

Agberos Bring Death, Fear To Abuja Roads

By **Leadership News** 13 hours ago **Cover Stories**



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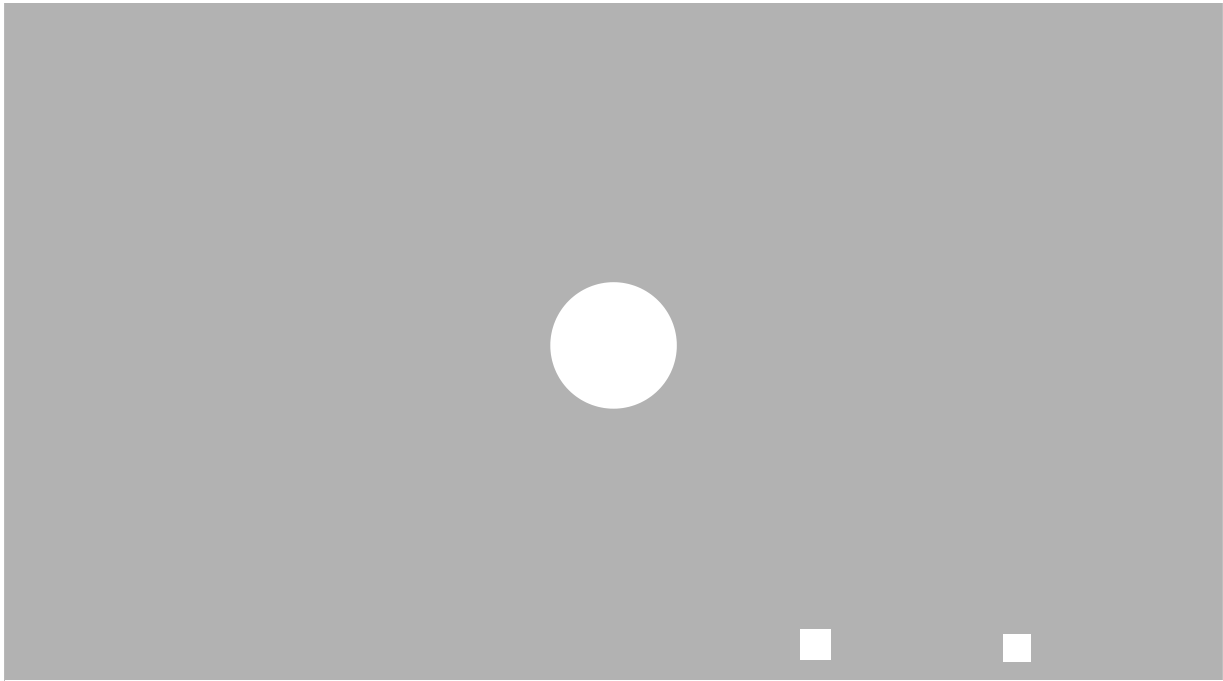
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The scene was apocalyptic. Shattered glass, twisted steel, and lifeless bodies lay strewn beneath the Mabushi bridge. An entire family gone in seconds. The family of Mr. Emeka Ehekweme, wife and his son, who lost their lives when their vehicle, a grey Toyota Highlander with registration number ABJ 206 EC, somersaulted after touts allegedly forced their way into it.

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The family had merely pulled over to pick up a relative. That one stop turned fatal.

Eyewitnesses say a gang of touts, yes, touts, accosted them, forced their way into the car, and began to struggle with the driver (the wife) for control of the steering wheel. The vehicle lost balance, crashed, and burst into chaos. By the time passersby gathered the courage to intervene, it was too late. Three futures had been silenced. In that blood-soaked silence, Abuja died a little.

Who Are These Killers In Disguise?

They come dressed in dirt-streaked aprons and laminate-faded IDs claiming to represent “AMAC” or some faceless union. But they are no better than highway robbers. They creep behind your car, squat low to avoid your mirrors, slip stones under your tires, and appear like ghosts to yank your keys while growling threats. They are not officers of the law. They are predators.

I know because I watched my colleague, the late Mr. Rotimi, who was flung onto a bonnet one faithful morning at the Nyanya Market bustop, and crushed by a car being chased by these very touts later being buried at the Gudu Cemetery. No one was arrested. No justice served. And today, more innocent lives have followed him to an early grave.

An aggrieved car owner who spoke exclusively to LEADERSHIP Sunday in reaction to the Mabushi incident said, “The question begging for answer today is, how many more bodies will litter our streets before the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) speak? This is not ignorance; it’s indifference. The authorities know what’s going on. We all do. These criminals have offices. They work hand-in-hand with the police. Victims report to nearby stations only to be told to “settle” their attackers. What sort of madness is this? These aren’t revenue collectors. They are licensed tormentors. Their victims are mothers, fathers, Bolt drivers, civil servants and many others who dares stop to pick up a loved one. Is this the price of living in Nigeria’s so-called capital city?

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The former chairman, National Union of Journalists, Abuja Chapter, Comrade Emmanuel Ogbeche posted this on his Facebook page; “Let me tell you, this isn’t just another story for me. I once had to pull a weapon from under my car seat to defend myself while dropping off my Wife , the irrepressible Chizobs on our way to Kaduna. They surrounded me like wolves. My offense? Parking for barely two minutes. They thought I was picking passengers. They thought they could extort me. But they thought wrong. Yet not everyone is as lucky or mad as I was that day.

Many have paid with their lives, dignity, and peace of mind. Even as a journalist, I have myself , received death threats simply because some bolt drivers suspected I was an agent tipped by Agberos at the popular Nyanya bridge to lure them and let them fall into their traps with false booking, to get them extorted by this evil ring. I nearly fled Abuja for good. What kind of city forces its own to run? A taxi driver at the Berger Bustop , Mr .Israel Idoko, told our correspondent that every day, Abuja drivers, families, professionals, and all manner of personalities navigate a gauntlet of fear from purported “AMAC staffers”.

He said, these homeless creatures appear in dirty aprons, faded IDs, and gesture-exuding intimidation. My sister, we work for them .

LEADERSHIP Sunday writee that these agberos in most cases surge from gutters, plant stones beneath tyres, rip off side mirrors, wrench out keys and leaving terror in their wake.

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Another driver, Mr. Chukwuka Uwah said, My own colleague, had to leave Abuja after he flung a young lady atop his vehicle while being chased some years back at the popular Jabi Garage bustop. Sadly, he was left alone as the touts disappeared into lawless impunity. No arrests were made. No justice was served. Instead, he was forced to pay compensation to the bearevead family, while these criminal hustlers remain unchallenged, emboldened by silence and inaction, spreading death and ruin from Mabushi to Nyanya, Jabi to Berger, Area 1 to Area 3. They seem to have forgotten that we are in the Capital City, not a jungle

Look around: Nyanya, Area 1, Wuse, Area 3 junction, Banex junction, Mabushi under bridge, Utako, Arab, Berger, Kubwa, Jabi and other areas in the City center, these touts are everywhere. They steal

car mirrors, pull out number plates, slash tires, drag the steering with their bodies halfway inside the car. You'd think they were possessed. And then they vanish into thin air when sirens wail. But come back the next day and they're back again, like roaches in an abandoned kitchen.

Mr. Alex Elejor a transporter told our correspondent that, "Sometimes, these touts not only steal phones, laptops, and other valuables from unsuspecting victims during their operations, but often go as far as physically assaulting them. In some cases, they vandalise vehicles, removing floor mats, car batteries, and even back jacks.

They also extort motorists, demanding between ₦10,000 and ₦25,000 in the name of penalties for "unauthorised parking" charges they impose based on their own questionable authority."

Even e-hailing drivers avoid certain bus stops because they know what awaits them: thugs who demand "stickers" or else. This is Abuja. The supposed pride of the nation. A place where touts enforce imaginary laws while police officers look on like cinema spectators.

Mr. Anthony Iwurum, a passenger at the Jabi Garage had this to say, "Lives , precious, irreplaceable lives have been shattered. May the souls of the three family members rest in peace. May their memory be our clarion call. The truth remains that , If the federal government or the FCTA does not act immediately with arrests, strict enforcement, and real transportation reform, then the next stage won't be petitions or tweets. It will be protests in our streets.

"It will be Nigeria's fury unleashed. Nostalgia will not bring back those three family members, only justice, reforms, and resolution can restore meaning to their memory.

Mrs. Diamond Ukot, reacting the the sad incident said , "at the Area 3 junction , they surrounded our car like wild animals... one went for the keys, another for my door. I had to bite him till my new nails came off

Narrating how the event unfolded, she said, "My husband, an immigration officer, showed his ID. They stabbed him anyway. Police told us to 'settle' them. Despite the fact that they damaged our vehicle.

Rahman Rukayat said, Inow fear strangers approaching me when I park. I freeze. That's the trauma these touts have inflicted on us."

Facebook comment, Anonymous said, "We gave someone a ride from a wedding. That single act almost cost us our lives."

The testimonies keep pouring in. They are painful. They are raw. And they all point to one terrifying truth: the streets of Abuja are not safe, not because of robbers in the night, but because of touts in broad daylight.

Mrs Josephine Utah a trader at the popular Utako market said, "We can't pretend anymore. Abuja's transportation system is a joke. Where are the bus stops? Where are the road signs? Where are the terminals that justify harassing motorists for stopping? Love or hate Lagos, at least it has structure. "In Abuja, it's lawlessness with a capital "L." You can't drop off a friend, a sister, a passenger without risking assault or extortion. And then we wonder why "one chance" criminals have free reign. The government has created a vacuum and these monsters have filled it.

Touting As A Business Sanctioned By Silence

A transporter, Mr Ikoh Edim , told LEADERSHIP Weekend that " What is happening is not random chaos but business . This is because, these ugly, blood-soaked business representative AMAC, I mean touts—backed by certain elements in the police have turned harassment into a daily revenue stream. They don't build the roads. They don't maintain them. Yet they claim to collect revenue for the council. On what legal basis?

Abuja Must Rise Or Be Complicit In Murder

An activists, Bar..onh Eying said, " Let me say this without blinking: if the federal government and FCTA continue to ignore this cancer, the streets will not stay silent. Enough of candlelight vigils. Enough of Facebook wailing. Enough of prayers. We will march. We will protest.

" We will shut down this capital until it becomes our capital again. This city does not belong to touts. It belongs to the living, not the dead. May the souls of Engr. Emeka, his wife, and their children rest in power and may their blood be the last spilled on our roads before real change comes. But if change doesn't come, neither will our silence.

They Aren't Our Staff- AMAC Washes Its Hands On National TV

In what many have described as "too little, too late," the Supervisory Councillor for Special Duties in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Hon. Emmanuel Inyang, appeared on national television Thursday night on African Independent Television (AIT) to publicly disown the street thugs, touts, and self-proclaimed revenue enforcers operating at major intersections across Abuja.

"They are not our staff," Inyang said flatly, adding, We do not authorise or empower any group to operate in the manner they currently do. In fact, we too have been victims of their callous trade." Hon. Inyang further clarified that AMAC never authorised the construction of any motor parks, whether under bridges or in open public spaces, categorically stating:"We never gave permits for those parks, and we should not be dragged into the illegality happening there."

He also drew a sharp line between AMAC and transport unions, saying:"Those passes or permits these touts show are not from AMAC. They come from transport unions, and those unions are regulated directly by the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA)."

LEADERSHIP Weekend writes that the bold disavowal by AMAC, though significant, raises critical questions: If AMAC has no hand in these touts, who then authorised them to collect money? Why are there 'AMAC' stickers on vehicles that have paid them off? If the FCTA is responsible for the unions, why has there been no crackdown or reform?

How can AMAC say it's also a victim, yet provide no legal challenge or enforcement against these criminals?

This public distancing by AMAC has sparked even more anger online, with some citizens accusing the council of “dodging responsibility” rather than “taking charge. If they're not yours, shut them down!” one viewer commented live on the broadcast's thread.

“Stop shifting blame. The city is under siege, and the agencies are pointing fingers!” another wrote. This televised denial confirms what residents already feared: there is no real accountability over the people harassing motorists across Abuja.

Now, the burden shifts even more heavily on the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) and security agencies. If neither AMAC nor the FCTA accepts responsibility, then the capital city is being run, not by law, but by lawlessness. And that cannot stand. Mrs Mkem.Ulomma said.

Suggested Call To Action

This isn't just negligence. It's murder by proxy. Abuja's streets have become killing fields, not by fate, but by failure. If the government won't act, we will.

Angry Abuja resident who preferred anonymity.

LEADERSHIP Weekend reports that in the end, what Abuja residents are confronting is not just the menace of touts, but a terrifying absence of accountability. With AMAC disowning the touts and FCTA remaining disturbingly silent, it has become clear that the capital of Africa's most populous nation is being held hostage by a rogue network of criminals operating in plain sight, unchecked by the very institutions meant to protect us

Mr. Idilkpi Nkanghansaid, “ Today, the blood of that family of three cries out, not just for justice, but for decisive action. We don't want press statements, we want arrests. We don't want denials, we want dismantling.

” If the government continues to look away, the people will have no choice but to rise, not in whispers or social media hashtags but in the streets, with one loud voice: No more deaths. No more touts. No more silence., he concluded.