

Ija Omode's Attack On Agbowo-Ikosi Police Post

By Akinwunmi King
TRAINEE REPORTER, Lagos

Residents of Agbowo-Ikosi Community in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos have cried out over the activities of a group known as *Ija Omode* meaning 'The fight of kids.'

Agbowo-Ikosi is a serene community and its residents are peaceful and law abiding.

On May 21, 2007 the Agbowo Police Post was attacked. The attack, according to a source, who does not want his name in print, was as a result of what happened the previous day.

"On May 20, 2007 a man whose name was simply given as Mukaila hit an 'Okada' rider called Rasheed with his vehicle. When it was discovered that the riders' group were about to lynch Mukaila, a good Samaritan came to his rescue and took him to the above-mentioned police station for safety.

"On getting to the station, the man was handed over to the officer in charge of the station, who had to put him in protective custody so that the people would not lynch him. Not quite long after that, a group of 'Okada' riders appeared at the station and were shouting that the man should be released to them. While this was going on, the police officer came out and agreed to follow them to the scene of the accident," he said.



• The smashed police officer's car

According to reports, the accident was fatal. One of Rasheed's legs was broken and he did not survive the accident as he later died that same day.

"Later, one of the 'Okada' riders summoned the others. They went straight to the police station and demanded the release of Mukaila. They said they would kill him because he killed one of their members. When they were not allowed to carry out their threat, they left. The accused was later taken away from the station to Epe Divisional Headquarters, Epe.

"The following day, May 21, 2007, the officers at Agbowo Police Post went to the scene of the incident in order to get Mukaila's vehicle to the

station. On getting there, the tyres of the vehicle had been deflated.

"While they were looking for a toying-vehicle, the officer in charge of the Police Post was called from his station that some people had launched an attack on the station. The attackers destroyed a car belonging to the police officer.

When *Daily Independent* visited the station, pieces of broken bottles were seen scattered everywhere with the remains of the police officer's vehicle - a Toyota Carina II with registration number BH 513 KR D.

It was disclosed that the group that launched the attack carted away the sum of



• Scattered police station as broken bottles litter the floor

N250,000 from the station, including a dagger and box containing assorted clothes.

A witness told our reporter that the attack was masterminded by someone who had grievances with the police officer in the past.

"Actually, the attack was led by two persons who are of the same parents. On that day, they gathered the 'Okada' riders from Ijede and Imota; they also gathered some of the 'Okada' mechanics and came to the station with the intention of attacking the police officer.

"They even brought Rasheed's corpse. When they got to the station, they started throwing bottles. It got to a stage that they forced their way

in. When they got in, they scattered everywhere. They broke the entire window glasses, destroyed so many things including the vehicle belonging to the officer.

"There was a day when the man who led the motorcyclists attacked the police officer at a carpenter's place. He accused the officer of disconcerting him in the community. He slapped the policeman; rough handled him to the extent that blood was gushing out of his mouth.

"There was a time he was summoned by the DPO in Epe. The traditional worshipers at Agbowo had gone to report him to the DPO for beating some of their members. He was sent an invitation through the

officer in charge of Agbowo Ikosi police post. Since the incident, he had been looking for a way to get at the man. The 'Okada' incident was used as an opportunity by his children", the witness said.

Confirming the incident, Mukaila Oduyebo, the *Lisa* of Agbowo Ikosi Community, explained that the *Ija Omode* was a threat to the village. It was also revealed that the *Lisa* harboured the officer on the day the station was attacked. He was said to have aided his escape him through the backdoor.

"That day, when I heard that they have attacked the station and were looking for the OC, I had to bring him to my place so that the hoodlums would not attack him. I had to take him through the backdoor, because if they discovered I was harbouring him, they could set my house ablaze," he noted.

Also speaking to our reporter was Pastor E.B. Ogunbiyi, who said though he saw evidences that the officer was brutalised, he could not ascertain those responsible because he was not at the scene.

"Actually, we saw that the police officer was maltreated, but those who attacked him I cannot say because I was not at the scene of the incident. I wouldn't say it is someone that attacked him.

It was learnt that the Epe Divisional Police Headquarters is handling the case which has further been adjourned till June 19.