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# Isara: A Sleepy Town In Crisis

• *Thugs Maim Indigenes, Loot Homes, Shops*

It all began like a nightmare. At 7:30 p.m. on Friday, August 17, 2007, about 12 armed men in an unregistered tinted-glassed Honda Bullet saloon car and a bus invaded Isara town, headquarters of Remo North Local Government Area, Ogun State, apparently to unleash mayhem on the residents.

The thugs were recruited from Ibadan, Oyo State capital, and Abeokuta, Ogun State, respectively to unleash terror on the town. But accusing fingers are pointing at the direction of two prominent chieftains of a party in the state, Hon. Dipo Odujirin and Hon. Boye Pefumi Olushola, who is the incumbent representative for Remo North Constituency at the Ogun State House of Assembly.

The wanton attack raged like a wildfire for three consecutive days, but was brought to abrupt end on Sunday, August 19, following deployment of armed mobile policemen from MOPOL 16 Squadron, Abeokuta. At the end of the commotion, no fewer than 11 persons were inflicted with serious injuries, while leader of the gang, one Kazeem Hamzat, was shot dead when he and his recruited warriors attempted to attack Isara Divisional Police Station at Aiyegbami Road.

As a result, six persons were arrested in connection with the breakdown of law and order. They have been arraigned before a Shagamu Magistrate's Court on 18-count charge (ranging from attempted murder to arson), and are currently remanded at Shagamu Prison by Mrs. Timilehin, the presiding magistrate. Further hearing has been adjourned till September 27.

But spirited efforts to secure bail for the six suspects proved futile when counsel to the accused took the matter before a High Court, sitting in Shagamu. Similarly, the matter was adjourned to September 24, 2007, for further hearing on the bail application.

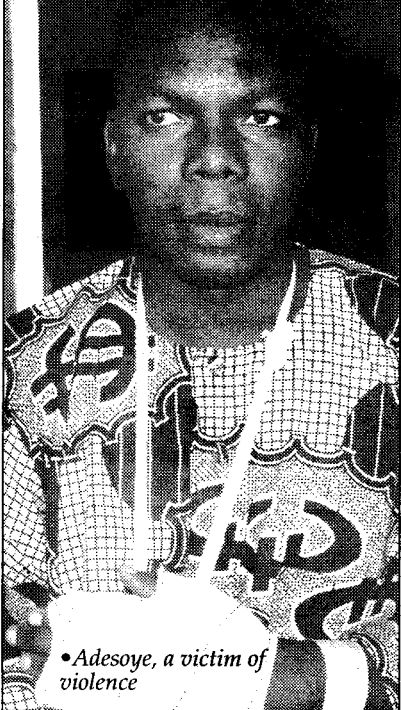
By and large, genesis of the crisis is traceable to the jostle for the coveted seat of Remo North Local Council chairmanship by two aspirants – John Obafemi and Are Kolapo Oshobuke – on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). One of the two aspirants, John Obafemi, who is a native of Isara, and Are Kolapo Oshobuke, an indigene of Ode-Remo, are pitched against each other by the powers that be over who mounts the saddle at the next local council poll. Above all, the contest is rooted on 'where the next chairman would come from'.

Elders, traditional chiefs and youths are applauding the spirited efforts of the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the town, Mr. Abraham Omotosho, Superintendent of Police (SP), and Shagamu Area Commander, Mr. Francis Adetosoye, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) for their timely intervention and bringing the situation under control.

Prior to the current mayhem, it was gathered that a similar outbreak of violence occurred on May 27, 2006, which is the Children's Day. In the absence of political rally or activity to herald the mood of the time, it was alleged that some identified men, Fatai Ogunmefun, Kazeem Hamzat (now late), Musiliu Oduwale, Segun Adeniyi, Tosin Awoyade, Suleiman Ogunmefun and eight others, alleg-



• Police Armoured personnel car in the area



• Adesoye, a victim of violence

edly doing the bidding of their pay masters, stormed the community one afternoon with dangerous weapons. They scared residents with sporadic gunshots before pasting posters of one of the chairmanship aspirant, Kolapo Oshobuke. They left harrowing memories, fear and insecurity in their trail.

During the daylight raid, an aged man, Pa Obadeyin Sofolabo, who is now late, was beaten to a pulp and a pestle allegedly taken from his kitchen was retrieved from one of his attackers, Nasiru Shodipe, and is currently in custody of the police at Elewe-Eran, Abeokuta, Ogun State Command Headquarters.

Following painstaking intelligence gathering, the suspects behind the attack, it was learnt, were arrested in a Nissan Urvan bus parked within Ode-Remo country home of a PDP stalwart. The suspects were whisked to Shagamu Area Command Headquarters from where they were subsequently transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID),

Elewe-Eran, Abeokuta.

But for the prompt intervention of Governor Gbenga Daniel, informed sources told *Daily Independent*, the suspects were let off the hook to enable the matter to be settled amicably within the leadership of the PDP in the state.

Besides, barely six months thereafter (precisely on November 14, 2006), the same suspects launched another attack. The unwholesome mayhem fell on the day Ward Congresses were held across the state.

Jamiu Awobodu Disu (a.k.a. Striker), Ayo Adams, Musiliu Oduwale, Segun Adeniyi, Kazeem Ogunmefun (now late), Mufutau Bakare and Muyideen Oduwale were fingered in connection with the attack.

When they were expected to be at their respective wards for the event of the day, it was alleged that the men went to Remo North Local Government Secretariat, Isara, to attack Hon. John Obafemi, the council boss.

"But owing to providence, he was rescued by the council's security guards, who chased the attackers to Alhaji Oyekanmi's home. And it was when the late Kazeem Ogunmefun wanted to escape through the ceiling in Alhaji Oyekanmi's roof that policemen attached to Isara Division arrested him. The suspect was detained but subsequently released following intervention by the party's leadership in the local government," a source disclosed.

The ugly incident of Friday, August 17, 2007, was seen as a calamity on the community.

A youth leader in the community chronologically serialised the attendant orgies of violence that rocked Isara town between Friday, August 17, and Sunday, August 19, 2007.

"At 7:30 p.m. on that fateful day, Samuel Oduniyi, who is a member of Ward 3, was inflicted with machete cuts. Luckily he was able to identify five of his attackers, namely:

Mufu Bakare, Kazeem Ogunmefun, Amidu (alias Omo Alhaja), Musiliu Oduwale and Segun Adeniyi. He reported the matter to the police, and two policemen were assigned to rush him to Isara General Hospital for treatment.

"Before we knew what was happening, they headed for Gbolahan Ogunfowodu's house at No. 9, Okeola Street, Isara. But luckily, Gbolahan was not at home. Instead, they registered their presence at his restaurant, 'Atinuke Alanu Cool Spot and Catering Services'. An entrance door of the restaurant was ridden with pellets and the attackers carted away the N60,000 one Jacob Adetayo deposited for cartons of beer for the funeral of his mother slated for Saturday, September 1, 2007.

"Immediately they left the place, they went to Keji Ibrahim's home at the same Okeola axis. Keji was away when they called, but they met a 70-year-old woman, Iya Elepo. They sprained her neck and went away with N3,000 the aged woman concealed under a box of



• Shoyombo, Apena of Isara



• Israel Ajao, DIG, Zone 2

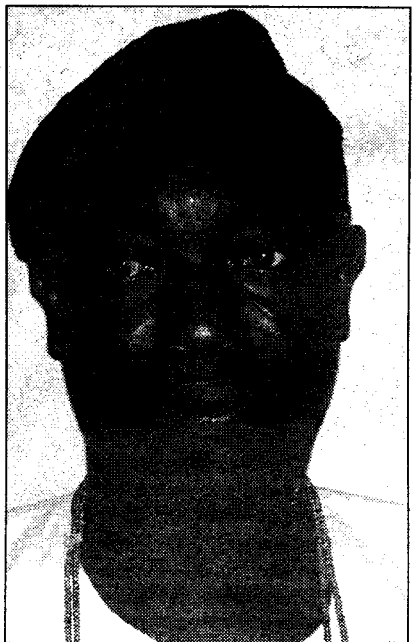
palm oil. They broke the box and its content of palm oil bottles.

"They retired to their hideout and resurfaced the following morning, Saturday, August 18, 2007. Around 2:30 p.m., we were looking for a vehicle to hire in order to convey Samuel Oduniyi and some policemen to the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) Headquarters, Adatan, Abeokuta, when information came that they had attacked Oyekanmi Adesoye in his red Blue Bird station wagon marked AA 440 SRA (Ogun), while in company of Tunde Showale at Okebola area. The young man was inflicted with machete cuts in six places and a sum of N22,000 allegedly kept in the car's glove compartment, his handset and car radio were removed by his attackers.

"As if that was not enough, the thugs laid siege to Kunle Awolowo's home at No. 45, AllWell Street, but their target was not at home. They littered his frontage with debris of bottles to register their visit.

"As early as 7 a.m. on Sunday, August 19, we were woken up to another round of mayhem. I was the last target. They stormed my home and chased me with Pump Action Rifle (PAR), but luckily I escaped. And it was in hiding I sent a short message service (SMS) to Tunde Adekoya, Supervisory Officer for Works at the local council, to come to my rescue. True to his bidding, he was able to get across to the DPO in charge of Isara, who led 12 of his men to rescue me from my hideout. Fortunately, Musiliu Oduwale and Segun Adeniyi emerged from nowhere and were sighted inside Hon. Fatai Ogunmefun's official Honda Accord saloon car marked LG 02 SRA (Ogun). At that spot, the duo were arrested and taken to the station," he said.

• To be concluded Tomorrow



• Shogunle, Baale of Isara