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By Titilope Joseph On Oct 24, 2019

FEATURED CRIME TRACKER

 DSS, Dapchi Girls

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**Lagos** – The Court presided by Justice Hakeem Oshodi was on Thursday showed a graphic video on how a gang of vandals murdered and buried seven operatives of the Department of State Security (DSS), while in the line of duty in 2015.

The 10 minutes video recording of the capture and interrogation of the alleged culprits, raiding of their hideouts by security agents and pictures of gravesites was played before an Ikeja High Court, Lagos.

The defendants standing trial for the alleged murder of the seven deceased officers are two Ijaw men; Clement Ododomu, 25, and Tiwei Monday, 26.

The duo were docked on an eight-count of murder and possession of firearms contrary to Section 223 and 298 (3) of the Criminal Law, Cap. C. A Vol. 3, laws of Lagos State 2015.

One of the defendant, Monday, identified in the video, said in English, “We killed the seven officers. We shot them one after the other and buried them inside three graves in the Barracks. Our commander’s name is Owusi”.

However, a compact disc, containing the video recording and the death certificate of the deceased personnel were tendered as exhibits before the court.

Addressing the court on the content of the video recording, Saheed Adetunji, an investigation officer with the DSS, said that seven out of a team of nine personnel sent on a kidnap rescue mission, were ambushed by vandals and taken captive at Abule Oba.

Adetunji said that the seven captured personnel were shot dead and buried in three separate shallow graves; three men were packed in one grave, two men in one grave while the remaining two were put in one grave.

According to the investigation officer, burnt body armour (bulletproof vests), shoes, face caps belonging to the deceased personnel, including a Prado jeep, were recovered inside a Creek, known as Barrack, where the vandals used as their camping ground.

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While being led in evidence by a Lagos state prosecutor, Y. G. Osuala, the witness said, “I know the two defendants in the murder of seven DSS operatives namely: Uzor Nwafor, Kayode Oladimeji, Luke Akande, Adebayo Adeniyi, Benjamin Mafo and Simeon Owolabi. I can’t remember the name of the last officer.

“The incident occurred in September 14, 2015 when the Lagos State Command of DSS received a distress report from one Mr Nwosu from the Sun Newspaper about the kidnap of his wife at their residence.

“The Lagos State Command immediately dispatched a nine-man team to carry out a surveillance operation to ascertain the location of the kidnappers that were negotiating for a ransom.

“However, in the evening at about 1800hrs, one of the team members, Mr Martins Ajayi, sent a distress text message to the Station saying, ‘We have been ambushed by vandals and our weapons have been seized’.

“When Mr Ajayi returned to the Command, he told us that they were conducting surveillance on some areas in Abule Oba, where the calls of the purported kidnappers emanated from, when about a 100 armed men with Ak47 and pump-action ambushed them.

“Ajayi said that the vandals collected their weapons and that he was able to escape by jumping into a pit and hid himself. It was inside the pit that he sent the distress message.

“But at that time, Ajayi wasn’t aware that another officer had also escaped while the vandals dragged the other seven personnel though the creeks into the forest.



“On October 10, 2015, there was a Joint Security Operation; a combination of the DSS, the police, the Army and the Nigerian Navy. This operation was launched on creeks at Igbo-Olomu, Abule-Oba to Arepo in Ogun State.

“The purpose of the operation was to clear the area, which was almost abandoned, of militants and also for the service of arresting those behind the death of the personnel.

“The two defendants were later arrested and the Command constituted an investigation team to investigate the matter and ascertain their level of involvement. And on October 28, the two defendants volunteered a statement under caution.

“The 1st defendant, in his statement, told us his name as Clement Ododomu, a 25-year-old Ijaw man from Delta State. He stated his profession as a plumber.

“In relation to the offence, he said he was among the vandals that chased and ambushed the DSS personnel. He said that they collected their guns, beat them, used teargas on their faces and pushed them into a speed boat.

“The first defendant said that they took the seven DSS personnel to their hideout, into the Creeks, called Barracks. He also identified the 2nd defendant, Monday, as a member that used the teargas on the personnel. He also identified one Godwin Oweli and Prince Sunday as other perpetrators.

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“He said that when they got to their Barracks, he personally shot two of the DSS personnel with a pump-action rifle, while one Agbala shot the remaining five with an Ak47.

“The dead bodies were buried in three separate graves. The first defendant said that the graves were dug by some Ijaw boys and three slim operatives were packed in one. And the bigger ones were put in twos into the other graves.

“After the burial, the first defendant said that a three-day party celebration, with alcohol, was held in jubilation for the death of the personnel.

“More so, during interrogation, the defendant was shown the pictures of the victims and he identified all of them”.

The investigation officer further said that the Command paid a condolence visit to the families of the deceased personnel and also paid the death benefits of the personnel.

Justice Oshodi thereafter adjourned the matter till November 6 for the continuation of trial.