



Woman of courage dies in the bush

• Monarch, villagers accuse local 'terror' of the murder

NOT many women are bold enough to confront men even when they know that the men had trampled upon their right.

Any so, it was a spectacle recently when a popular cocoa and kola nut farmer in the sleepy town of Ijare in Ifedore Local Council, about eight kilometres from Akure, the capital of Ondo State, Mrs. Dorcas Alatisé, confronted a local oppressor in the area.

But her gallantry, instead of emboldening other women to be able to take up the gauntlet in the future, had turned out a frightening prospect because Alatisé lost her life allegedly to the man who is known as a local terror.

The journey of the 69 year-old businesswoman to her untimely death started sometime in February 2006. She had courageously confronted a 32 year-old timber contractor, who had been allegedly going to her cocoa-farm at Igboiti to fell timber, which were said to have been destroying many cocoa trees in Dorcas's farm.

But Dorcas was attacked and slaughtered on September 28. Her body was found on September 30. It took the police of the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Akure, a week to arrest the suspect who was alleged to be behind the incident as the police in Ijare Town could not apprehend the tough man.

The man is feared in the town. He is said to be a source of worry to many farmers in the area because of his activities, which have caused some residents to sue him to court many times in the past.

The *Guardian* gathered that the suspect, who is now cooling his heels at the state CID, had allegedly been going to the deceased's farm regularly to fell timber. He had refused to pay compensation for crops destroyed.

The forest guards reportedly informed the dead woman who damaged the cocoa crops. The guards told Dorcas that the man had approached them several times for the stamping of the trees felled in her farm.

The deceased thereafter reported the matter to the police at Ijare. She demanded for compensation from the suspect. She also wanted the police to invite and caution him to keep clear of her farm.

But on getting to his house, the suspect was enraged and questioned the woman's audacity to bring policemen to his house. It resulted into an argument between him and the woman. It was gathered that the woman was thoroughly beaten in the presence of the police.

It was further learnt that the Olujare of Ijare, Oba Ademigbe Oluwagbemigun, organised for the woman to be taken to the hospital when the matter was reported to him. He even paid the hospital bill.

The police later arrested the man and charged him to court at Igbarake. He was remanded in prison custody at Olokuta, Akure.

On his way to the prison, he reportedly told the family of the deceased, who was then hospitalised after the beating, that on return from prison, he would not like to meet her again in the town.

True to his words, few days after his release from prison custody, the suspected assailant was said to have traced the woman to her banana plantation, which was acquired by her son to build a house, and allegedly hacked her to death in cold blood. It was learnt that the body of Dorcas was found three days after she was declared missing.

Oba Oluwagbemigun who spoke with *The Guardian* on the incident at his palace said everybody in the town was fed up with the man.

"Before I assumed the throne of my fore fathers, I was told about the robbery activities of the young man who had become a terror to us in the town. I can say that he is a thorn in our flesh", he said.

He added: "After taking the staff of office, I called him and I pleaded with him to stop all the nonsense he engages in. I also called his mother and told her to warn her child to desist from the nefarious activities he has been known for in the town and they all agreed with me and they promised to turn a new leaf. They also promised to ensure peace in the town", the traditional ruler said.

"The suspect rather than change for the better, he was said to be involved in new robbery cases and he even confessed that he has a gang that works for him when I called him again", he said.

According to the monarch, the suspect had also been allegedly involved in a case where two farmers were cut with machetes. When the man came back from the farm, he told the relatives of the two victims to go take the bodies of their fathers at the farm. Unfortunately, the victims survived the attack and they are living witnesses today.

"We have been living in fear of being attacked by the young man and whenever he is in the town, my people are in trouble because the police at Ijare town are afraid of him too. He is a terror in the town and he is always going round the town looking for whom he will devour", he said.

The royal father said the man "has confessed to me several times that life is empty to him. Then I asked myself, what does it take for someone to say that his life is empty, what kind of person would actually say that? And I actually looked around him, nobody could be referred to as his relative(s). He has been abandoned because of his bad character. He has no farm of his own, rather he lives on other people's sweat.

"I have advised him several times that I believe the worst experience or condition can still be converted into something positive. Rather to take to the advice, he has



• Dorcas, lying in the banana plantation after being murdered

From Julius Alabi, Akure

been involved in one case or another", the monarch added.

Speaking on the deceased, he said if the suspect is interrogated very well, he will confess and that he is 100 per cent sure that he has a hand in the death of the woman.

"I paid for the hospital bill when he initially beat the woman into a state of coma and I was informed when he threatened the life of the woman shortly before he came back from prison. Enough is enough; we don't want him in our town again. Since he was arrested on October 3, peace has returned to the town and the incessant robbery cases we used to have in the town have stopped".

A relative of Dorcas, Mrs. Victoria Oguntuase, who also spoke with *The Guardian*, said the woman left home on that faithful day to work on her banana plantation where she was murdered.

According to her, the suspect truly did what he said when he visited her residence at No. 4, Ilemo Street, Ijare that she, Victoria, should tell Dorcas to pack her belongings and leave the town or else she would meet her Waterloo.

"I can say categorically that he was behind the death of my sister and he should be prosecuted according to the law of the land. It is a pity that the man has become a terror in the town and truly he carried out his threat and I know that this would be his last killing in the town", she said.

But the mother of the suspect, Omobomiwe, stoutly defended her son's character saying that he is a humble

man who could not hurt a fly how much less killing a human being.

According to her, her son has since left timber felling for palm wine tapping as known to everyone in the town.

"Also, since the day the deceased fought with my son, which coincided with my husband's burial, Dorcas has not allowed me and my son to move freely in the town. She has been raining abuses and courses on us and I have sent people to beg her, to no avail.

"The situation degenerated to the extent that we can no longer move freely again in the town because every eye is on us. It seems we are under bondage despite the fact that my son paid for her hospital bill amounting to N3,500 and not the traditional ruler as widely speculated.

"My son can not hurt a chicken, what then would push him to slaughter a human being? People of the town are only lying against him, just to nail him to the cross", she said.

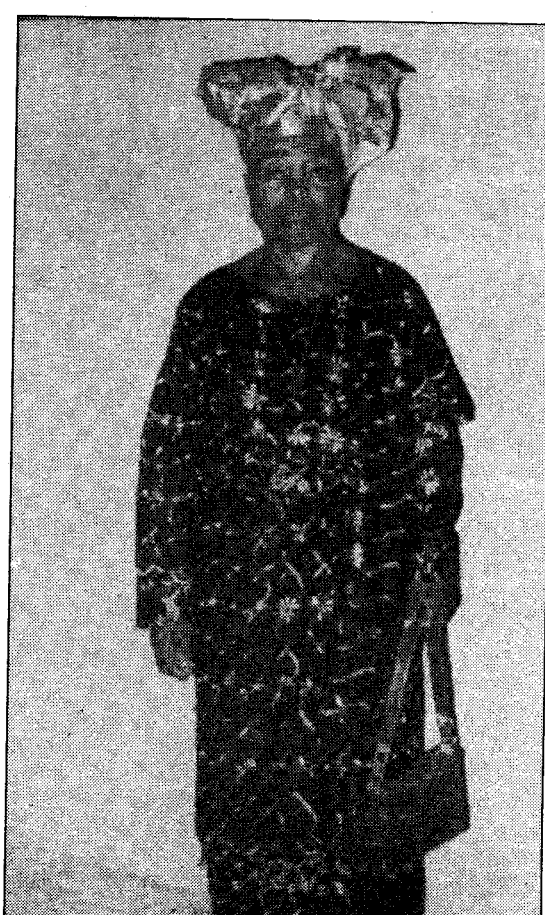
Omobomiwe added that her son was coming from his palm wine farm when he was arrested by policemen from Akure alleging that he was responsible for the killing of the deceased and since then nobody in the town has come out to assist her in effecting his release.

She pleaded with the police in the state to release her son because he is innocent of the murder.

Speaking with the state Police Public Relations' Officer on the matter, Mr. Adeniran Aremu, confirmed the arrest, adding that the police were still interrogating the suspect and that he would be prosecuted soon.



• During hospitalisation after being beaten by the assailant



• Dorcas while she was alive

Briefs

Youths hold summit

YOUTHS in transit organisation Nigeria, a non-governmental, non-profit organisation will tomorrow hold its youth leadership summit for young people aged between 13 and 20 in secondary schools across Mushin Local Council at Rafiu Ishola Solomon Hall, by Vono Product Plc, Mushin, Lagos.

With the theme: "Be involved and do something," it will focus on how young people can be agents of change their communities need.

Church holds convention

THE Oasis of Christ Covenant Ministries International, No. 14, Bashiru Sekoni Street, N.N.P.C Ejigbo, Lagos will hold its convention from Sunday, November 12 to Sunday, November 19 at 6.00 p.m. from Monday to Sunday and 9.00a.m. on Sunday. Rev. and Pastor Mrs. Emeka Jidennwa and other ministers including Rev. Uba Joshua Nnamdi, Pastor Tina Adams, Rev. Steve Dagana and Rev. O.U. Essien will minister.

Memorial service for Ajumogobia

THE tenth anniversary memorial service for Mr. Feniobu Iroroye Ajumogobia holds today at the Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos at 4.00p.m.

Ajumogobia, acc educationist, first African vice-principal of King's College, Lagos, founder of Science Teachers' Association of Nigeria (STAN), UNESCO diplomat and a member of Cathedral Church Christ since the 1940's, is survived by five children and nine grandchildren.

Abeke Abolade dies at 97

THE final burial of Madam Morinatu Abeke Abolade (a.k.a Iya Agege) who died recently at the age of 97 years will begin on November 18 at Owu African Church Central School Field, Ita Iyalode, Abeokuta, Ogun State from 2.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.



• Abolade

Olugbenle, 79, for burial

THE death has occurred of Prince Abiola Adejumo Olugbenle, who died at the age of 79.

Commendation service holds this Thursday at The First African Church Mission, St. Peter's Parish, Railway Line, Odi-Olowo, Mushin at 11.00a.m. and a Christian wake at Ilaro, Ogun State at 5.00p.m.

Funeral service holds on Friday at Christ Church Cathedral, Ilaro at 11.00a.m. followed by interment.

He is survived by wife and children among whom are Omoba Taiwo and Kehinde Olugbenle.



• Olugbenle