

20 feared killed, seven arrested in Sagamu cult war

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**, **Gbenga Akinfenwa (Lagos)** and **Bukky Olajide (Abeokuta)**

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CP Abiodun Alamutu

• Ogun govt restricts movement, orders crackdown on cultists

About 20 people were reportedly killed during a violent clash between two notorious cult groups – Eiye and Aye Confraternity groups in Sagamu, Ogun State.

The Guardian learnt that the unrest began on Thursday night, when members of the two cult groups engaged in supremacy battle, which set the boisterous town on fire.

The clash reached its peak in the early hours of yesterday, when about six young men, including secondary school students, who just resumed the new academic session, were gruesomely murdered.

Some of the hotspots where many casualties were recorded include Agbowa, Ajaka, Sabo, Ijagba, and Isokun.

A 50-year-old gospel musician, popularly known as Sunny Pa, allegedly lost his life in the crossfire, becoming one of the unfortunate casualties of the clash.

Another victim, identified as Elemere, a popular drummer associated with a well-known local Fuji musician in the city, was brutally murdered at a local bar along with two women on Sunday.

The Sabo area was the worst hit, as about 10 people were reportedly killed, including Mikolo, a suspected Eiye cult member, and Anene, an Aye cult member.

Though the cause of the crisis remained sketchy, residents linked the mayhem to the death of budding musician, Promise Oladimeji Aloba (a.k.a Mohbad), while some attributed the dispute to misunderstanding over sharing of proceeds from land-grabbing activities.

Reacting to the development on his X handle, Force Public Relations Officer, Muyiwa Adejobi, said all hands must be on deck because the crisis is beyond mere deployment of anti-cultism groups.

He said: “Sagamu’s case goes beyond mere anti-cultism. The politicians know what to do. I was in Sagamu between 2006 and 2008, and there was no single cult clash throughout the period. I worked with the late Akarigbo, Oba Michael Sonariwo, and others.

“Most of those who caused the problem are not even indigenes. Some came from Ijebu Ode, Ago Iwoye or even Edo State. It’s a problem that the whole system must tackle.

Meanwhile, Ogun State Police Command has confirmed the arrest of nine suspects.

Speaking at a press briefing in Abeokuta, the Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alamutu, identified the remote cause of the crisis to a land transaction that took place in the town.

“A land was sold and commission was paid to a cult group by the owner of the land. A rival cult group got to know about the payment, and went after members of the other group in a bid to get a share of the commission.

“The situation degenerated into an attack and counter attack, which started last Wednesday and continued till Sunday, leading to the death of eight persons,” the police boss said.

Alamutu, who noted that investigation was ongoing, said nine persons are bei ALSO, spokesperson for the Command, Omolola Odutola, in a statement, said the command conducted a successful raid led by Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Shehu Alao, in collaboration with a vigilante group.

She said: “This operation was carried out in response to a report of a clash between two rival cult groups, which resulted in the death of four persons.

“Upon receiving the information, the Area Commander swiftly mobilised more personnel to the scene to prevent the crisis from escalating, and apprehend those involved. Subsequently, seven suspected cultists were arrested, while further investigations led to the recovery of a firearm, three live cartridges, and charms.

“Among those apprehended were Asaiye Omolaja, Azeez Nofiu, Mathew Adewale, and Bolaji Ogunkemaya, who was found with the four deceased persons where the killings occurred. One of the suspects, identified as Wasiu, managed to escape before the authorities arrived.”

Ogunkemaya was said to have provided critical information while being interrogated.

According to the spokesperson, the police chief, yesterday, led his men to Sagamu, to assess the situation firsthand, and profile suspects apprehended.

Alamutu warned cultists in the state to desist from the act, saying the command would no longer tolerate such.

“With the restoration of normalcy in Sagamu, and diligent efforts of law enforcement agencies, it is evident that the authorities are committed to maintaining peace and security in Ogun State,” she added.

Abiodun orders crack down on cultists in Sagamu

Meanwhile, Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State has announced restriction of movement in the area between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00a.m.

He urged residents of the town to abide by the restriction order pending the time the security of the area will improve, as police and other security agencies are on top of the situation to restore normalcy.

The governor also directed security agencies to rid Sagamu and its environs of the menace of cultists and cult-related activities.

Abiodun, in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Lekan Adeniran, lamented the avoidable loss of innocent lives and wanton destruction of properties by the hoodlums.

The governor stated that the police and other security agencies have been given matching orders to deal ruthlessly and decisively with those disturbing the peace of the town.

Reiterating the state government’s zero tolerance for lawlessness and brigandage, Abiodun warned that those responsible for the mayhem would not go scot free.

He said: “As a responsible and responsive government, we are very sad with the resurgence of activities of criminal elements under different outlawed groups, raising unnecessary tension in the sleepy town of Sagamu and its environs.

“Let me categorically state that we are more than determined to put an end to the nefarious activities of hoodlums, bent on truncating the peace of the town.

Abiodun, therefore, appealed to the people to provide adequate and useful information to security agents for prompt action, to prevent future occurrences