

## Impact Journalism Day

### THE LATEST

WYC: Flying Eagles qualifies for Round of 16  
58 mins ago

Mapoly students block road over lecturers strike  
45 mins ago

Film on Olympic hero debuts July  
1 hour ago

Collapsed water tank kills one in Akwa Ibom  
1 hour ago

NEC meeting in Abuja  
2 hours ago

Ex-prison staff nabbed for car snatching  
2 hours ago

Drama as Amaechi, Jang sit together at NEC meeting  
2 hours ago

Alleged fraud: Court remands Ajudua in prison  
3 hours ago

New commandant for Lagos police college  
3 hours ago

NDLEA arrests 194 suspected drug offenders  
4 hours ago

Home » Business » Building & Properties » Land of crises, bloodbath



## Land of crises, bloodbath

Posted by: Seyi Odewale In Building & Properties 3 days ago 0

Ajah, situated in the neighbourhood of Lekki in Lagos, has always been a hotbed of trouble. There have been many fights over land in the area. Last month, another fight broke out there, leaving some people dead. What is the cause of these perennial crises? Seyi Odewale examines the claims and counter-claims of some families on the ownership of the land.

THEN on May 25, Idowu Olumegbon and Musibau Olumegbon, siblings of Chief Fatai Olumegbon, the Olumegbon of Lagos, woke up in the morning, they never knew that they would not see the end of the day. They were killed in a land fracas, which has become the trademark of Ajah, near Lekki in Lagos.

At a press conference on behalf of Olumegbon of Lagos on June 1, his spokesman Peter Fowoyo, accused the police of not nipping the fracas in the bud, despite being tipped off.

"On May 22, we received a call, with the caller threatening to 'kill' at least, three people in order to spur the Olumegbon family into positive or negative action," Fowoyo alleged.

He said a Save Our Soul (SOS) was sent to the Area Commander, Area J, Elemoro in Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Area of Lagos State. The Divisional Police Officer of the area and the Commissioner of Police, Umar Manko were copied.

[Translate](#)

"It was only the Commissioner of Police that said he received the petition and ordered the Area Commander to take positive steps by preventing the ugly situation," Fowoyo said.

He alleged that a businessman in the area sponsored the fracas.

The area, the residents said, has witnessed more than six communal crises this year, claiming several lives and destroying properties worth millions of naira. But why the recurring crisis, one asked? "It is not unconnected with the land in Ajah. Ajah is a gold mine. The cost of land and property in that community is making kith and kin to go for one another's jugular. People are being killed over land ownership here," said a resident who wished to be anonymous. "I live here and I would not want to endanger my life by mentioning my name. The truth of the matter is land ownership is the bone of contention in Ajah," he added. On investigation, a plot of developed land goes for about N60million, although negotiable depending on the location and accessibility.

Bone of contention

### CHANGE TEXT SIZE

A A A A A

### STAY CONNECTED



### MORE FROM BUSINESSBUILDING & PRO

Govt needs N600b to build 14,000km road  
Minister  
Roads of sorrow, anguish  
Conservation Foundation immortalises dir  
Estate surveyors move against quacks  
Ogun to dualise Journalists' Estate road  
The remaking of Mandilas House  
Registration of Lagos residents begins Jul  
Experts hail Fashola on Lekki-Ikoyi bridge  
Once upon a Festac Town  
Lagos okays 1,427 development permits



FANCY FOOTWORK

AS LOW AS ₦3,000

JUMIA  
Nigeria's No. 1 Online Retailer

SHOW



## Professional Crusher Manufacturer

[www.zenithcrusher.com](http://www.zenithcrusher.com)

### HP Series Cone Crusher



### S Series Cone Crusher



Tel: 0086-21-58386256  
0086-21-58386258  
[info@zenithcrusher.com](mailto:info@zenithcrusher.com)

## ARCHIVES

June 2013

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
« May						

## PAST ARCHIVES

Archive 1 (2006-2008)

Archive 2 (articles before June 22nd 2010)

Archive 3 (articles before April 16 2011)

Archive 4 (articles between April 2011 and September 20, 2012)

Olumegbon, Ogunsemo and Ojupon families, it was learnt, are laying claim to ownership of the land. "The Olumegbon family is basing its claim on the Supreme Court judgment of 2002, which made it the overlord in Ajah and Okun Ajah communities, but the Ojupon family would have none of that."

But Fowoyo said there was nothing to contend with the other family. "The Olumegbon family is not in contention with anybody on any land in Ajah or any issue, as all land in Ajah and Okun Ajah belong to Olumegbon family vide the judgment of the apex court. There is no doubting that fact. Ajah is owned by the Olumegbon family, the head of the Idejo Chiefs in Lagos. This is not contestable. Idejo Chiefs are the land owners in Lagos. That has not changed," Fowoyo claimed, adding that the recurring crisis in Ajah is not unconnected with some people who are bent on making the community uninhabitable.

"If you check a copy of the statement we released on June 1, we said without mincing words that some elements like Kazeem Salami (a.k.a 'All Rounder'), are not helping the situation in Ajah," he said.

But Salami took exception to this statement, especially when being tagged a 'terrorist'. Replying through his lawyer, Saka Abdulkadir, he said a seven-day ultimatum had been given to Fowoyo and his principal to apologise to Salami, who considers the statement derogatory and an affront.

Speaking with The Nation in company of his lawyer, Salami said he was not in contention with Chief Olumegbon and wondered why he would be dragged into last month's crisis. "I'm into oil and gas he is into land business. Let us look at it this way, when you came to my Ilaje branch filling station here in Ajah, did you see any thugs here? Those you are seeing are my staff attending to customers. Anybody familiar with land business in Lagos knows that it is the practice of omo-onile to use thugs to disturb those they collect owo omo-onile from. The nature of his business shows that he can be violent. I wonder why he referred to me as a terrorist. Anyway, I have my business, I'm a law-abiding citizen of Lagos. I come from Baba-Isale Chieftaincy family and my family was not part of those he dragged to court, whose case he claimed to have won. We are not in the same business, why should I harbour thugs to attack him?" Salami asked.

He said Olumegbon was fond of using others to speak, a tactic which complicates issues for him. "Let him come out to deny or debunk all I have said. I don't have any issue with him, but he should stop using people to call others names," he said.

A source at Olumegbon's palace in Enu-Owa, Lagos, said the reason Olumegbon does not want to join issues with anybody is simple: "He is not happy with the negative image the crisis has given him. Why would everything that happened in Ajah be attributed to him when everyone knows that he is not culpable? The truth is that there are those hell-bent on making Ajah uninhabitable on account of the position of the law on Ajah. What the apex court did in 2002 was to endorse what was already on the ground, which the other parties challenged."

### Previous judgments

The source said Olumegbon from time immemorial has been the owner of Ajah and Okun Ajah. "As the head of the Idejo Chiefs in Lagos, he was then more pre-occupied in Lagos. He delegated the two families, Ogunsemo and Ojupon, to look after Ajah while he was away in Lagos. This was how the two families came in to contention over the land years after. The two families, however, failed to realise that the 1896 judgment in favour of Olumegbon against Ojomu and 1960 judgment against Onibeju gave the land to Olumegbon."

Two cases establish this fact; the issue between Olumegbon and Onibeju and the consent judgment of March 4, 1991. "The case that led to the consent judgment was filed before Justice J. Akinboboye and after the preliminaries, which included settling and amendment of pleadings, the trial commenced on November 22, 1989. The plaintiffs then (the late Chief Lamidi Yesufu Kalefo, the then Olumegbon of Lagos and the late Chief S. S. Ola Abereojie stood for themselves and Odugbese, Abereojie and Olumegbon families), while the defendants were the late Baale of Ajah, Amida Adedeji Kareem, Olatunji Apelehin Ojupon and Alhaji Sule Ogunsemo," the source said.

The case, accordingly, produced the consent judgment where terms of settlement were drafted and endorsed on February 12, 1991. The terms read in part: "The parties to this suit representing the Olumegbon Chieftaincy family on one part and the community of Ajah represented by the Ojupon and Ogunsemo families on the other part have resolved and hereby agree to settle this suit upon the following terms:

1. That various actions now pending before this Honourable Court and / or elsewhere in Lagos between both parties over land situate, lying and being at Ajah in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria be withdrawn and be finally discontinued;
2. That Ojupon and Ogunsemo families of Ajah recognise and accept the Olumegbon Chieftaincy family as represented by Chief Olumegbon of Lagos as overlord of the said Ajah as reflected in the judgments in suit numbers: (a) 97/1896-Chief Olumegbon versus Chief Ojomu and (b) 1/302/55-Oba Onibeju Versus Salomonu Oyebola;
3. That the Ojupon and the Ogunsemo families shall disclose to the Olumegbon Chieftaincy family whatever area of the land at Ajah that has actually been sold or leased to any third party and the correct amount collected in each case;
4. That the Ojupon and Ogunsemo families shall disclose to the Olumegbon family the area of land at Ajah which is now free, undeveloped and unencumbered;

Any Make  
Any Model  
MIN ₦ MAX ₦ Search



**Nissan Pathfinder**  
Lagos, ₦ 2,800,000/-



**Honda Pilot**  
Lagos, ₦ 1,800,000/-



**Volkswagen LT**  
Lagos, ₦ 800,000/- ONO



## JOB VACANCIES

Nigeria's Number 1 Job's Website  
**Jobberman**  
Specialization Industry/Sector  
Search Jobs

**Electrician**  
1 - 3 years

**Driver**  
1 - 3 years

**Team Leader**  
1 - 3 years

**Graphic Designer**  
1 - 3 years

**Snr. Maintenance Engineer- Electrical**  
5 - 7 years

**Computer Operator**  
1 - 3 years

**POST A JOB**

5. That the parties shall jointly manage ... matters affecting the rights and interests of Ajah under a Committee to be known as Ajah Management Committee;

6. (a) That both parties shall have representatives on the committee in the manner following: (i) Ojupon and Ogunsemo families-five representatives (ii) Olumegbon Chieftaincy family-five representatives including Chief Olumegbon or his representative; (b) That Chief Olumegbon or his representative shall preside on such committee; (c) That in case of parity of votes Chief Olumegbon or his representative shall have a casting vote;

7. A reigning Chief Olumegbon remains the authority to cap the Baale of Ajah and three other terms.

These terms were signed by four persons: Chief Lamidi Yesufu Kalefo, Olumegbon of Lagos for the plaintiffs, Amida Adedeji Kareem for the defendants, witnessed by their counsel Alaba Okupe for the plaintiffs and W.A. Oseni for the defendants.

It was the non-recognition of these agreements by the defendants, according to Olumegbon, that made them to proceed to the Appeal Court, claiming that their counsel misled them in endorsing the terms. It, however, dragged the matter to the apex court, which in 2002 upheld the lower court's consent judgment. The five justices of the Supreme Court: Justices Modibo Alfa Belgore; Michael Ekundayo Ogundare; Uthman Mohammed; Samson Odemwingie Uwaifo and Akintola Olufemi Ejiwunmi, upheld the lower court's decision.

When The Nation spoke to Chief Olumegbon, he said his spokesman had said all. The head of the Idejo Chiefs, however, did not mince words at the turn of events in Ajah. According to him, the apex court pronouncement is sacrosanct and as such, should be upheld. "There is no gainsaying, Ajah belongs to Olumegbon and the facts are there. The other parties in the suit have agreed to that, only a handful of them are kicking against that," he said.

A member of the Ogunsemo family, Chief Kehinde Adeniyi Osisanya and the Aro of Ikorodu, who claimed to be the head of that family, said Ogunsemo, immediately after the Supreme Court judgment, agreed to abide by the terms of settlement. "We actually do not have any problem with Olumegbon. We have agreed to the terms of settlement immediately the Supreme Court upheld it. Initially, before the apex court's verdict, we were against it, but after that, we have agreed to go by the terms and between us and the Olumegbon, there is no problem," he said.

Proffering solution to the imbroglio, Chief Osisanya said the solution lies with the Olumegbon whom the court has pronounced as overlord. "The solution lies in Olumegbon's hands. This is because that family is the one on the ground. They know the place more than we do. I don't think any of our children is there and if they are, I am sure they would not be many.

"As regards ratification of land, it's Olumegbon that does that and we have no issues with that. The court has made them the overlord in Ajah and to be fair to that family, they do carry us along."

But Osisanya's stand was countered by Jamiu Ojikutu, who said Osisanya was not qualified to speak for the Ogunsemo family. "Who made him the head of the family? I am the bona fide head of the family, make no mistake about that," he said on phone. He enjoys the support of another member of the family, Rev. Olatunde Ayotunde Alashe.

Lagos State's

intervention

As a way out of the crisis, the Lagos State Government, in 2007, set up a Tribunal of Inquiry into Ajah land disputes. The committee was headed by a retired Justice of the Court of Appeal, Justice Moronkeji Onalaja. Mr Igbekele Alaba; Prof. Imran Smith (SAN); Mrs Morenike Nedum and Mr Fariudeen Akodu were the members. They were directed to look into the causes of the land disputes in Ajah; identify those responsible; determine the damages; look at the documents of the parties in the dispute and inquire into matters incidental to the disputes to assist the government in coming to a conclusion.

The tribunal made an eight-point recommendation, which neither obliterated the Supreme Court's pronouncement nor added to it. All it did was to find a middle way around the dispute. Concerning the title of Ajah land, the panel said: "It should be recognised that the people settled in Ajah since about 300 years ago. However, as title over Ajah land cannot be determined by this tribunal because of the Provisions of Section 39 of the Land Use Act, which vests exclusive jurisdiction to determine title to land in the high court, the tribunal recommends that the Chief Judge of Lagos State be implored to advise the various judges handling pending cases on title to the various parcels of Ajah land to accord those cases accelerated hearing."

The Supreme Court's judgment, the tribunal said, should be resolved in favour of the Ajah community as highlighted in the body of its report. To them, the inadequacies in the terms of settlement, which the apex court upheld, were the main cause of the dispute.

But the government said it observed the 2002 Supreme Court judgment in Suit No. SC.148/1997, upholding the Terms of Settlement of 1987, which confirmed the Olumegbon of Lagos as the overlord of Ajah and Okun-Ajah in Eti-Osa Local Government Area.

It "noted that no lower court or tribunal has the jurisdiction to alter or nullify the decisions of the apex court. Consequently, government rejects the report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Ajah land disputes".

It said: "However, in order to facilitate genuine rapprochement and lasting peace in the community,



government directs that the Olumegbon Chieftaincy family should release 50 hectares of land at Ajah to the various aggrieved families. In addition, the Olumegbon Chieftaincy family should release one-quarter of whatever parcel of land is reclaimed within the contiguity of the waterfront to the aggrieved families."

The Olumegbon family, Fowoyo added, has agreed to comply with the directive from the government. "The family initially was not happy with that decision, but it had no choice. Unfortunately, about 600 hectares given by the government to augment the settlement are on the water. The place has to be sand-filled and the other families are aware of this. About three years ago, the Olumegbon held a meeting with them to assure them that as soon as the land is reclaimed the 50 hectares directed would be excised to them," Fowoyo said.

But Alashe said the recommendation was not fair to the other parties. To him, the Olumegbon is not the problem in Ajah, but the government.

"The government actually is the problem in Ajah. They gave the land to those who have no roots in Ajah, either paternally or maternally. We have not got the 50 hectares. In fact, we are not taking it. Although he (Olumegbon) has been going around with the Supreme Court judgment, we know that one day the truth will prevail," he said.

Tweet 0 1 [Share](#) [Pin it](#)

Tagged with: [LEKKI](#)

Previous: [NIMASA,NLNG unending levy quarrel](#)

Next: [Anambra council polls holds Oct 5](#)

## RELATED ARTICLES

Lekki Port to generate \$361b

May 16, 2013



Wizkid set to move into Multi-million Naira Lekki home

January 13, 2013



For the love of fun

January 9, 2013

## LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

Name \*

Email \*

Website



[Post Comment](#)