

# One killed, many injured as hoodlums ambush SARS operatives

By Eugene Agha, Lagos | Published Date Jul 16, 2019 5:50 AM

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One person died while many others were injured at Ilupeju, Lagos, when armed hoodlums yesterday morning ambushed a police patrol van conveying some operatives of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).

The deceased was identified simply as Francis.

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Our correspondent learnt that the SARS men were being led to the Ilupeju area by an armed robbery suspect, Ikechukwu Monye, 39, to recover some

arms belonging to his robbery gang when his colleagues, who were believed to have had prior knowledge of the visit, laid an ambush for them.

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“They opened fire as soon as they sighted the police patrol van,” a policeman, who claimed to be among those who went for the operation but pleaded anonymity, confided.

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Some witnesses said that Francis was sweeping the front of his shop located along Ajisegiri Street, Ilupeju, when he was hit by a bullet and died on the spot.

The shooting sparked off protest in the area as some youths took to the streets to demand justice.

A trader on Ajisegiri Street, James Okere, said that the deceased was killed by some SARS operatives who drove into the street.

“Before we knew what was happening, they had started shooting sporadically. Everybody scampered to safety for fear of being caught in the crossfire. It was when the shooting stopped that some of us got to know of the killing. It took some time before policemen from Ilupeju Division came for the body of the deceased,” he added.

The Lagos State Police Public Relations Officer, Bala Elkana, however, dismissed the allegation, saying that the deceased was killed by a stray bullet fired by some hoodlums during an encounter between them and SARS operatives.

He added that the hoodlums had ambushed the SARS men who were in the area with an armed robbery suspect to conduct an investigation.

“On July 25, 2019, at about 7.30am, SARS operatives led by Inspector Mohammed Akeem, while being led by a notorious gang leader, Ikechukwu Monye, 39, to where their arms are kept, were ambushed by members of the gang along Ajisegiri Street, Ilupeju.

“The assailants shot sporadically and in the process killed a middle-aged man who was passing by. Reinforcement was quickly drafted to the scene. The whole area is cordoned off with a view of apprehending members of the gang and bringing them to justice.

“Ilupeju has experienced violent attacks between members of Aiye and Eiye confraternities, who also engage in heinous crimes like armed robbery, rape and murder. The gang in question here is responsible for series of robberies in Ilupeju and its environs. Its members have been on the wanted list of the police for the murder of six persons during three robbery operations that they carried out.

“The Command condemns in totality the senseless killings of innocent persons by those criminal elements, and will also not tolerate attacks on its personnel

by them. It has vowed to bring an end to the activities of this deadly gang,” Elkana added.

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