

# NEWSINDEPTH

## How herbalist killed son for ritual in Kogi

From Usman A. Bello, Lokoja

The people of Egbe village in Yagba West local government area of Kogi State are battling to come to terms with the reality that a father could kill his son for ritual purpose in a their community, something which has not been witnessed in their living memory.

The villagers woke up on January 1, 2013 to discover that one of them, Hosea Folorunso, allegedly killed his four months old son, Sunday Folorunso, in mysterious circumstance.

Daily Trust learnt that the herbalist allegedly killed the baby at night, dug a shallow grave in his compound and buried the corpse to conceal the crime.

Kogi State commissioner of police, Alhaji Mohammed Musa Katsina, confirmed the arrest of Folorunso, saying that he had confessed to carrying out the act in the course of investigation.

Residents of the area were not willing to speak to journalists, but one of them who identified himself as Ajayi Michael said the news came as a rude shock to them that a father could kill his child while others were in the church praying to witness the arrival of the New Year.

He said on the fateful day, many residents of the village went to Church to usher in the New Year and returned very late, saying that at about 5:30 am, they heard unusual wailing from the herbalist's home. When people

rushed to find out what was happening, he said, they were told that the herbalist's four months old baby had died. Therefore people were surprised when police came to arrest him for allegedly killing his own son.

"We have been neighbours for about 15 years, but because he is a herbalist and I am a Christian, we live miles apart. I don't really know much about him and what happened," Mr Michale said.

Besides, some other residents who refused to speak on record said that the herbalist had done it for ritual purposes.

Parading the suspect in Lokoja last Friday, the state police commissioner, Alhaji Mohammed Musa Katsina, said the suspect who is a herbalist in Egbe killed a four months old baby for rituals on December 31st, 2012 when people were at the church praying to usher in the New Year.

According to him, the suspect who hails from Egbe in Yagba West local government area of Kogi state, at about the hours of 11:55 pm on the fateful day, quietly took the baby (Sunday Folorunso) who was deep asleep with the mother outside the house and killed him in a gruesome manner.

"The suspect having killed the baby dug a shallow grave in his compound and hurriedly buried the corpse so that people would not know that he killed his own son," the commissioner said.

Katsina said the suspect was arrested by the police squad in Egbe following intelligence report and brought to the police

headquarters for interrogation. He said after investigation, the suspect confessed to have committed the acts.

Katsina added that the suspect led the police to where he buried the corpse and exhumed it. He said an autopsy was being carried out by a renowned pathologist at the Federal Medical Centre to ascertain the cause of the death, and that the suspect would be charged to court after investigations are concluded.

"I can only describe the suspect as a person of madness because the baby is an innocent and defenceless human being who can neither hurt nor provoke anybody," he said.

Katsina called on members

“As I held the baby, he turned into a cat and I immediately threw the cat on the ground and it turned to the baby again and when I went there to carry the baby, I discovered that the baby was dead.”



■ The suspect with the corpse after he had exhumed it.

of the public not to hoard information from the police as they are determined to get to the root of the gruesome mother of the baby by his father.

The suspect, Folorunso, who spoke to journalists at the police headquarters in Lokoja gave unbelievable account of how his son died.

He said: "I asked my wife to prepare food before I return to the house and she told me she was going out to buy something with the eldest son. When I came back, I met her sitting down with our daughter so I said 'you are sitting there when I asked you to go and cook for me?' So I picked up a broom and wanted to beat her.

"The woman took to her heels with the girl and I got annoyed and took the four months old baby and asked her to come and pick him since she was running away. As I held the baby, he turned into a cat and I immediately threw the cat

on the ground and it turned to the baby again and when I went there to carry the baby, I discovered that the baby was dead."

When the baby was exhumed our reporter observed that red ribbons were tied round his hand.

Meanwhile, the liaison officer 1 of Yagba West local government area, Mr Tunji Aro who spoke to journalists wondered why a father could kill his child for whatever reason.

Aro assured the community that adequate security measures were being put in place to forestall a re-occurrence of such crime and urged them to be law abiding and always pursue legitimate means of livelihood.

He called on the people to be prayerful and always report to the police any unpleasant behaviour, saying that if useful information had not been given to the police, the herbalist could not have been arrested for such action.



■ Kogi State Commissioner of Police Muhammed Katsina.



■ Hosea Folorunso exhuming the corpse.