

Ritual killers on prowl in S'West

The spate of ritual killings in the country for money rituals has assumed an alarming proportion in the South West. The culprits are mostly youths, including teenagers.

Christiana T. Alabi & Eugene Agha, Lagos; Jeremiah Oke, Ibadan; Hameed Oyejobade, Osogbo; Peter Moses, Abeokuta & Bola Ojuola, Akure

- 'Get-rich-quick syndrome behind endless murder cases'
- Stakeholders blame TikTok, Instagram, Facebook posts
- Poor upbringing, unemployment responsible – Experts
- No deity used human parts for rituals- Traditionalists
- Don't blame filmmakers - TAMPAN President

Dozens of teenagers, youths and the elderly have been arrested over the murder of innocent people for ritual purposes.

Many of them were found with body parts and the in the course of interrogation by law enforcement agents, many of them admitted that some traditional worshippers or ritualists asked them to kill, or to produce body parts of humans to pave the way for them to become rich.

Others said they got the "prescription" through social media.

Gory pictures of human skulls, decapitated heads and dismembered bodies that trail their bizarre activities are always on display on social media.

Residents of the South West states including Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ondo and Ekiti now live in trepidation with experts blaming poor upbringing and failure of diligent prosecution as motivators for the rising cases of ritual killings.

Girl's head decapitated, burnt in Ogun

Three teenagers and 20-year-old Mustekem Balogun were arrested recently for beheading and burning the head of Sofiat Kehinde for money rituals. Our correspondent gathered that the chilling incident took place in the Oke Aregba community in Abeokuta, the Ogun State capital.

A trio of the culprits, 17-year-old Wariz Oladeinde, 19-year-old Abdulgafar Lukman and 18-year-old Soliu Majekodunmi, were said to be boyfriends of the deceased girl.

While being paraded by the police at the state headquarters, Elewran, Abeokuta, the boys admitted that they saw on Facebook the guidelines on how to perform rituals and get rich.

Majekodunmi stated that when the victim visited him on Friday, he strangled her, then beheaded her with the support of the other boys.

He also explained that earlier, he and the accomplices had contributed some money and purchased other ingredients needed for the ritual and waited in anticipation for the d-day when they would pounce on the lady, who was introduced to him in December last year.

Human heads, hands found on suspects in Ondo

Recently, 30-year-old Timothy Odeniyi was arrested with fresh human parts in Ondo town by men of the State Security Network Agency, codenamed Amotekun.

Olaniyi, who claimed to be a trailer driver with a popular brewery company where he resigned in 2020, admitted that he was caught with a bag containing two severed human hands and two human legs at the Sabo area of the city.

He also confessed that he was promised N30 million after delivering the human parts in Lagos State.

Weeks earlier, policemen in the state also arrested a self-acclaimed cleric identified as Alfi Tunde Olaiyiwola with a fresh human head.

Olaiyiwola was arrested at the Ajagbale area of Ondo Town with a bag containing a fresh human head.

The suspect, according to the police, confessed that he wanted to use the head to 'better his life'.

11 in possession of human parts arrested in Lagos



■ The teenagers with the roasted head of their victim in Ogun State

Eleven suspects were also arrested by the Lagos State Police Command between September and December 2021, for being in possession of human parts.

Under graduate's head cut off, roasted in Osun

A few years ago, a 400-level student of Osun State University, Oluwafemi Shonibare, was abducted, killed, butchered and allegedly used for money ritual in Osogbo, the Osun State capital.

The victim was said to have been killed and used for money rituals by some teenagers.

After killing him, they cut off his head and roasted it as part of the money-making rituals.

The culprits, who were arrested by security agents, confessed that they hit the deceased with a pestle on the head and later butchered him. They also admitted that they roasted the head, but luck ran out on them when they were apprehended by the police.

Rofiat Adebisi, another 400-level student of the same university was also killed for money ritual at Iragbiji area of the state.

The deceased had boarded a car while returning home from school. The driver was said to have hypnotised her after which her lifeless body was found along Egbeda Road.

Justice Jide Falola of the Osun State High Court sentenced the murderers to death by hanging.

'Don't blame filmmakers'

Speaking on their alleged role in motivating youths to go into ritual killings, the President of Theatre Arts and Motion Pictures Practitioners Association of Nigeria (TAMPAN), Bolaji Amusan, said bad parenting and government should be blamed for increasing money rituals among the youths.

He pointed out that for every money ritual in a Nollywood movie, there is always a consequence that serves as a deterrent for viewers.

Amusan said: "Those who are pointing accusing fingers at us, that's their own thinking. I have never seen a movie that anybody will do rituals without consequences. And our movies are

being categorised 15, 18, PG. If it is categorised as 15, it means if you are not older than 15 you can't watch it. If it is 18, it means if you are not older than 18, you can't watch it.

"Can you say it is because American actors are shooting in their movie that's why crimes are rampant in America? No. It is the society, parents and government. They have neglected a lot of things. Some parents are not even taking care of their children. A 17-year-old will come home with a car and the parents will not ask him where he gets the car from.

"You watch a movie halfway and you are telling us it is those people that are celebrating crimes. Why don't you watch the movie to the end to know what happened to the person who played the role?" he asked.

He, however, promised that movies makers and actors would continue to play their roles as a mirror of the society in propagating morals and values in the country.

"This is an era of social media and definitely we have to play our roles as the mirror of the society to correct what's wrong and live a very worthy life worthy of emulation," Amusan said.

No deity used human parts for rituals- Traditionalists

Piqued by the appalling trend, the Traditional Religion Worshippers Association has called on the government to clamp down on self-acclaimed ritualists that claim to have the power to enrich others through human parts. It argued that no Yoruba deity had been recorded to have used human parts for wealth rituals.

The Oyo State Branch of the body said the current trend in Nigeria and Africa, where youngsters flaunt cash, jewellery, posh automobiles and other material wealth on the social media, thereby inviting unsuspecting members of the public to subscribe to the same venture, was horrible and should be sanctioned by relevant authorities.

The Chairman of the Ibadan Branch of the Traditional Worshippers Association of Nigeria,

Surveyor Adefabi Dasola, and the Secretary, Mogaji Fakayode Fatunde, noted that the progenitors of Ifa oracle never claimed to have used human parts to seek prosperity.

The traditionalists added that Ifa adherents would rather call on 'Eledumare' to bless whoever that sought wealth through them and whenever appeasements were to be done, sugarcane, salt, banana and other relevant items were used.

"The world no longer has respect for our traditions. They think we are all guilty of human rituals. No history of Africa or Yoruba gave credence to wealth through the use of humans for rituals," they said.

The group, which also blamed the government for the high rate of unemployment among the youths, also called on religious leaders to reorient Nigerians on the dignity of labour and hard work.

"We should give much of the blame on the doorsteps of our leaders in the society. Their display of wealth in the face of widespread poverty, where the majority of youths are jobless and what belongs to the people are kept in the hands of a few, are the major causes of the problem.

"Today, TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms are being used by these people to escalate the rate of ritual killings in our society as our young ones now believe that it is easier to access wealth through rituals with human parts than doing a noble job. We call on the government to quickly establish an understanding with owners of social media platforms to either ban those displaying horrible content on the platforms or make upload of such content impossible," they said.

The traditionalists also called on Nigerians to step up campaigns against ritual killings which, they said, had become a recurrent decimal in the country.

They also called on regulatory bodies to censor Nigerian movies, especially Nollywood that have contents that project the use of human beings for money rituals.

They stressed that the projections, which are

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