

# Robbers kill 'Oro' festival cows

Stories by  
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THE last Oro festival in Itire, a densely populated area of Lagos metropolis may have come and gone but the memories linger. It is one festival, residents of the area would not forget in a haste. The festival brought sorrow instead of the usual joy to many families and even to the community as robbers killed all the seven cows meant for the occasion.

Aside from killing the cows, a couple was said to have been killed during the process.

Oro is a kind of cult like masquerade. The belief is that Oro cult procession can scare away evil spirits from the town during the Oro festivals the belief is that non-oro members could be killed if caught on the paths of the cultists during their nightly processions.

Daily Champions investigations revealed that trouble started last December when the 'Oro' boys went out late mid nights to seek for a 'sacrificial head' for the marking of the festival in the area.

According to our source, the boys who were armed with sharp knives and cutlasses met a couple going to hospital for antenatal reasons and attacked them.

The couple were said to have been beheaded by the boys numbering about 10.

Daily Champion learnt that the husband begged the 'killer boys' to spare their lives, noting that they were rushing to the hospital for safe delivery of the baby, a plea that the boys turned down.

However, some of the 'Oro boys' became divided in their views as some of them were opposed to the killing. Some were sympathetic to the couple and opted out in the killing process.

But as luck would have it, as they were killing the couple, a six-man armed robbery gang in military uniform came to the scene in a jeep. The robbers were said to have been shocked on the sight of the gruesome murder of the couple, particularly the pregnant woman, and the

robbers killed the cultists, allowing two to escape so as to inform others.

Our correspondent learnt that the two who fled went to their camp and reported the incident.

The 'Oro boys' further regrouped and contacted other hoodlum to attack the robbers who initially fled. However as they regrouped to launch attack on the robbers, they (robbers) appeared from another direction and confronted them, killing some of second batch of the cultists and chasing them down to the venue of the festival.

They also shot the cows, already tied for the celebration, next day.

The robbers were said to have told the people, especially women, that they were revenging the death of the couple who could not be properly identified as at Press time.

However, Daily Champion learnt that the ceremony was turned into mourning as some of the hoodlums were killed by the robbers and the meat destroyed.

But the police at Itire



•Hoodlums arrested in Lagos recently

Police Station declined comment on the issue. Also at the palace of Oba of Itire, where the cows were said to have been shot, many people wore ugly faces as a result of the incident but the people refused access to the Oba for his comments

on the issue.

However, a source at Itire Police Station said "the oro boys deserved what happened to them, noting that the boys have turned the festival to ritual killing."

The Command's spokesman, Mr. Olubode

Ojajumi said he was not aware as no such incident was reported to him but he vows to investigate the matter warning that nobody in any guise is permitted to take the life of another.

It is recalled that last two

years, a Computer Science graduate was killed at Ojota in similar circumstance.

The death of the Mbaise, Imo State graduate nearly caused ethnic conflict in the State save for intervention of deputy governor of the state Mr. Femi Pedro.

DENNIS NAKU, Yenagoa

IN what appears to be a crack down, sixteen persons, including eight boys and eight girls who are suspected armed robbers and members of Islander, a notorious secret cult in Bayelsa State have been arrested by the state Police Command.

Parading the suspects before journalists on Tuesday, the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mr. Iniobong Ibokette explained that the first category comprising eight girls, between the ages of 14 and 16 and four boy (18 to 21) belong to a secret cult called Islanders, even as they are in various secondary school across the state; while the other group made up of four boys are armed robbers, between the ages of 16 and 26.

Ibokette noted that the police, acting on a tip of, swooped on the secret cult members in an attempt to initiate new members mostly girls in a bush at Okaka, Yenagoa, the state capital, saying the cult group commit all kinds of crimes ranging from fighting and beating those who cross their path or those of their friends; just as he said two of the girls are confirmed to be pregnant.

When Daily Champion spoke with two of the girls who gave their names as Mary Sunday and Queen Koko, the duo said they were initiated into the Islanders cult in November last year through a friend, saying they had their eyes tied with white handkerchief and were made to drink an alcoholic liquor (squadron) before swearing to an oath never to expose the activities of the group, or die otherwise; just as they disclosed that a major activity of the group is to manhandle any one who crosses the path of their members.

The police spokesman further stated that the four armed robbers threaten to burn the houses of their victims with fuel if they do not comply with their demands, which is

## Police arrest teenage cultists, robbers

usually money demand through the windows of their victims, especially at night; adding that they have wreck all kinds of havoc on residents of the Yenagoa and neighbouring towns over the past nine months; pointing out that they recently raped a female victim during one of their operations.

The PRO pointed out that the robbers also use charms to lock the eyes of their victims, to prevent them from seeing and identifying some of the heinous crimes they perpetrate, but stated that luck ran out of them as some residents of the city who have fallen prey to the activities of the hoodlums facilitated their arrest as they were able to identify the robbers and had consequently helped the police in tracking them at Otioio-road, Yeni-Zuegene, at the outskirts of Yenagoa, while carrying out a similar activity.

He gave the names of the suspected robbers as Temple Ishnive (16), Theophilus Nyananyo Chapson (26), Christian Clever (25) and Julius Onoguere (26); all males and residing in different parts of the state, even as he said all sixteen suspects would be charged to court immediately.

Items found with the robbers include, local charms, cutlasses, hacksaw, hammer and goggles with which they use to disguise themselves, as well as a Nokia handset believed to have been robbed off one of their helpless victims.

The image maker therefore called on parents to look after their children and effectively monitor the company they keep, so as to prevent them from becoming some kind of menace to society; but to be useful to themselves and society.

## Logistics mar joint patrol team operation



•Some battle ready policeman on parade

TWO Weeks after the newly constituted Joint Police/Military Patrol team officially commenced operations in Lagos, the residents are yet to feel their impact as crime wave still remains on the increase.

There are records of untold robbery operations at various parts of the metropolis, which was the reason for the teams formation.

Daily Champion investigation revealed that the joint team are neither visible on the roads in the day nor seen patrolling the roads at night.

Apart from the few locations where the teams, were seen, several crime prone areas have been left unpatrolled by the team.

A visit to some of the black spots in Maryland, Iyaniba, Ajegunle, Obalende, Ikoyi etc reveals that the patrol teams are yet to guard such areas.

However, Daily

Champion exclusively gathered that lack of logistics such as patrol vans, adequate provision of arms and ammunitions, bullet proof jackets, allowance, have marred the smooth operation of the team.

A senior police officer at the State Command, Ikeja said "The same thing that has made the police not to fight crime as expected has also played its ugly role again on the team, the government did not provide the necessary logistics before they asked the men to patrol the road, would they do it on empty stomach, on leg or without arms, the Armoured Personnel Carriers are dysfunctional, let the government provide necessary tools for them to operate".

The officer who is also a member of the team said the vehicles allocated to them are rickety ones whose engines and bodies need thorough overhaul.

He added that the

policemen are human being with families, noting that those to protect the lives of the larger societies need to be armed. "You expect us to use counted arms to confront armed robbers with sophisticated weapons, that means committing suicide on our own, which we are not ready to undertake, we are ready to do the work but let the government provide enabling environment" he said.

The federal government has at the wake of serial robberies in the state and other commercial cities approved the constitution of joint Police/Military team comprising the army, navy, police, airforce etc to combat crime in Lagos.

The team were mandated to fish out the criminals from their hide out to enhance security of lives and property in the nations commercial nerve centre.

They were also directed to monitor the 40 designated black points in the State as well as patrol major roads across the metropolis.

The 400 members of the team comprising 200 policemen draw across the ranks and 200 from other agencies however commenced operation on January 2, this year.

Daily Champion exclusively reported that some men of the operation were seen along Badagry express road. But few days later, the patrol team disappeared on road alleged lack of logistics.



•Sunday Ehindero, IGP