

Still on Uromi Massacre and Nigeria's Justice Blind spot

By [Umar Farouk Bala](#)

The brutal killing of 16 Hausa hunters in Uromi, Esan North-East Local Government Area of Edo State in late March is not only tragic—it is deeply condemnable. Such barbarity has no place in a civilized society. But this horror is more than an isolated incident. It reflects a fractured justice and security architecture that continues to fail Nigerians across ethnic and regional lines. Nigeria remains a fragile state where double standards in justice not only breed resentment but also ignite avoidable crises. The Uromi killings underscore the devastating effects of selective justice and the steady erosion of state authority. According to reports, the Hausa hunters were merely passing through Uromi when a mob attacked them, accusing them of involvement in local security breaches. They were forcefully removed from their vehicles, lynched in broad daylight, and their bodies desecrated. Gruesome videos of the incident have since gone viral, sparking nationwide outrage and stoking debates about ethnic tension, state complicity, and the incompetence of security operatives.

The Edo State Government and relevant security agencies must urgently identify and prosecute those responsible. Justice must be served through the courts—not through jungle justice. However, in pursuing accountability, law enforcement officers must exercise restraint and uphold human rights. Reports of police harassment and extortion in the aftermath of the killings are unacceptable and must be swiftly addressed. Still, the roots of this tragedy run much deeper. The killing of the Uromi 16 did not occur in a vacuum. It is part of a broader, long-standing pattern of violence—particularly associated with Fulani herders in several parts of the country. In February alone, 27 farmers were killed in Edo State. Initially, the state government acknowledged 22 deaths, only to later revise the figure upward. Yet, no decisive action followed—no arrests, no compensation, no justice. In states like Plateau, Benue, Ekiti, Ondo, Nasarawa, and Ogun, farmers live under siege. Many cannot access their farmlands due to the constant threat of violence. Massacres, arson, rape, and land invasions have become routine—while government response remains painfully inadequate. Selective justice is tearing Nigeria apart. When farmers try to defend their farmlands from armed herders, they are often met with swift, heavy-handed punishment from security agencies.



Meanwhile, the perpetrators of mass killings continue to walk free. This glaring disparity sends a dangerous message: that some lives—often Southern—are worth less than others. Yet, justice must be fair and balanced. Those behind the Uromi killings must be brought to book, just as the perpetrators of countless atrocities committed by herders and other violent actors must face the full weight of the law. Only by applying justice evenly can Nigeria hope to end this vicious cycle of violence. Ranching remains the most viable solution to the perennial herder-farmer crisis. The Federal Government must invest in modern livestock systems like those used in developed nations. Nomadic herding is no longer sustainable in today's Nigeria. When violence is met with indifference, impunity thrives. To confront this crisis, Nigeria must overhaul its entire security architecture. The national police force is overstretched and underfunded. It

is time to decentralize policing by creating state police forces. States must be empowered to protect their citizens proactively—not merely react when tragedy strikes. Governors must also collaborate with local security outfits like the Western Nigeria Security Network (Amotekun) and vigilante groups, which have proven effective in deterring crime.

Rather than banning the Uromi vigilante group, Governor Monday Okpebholo should support and reform them to operate within lawful boundaries and rebuild community trust. Security and justice must go hand in hand. Nigerians deserve to live, work, and farm without fear of attacks or reprisals.

The Federal Government must rise above ethnic or political allegiances and affirm that every Nigerian life is equal and sacred. Partial justice and political correctness have corroded public trust in the state's ability to protect its people. Southern leaders must speak out and implement bold, actionable security policies. Silence in the face of violence only deepens the sense of injustice and imbalance. With rising tension in the aftermath of the Uromi killings, there are fears of reprisals from Fulani groups. The government must act swiftly to prevent further bloodshed. Any deployments to Uromi must be accompanied by thorough investigations—not harassment or abuse of power.

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