

Uromi Killings and the Complicity of the Nigerian State

What occurred at Uromi, headquarters of Esan North East Local Government Area in Edo State on Thursday, March 27, could have befallen any other community in the heartbeat of the nation, given the prevailing circumstances, tension, and anger over the hair-raising operations of suspected herders in combination with abductors. More than 24 other communities in Edo Central, Edo North, and Edo South senatorial districts have been sacked and under siege by criminally-minded herders from northern Nigeria. The same could also have arisen in over 30 communities in Delta and Bayelsa States, where the residents, especially farmers, are terrified to go to farms because of

some brazen Fulani herders who invade their farms, uproot crops they planted and feed their cows, rape women, and take the villagers hostage for ransom.

A few months ago, bewildered women stormed the palace of the Onojie of Uromi to vent their anger at the rising cases of kidnappings and killings. The situation became so frightening in January that the Onojie of Uzea, Esan North East local government area, HRH Solomon Itoya Iluobe, declared that he did not want to see any Hausa/Fulani in their forests because of their atrocities. "Our women go to their farms, they rape them, and at times they even set them ablaze. I have paid





ransom three times to Fulani herdsmen; they kidnapped my elder sister, and they have also kidnapped two people from this place. Even last month, I paid a ransom. "To even sleep in this place is by the grace of God Almighty. To access this road, you need security, which is a problem. "I, as Onojie of Uzea, no longer want Fulani in my forests. They will kidnap us, keep us in our land, and we will pay a ransom. We are tired. I do not have a hand in Fulani, and anybody who has a hand in their staying in our forests should tell them to leave Uzea. We need security here so that one day we will not wake up and discover that we only have two people remaining in the Uzea Kingdom."

Some weeks ago in Bayelsa State, where the deputy governor confirmed that several local governments were under siege by herdsmen, mothers protested the destruction of their farmlands and rape by the prowling cattlemen. In Delta, Edo, and Bayelsa States, the situation is as if herdsmen plotted and intensified their operations in the first three months of this year to make life unbearable for the people, who have cried hoarse about their nightmares with the federal and state governments doing little to protect the citizens.

However, the incident in Uromi was ill-fated. A raging mob roasted alive 16 out of 27 persons of Hausa origin who identified themselves as hunters and were traveling from Port Harcourt, Rivers State, to the northern part of the country for the Salah celebration on the supposition that they were kidnappers after finding a cache of arms and ammunition with them. Some people argued that it was a transferred hostility. Two survivors of the Uromi attack who narrated their near-

death experience said they were hunters from Kano State. They said the rifles recovered by the vigilante group were hunting rifles, claiming they had licenses; however, the vigilante cluster accused them of being terrorists and lynched 16 of them, while five others escaped. Concerned citizens have also pointed out that the people lynched were Hausa indigenes and not Fulani herdsmen, who the Uromi people claimed were attacking farmers and kidnapping villagers for ransom. Eyewitnesses said more than 20 persons were in the trailer, but some Uromi indigenes helped some of them to escape lynching. The whereabouts of arms, ammunition, and cash allegedly found are unknown. There is a controversy over the whereabouts of the arms and ammunition found with the victims, but what they saw with them were Dane guns. A villager said the guns were with the police, but the police public relations officer said everything that has to do with the case has been transferred to the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID). The whereabouts of the supposed cash found in the trailer remain unknown.

Some locals who disputed the claim of the Hausa victims said some kidnappers also have dogs with them in their hideouts in the forests, but the way the victims behaved created room for suspicion from the point they were sighted loading their consignments into a waiting truck, along the road between Onicha-Ugbo in Delta State and Ubiaja in Edo State. A non-indigene who lives in Uromi, Ben (surname withheld), gave a peek into what happened. His words: "I condemn the act of jungle justice, which is not in line with our constitutional provision of how offenders of any form of crime can be tried." "However, those persons are presumed to be kidnappers because information available showed that if you are passing

The Federal Government should rise above ethnic biases and ensure that every Nigerian life is valued equally. Selective justice and political correctness have eroded trust in the state's ability to protect its people. Likewise, political, cultural, and civic leaders in the South should be vocal in the face of these atrocities and find the courage to defend their communities through robust and actionable security policies. The continued silence only perpetuates the false dominance of one group over the others.

through here to the east, you will move from Uromi to Ubiaja, Ewato, and Ewohinmi, down to Onicha-Ugbo, and there is a forest and a river. “That place has been a flashpoint; they (herders and kidnappers) have laid siege on that part of the road for the past months, and it was at that spot that an indigene of Ubiaja moving towards Ubiaja from the Onicha-Ugbo axis saw these men carrying their arms from one person to another and into the trailer with Dangote inscribed on it. “He quickly drove to town and alerted the vigilante men at Ubiaja, who waited for the truck. On getting to Ubiaja, the trailer did not stop for the vigilante, so the vigilante at Ubiaja sent a distress call to those in Uromi, and they mounted surveillance. “The vigilantes in Uromi were able to use a tipper with a full trip of sand to stop the trailer, and at the point of questioning them, one of them stabbed the vigilante with a dagger, which was how the thing escalated. It is regrettable the way they were handled, but they caused the provocation, and their movement was suspicious.”

Corroborating the claim, Prince Eugene Olumese who is a native said the victims could have also camouflaged as hunters because “there are hunters that carry dogs and Dane guns.”

“From the environment I grew up in, Lagos and Ogun states, we used to see hunters in the bushes, irrespective of what tribe they were; some of them even have huts in the bushes. But even at that, were these people hunters? It could be. Are they kidnappers? It still could be, but some reasons will make you say these people are likely to be kidnappers or hunters.

“They covered themselves with a tarpaulin in a truck filled with palm kernel shells, which means they did not want anybody to know that people were there. Why? Hunters should walk freely in towns; there was something spectacular, and they also had plenty of money. New currency notes—look at it, hunters with new currency notes! “Many trucks drove through Uromi that day without anybody searching. This truck was carrying palm kernel shells. You can imagine what it took them to search and discover human beings and then guns, money, Dane guns, and dogs, so these people (vigilantes) were working on a tip-off. “There are videos and write-ups in social media by Uromi indigenes saying these things are happening; they kidnap poor men, they kidnap our women, they rape our women, and they insert sticks into their private parts. “Sometimes, even when ransoms were paid, they would hold the person who came to pay the ransom and release the one who was held before. These things kept happening again and again, yet nothing was done on these cries, and if anything was done, it was not to the satisfaction of the Uromi indigenes. “Though it is not right that they took the law into their hands, something triggered the anger. You can imagine that when people are arrested in the act and taken to the appropriate authorities, especially the police, and in a few days to months, you see the same people walking freely. “Your life is at risk, especially those who keep watch over the town, whom we call vigilantes, because these people will come after them. This was why they mobbed them to death, which is inappropriate. We are unhappy about it. But a situation that was not remedied caused it to happen.”

Another indigene, Brown Okojie, said, “We see trucks pass through here, and you would see the boys who we call aboki standing on the top of the trucks; they hang their Dane guns on

their shoulders, and you would see the dogs they carry, but these, they were hiding in the Dangote truck. why?” A week before that incident, five kidnappers were arrested in the forest, and they were taken to the police station in Uromi, which transferred them to the state police headquarters in Benin City. But shockingly, the following Monday, the same people were released back to the community, thereby putting the lives of those who apprehended them at risk. Okojie revealed: “A day before the incident, N25 million was paid as ransom to the herders to release a husband and his wife, but they still killed them and left their bodies along the Ubiaja Road. “That same day, a lady went to pay N5 million to bail her sister from the herdsman in Uromi; they collected the money, released the initial victim, and then kept her. Now, we are looking for money to release her. As we speak, people who are victims of kidnapping are still with their captors, these Fulani herdsman.

“Early this year, a pregnant woman was in labor, and the husband had no choice but to carry her around midnight to the hospital. On their way to the hospital, herdsman kidnapped them. The woman was in labor throughout that night until morning, and she gave birth to a baby boy in their presence. “The Fulani herdsman gave that baby boy to their dog because they move with the dogs; the woman said she watched her baby being eaten alive by the dogs. She is still living with the trauma, so you cannot just say that because those victims were with dogs, it made them hunters. After this incident, they still asked for ransom before they were released. They did that to show their level of harshness.” He said a few days before the incident, about 12 children were going to school together in a community in Ewohi, cows emerged from the bush, the children ran, and a three-year-old child who could not run was trampled upon, killed by the cows, and nothing happened. Ordia, who has been involved in negotiating the release of a kidnapped person, said, “It is not a good experience at all. About two months ago, a very close friend of mine was kidnapped, and the members of our association had to rally round, levied ourselves, including church and family members, and raised N3 million before they released him.”

I am not particularly pleased with how the authorities and media have handled this matter, that they are hunters traveling



from Port Harcourt to Obajana and Kano State, as the case may be. Port Harcourt is a riverine area, so where were they hunting? I believe that these guys were not hunters.”

A source told *Saturday Vanguard*: “What provoked the mob to lynch the 16 persons was when villagers who claimed to have been abducted in the past came to the scene, and identified some of them as those that kidnapped them.” “Some of them also identified some items found with them as property they stole from them during their kidnap. “If they were hunters, why were they not with dried meat and any other things that would show they were hunters? They use the weapons they carry to hunt and kill their fellow human beings, not animals. “Is it the bags of rice that the vigilantes saw with them that were their proof of being hunters when we already knew they took off from their hideout in the thick forest between Onicha- Ugbo and Ubiaja.”

When Governor Monday Okpebholo visited Uromi on March 28, a day after the incident, Hausa people residing in the community and some natives staged parallel protests. Both sides almost clashed before security agents shot to disperse them, after which the governor came down from his vehicle to address them. The women's protest on social media, purporting that they barricaded Okpebholo's entourage, was an old video. The protesting women, however, said they were worried that the state government had stopped the local vigilante protecting them in Uromi, and “Now, it is operation secure yourself.”

Former governor of the state, Godwin Obaseki, had set up the Edo State Security Network (ESSN), mainly vigilante members. Many of them registered with the state government with their arms. Some were trained by the security forces at the Mobile Police Training School in Ogida Barracks, Benin City, and the government deployed them across senatorial districts, local government areas, and communities. They worked with the local vigilantes and hunters in the communities. They also mounted roadblocks at the flashpoints around the highways and communities, and at times, jointly searched the forests with government security agencies to checkmate kidnappers and their activities. When Governor Okpebholo assumed office, he appointed Friday Ibadin, a retired commissioner of police, and changed the name to Edo State Security Corps. Ibadin recalled the personnel and ordered them to submit their guns and appear for profiling, which is what he has been doing for the past three months. The governor suspended him soon after the Uromi incident. The Okpebholo government took a hard stance against kidnapping by demolishing properties linked to criminal activities, including those of suspected informants and kidnappers, and has vowed to continue this crackdown until kidnapping ends in the state.

These actions were taken based on a new anti-kidnapping law in the state. According to the new law passed by the Edo State



Edo women protest alleged attacks by herders

House of Assembly and signed by the governor, any house found to be used for kidnapping activities will be demolished to serve as a deterrent to others.

Under the new law, a landlord “must profile a person before giving out their house to him or her for rent.” The government intensified its crackdown on individuals aiding kidnappers, as the state's task force demolished several properties within the Edo Central and Edo North senatorial districts.

The measures seemed to be yielding results as collaborators were already allegedly fleeing their areas, abandoning their properties for fear of being demolished until the March 27 tragedy. A post currently trending in the social media showed the image of a young fulani girl who allegedly confessed saying 'My brother who was among the 16 persons that were burnt in a vehicle in Uromi is not a hunter, he is a terrorist who has been going from village to village killing innocent people. Before he and his fellow terrorists set out on their last mission- which ultimately led to his death- my mother warned him saying, the South East is not like the North where people are killed indiscriminately but he refused to listen. Now, the truth is out' As to whether this is true or not is yet to be verified

In a swift reaction to the recent killing of 16 northern hunters in Uromi, Edo State, a group known as Concerned Northerners has issued a searing declaration condemning the attack and questioning the continued unity of Nigeria, warning that “the North is under no obligation to continue to sustain Nigeria union.” In a statement titled “Uromi Massacre: One Killing Too Many, North Under No Obligation to Continue to Sustain Nigeria Union,” and signed by Dr. Usman Bugaje, Prof. Usman, Naja'atu Muhammad, Dalung, Gen. A.M. Jalingo, and Chief Ameh, the group condemned the recent killing. It said, “We the concerned people of Northern Nigeria on behalf of the grieving families of the 16 innocent victims massacred in Uromi Edo state, do hereby declare as follows: This cruel and senseless massacre is one too many and therefore raises a lot of pertinent issues with respect to the rights and privileges of northerners irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, gender or creed in Nigeria. It appears that northerners are not entitled to the same rights as other Nigerians especially from the south.” The group noted that the Edo incident was not an isolated case, but part of a recurring trend of violence targeting northerners across southern Nigeria. It said, “The Edo incident is not an isolated case but it is a repetition of an all-familiar pattern of



unleashing senseless, unprovoked violence, destruction of property and the killings of northerners at will in the southern part of the country. “Since the inception of the 4th republic, we have witnessed the OPC killings in the southwest, IPOB and the so-called unknown gunmen in the south-east and the recent Edo killings of 16 hunters in the south-south in addition to the isolated destruction of goods and properties, maiming and killing of innocent northerners pursuing their legitimate interests in the south. “This pattern is making it abundantly clear that northerners are persona non grata in the south, while southerners are freely welcome to pursue their interests and even permanently settle in the north in peace and security unhindered.”

The declaration also noted what it called northern restraint in the face of repeated provocation. It said, “Northerners have all along been restrained and placated by their elders against retaliation in the face of all these provocations. But, the situation has now reached a stage whereby our dignity and integrity as a people is being severely compromised and questioned by our people in the circumstances of our inability to defend them. “We can no longer appeal or restrain our people to continue remaining peaceful and accommodating due to the obvious negligence of their interests or even lives, all for the sake of a nonexistent national unity. “This is the last time that the north will be pacified on any infringement on its legitimate right to freely move and pursue its interests in any part of the country without any molestations, intimidations, harassment or violence. “Any maltreatment of northerners will henceforth be considered as deliberate and not accidental and will make us to be indifferent as in calling our law-abiding people for any restraint in whatsoever they decide to do in defense of their lives and human dignity!” While acknowledging the condolence visit of the Edo State Governor to Kano, the group demanded firm action. “While we have noted Governor Okphebo of Edo state visit to Kano state government and the families of the victims, we are demanding for a transparent investigation of the whole massacre as well as the prompt and adequate payment of compensation to the families of the victims,” it said. They also rejected the profiling of northerners as criminals, stating: “We unequivocally reject and will resist the continuing attempt to profile people of the north as terrorists, bandits and cattle rustlers in order to criminalize and systematically exterminate

them by using the instrumentality of the law as a cover.” In a direct message to the federal government, the group warned that urgent steps must be taken to reassess the basis of Nigeria's existence. “We are therefore urging the federal government to as a matter of urgency, address the national question immediately in order to determine viability and possibility of our continued existence as a single corporate entity with equal rights and privileges as citizens of Nigeria,” it said. The statement concluded with a critique of the Tinubu administration's federal restructuring agenda.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in his reaction condemned the incident. has called on security operatives in the state to go after the killers and bring them to justice, saying that a thorough investigation should be conducted. Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, in a statement said the president, “expressed shock at the dastardly act, directed police and other security agencies to conduct swift and thorough investigations and punish the suspected culprits.”

President Tinubu commiserated with the families of the affected victims and assured them that criminals would not be allowed to shed the blood of innocent Nigerians. The president noted that jungle justice has no place in Nigeria, and all Nigerians have the freedom to move freely in any part of the country. The Northern States Governors' Forum (NSGF) has also condemned the killing. In a statement issued chairman of the Forum and governor of Gombe State, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, described the attack as a gross violation of human rights, stressing that extrajudicial violence was “entirely unacceptable and must be unequivocally condemned with the utmost severity.” He said the forum expressed its deepest condolences to the families of the victims and all those affected by the incident. “We are deeply disturbed by the loss of innocent lives and the horrific manner in which these individuals were attacked. “This appalling act undermines the rule of law and the very fabric of our society. It is imperative that the relevant authorities conduct a full and thorough investigation into this senseless act. The perpetrators must be identified, arrested, and brought to justice swiftly,” he said. Governor Yahaya reiterated that all Nigerians, regardless of their region, should be able to travel

“The Edo incident is not an isolated case but it is a repetition of an all-familiar pattern of unleashing senseless, unprovoked violence, destruction of property and the killings of northerners at will in the southern part of the country. “Since the inception of the 4th republic, we have witnessed the OPC killings in the southwest, IPOB and the so-called unknown gunmen in the south-east and the recent Edo killings of 16 hunters in the south-south in addition to the isolated destruction of goods and properties, maiming and killing of innocent northerners pursuing their legitimate interests in the south. “This pattern is making it abundantly clear that northerners are persona non grata in the south, while southerners are freely welcome to pursue their interests and even permanently settle in the north in peace and security unhindered.”

freely and safely without fear of harassment, violence, or intimidation. In the same, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, while reacting to the development expressed “deep sorrow over the incident” and called for thorough investigation. “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,”. He called for a transparent and impartial investigation to ensure justice is served and prevent future occurrences of mob violence. “The protection of innocent lives must remain paramount, and I urge the authorities to act swiftly and decisively to prevent a recurrence of jungle justice. Justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done to restore public confidence in our security institutions”, he said.

Senator Rabiū Musa Kwankwaso, the presidential candidate of the New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP) in the last general elections, also condemned the mob action. In his Facebook post, he described the incident as barbaric and emphasized the right of all Nigerians to travel freely without fear of harassment or intimidation. On his part, Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Barau I Jibrin, urged security agencies to immediately go after the perpetrators. Describing the killings as barbaric, inhumane, and devilish, the Deputy Senate President appealed to the Edo State Police Command and other security agencies to take decisive action to bring the culprits to justice. Senator Barau, in a statement by his Special

Adviser on Media and Publicity, Ismail Mudashir, called for calm, assuring that the perpetrators would not go unpunished. He disclosed his intention to sponsor a motion in the Senate to ensure that those responsible for the killings are held accountable. “I have been inundated with calls by my constituents and other Nigerians on the horrific murder of innocent individuals in Edo State. I condemn in totality the barbaric killing of innocent Nigerians. “I, hereby, appeal to our security agencies to quickly swing into action to arrest these evildoers and ensure that they are punished in line with the gravity of their criminal acts.”

Also, Amnesty International, in a statement on Friday signed by the Country Director, Isa Sanusi, condemned the incident. “The Nigerian authorities must go beyond merely condemning the incident and ensure that the suspected attackers are apprehended and brought to justice in a fair trial,” the statement read. “The consistent failure of the Nigerian government to punish mob violence has created an environment in which violent mobs believe themselves entitled to take the law into their own hands,” Mr Sanusi said. Amnesty International described the lynching as part of a growing trend of vigilante groups unlawfully blocking highways and engaging in violent acts with impunity. “The horrific mob violence that happened at Uromi is part of the rising trend of vigilante groups of towns and villages along highways blocking roads and carrying out unlawful activities with impunity. “The fact that these killings have been happening for a long time, with few cases investigated and prosecuted, highlights the authorities' shocking failure to uphold and fulfill their obligation to protect people from harm and violence”, Mr Sanusi said. Also, the Arewa Youth Consultative

Forum (AYCF) in a press statement signed by Yerima Shetima, its President General, said, “The subsequent actions of an irate mob, incited by unfounded claims of kidnapping, led to a grotesque act of barbarism that is both regrettable and unacceptable. The mob's actions resulted in the loss of 16 precious lives, with some bodies tragically trapped inside the vehicle that was set ablaze. “Eyewitness accounts reveal the horrifying scene where some victims were allegedly removed on wheelbarrows and thrown into the flames, a chilling testament to the sickening reality of mob justice that has taken root in most Southern Nigerian communities”, he said. He expressed concern over the act of mob violence and called for immediate and thorough investigations into the tragedy. He calls on the Inspector-General of Police, the AIG zone 5, the DSS, the governor of Edo State and the federal government to investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing of these innocent people. We want this incident thoroughly investigated and all those found culpable punished”.

In a related development a horrifying desperate and continuous assault on communities in Benue State, armed herdsmen have again invaded and attacked another community in the state. The incidence believed to have taken place on Saturday, April 5, 2025 in Otobi community situated in the Otukpo Local Government Area of the state, forced residents to flee their homes. Otobi is the ancestral home of former President of the Senate, Senator David Mark, who is also a retired Brigadier-General in the Nigerian Army. It was

gathered that residents and villagers of the community presently under attacks, are now moving out in droves from their homes. An eye witness account said that the armed herdsmen were shooting at residents of Otobi in Otukpo LGA Benue State, adding that one of the residents was killed last night as the marauders went about the community shooting.

The source said; "They have promised to attack again tonight. Villagers are evacuating. There is panic everywhere". The insecurity situation in the State is becoming alarming in recent weeks in spite of the efforts of the Governor Hyacinth Alia-led Government to tame the situation. It was gathered that Governor Alia is leaving no stone unturned as he moves round the three senatorial districts of the State on weekly basis to study and nip in the bud flash points areas. Spokesperson of the Benue State Police command, SP Anene Sewuese Catherine, confirmed the attack and assured that more details would be provided in due course.

According to a recent report from the Punch Editorial, there is a clear precursor to the killing of the Uromi 16: the provocative bloodshed by Fulani herders across Nigeria. In February, Edo witnessed the death of 27 farmers. Initially, the state government reported 22 deaths. The casualty figure jumped to 27 by the end of the month. Governor Monday Okpebholo did not move into action then or offer to pay compensation to the victims' families. Beyond Edo, Nigerians have been constantly inundated by the rapine of Fulani herdsmen, with little respite from the state and federal governments. Farmers are under siege, unable to go to their farms in Plateau, Benue, Ekiti, Ondo, Nasarawa, Ogun, and many other states. Many farmers are paying tribute to Islamic terrorists. Fulani herdsmen, with a sense of gross entitlement, encroach on farmlands and kill farmers for preventing them from violating their livelihoods. Massacres, arson, rape, and killings have become the norm for these violent Fulani herdsmen. In 2014, the Global Terrorism Index listed Fulani herdsmen among the four most dangerous terrorist groups in the world because of their killing sprees in Nigeria. On New Year's Day in 2018, Fulani herdsmen slaughtered 72 persons in Benue State. President Muhammadu Buhari feigned ignorance about the massacre. The bloodthirsty herdsmen murdered over 40 people in Ukpabi Nimbo, Enugu State, in 2016. The Federal Government has not prosecuted any of the perpetrators. In December 2023, Fulani herdsmen continued their atrocities in Plateau State, killing over 140 residents in 62 villages during the Christmas period. The outrage simmered down shortly thereafter without the arrest or prosecution of any invader. So, the hypocrisy of the Federal Government and security forces in handling such incidents is glaring.

This selective justice raises troubling questions about the value placed on the life of a Southern Nigerian and a Northern Nigerian. When an Adamawa State farmer, Sunday Jackson, killed a Fulani intruder on his farm in self-defense in 2015, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against him, even though he should have been tried for manslaughter. Yet, when Fulani herdsmen carry out mass killings across the country, the government feigns ignorance, remains silent, or reacts tepidly. It is not only Fulani herdsmen. Islamic extremists have been responsible for numerous killings. The 2016

murder of Eunice Olawale, a Christian preacher in Abuja, attracted no outrage in Northern Nigeria and among the security forces that have now trooped to Edo State. In 2007, the pupils of Toyin Oluwasesin murdered her on the untenable accusation of abusing the Koran. None of the 16 pupils were brought to justice by the Gombe State Government or the Federal Government. In Sokoto State, the colleagues of Deborah Samuel lynched her on flimsy grounds of writing against Islam; the 2022 case has died down with no justice for the victim. The Federal Government practically ignored the brutal killing of Funke Olakunrin, the daughter of Afenifere leader, Reuben Fazoranti by Fulani herdsmen in 2019 in Ondo State. When violence is met with indifference, it emboldens criminals to act with impunity. International observers have repeatedly warned about the unchecked violence of Fulani herdsmen. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented the widespread attacks and government inaction. Some estimates suggest that Fulani militias have killed over 3,600 people since 2015, making them one of the deadliest non-state armed groups in Africa. The solution lies in a comprehensive security overhaul. The Nigerian Police Force is understaffed and ill-equipped to handle the country's security challenges. Therefore, Nigeria should decentralize policing and allow for the creation of state police to enable governors to protect their domains effectively. Security agencies must leverage intelligence to prevent attacks rather than merely reacting after the fact. Farmers must be protected, and perpetrators of violence must be prosecuted to serve as deterrents. Without true federalism, Nigeria is doomed. So far, the Western Nigeria Security Network and other vigilante groups have been instrumental in securing minimal peace, arresting criminals, and defending communities. Therefore, Okpebholo, who has threatened to ban the vigilante group in Uromi, should not do so. He should critically examine the situation and equip them to engage intruders within civic guardrails. State policing and various similitudes of local policing should not be disbanded but rather reformed and regulated. The governor must strike a balance between enforcing justice and ensuring that citizens feel safe enough to return to their farms, work, and life without fear of reprisal attacks.

The Federal Government should rise above ethnic biases and ensure that every Nigerian life is valued equally. Selective justice and political correctness have eroded trust in the state's ability to protect its people. Likewise, political, cultural, and civic leaders in the South should be vocal in the face of these atrocities and find the courage to defend their communities through robust and actionable security policies. The continued silence only perpetuates the false dominance of one group over the others.

There are fears that Fulani herdsmen may retaliate by launching further attacks on Uromi communities. The government must prevent this by deploying adequate security forces to the region. Furthermore, these security forces must carry out thorough investigations and intelligence gathering without undue high-handedness and violation of human rights. Reports stated that some police officers in Uromi have begun harassing and extorting citizens under the guise of investigating the killings. This must be swiftly addressed, and errant officers should be prosecuted. Any government that cannot provide security has failed in its primary duty.

The Federal Government must take decisive action to curb violence and ensure justice for all, irrespective of ethnicity. The culture of impunity and partiality must end. The heinous killing of 16 Fulani hunters in Uromi, Esan North LGA, Edo State, in late March is unacceptable and totally condemnable. This is reprehensible. No decent society should condone mob justice or jungle justice, also known as vigilante justice. The criminals must be identified scientifically and punished. However, the Uromi killings are a symptom of a broken security and justice system. The federal and state governments should ensure that Nigerians are treated equally irrespective of their ethnic, tribal, and religious coloration. In a fragile country, the overt deployment of double standards is destructive and leads to unintended outcomes.

The tragedy in Uromi unfolded when a mob set upon 16 Fulani hunters travelling through the community. Accused of being complicit in the serial security breaches that have rendered local farmers morose, the hunters were dragged from their vehicles, lynched, and their bodies desecrated. The gruesome incident, captured in harrowing viral videos, has ignited fierce debates on security, ethnic tensions, and the government's inability to protect citizens from rampant violence and retaliation. The Edo State Government and the security agencies must activate mechanisms to identify the culprits of the dastardly act. They must be brought before a court of competent jurisdiction and tried justly. The caveat: the security agencies should do their work with tact and not become an army of occupation terrorizing innocent members of the Uromi community. As the outrage deepens, with the police, military and other security agencies invading Uromi, Nigeria is missing one crucial point. However, the criminals who killed the Fulani men in Uromi must be brought to justice, just as those responsible for previous attacks on farmers and civilians must also face the law. Until Nigeria embraces the rule of law and discards partiality in the dispensation of justice, the cycle of violence will persist. Herders should adopt the ranching option instead of trampling roughshod on farming communities. They should leverage the ministry, making Nigeria a globally competitive livestock production country, as is the practice in the Netherlands and Brazil.

Meanwhile Edo State Governor, Senator Monday Okpebholo has disclosed that the Federal government, in collaboration with the Edo State have set up a fact-finding Committee to look into the circumstances surrounding the recent killings of some hunters in Uromi, Edo State. Governor Okpebholo stated this when he received a high-powered delegation from Kano State, led by the Deputy Governor of the State, Comrade Aminu Abdulsalam Gwarzo at the Government House in Benin City. The Governor said President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is not happy over what happened in Uromi and he is determined to ensure the State and nation are safe for everybody to live and do business. "This incident has opened our eyes and we are ready to address a lot of issues about the country and how to make life better for us all. The president is not happy with what has happened and he wants us to see to the end of this dastardly act. "The President personally wants to see to the end of this issue. I want to also let you know that the President and Edo State Government have set up a committee to find out the remote cause(s) of the incident and put a lasting solution to the issue. "This report you have

submitted will actually help us so that we do not have to worry you. A lot will be done and made open to the public to know what the committee is doing on the issue. "We are a peace-loving people in Edo State. We love those living with us in the State. Kano and Edo State have been collaborating in the area of commerce and industry," he stated. The Deputy Governor of Kano State, Comrade Aminu Abdussalam Gwarzo appreciated Governor Okpebholo for his earlier visit to Kano. He noted that the delegation was in Edo State to thank the Governor for the peaceful steps he took when he came to Kano State with regards to the Uromi incident. "The Governor of Kano State set up a Committee to screen and verify, to establish the names, numbers, next of kin and those who survived the attack.

We have been able to carry out these activities and we have come out with a report which we are here to submit to your Excellency. "You promised us that justice will be done and we believe you on this Mr. Governor. We need a transparent process on this issue. Sixteen persons lost their dear lives from five local government areas of Kano State," he explained. Present during the visit were the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Hon. Dennis Idahosa; Speaker Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Blessing Agbebaku; security heads in the State, senior government officials, both from Kano and Edo State, among others. Governor Okpebholo and the delegation from Kano also visited Uromi, where they met with members of Hausa Community in the area.

The Federal Government must take decisive action to curb violence and ensure justice for all, irrespective of ethnicity. The culture of impunity and partiality must end. The heinous killing of 16 Fulani hunters in Uromi, Esan North LGA, Edo State, in late March is unacceptable and totally condemnable. This is reprehensible. No decent society should condone mob justice or jungle justice, also known as vigilante justice. The criminals must be identified scientifically and punished. However, the Uromi killings are a symptom of a broken security and justice system. The federal and state governments should ensure that Nigerians are treated equally irrespective of their ethnic, tribal, and religious coloration. In a fragile country, the overt deployment of double standards is destructive and leads to unintended outcomes.