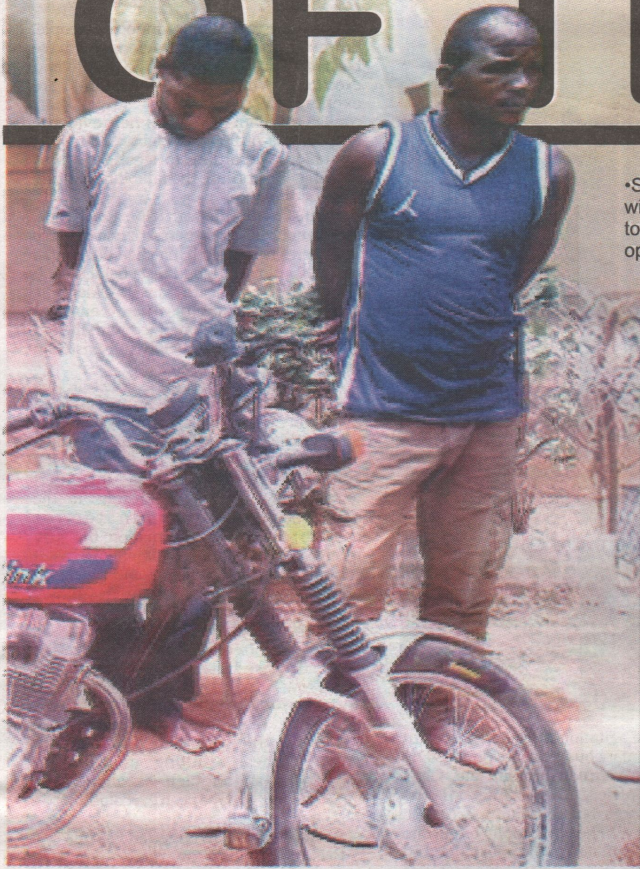


OF TERROR



•Suspects with their tools of operation

The activities of these hoodlums are terrifying and making life unbearable for us in the whole area. They wield all manners of weapons and often ride on motorcycles to make their dirty jobs and escape faster. As I am talking to you now, no fewer than five young men have been gruesomely murdered by unknown gunmen

activities because they know that it will make their escape very easy. If they should operate using a vehicle, nemesis might catch up with them as they might run into traffic. Something urgent needs to be done about their activities, else, they will continue to waste innocent lives."

Dada Afolabi, another resident of the area, observed that motorcycles, especially those used for commercial purposes, play a vital role in the movement of the people, he feared that the recent use into which hoodlums are putting it is causing panic for the people.

"The importance of *Okada* in the society such as ours cannot be overemphasized because they help to move people to places that cannot be reached by vehicles and areas that are not motorable. But the recent development of using motorcycles to move about for the purpose of killing and robbing people is worrisome and condemnable. Each time a motorcycle rider carrying one, or two males approaches one especially at night, it makes one to be gripped with fears because you are not sure they have good intentions.

"I think it is high time security operatives began to do stop and search for people riding on *Okada*. This will probably reduce the rate at which hoodlums move about with guns and other dangerous weapons to attack innocent members of the society," he said.

Aside from the Ikorodu axis of the state, *The Nation's* investigation revealed that Lagos' Badagry area is another environment where the use of motorcycle for assassinating people is on the rise.

It was learnt that no fewer than five people were recently killed in Ojo Awori

part of the area. Some residents, who spoke with our correspondent, said they have continuously been living under fears.

"The activities of these hoodlums are terrifying and making life unbearable for us in the whole area. They wield all manners of weapons and often ride on motorcycles to make their dirty jobs and escape faster. As I am talking to you now, no fewer than five young men have been gruesomely murdered by unknown gunmen. They don't use vehicles and hardly do they depend on their legs to run away from the scene of their criminality. They depend majorly on *Okada* to execute their dirty jobs.

"There is an urgent need for security operatives to beam search light on the activities of *Okada* riders in this area because there is every tendency that some of them are accomplices to these criminals. The most unfortunate thing is that many students are into commercial motorcycling. I guess some of these people provide the motorcycles for their

colleagues when they need to do their operations."

David, a journalist with one of the leading newspaper houses in the country described his recent encounter with some of such hoodlums as unforgettable.

Reliving his experience, he said: "I left for my house after the day's hectic work without any premonition of what was ahead. That fateful day, it rained cat and dog. I had passed through all known dark spots and was entering into my street when three young men on a motorcycle pulled up beside me. I didn't immediately know that I was their target as I continued humming one of my best songs of worship. Before I could take the next step after they parked beside me, they pointed guns at me. They placed the guns on my head and ransacked my pockets. They took all the money, wrist watch, two expensive phones and other valuables I had on me. The value of the cash and other valuables that I lost to them was over N500, 000. Luckily for me, they didn't see my small Nokia phone on which I stored most of my official contacts.

"As they were busy moving from one part of my pocket to the other, I was seriously sweating in that cold weather for fear that any of them could mistakenly pull the trigger. I was so frightened that I couldn't explain whether the water dripping from my trouser was my urine or the rain that drenched my clothes.

"When they were eventually done, they asked me to run without attempting to look back. Without waiting to be asked to begin to run, I started running in a manner I never did in my over 50 years of existence. I ran so fast that I passed the entrance of my house. I have continued to be haunted by that ugly experience as I always live in fear of being attacked again. My fears heighten each time a motorcycle is coming behind or in front of me."

Last week, some suspected hired

assassins riding on a motorcycle killed Michael Ogunnusi, the owner of the Allonze Hotel on Ishawo Road, Agric, Ikorodu, Lagos State.

Narrating how the incident occurred, an eyewitness said: "They entered into the hotel on a motorcycle. They deceived the gateman by telling him they wanted to book a room. But immediately he opened the gate, they beat up the security man and tied him up. Thereafter, they went to the man's room. One knocked at his door as if he was one of the hotel workers. As he opened the door, they opened gunfire on him."

A young lady, who identified herself simply as Ajoke, recounted how she narrowly escaped being raped by the hoodlums after they robbed her of her valuables.

"I work with a micro-finance bank in Igando area of Alimosho Local Government and had collected the sum of N34,000 from a client late in the evening. I couldn't take the money to the office and had to hide it in my underwear because of the activities of robbers in my area. My house is around Ojo Filling bus stop which has become a dark spot in recent times, especially late in the night and early in the morning.

"As I was going home around 8:30pm, a motorcycles pulled up beside me and before I knew what was happening, they had snatched my bag and when they saw nothing in it, they became furious and started ransacking my whole body. They searched every part of my body including my bra and pant until they saw the money where I tucked it. When they were done, one of them said, 'let us waste her'. But his colleague objected. Thereafter, he went on to suggest that they should rape me. At that point, I started praying and pleading the blood of Jesus to take control because there was nobody in sight to rescue me. God answered my prayer as his colleague once again objected to it. They subsequently pushed me away and sped off. The incident has left a serious scar in my memory. The sight of *Okada* riders, whether during the day or at night, instills fears in me. Criminals have infiltrated the business and hiding under it to unleash terror on innocent citizens.

Demola Sunday, a security officer, had his head broken with an axe by hoodlums riding on motorcycle on his way to work early in the morning. Narrating his ordeal in the hands of the criminals, Sunday said: "I always leave my house for work before 5am. I always leave early when I am on morning duty to avoid running into traffic and getting late to work. On this very day, I left home as usual and started walking to the bus stop as there were no commercial vehicles or motorcyclists to take me out by that time of the day. As I was walking out, I saw a young man on a motorcycle but I never suspected he could have any sinister motive being on the road by that time. He started the motorcycle and rode speedily past me. A few minutes after he drove past me, a motorcycle with two young men on it pulled up beside me. The one behind immediately brought out a small axe and cut my head with it. I fell and writhed in pains. Seeing that I had been emasculated, they came down



•Teenage suspects arrested