

Bloody day at Owode-Egba

Stories by LUKKEY ABAWURU

2 feared dead, 8 injured

THE people of Owode-Egba in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area, Ogun state may not forget last week, Friday, in a hurry. It was a day, many of the residents would not want to re-occur in their life times. It was a sad day for many families as blood flowed freely, following several gunshots and machete wounds inflicted on them during a "war" that pitched officials of embattled Nigeria Merchant Navy and the youths of Owode Egba.

A first time visitor to the area would believe there was war because almost all the youths were armed with dangerous weapon. Both long and short double barrel guns were on display. Cutlasses and Machetes were used as supporting weapons.

Although there are many versions as to the causes of the crisis, which paralyzed social and economic activities in the area, a reliable source said trouble started between a motor bike operator, popularly known as Okada and a member of Merchant Navy officer over Fare.

He said the disagreement that ensued between the Okada Man and the Navy allegedly spread like a Harmattan fire as all the youths in the area purportedly regrouped for a sympathy fight.

However, another source told *Daily Champion* that the crisis was what he described as an explosion of a pent-up anger, by the villagers against the officers of Merchant Navy.

However another source added that the crisis was remotely staged by unidentified officers from Nigeria Navy. (NA) who allegedly vowed to crush any person that parades him/her self as Merchant Navy, or insurgents parading themselves as Nigerian Navy. Indeed, the attack came just after few days Nigerian Navy addressed journalists in Lagos where they threatened to deal with such groups.

Daily Champion However learnt that saved for prompt intervention by the Army, from the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI, Apapa, the causality figures would have been alarming.

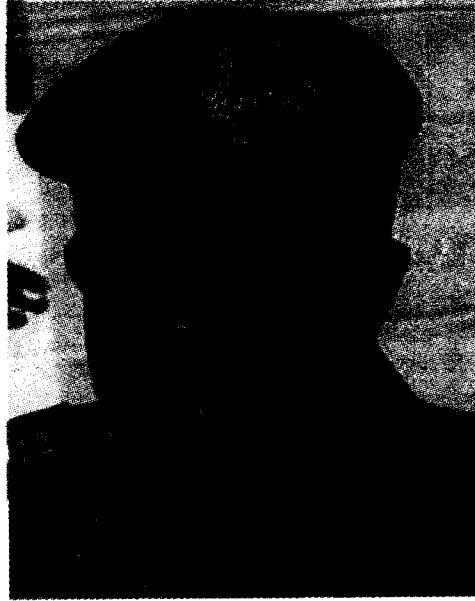
The Local police from Mowe and Ibafo were unable to contain the situation as the crisis was allegedly beyond them.

Eye witness said stomach of three members of Merchant Navy were ripped open and their intestines gushed out.

Medical experts are still battling to save their lives at hospitals in the area while others who



• Lifeless victim



• Onovo IGP



• Suspect arrested with gun

sustained severe machete cuts are recuperating at the Federal Medical Centre, at the area.

Houses and Properties worth several millions of naira were allegedly burnt.

The source noted that the youths in the area were not happy over the activities of the Merchant Navy Officials who allegedly blocked their ways of making money via oil bunkering.

The Merchant Navy specifically relocated to the area to monitor and checkmate the activities of Oil Bunkerers and pipeline Vandals an act, the youths and those that engaged in the business, consider inimical to the survival of their business.

"Actually, considering their roles, especially in checkmating vandals, Ogun state government was said to have provided them the training base at Owode Egba".

The base also serves as training depot for merchant corps and seamen.

Prior to the crisis, the Merchant corps have allegedly arrested some indigenes of the community for pipeline vandals inside the thick bushes where policemen and other security men could not reach.

Our Correspondent gathered that it was some of those whose business of bunkering was frustrated by the activities of the Merchant Navy that sponsored the thugs in the community.

According to official of Merchant Navy Corps (names withheld), the armed thugs invaded the base as early as 6am on that fateful day and attacked over 50 of them.

He said, aside from attacking them at the base, the thugs went inside the village where some of the corps are living and burnt their properties.

The source noted that some of the injured members of Merchant Navy are receiving treatment at Federal Medical Centre, FMC, Owode.

Speaking on the issue, National Leader of Merchant Navy, Commodore Benson Allen Edoma said the attack was targeted on his life. He said the hired thugs got wind that he would be visiting the place that day.

"I was supposed to be there but something pushed me out of the place. I am the target. They were hired to do what they did but God is

on my side. The thugs came with all manners of weapons in the presence of police. Before that period, Area Commander of the area (police) called me on phone and asked me to take my people away".

He however called Inspector-General of police IGP, Mr. Ogbonna Onovo to thoroughly investigate the matter. He added that his Corps arrested three persons during the acts, noting that the suspects were immediately handed over to the police.

Another source, however said the crisis was caused by one of the Merchant Navy Corps who claimed "staff" and refused to pay fare as charged by the commercial motor bike operator.

According to the Source who also pleaded anonymity, the way and manner Merchant Navy pose as officers and fail to pay money was not palatable to the commercial motor cycles. He added that the Okada riders had reported to their immediate boss but nothing was done.

He said the aggrieved motor bike operator cashed in on the alleged ploy not to pay transport fare to attack the armless corps,

Life jail: Fear grips, cocaine suspects

LAST week's jail sentences handed over to two drug trafficker in Lagos is causing jittery to drug suspects who are currently under going trials for drug related offences at various courts in the country.

Sources from National Drug Law Enforcement Agency NDLEA Lagos said the news of the life imprisonment, handed down to two drug couriers made some drug suspects to express fears that their case might end in similar fate. Most of the suspects were said to have approached their lawyers to ensure that all loop holes are filled so as to save them from bagging life jail.

The Federal high court in Lagos which handed down the judgement said the jail birds would spend about 50 years in prison.

The convicts are Nweke Chibueze Francis, 27 who was arrested with 1.416 kilogrammes of cocaine on May 14, 2009 at the Murtalla Muhammed International Airport Lagos. He was arrested during outward clearance of Royal Dutch Airline flight to Holland. The other tyrafficker, Adedeji Adesanya, 25, was nabbed at Gbaji check point by Seme Command officers with 2 kilogrammes of cannabis on July 30, 2009.

Both convicts who were cponvicted with one count charge each of unlawful exportation and importation pleaded guilty and will spend the next 50 years in detention.

Daily Champion gathered that the judgement was in line with the NDLEA Act, which stipulates 25 years or life imprisonment.

Prior to the judgment, drug offenders were only given a maximum of three years which experts alleged was one of the major causes Of drug trafficking.

Chairman of the NDLEA Ahmadu Giade in a swift reaction commended the Judge for his historic and courageous judgment.

"This is good for the nation's drug control

efforts. It will serve as a deterrent to others because since the drug trade is money spinning we must apply the full weight of the law on culprits".

It is hoped that similar sentences will help to discourage people who now see the illicit drug trade as a means of getting quick wealth.

The jail terms came even as NDLEA also seized 507.936 kilogram's of illicit drugs worth over 2.2 billion naira in nine months at the Murtalla Mohammed International Airport (MMIA) Lagos.

The breakdown of the drugs seized between

Man kills daughter for ritual

DETECTIVES from the homicide unit of State Criminal Investigation Department, SCID, parts has taken over the investigation of the murder allegation against a 44 year old Akpan Hassan who allegedly killed an eight year old girl for ritual.

Daily Champion gathered that the wife of the suspect, accused him of masterminding mysterious of the girl.

The wife, Glory also added that the man (husband) claimed that he was not the father of the child, arguing that he married the mother when she was about 7 months pregnant. Reliable source said the corpse of the deceased was found in a shrine, said to be owned by friend of the suspect.

Our correspondent further learnt that trouble stated when the mother of the deceased purposely left her matrimonial home over disagreement on the paternity of the deceased.

A neighbour to the suspect said the couple had lived like cats and dog over the paternity issue. He said while the man claimed that he was not the father, the mother insists that he was the biological father of the child.

According to another witness in their no 4

January and November shows that cocaine has the highest quantity with 172.930 kilogram's, cannabis is next with 170.554 kilogram's, psychotropic substances 121.100 kilogram's while heroin is 43.352 kilogram's.

Spokesman of the agency, Mr. Mitchel Ofoyeju said a total of 139 suspected drug traffickers were arrested within the period under review comprising of 127 males and 12 females. The month of July has the highest seizure of 135.066 kilogram's with 15 arrests while in February 19.04 kilogram's of drugs were seized

with 13 arrests.

Giade vowed to make drug trafficking unattractive and encourage the principle of diligence. "It has become pertinent that we daily increase our commitment to the anti-narcotic campaign as every seizure made translates to incapacitation of drug syndicates. If we fail to stop the drug barons, deny them of the illicit proceeds and place"

He noted that the oldest among the suspects so far arrested is a 64 year old Folayan Elizabeth, a mother of seven that ingested 1.060 kg of cocaine. She was arrested on November 17, 2009 during screening of passengers on Iberia flight.

Ofoyeju said the youngest suspect, 19 year old student, Adetola Odufuwa studying in Cyprus was nabbed on August 23, 2009 with 5.050 kg of cannabis concealed in powdered milk container in his luggage. One Ukoh John



• Giade