

is the modus operandi of hoodlums who have seized the area by the jugular.



•Blood-soaked Oyibo after his bloody encounter with the hoodlums

Mr Ogheneruona Oyibo, a reporter with the Delta State Broadcasting Service, one victim who lived to tell the tale of his encounter, said the criminals are usually young boys, some as young as 17 years or less and have no regard for the sanctity of life or human dignity.

"In my case, they broke a Coca-Cola bottle in my presence after taking my GSM phones, cash and other valuables. They used the bottle to stab me severally; on the head, back and arm before leaving me in the pool of my blood," Mr Oyibo, told our reporter at the funeral of Mrs Ukana, on September 17.

But for quick intervention of good neighbours who rushed him to the hospital, Oyibo said he would he bled to death.

Our reporters visit to the area showed that the entire Usiefrun and other parts of that axis of the state are battling development challenges ranging from lack of motorable roads, power to all basic amenities. Apart from political appointees and few others, the people are mostly poor and without hope.

Investigation by our reporter revealed that the area has become a hotbed of violence and cult activities with school children, some as young as 12 years, deeply entrenched in cult activities.

The area, with a population of over 100,000, lacks government presence and basic amenities. The Delta Steel Town, the residential quarters of the Delta Steel Complex has deteriorated in the past decade, leading to the dearth of services that were provided by the company to its host.

"You can see the major roads into Orhumworun, Eket, Aladja and other parts are deplorable. We do not have light or pipe-borne water supply. Parents are losing control over their children. The highest aspiration of some of the youths is to become thugs to politicians and go into politics," a resident, who asked not to be named for obvious reason, told our reporter.

"Almost every child you find around here now belongs to one cult group or the other. They use their membership of the various cult groups to terrorise even members of their families and neighbours. Those who want to get protection join cults," a civil servant in the area told our reporter on condition of anonymity.

It was gathered that the security situation in the area worsened further after the head of the Udu Central Vigilante Group, Honorable Prosper Erhinyojare, was gruesomely murdered. The local security chief was shot dead along with an associated at a beer parlour along the Udu Expressway about the 17th day of April, 2014.

It was gathered that the former Councilor's murder sparked off unrestrained killings, maiming, robbery rape and other crimes in the area. The alleged arrest of his killers by the police has not halted the drift to anarchy.

"Since his death, cultism and criminal activities are on the increase as people are daily attacked. In the early hours of Monday, the corpse of a young man suspected to be killed by cultists was on Sunday found at Eket junction. The victim was simply identified as Junior. Also, at Owchase, a woman was killed after she had been robbed."

Another source said, "Although the said Prosper was not himself free of terror, his presence, in the absence of government, brought law and order to some degree even though there were others under him who used his influence to victimize and carry out nefarious activities."

It was gathered that members of the local vigilante group guarding the Usiefrun area have emerged as key suspects in the killing of Mrs Ukana. The vigilante gang, it was alleged, had earlier on the morning of September 10, warned of mayhem over the delay in the payment of their salaries.

"One of them particularly warned that when 'bad things happen' the people would know their importance and would be forced to pay up. It is instructive that on that same day they did not resume work as usual and the woman, who is the treasurer of the landlords' union, was killed. So, it is a case of



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