

Uromi killings: CDS, CAN, PFN seek justice for victims



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BENIN CITY— The Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, General Christopher Musa, Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, and the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, PFN, yesterday called for justice for the 16 hunters killed by a mob in Uromi, Edo State, last Thursday, having been tagged kidnappers. Their call came as the 16th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, yesterday warned Kano youths against launching reprisal attacks on innocent non-indigenes in the state over the killings, even as Edo State governor, Monday Okpebholo, suspended head of the state's security corps, Friday Ibadin, a retired Commissioner of Police.

The CDS, in a statement by the Director Defence of Information, Brig. Gen. Tukur Gusau, said the tragic incident could have been prevented had the appropriate authorities been notified to verify the identities of the victims.

The statement said: "General Christopher Musa has condemned in strong terms the unfortunate killing of 16 hunters while on transit in Edo State. The incident, which occurred on 28 March 2025, could have been avoided if the appropriate authorities were notified and involved in ascertaining the identity of the victims.

"General Musa condoled with the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and the families of those who lost their lives."

He also urged citizens to avoid taking the law into their own hands and instead rely on security agencies for conflict resolution.

Musa assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces of Nigeria would collaborate with the police and other security agencies to ensure justice was served.

"The CDS also urged Nigerians not to take laws into their hands but always revert to constituted authorities in matters that affect security. The Nigeria police, military, and other security agencies are well trained to handle such matters.

"The Chief of Defence Staff assured Nigerians that the Armed Forces of Nigeria will work closely with the police and other relevant security agencies to bring the perpetrators of the dastardly act to book," Musa said.

He warned vigilante groups, hunters, among others, to register with relevant agencies to regulate the possession of firearms.

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"He warned that all local hunters and vigilante groups should register with the police, DSS, AFN and any other agencies mandated by law to regulate the possession of fire arms, while calling on vigilante group to always revert to police for appropriate action.

"He also sued for calm and solicited citizens support to the AFN and other security agencies to continue to perform their constitutional duties with diligence," the statement read further.

CAN seeks justice for 16 slain hunters

On its part, the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, also demanded justice for the 16 hunters killed in Edo State.

In a statement by the President, Archbishop Daniel Okoh, CAN expressed profound sympathy to the victims' families and emphasised the urgent need for effective law enforcement to rebuild trust in the legal system.

The statement read: "A few days ago, sixteen hunters travelling from Port Harcourt to Kano to mark Eid el-Fitr were brutally murdered by a mob in Uromi, Edo State.

"Mistaken for kidnappers due to the traditional hunting tools they carried, these innocent men suffered a horrific fate—beaten and burned alive in an act of mob violence, denied any chance of due process.

"This extrajudicial killing is a grievous violation of human rights and a chilling reminder of the dangers of lawlessness.

"We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of these hunters, who now mourn the loss of their loved ones taken in such a senseless and brutal manner.

"These tragedies inflict profound pain and could erode trust in our legal system, highlighting the urgent

need for effective law enforcement and the upholding of the rule of law.

“The government must act decisively to address these failures and ensure justice is served. Specifically we call on the government to conduct a thorough investigation into the killing of the sixteen hunters and to ensure the perpetrators face justice.

“In the face of such challenges, we must not succumb to despair. Instead, let this moment spur us to unite for peace and security. I urge all Nigerians to practise charity, support those in need, and stand together against violence and division.

“Leaders at all levels must also promote understanding and reject mob actions. CAN reaffirms its commitment to dialogue and cooperation with Muslim leaders, fostering interfaith initiatives to build a stronger nation.

“As we extend our goodwill on Eid-el-Fitr, let us embrace compassion, forgiveness, and mutual respect-values that can lead us towards a Nigeria where every life is cherished and protected.”

PFN flays killing, demands justice

Similarly, the National Secretary of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, PFN, Bishop David Bakare, condemned the killings.

Bakare, in a chat, called for thorough investigations into the ungodly act to ensure the perpetrators were fished out and brought to justice.

While appealing against reprisal attacks, as two wrongs could not make a right, he said: “We strongly condemn this barbaric and ungodly act of killing travellers under any circumstances.

“Even if they were kidnappers, that does not warrant taking the law into our hands; the right thing was to hand them over to law enforcement agents for proper investigation and legal action.

“We urge that thorough investigation be carried out on this matter to ensure the culprits are brought to book, no matter who they may be.

“We appeal against reprisal act because two wrongs won’t make a right. Our prayers are with the families of the victims. Nigeria needs all the peace at this time.”

Okpebholo suspends security chief over Uromi killings

Also yesterday, Governor Okpebholo suspended head of the Edo state security corps, Friday Ibadin, a retired Commissioner of Police.

Also suspended are all forms of illegal vigilante groups in the state.

The Secretary to State Government, SSG, Umar Ikhikor, who disclosed this in a statement yesterday, said the governor was also in touch with the families of the victims, adding that 14 people had been arrested so far in connection with the killings.

The statement read: “It is hereby announced for the information of the general public that after a review of the preliminary report of the unfortunate incident of Thursday, March 27, 2025, at Uromi in Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State involving the gruesome killing of some travellers, the governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo, has ordered the immediate suspension of all illegal vigilante groups operating under whatever guise in the state.

“Also suspended is the Commander of Edo State Security Corps, CP. Friday Ibadin, retd,. It is to be reiterated that the local vigilante group involved in the gruesome killing of March 27 was operating illegally as it was never profiled or registered with Edo State Security Corps.

“Its actions do not reflect the core values, character and principles of Okpebholo’s administration or the objectives of the corps as enshrined in Edo State Security Corps Governance Law.

“Investigations into the killings are on-going and fourteen persons have been arrested so far, while there is an intense manhunt for others involved in the gruesome killing by a special team set up by the Inspector General of Police.

“The government of Edo State reiterates its belief in the constitutionally guaranteed rights of citizens to move freely or engage in lawful business in any part of the country.

“In the meantime, the government is in touch with families of the victims, community leaders and the government of Kano State where most of the deceased are reported to hail from.

“We urge all parties involved to remain calm as the state government remains committed to ensuring that justice is done in a most efficient, transparent and proactive manner.”

Sanusi warns Kano youths against reprisal attack

Meanwhile, the 16th Emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi II, has warned Kano youths against launching reprisal attacks on innocent non-indigenes in the state over killings of 16 northern travelers in Edo State. Sanusi, who was former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, in his sermon after leading the two rakat eid-el-fitr prayer at the Kofar Mata Eid ground, warned the youths against taking laws into their hands.

He called on the relevant authorities to take decisive action and ensure justice prevailed for victims of the barbaric act.

The monarch said: “We got information yesterday (Saturday evening) that youths in some areas are

planning to launch reprisal attacks on non-indigenes after the Eid prayers. We are instructing them not to carry out such attacks.

“We appeal to them not to take laws into their hands. They should avoid breakdown of law and order. We call on all traditional leaders to be vigilant.

“Similarly, we appeal to the relevant authorities to ensure justice for the victims. They should investigate and prosecute persons behind the barbaric act.”

Sanusi also called on Muslim faithful to sustain lessons learnt from Ramadan fasting and not to return to sins or wrong doings.

Kano sends delegation to engage Edo govt

Meanwhile, the Kano State government has constituted a high-powered delegation to visit and engage the Edo State government killing of 16 northern travelers in Uromi.

The Commissioner of Information and Internal Affairs, Mr Ibrahim Waiya, who disclosed this, said the delegation is saddled with the task to engage and collaborate with Edo State government in the efforts towards identifying the perpetrators and ensuring justice for the victims.

Waiya reiterated the government’s commitment to ensure justice for the victims of the barbaric act.

He said: “The Kano State government is deeply saddened by the recent tragic incident in Edo State that resulted in the loss of innocent lives, majority of who were indigenes of Kano State. This unfortunate development has caused great concern to the government and good people of the State.

“In response to this distressing event, Governor Abba Yusuf of Kano State has approved the establishment of a High-Powered Delegation to travel to Edo State with immediate effect. The delegation is tasked with the responsibility of engaging the Edo State government and collaborating in the efforts to identify the perpetrators and ensure justice for the victims. The committee would also meet the leadership of Hausa community in Edo State to discuss the issue and offer suggestions.

“The affected individuals, who were on a legitimate adventure traveling from Port Harcourt en route to Uromi, in Edo State, deserve justice, and the Kano State government is committed to ensuring that their rights are protected.

“The Kano State government urges all citizens to remain calm and avoid any actions that could escalate tensions. It reassures the public that all necessary diplomatic and legal measures are being deployed to address the situation. The government is also in close communication with Edo State government officials and the security agencies, towards ensuring justice to the affected families.

“Furthermore, the Kano State government expresses its heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and prays for the peaceful repose of the departed souls. The government remains steadfast in its commitment to the protection of its people and would continue to work closely with relevant authorities to ensure that justice prevails.”

Perpetrators must face justice — Reps spokesman

Speakong on the issue yesterday, spokesperson of the House of Representatives, Mr Akin Rotimi, expressed his displeasure during the 2nd Ramadan Annual Lecture organised by him in honour of the National Vice President of Ansar-ud-Deen Society of Nigeria, Aare Sulaiman Ogunlayi.

Rotimi, who represents Ekiti North I (Ikole/Oye) federal constituency, tasked security agencies to bring the perpetrators to justice, stressing that Nigerians should be able to coexist peacefully, regardless of ethnic or religious differences.

His words: “Nigerians should be able to coexist peacefully regardless of our cultural and traditional differences. There must be love and harmony among us.

“On behalf of the people of Ikole/Oye-Ekiti federal constituency, we condemn the violent mob attack on those travelers in Edo State.

“We call on security agencies to ensure that the perpetrators are identified and brought to justice.”

Nigerians should feel safe in all regions — Oluwo

On his part, the Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Abdulrosheed Akanbi, while condemning the killings, said Nigerians should be protected in all parts of the country without fear of intimidation and harassment.

The Oluwo, who spoke after the Eid-el-Fitr prayer in Iwo, said: “I condemn the jungle justice on the Fular hunters in all entirety. They are Nigerians, and Nigerians should be protected at all times, anywhere.

“Nigerians should be free to leave anywhere. Nigerians should be safe and secure, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or tribe. Every Nigerian should be safe in Nigeria. An Ibo man should be able to live in the north and vice versa in peace without discrimination.

“This is what I’ve been preaching all the time. Any Sokoto man living in Iwo, I am their Sultan. The Sultar of Sokoto should be the Oluwo to any Iwo son living in Sokoto. A Kano man leaving in Iwo, I am his Emir while I’m the Awujale of any Ijebu man living in Iwo. “This is our philosophy, it’s about love and everybody accepting any Nigerian, no matter the ethnicity or tribe. Nigeria is for Nigerians, and Nigerian should be safe to leave anywhere they choose to live.”