

Edo Killings: Police arrest 14, launch probe amid widespread outrage



...debunk reprisal attack on Igbo in Kano
•Atiku, Obi, others condemn mob action

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Amid the widespread condemnations trailing the brutal killings of 16 northern travellers at Uromi, Edo State, police said they have arrested 14 individuals as part of an ongoing investigation into the incident.

The victims said to be hunters were killed by a mob on Thursday while transiting from Port Harcourt in Rivers State to Kano State for the Sallah celebrations.

Unconfirmed reports said 19 locally fabricated firearms were found in their possession when intercepted by vigilantes, who were not satisfied with the excuse of being hunters to have such a number of arms and concluded they were kidnappers.

In the wake of the mob action, the presidential candidates of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in the 2023 elections, Atiku Abubakar, and his Labour Party (LP) counterpart, Peter Obi, have condemned the incident and called on relevant authorities to investigate and bring those responsible to book.

Reacting via his X handle, Atiku wrote: "I am deeply saddened by reports of the tragic killing of some hunters in Edo State. My heartfelt condolences go out to their families and loved ones.

"This unfortunate incident demands a thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation to uncover the truth and ensure that those responsible are brought to book."

Killings unacceptable — Obi

On his part, Obi decried the increasing trend of mob killings, describing it as unacceptable in a civilised and lawful society.

"Such killings have become frequent in our society, and acts of violence like these are unacceptable in any civilised and lawful nation.

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"This tragic incident highlights the urgent need for improved security measures and public awareness to prevent similar occurrences in the future," Obi said.

Act swiftly – Kano govt

The Kano State government has called on President Bola Tinubu and Edo State Governor, Monday Okpebholo, to swiftly act by bringing perpetrators of the killings to book.

The state's Commissioner for Information and Internal Affairs, Comrade Ibrahim Waiya who condemned the mob action, called for an immediate, thorough, and transparent investigation into the incident.

"This unconscionable act of mob violence is not only a personal tragedy for the affected families but also a stark indicator of the disturbing rise of extrajudicial measures in Nigeria. It undermines the sanctity of human life and erodes public trust in the state's ability to uphold law and order", the statement lamented.

"In light of these events, we call for an immediate, thorough, and transparent investigation into the incident. All individuals found to be complicit in this atrocity must be brought to justice, including any law enforcement personnel who may have neglected their duty.

"We urge President Bola Tinubu and Governor Monday Okpebholo to denounce this act unequivocally and to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to justice by ensuring that the perpetrators are swiftly prosecuted through a fair and impartial trial."

Barbaric act

In the same vein, the Arewa Peoples Congress, APC, warned that the North will no longer tolerate such acts of violence and intimidation.

The group's National Secretary, Dr Yahuza Getso, condemned the incident which he described as a senseless and barbaric act and a clear manifestation of the growing intolerance and xenophobia in the country.

"We strongly condemn this senseless and barbaric act, which is a clear manifestation of the growing intolerance and xenophobia in our country. The APC demands immediate action from the national government to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure that such incidents never happen again."

Grotesque misjudgement

Similarly, the Coalition of Northern Groups, CNG, has expressed deep pain over the gruesome killing of 16 travellers in Uromi.

The CNG in a statement signed by the National Coordinator, Jamilu Charanchi, described the killing as grotesque misjudgement and senseless violence against individuals who were falsely accused of kidnapping.

"It is with heavy hearts that we reflect on the loss of life in this senseless violence. The victims were not criminals; they were ordinary citizens travelling for legitimate purposes. The actions of the mob, fueled by misinformation and ignorance, represent a grave affront to the values of humanity and decency.

"We call upon all responsible citizens to reject such mob justice and to engage in

constructive dialogue rather than resorting to violence based on unfounded allegations”, the group counselled.

Reps wade in

Also, the House of Representatives has described the act as not only barbaric but also cowardly and unacceptable.

“This horrific act is a grave violation of human rights and the rule of law”, the House said in a statement on Saturday, through its spokesperson, Hon. Akin Rotimi.

“The House urges law enforcement to ensure all perpetrators are promptly identified, arrested, and prosecuted. However, justice must not only be swift but also thorough. Those responsible for inciting, enabling, or carrying out this heinous crime must be fully held accountable to deter future occurrences”, the statement added.

Vigilante justice

Reacting, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, CISLAC, has condemned the ugly incident.

In a statement by the Executive Director, Awual Rafsanjani, CISLAC described the dastardly act as horrific and gruesome and demanded justice and a transparent investigation to prosecute all involved.

The statement warned that such horrific act of mob violence, which underscores the alarming rise of vigilante justice and a growing disregard for human life in Nigeria is a serious threat to national security.

“The incident in Uromi is not an isolated case but part of a disturbing trend of vigilante violence across the country, particularly in towns and villages where highway communities are increasingly besieged by groups taking the law into their own hands.”

It, however, demanded that President Tinubu and Governor Okpebholo take immediate action to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring justice for the victims.

“The Nigerian government must go beyond offering mere condemnation and take concrete steps to ensure that the suspected attackers face justice through a fair trial”, the statement added.

Police call for calm

Meanwhile, the Inspector-General of Police, IGP, Kayode Egbetokun, has appealed for calm and urged the public to cooperate with the investigation.

A statement by the Force headquarters said, “In immediate response, the Edo State Police Command deployed operatives to the affected community, restoring law and order.

“So far, fourteen (14) suspects have been arrested in connection with the incident, while a manhunt has been launched for other perpetrators involved in the mob action.

“The IGP has directed the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), DIG Sadiq Abubakar, to take over the case and ensure a thorough, impartial, and expedited investigation.”

Also, the Kano State Police Command has debunked news making round of a reprisal attack on 18-seater bus carrying Igbo passengers in Kano.

The command’s spokesperson, SP Abdullahi Haruna, described the viral video as false.

Haruna said the command has commenced investigation to apprehend masterminds and source behind the fake news.