

Protest as Amotekun operative kills 23-year-old in Ibadan

By Muyiwa Adeyemi (Head, South West Bureau) and Rotimi Agboluaje, Ibadan
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Amotekun

- Protest as Amotekun operative kills 23-year-old in Ibadan
- Security agency dismisses operative, gets in touch with the family

Commercial activities were halted for hours in Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State capital yesterday morning as some residents staged a peaceful protest against an operative of the Oyo State Security Network Agency, codenamed Amotekun, who killed a 23-year-old man, Tosin Thomas.

Commuters had hectic time passing through the commercial centre of the town as protesters blocked roads and condemned what they called unprofessional handling of arms by Amotekun operatives.

Thomas, it was gathered, was said to have engaged the Amotekun operative in a hot argument and in anger, the local security guard pulled the trigger and shot Tosin. Some residents who tried to prevail on the operative were threatened.

Thomas was pronounced dead at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan, where he was rushed to. No fewer than five persons have been killed as a result of clashes between Amotekun operatives and hoodlums in the state lately. Late last year, a police officer was shot by an Amotekun operative, though in error, as the police confirmed. Few days after, a clash occurred between Amotekun operatives and some youths in Tapa town, leaving two persons dead. Also, three people were reportedly killed during a clash between operatives of Amotekun and some hoodlums in Aiyete in Ibarapa North Local Government Area of the state last week.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr Olugbenga Fadeyi, confirmed the killing yesterday. He said: "A report was received from one Alamu, 'm' at Mokola Police Station at 9:10a.m. alleging that one Tosin Thomas, 'm', aged 21 of Ode Olo area of Ibadan, while going home at Total Filling station, Mokola, on Wednesday around 11:30p.m., was hit by bullets from a gun fired by Amotekun operatives.

"He was rushed to University College Hospital (UCH) for immediate medical attention and thereafter was confirmed dead by medical personnel. Investigation has commenced into the matter and further development shall unfold."

However, a statement by the commandant of the security outfit, Col. Olayanju Olayinka (rtd), explained that "around 10:00p.m. on Wednesday, operatives of Amotekun, led by Team Leader George Idowu, got an alert of a purported armed robbery operation at Total Filling Station, Mokola.

"Following the distress call, the team leader and his team of seven members, stormed



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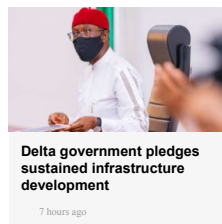
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the scene. On arrival, it turned out that it was not an armed robbery operation, though a crowd had gathered.

“The team leader, sensing no immediate danger to anyone at the scene, immediately proceeded to speak with the station manager. While he was with the manager, he heard a gunshot.

“As it turned out, one of his team members, by the name Afolabi Kazeem, who felt sufficiently threatened by the crowd, which included some hoodlums armed with cutlasses and other dangerous weapons, opened fire to supposedly scare away the crowd. Unfortunately, his shot hit one Mr Tosin Thomas, 23, who was subsequently confirmed dead.

“The Corps has found that Afolabi Kazeem with Ammunition Number AM031849 acted outside the Amotekun Corps’ protocols. For this reason, he has been summarily dismissed from the Corps and handed over to the police for prosecution. Also, his Team Leader, George Idowu, is being thoroughly investigated and will face all necessary sanctions.

“We want to reassure members of the public of our internal mechanisms for dealing with erring officers. We will continue to train and retrain our officers on best practices and rules of engagement. The Corps deeply regrets the loss to the Thomas family, and we are already in touch with the family.”

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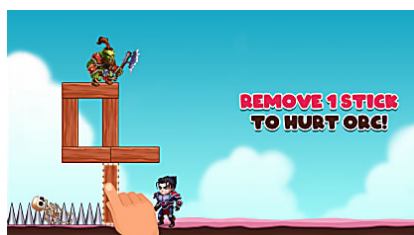
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