

We were paid N.2m to disrupt last elections – Suspects

From Eugene Agha, Lagos

Three suspected cultists arrested recently by the police have disclosed how they were hired by politicians to disrupt the last general elections in Lagos State.

The suspects; Dipo Adebayo, Olumide Kofi and Alade Ogbulu, alleged that they were paid N200,000 by members of a political party (name withheld) to create confusion at campaign venues of their opponents within Lagos Island.

Two of the suspects who were also alleged to be masterminds of several cult wars in Ajah, Idumota,

Onikan and other areas in the state where loss of lives were recorded during the last electioneering, Kofi and Ogbulu, were discovered to be citizens of Ghana and Benin Republic respectively.

The suspects confessed to being members of cult groups that are renowned for terrorising the residents of Lagos Island.

Briefing newsmen on their arrest, Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Kayode Aderanti stated that he ordered a comprehensive raid of all dark spots in the state, owing to the incessant skirmishes on the Lagos Island and its environs, which led to the arrest of

the suspects.

Items recovered from the suspects during their arrest included a pump action rifle with serial number P. 960667, one single barrel rifle, four rounds of cartridges, two cutlasses and one battle axe.

In his confessional statement, Kofi said: "I belong to the Abija Group. About six persons have been killed in separate clashes. I am a political thug to a political party. On the day the party held its rally at the Tafawa Balewa Square, my group shot dead one person. After the rally, some of our boys shot dead Otun who brought his

boys to engage us in a fight. It was one Layi, our gang member, who shot him."

"The following day, the rival political party thugs came to Enuwa area to engage us in a reprisal attack; we also killed four of their members. It was the rival party's thugs that launched the first attack."

"We are loyal to Abija; he was our leader and it was him who brought all these guns (pointing to the recovered weapons) for us. Abija had so many boys—too many to count. I was a meat pie seller before I joined the group in Lagos Island."

On his part, Adebayo, who hails from Irewole Local Government Area of Osun State, denied that his gang killed five persons after the rally.

He said, "It was only Ashake that we actually killed during the political parties' clashes. The others died during a fight with our gang. Nobody shot at them. We also lost some of our members during the clashes."

"I am a member of Black Axe confraternity and I dropped out of the university due to lack of finance. We were usually given N200,000 after each rally, which we shared among ourselves."