

I only participated in killing four people — Arrested cult leader

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THE police in Lagos State have recorded a major success in the fight against the rising wave of violent killings and attacks by rival cult members in Ishashi, Shibiri, Ajangbadi and Ilogbo, all in the Ojo area of the state. More than ten people have been killed during attacks and reprisal attacks by rival cult groups. One of those arrested is Emmanuel, alias Oblo, chairman and one of the leaders of the Neo Black Movement, popularly known as the Aiye Confraternity.

Emmanuel has claimed that he was only involved in the killing of four members of rival cult groups, but his gang has been linked to the killing of more than ten people around Ajangbadi, Shibiri, Ishashi, Ilogbo and other communities.

Emmanuel, who holds the position of chairman in the cult group, and three other members of his gang – Ayoola, Ebuka and Chinedu – were arrested by operatives of the Lagos State Police Command Tactical Squad in Ajangbadi on the order of the state Commissioner of Police, CP Fatai Tijani, following the incessant cult clashes in the area. The police are also on the trail of other leaders and members of the group, including David, Emma, Paragon, Fela, Santa and AB, alias Awilo.

A policeman at the Ijanikin Tactical Squad, who pleaded anonymity, said: "Before now, there was an increase in cult-related killings around Ajangbadi, Shibiri and Ilogbo in Ojo Local Government Area, and the Commissioner of Police, Fatai Tijani, directed our O/C to go after the perpetrators of the killings and put a halt to the violent crimes."

The police source continued: "The unit swung into action with an analysis of the data generated from the scenes of the killings, as well as the patterns of the attacks. Through intelligence reports, we were able to track and trail one of the leaders of the gang, Emmanuel, to a hotel in the area, where he was arrested alongside another member of his gang, Ayoola."

The arrest of Emmanuel and Ayoola led to the arrest of two other members, Ebuka and Chinedu, who were also reportedly acting as armourers to the gang whenever Ayoola was not around or could not safeguard the arms and ammunition used by the gang. The police team recovered the gang's arms and ammunition from Ayoola and Ebuka, who had initially dug a hole and hidden them after learning of the arrest of Emmanuel and Ayoola.

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Emmanuel said: "It is true that I am a member of the Aiye cult group. My name is Emmanuel. I am into internet business. I was introduced to the Aiye Confraternity by one of my friends, Hurry, who is now late."

He narrated: "My name is Emmanuel. I am into internet fraud, but not really fraud. I met Hurry during a visit to one of my friend's places on Lagos Island about three years ago. We became close and eventually became friends. When I returned to my base, we still maintained the relationship. It was just a casual friendship. I was not a member of any cult group then.

It was after some time that he told me I should join the Aiye cult group because I was handsome."

"Hurry told me that if I wanted to make it and see improvement in my life, I should join the NBM (Aiye), but I have not seen any improvement in my life since I joined them."

Emmanuel, while reacting to the accusation that his gang killed more than ten people around Shibiri, Ajangbadi and Ilogbo, said:

"I only participated in the killing of four people. The four people that I know were members of rival cult groups in our area."

He also confessed that: "The first person we killed was Soweto, a member of the Eiye Confraternity, who also had a gun. On the day we killed him, Emma, one of our group members, came to us and said he had sighted Soweto where he was sitting.

He also said that Soweto had once attempted to kill him after chasing him with a gun. David was on a motorbike when he saw Soweto."

On how they killed Soweto, Emmanuel said: "We lured him to a place after we lied to him that we wanted to buy hard drugs. He was into the hard-drug business. Four of us — Emma, Paragon, Santa and myself — went for the operation to kill Soweto. I was the one recording the killing."

"There was another person that we killed because his group, Aro Berger, formed an alliance with the Eiye Confraternity to fight against us. The Eiye Confraternity is our main rival in that area. It was the same Emma that pointed him out before we killed him."

"The third person was an Eiye member. It was David who recognised him. His name was Bisi and he was also into the sale of hard drugs. It was David who sighted him, and our leader, AB, alias Awilo, led us to where he was sighted and we killed him," the suspect narrated.

"Emma and David are the most active members of our group. They were the ones who identified the people to be killed. I only followed them to kill four people. The only thing I did in those killings was record the killing process."

He, however, claimed that: "Whenever my group killed any rival member, I couldn't sleep in my house for days. The memory brought fear and restlessness to me. It haunted me emotionally too."

Another member of the gang, Ayoola, a fisherman, also confessed to being a member of the gang and claimed that he was only in charge of keeping arms and ammunition for the group.

He said: "I am 39 years old. I am a fisherman and I am not one of the leaders of the gang. I only helped in keeping the guns and bullets for the gang. I was forced to keep the guns and bullets with me by one of the leaders of the

gang, Emma.

I didn't follow them to any scene of killing, but I know that the group killed some Eiye members."

According to him: "I was initiated into the NBM with a promise that I would have the opportunity of relating with top and influential people around. That is why I agreed to join. When the police came to my house, they recovered eleven bullets and one revolver pistol."

Ebuka, a 31-year-old warehouse keeper at Alaba International Market, also confessed to being a member of the gang. He, however, claimed that he did not participate in any of the killings carried out by the gang. He also admitted that he helped in the safekeeping of the guns and bullets used by the group.

On how he became a member of the gang, he said: "There was a day we were drinking at a hotel when David called me to join them at another hotel to continue drinking. I knew David from my street in Ilaje, Ajangbadi. It was late, but he persuaded me to follow them and said a friend would drive us back home in his car."

"I joined them in the car and, along the line, the journey was taking too long. We drove for about an hour. I became worried and kept asking where we were going. He kept telling me to calm down. Later, he confessed to me that they were taking me somewhere to be initiated into the cult group. That was in 2022. It was Ayoola who gave me the guns to keep."

He, however, confessed that: "I know that my group had been killing people. I have never followed them to any of the killings.

There was a clash between different cult groups in Ajangbadi. Each group was killing members of rival groups."

Twenty-one-year-old Chinedu, a trader at Alaba International Market, also confessed to being a member of the gang and claimed to have been initiated into the group in Owerri, where he had gone to take care of his critically ill mother.

The Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Fatai Tijani, while speaking on the arrest of the suspects, stated that the police recovered two locally made pistols, a revolver pistol and thirteen live cartridges from them.

The police boss also stated that the police are on the trail of other members of the gang and reaffirmed the commitment of the police to rid Lagos State of criminals.

CP Tijani also commended the Tactical Squad in Ijanikin for decimating the ranks of cultism around Shibiri, Ajangbadi and Ilogbo in Lagos State.

He said: "The arrest is one of the successes recorded in our battle against cultism in the state. We are on the trail of other members of the gang."