

FEATURE

Mumini AbdulKareem, Ilorin

Residents of Kaiama, a local government area in the northern part of the state, are yet to get over the shock of the news about Adebowale, their once beloved harmless medical doctor who reportedly turned to be their greatest enemy.

Speaking about the supposed gentle personality of the doctor, one of the residents, Mohammed Ndaji said, "It is difficult to believe that he can hurt a fly. He hardly talks; and even when he does, he does so softly. When we started noticing some things about him, it was initially difficult to confront or accuse him."

The police in Edo State had arrested the 36-year-old self-confessed killer after the murder of one Emmanuel Yobo Agbovinuere, his regular driver whenever he was in town.

Agbovinuere had sought help for a protracted leg pain, but he got a lethal injection from his 'friend,' who stole his car in the process.

Dr Adebowale was, however, traced to Osun State with the aid of a tracking device in the vehicle. The police also recovered another vehicle he sold to a car dealer.

While the Edo scenario was playing out, the new commissioner of police in Kwara State, Paul Odama, revisited some of the petitions against the doctor, which had hitherto allegedly met a brick wall. Odama was particularly touched by the case of a missing young woman in Kaiama, Nafisat Halidu.

Following Adebowale's confession in Edo and some unresolved murder cases in Kaiama, Odama ordered for a search of his office. That adventure led to the discovery of a shallow grave where a decomposing carcass of a female was buried and another one inside a trash can, which was identified as the missing Nafisat by her husband who was part of the search team. Other items recovered were two mobile phones, female handbags, wig, veil and pants.

The public relations officer of the Kwara State police command, Ajayi Okasanmi, said the suspect confessed to killing two other boys, according to a briefing by the investigating police officer in Edo.

The doctor, who hails from Offa Local Government Area in the southern part of Kwara, was said to have endeared himself among the Borgus, where he saw as home and decided to stay in the rural community, unlike his predecessors who all relocated.

Daily Trust Saturday gathered that Adebowale was so loved by the people that he was allowed to marry a princess of the community, who has now been relocated with his child.

One of the residents of the community, Mallam Isa Saeedu, said that after this incident, it would be very difficult for the people to trust any doctor or medical personnel again.

"We developed love for him for accepting to be our community doctor. He even rejected his transfer. He got a free land and



■ Shallow grave where the woman was buried. Inset: Dr Adebowale



■ Entrance to Dr Adebowale's residence in Kaiama

How escapades of Kwara medical doctor shocked residents

Dr Abbas Adio Adeyemi Adebowale's escapades shocked the medical profession and left residents of Kaiama Local Government Area in Kwara State, where he served as the chief medical director of the 30-year-old general hospital shattered. *Daily Trust Saturday* writes on the activities of the doctor.

has completed his house. He is building his private hospital in another land," he said.

It was also gathered that the doctor engaged in philanthropic activities, donating cash and blood to assist needy patients. Clerics and residents sang his praises during Jummat services, and he was bestowed with awards. His case got to a point that criticisms against him would attract the wrath of indigenes.

Daily Trust Saturday further gathered that despite being the Chief Medical Director of Kaiama General Hospital, Dr Adebowale was also allegedly involved in smuggling activities as attested to by many residents. "He used the hospital's ambulance to smuggle rice and fuel. He was once arrested for an alleged kidnapping along the Baruten border axis. The intervention of some prominent figures saved him," Mr Yinusa AbdulMalik, another resident said.

Following calls for a thorough investigation into the matter to expose his accomplices (if any), a member of staff in the hospital (name withheld) said the police should also investigate him for organ harvesting, alleging, "Dr Abbas sometimes does operations without other doctors or nurses present."

It was further gathered that there was a time two dead bodies were found in the area where the doctor was building his hospital, and residents are already attributing their deaths to him. Also, a wooden coffin with a pair of trousers inside it was discovered in his new house.

A relative of Nafisat's husband, Alhaji AbdulGaniyu, said the death of a former staff of the hospital raised a lot of dust in Kaiama and assumed a political dimension. "People were insinuating that her husband and his brother, who is

a popular politician, used her for money ritual," he said.

Similarly, Mr AbdulKareem Saheed, another resident who also witnessed the search in his office, said Adebowale's action had shattered many families, adding that there are strong indications that many past murders and missing persons in the community may have his connection.

"Initially, we thought that bandits and kidnappers were behind some of the incidents. There was a Fulani boy who memorised the Quran that went for treatment in the hospital. He was last seen in Adebowale's car by a staff before he was declared missing. There are also about five other cases of pregnant women who gave birth at the facility, allegedly under his supervision, but died. Some of these incidents have led to the suspicion that he is into organ harvesting.

"His wife's family and several others in the community have decided to do a proper medical checkup for all the women that passed through him," he said.

Many residents of Kaiama believe that the embattled medical doctor may also be involved in ritual activities.

One of the residents said, "We are yet to find out whether his action was prompted by cultism or love for money."

Community at the mercy of self medication/quacks

Speaking on the matter during a plenary at the Kwara State House of Assembly, a lawmaker from the community, Halidu Danbaba, said Adebowale's action would have a psychological effect on residents, and may force them to engage in self medication or patronise quacks.

He said, "It is unfortunate that the suspect, who was trained to save lives, is rather killing. It is difficult to believe that the doctor can

perpetrate such act. He was loved and accepted despite not being an indigene. His case will have a psychological effect on the people and may force them to engage in self medication and patronise quacks.

"But it is difficult for him to have carried out the murders and cover-ups alone. The police have a lot of work to do in apprehending his accomplices."

The lawmaker's colleague, Olumide Awolola, said that with the latest development, there was the need to continue to assure residents of best services at government-owned hospitals so as not to create fear in them.

NMA, colleagues react

Some of Adebowale's colleagues who graduated with him from the University of Ilorin in 2013 described the turn of events as shocking and unbelievable.

One of them who simply identified himself as Dr Olatunji said, "His exploit as a qualified medical doctor remains a misery to many of his colleagues. He had none of the traits he has manifested. As the head of the hospital, his salary is not low to the point of driving him to such evil. There are also opportunities for additional cash through surgeries. However, we observed that before this news broke, he just cut off from many of us and refused to answer calls."

When contacted, the chairman of the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Kwara State chapter, Dr Ola Ahmed said, "No comment on the issue for now."

Mr AbdulKareem Saheed further said, "It is strange that the commissioner for health and officials of the ministry have not visited Kaiama to address the people in order to regain their trust. Some people have the apprehension that Adebowale is going to escape prosecution. They need to assure the

community that such is not going to happen. Another important aspect is the strong belief that he has accomplices because he cannot commit such grave atrocities alone. The police must fish them out."

Meanwhile, the Kwara State Government has placed Dr Adebowale on indefinite suspension. The commissioner for health, Dr Raji Razaq said, "His salary has been stopped pending the conclusion of investigation into his activities by the security agencies. That will determine our next line of action. He is alleged to have committed a criminal offence. We will wait until the investigation is concluded."

The Kwara State House of Assembly has also called for a thorough investigation into the matter, as well as the need to arrest his collaborators. Reading the resolutions of the House, Speaker Yakubu Salihu Danladi said there was the need to do something that would serve as a deterrent to others. He urged the people not to be discouraged by the incident, assuring them of quality services at the hospital.

Efforts to get the Kwara State attorney-general and commissioner for justice to react to the development were not successful as he failed to pick several calls to him. But a very senior official in the ministry told *Daily Trust Saturday* that the case may pitch the Edo State police command with that of Kwara.

"The case is still with them in Benin, and it is not likely that they will release him. They have a fresh case, which appears to be stronger against him for now. The major problem he has with us is a community issue for now. He can plead not guilty in court on those discoveries, don't be surprised," the senior official added.