the whole world", he said.

Addressing tourists and traditionalists inside the groove, Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke said his administration would use the Osun-Osogbo festival as a tool for state development, being the strongest heritage of the people.

El-Rufai withdraws interest in ministerial appointment, jets out of country

Former Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, has opted out of President Bola Tinubu's cabinet as a minister. In an exclusive report by an online newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES, El-Rufai was said to have told President Tinubu at a meeting on Tuesday that he was no longer interested in becoming a minister but would continue to contribute his quota to the development of Nigeria as a private citizen.

Quoting presidency sources, Premium Times also reported that the former governor "told the president that he needed time to focus on his doctorate programme at a university in The Netherlands".

Additional sources confirmed that El-Rufai who had already left the country was very angry that if the President Tinubu really wanted him in his cabinet, he would have made it possible for him to get the nod of the Senate.

Another insider also told the medium that El-Rufai suggested a new ministerial nominee — Jafaru Ibrahim Sani — for Kaduna State, saying the President would find him very useful and resourceful.

Mr Sani served as commissioner in three ministries in Kaduna State (Local Government Education and Environment) while Mr El-Rufai was governor.

El-Rufai visited the

President at the presidential villa a day after the Senate confirmed 45 ministerial nominees after a week-long screening of 48 of them. The upper legislative chamber, however, withheld his confirmation and those of two others, citing security reports from the Department of State Service, DSS for the action. The two others were a former senator from Taraba, Sani Danladi, and a nominee from Delta State, Stella Okotete.

On becoming aware of the Senate pronouncement on his case, El-Rufai, who only returned to Nigeria from London on Monday, sought and got an appointment to meet the president. At the meeting on Tuesday afternoon, President Tinubu, according to Premium Times sources, told the former governor he received some petitions critical of his ministerial nomination.

The president then asked for 24 hours grace to review the petitions and the DSS report to the Senate to enable him reach a decision. It was at that point that El-Rufai responded that he was no longer interested in being minister since it appeared some forces around the president were scheming intensely to block his emergence as federal minister.

El-Rufai had disclosed during his confirmation hearing on August 1 that President Tinubu asked him to work with him on the power problem facing the

country. According to him, the President had given a target of seven years for Nigeria to stop experiencing power outages in the country.

At the Tuesday meeting, Mr El-Rufai also reportedly told the President that since he would no longer be in the federal executive council, he would return the next day with his team to present the preliminary work done so far on the energy sector.

The team that accompanied the former governor to make presentations to the president on Wednesday includes Eyo Ekpo, a former commissioner at the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission

(NERC); Hafiz Bayero, a former commissioner and administrator of the Kaduna Capital Territory Authority; Tolu Oyeekan of the Boston Consulting Group and Ayodele Oni, a lawyer.

Obasanjo, Gov Eno extol virtues of late

By Chioma Onuegbu, Uyo

FORMER president Olusegun Obasanjo and governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State have extolled the qualities of late Prelate Emeritus of the Methodist Church Nigeria, Sunday Mbang who died few months ago at the age of 86.

They spoke during late Mbang's funeral service held on Friday at his hometown in Eket local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Speaking, Obasanjo who described the late prelate as a great man, nationalist, and honest man, recalled how he became close to the deceased who was then the arrow head of Methodist Church Nigeria and Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria,

administration has a tourism and cultural industry agenda. During the campaign and within the transition committee, we devised far reaching programmes and policies for the arts, culture and tourism industry. We indeed created a new holistic approach by adding the creative industry as a whole".

El-Rufai is studying for a doctorate in public policy at the United Nations University, Maastricht.

His associates said as he prepared to leave office as governor in May this year, he had indicated his desire to exit public life and concentrate on his PhD programme. But that was until then President-elect Tinubu asked him to join his cabinet so he could charge him with the responsibility of repositioning the inefficient power sector in Africa's largest economy.

(CAN)

"One of the Christian leaders I went to when I was contesting for the office of the President was Sunday Mbang. That was at his Lagos residence. He had told me 'you are a military man and I won't vote for you'. The completion of the National Ecumenical Centre, Federal Capital Territory Abuja was facilitated by late Prelate Mbang. I found him such a great man, such a unique human being, such a nationalistic Nigerian. I used to come to Akwa Ibom to seek the opinion and advice of Prelate Mbang", Obasanjo said.

Akwa Ibom State governor, Pastor Umo Eno in his funeral oration, described him as an embodiment of Christian