

Man runs amok, beheads 5 women

BY EMMA OGU, Owerri

GREAT calamity has befallen the Mbaise community in Imo State where five women of the same family were beheaded at the weekend in Amukwu Onicha, Ezinihitte local government area, by a 30-year-old man, Bartholomew Uzoegbu, whose state of mental health is a subject of controversy.

He was, however, shot dead by the police after a prolonged battle to arrest him.

Though details of the incident were yet to unfold, it was gathered that Bartholomew sharpened his knife in the early morning of last Friday and entered a bush from where he unleashed attack on the women.

The report said he waylaid the victims and slaughtered them one by one. His target was said to be the heads and necks of the victims which he chopped off.

According to our source, the man's target was mainly women and all of them were not together when he attacked them but he emerged from the bush at each point and slaughtered each of them.

Sunday Champion was told that the man has been insane for some time but remained calm until that fateful day when he broke loose and became violent.

The police, however, said they were not yet convinced and could not yet conclude that the man was mentally-deranged, as investigation still continues.

State commissioner of police, Donald Iroham, who spoke to *Sunday Champion* yesterday on telephone from Abuja, said Bartholomew resisted every attempt by his men to arrest him, as a result "they engaged him".

According to him, the man after butchering the five women, wanted to kill more and the police had to engage him. Asked whether the man was insane, he said that it was yet to be established as his men were still investigating the matter.

"Right now, I am in Abuja but I have been told of the incident but I have not been fully briefed on the extent of investigation. I am told he wanted to kill more people but my men had to engage him", the police commissioner said.

Also the command's public relations officer (PPRO), Mr. Linus Nwaiwu, who also confirmed the incident to *Sunday Champion*, said Bartholomew mounted strong resistance to attempt to arrest him by the policemen and even lifted his bloody knife to attack them when they came to arrest him, compelling the team to shoot him in the leg. According to him, Bartholomew died on the way while the policemen were taking him to the hospital.

He said that he has visited the hospital where the bodies of the victims were deposited to see things for himself, adding that the command was at present carrying out serious investigation on the matter.

"We are yet to ascertain the claim that he is insane but those he killed were from the same family and all of them, women, but investigation is on", Nwaiwu

stated.

When contacted, a member of the state House of Assembly representing Ezinihitte constituency, Dr. Obioma

Ekennia, also expressed shock over the incident but explained that he was yet to be fully briefed on the matter as he was just returning from Enugu on

assignment.

Meanwhile, some members of the community have gone into hiding to escape possible arrest.



*(L-r) Prince Adeniyi Oyemade, Lagos State Commissioner for Commerce & Industry, who represented the State Governor, Dr. (Mrs.) Cecilia Ibru, Managing Director Oceanic International Bank Plc/Guest Lecturer, Mazi Sam Oluwabunwa, Outgoing Chairman, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Ikeja Branch, at the MAN Ikeja Branch's 40th Annual General Meeting (AGM)/Lecture in Lagos.

Yar'Adua should resign -Balarabe

ETAGHENE EDIRIN

FORMER governor of old Kaduna State, and national chairman of the umbrella opposition political parties, the Conference of Nigerian Political Parties (CNPP), Alhaji Balarabe Musa, has said the concept of plea bargain for corrupt ex governors is against the anti-corruption campaign.

Alhaji Musa who spoke to *Sunday Champion* in Lagos yesterday, said the plea bargain option is a conspiracy to discredit the anti-corruption campaign, and would enable corrupt public officials get away with what has been embezzled.

"Why should a thief be asked to refund part of what he has stolen, and for this reason avoid facing the law?", he queried.

He however noted that such practice has been the case since the second republic and said it needed to be stopped; "otherwise there will be no more public property."

"This has been going on particularly since the second republic, and this is the time to stop it", he said.

The former governor stated that the inability of the anti corruption establishments in the country to pursue their cases against corrupt public officials to logical conclusions does not serve as a deterrent to others, and noted that the level of investigation, detention and trial, of suspects is at a very low level.

Speaking on the electoral reform panel inaugurated by the federal government, Alhaji Musa noted that there was a need to take a critical look at the electoral laws of the country with a view to amending them but queried the moral justification of the present government to set up such a body.

According to him, "electoral reform, particularly for Nigeria is desirable, but it should not be

undertaken by a government that came about as a result of a fraudulent election.

"Such a government has no moral base to reform the electoral process".

While commending the individual credibility of the members of the panel, Alhaji Musa said he is disturbed that such credible people can allow themselves to be associated with a government that is not legitimate.

He said Nigerian leaders of thought were not critical in analyzing political situations which can involve them.

He went ahead to enumerate some of the reasons for which he thinks members of the panel decided to serve in the panel; he said some decided to join because they feel it is better to be involved in national issues at any time than to sit aside and watch, others he said, are on the panel because they feel "the Yar'Adua regime, in spite of the fraudulent way it came about, is a protector of their class interest."

"They are afraid that a reversal of the fraud can mean the end of the government, and therefore the end of their class privileges".

He noted that it was wrong for the present government to admit the last elections were flawed and still remain in office, and called for the President Yar'Adua to withdraw from the position of president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

On the crisis in the House of Representatives, Alhaji Musa said he was not surprised that such an allegation was being made against the speaker, Mrs. Patricia Etteh.

He said, "she wants to help herself to be rich like the others have been doing".

Reacting to the on-going debate as to whether the speaker of the House of Representatives should be impeached or not, Balarabe Musa explained that it would make no difference

spare Nigerians further news of corrupt public officials is to overhaul the political system in general.

Trying times a

By Michael Olanrewaju, Ilorin

THIS year's Annual Taborrah of the Evangelical Church of Yaweh came to an end at the international headquarters of the church at Ilorin in the wee hours of yesterday with the Church Primate, Prophet Theophilus Olabayo, who has been consistently and accurately predicting on Nigerian and international issues since 1978, predicting gloomy days ahead of the country.

"A messiah will rise and deliver this nation from darkness and corrupt leaders. Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is not the messiah because his election could best be described as selection.

"His clay-footedness is not the sterner stuff messiahs are made of. His government will be faced with pockets of uprisings here and there. All attempts to balance the various contending interests as they emerge will make governance suffer, as the initial flicker of hope will remain

Mark a

TIMOTHY AJIBOYE, Lokoja

SENATE President David Mark has promised that the National Assembly would soon pass the much-awaited Freedom of Information Bill for the benefit of the nation.

Senator Mark disclosed this yesterday during the commissioning of Joseph Ab Ogbeha Broadcast Center on Grace FM 95.5, in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital.

He said the National Assembly and the Minister of Information would ensure quick passage and signing of the bill into law by the