

The perennial confrontations and reprisal killings by the cult groups embroiled in supremacy battles pose serious threats to law and order in Ikorodu and several communities in Lagos. Of late, cult-related killings have assumed a different dimension in the community, as armed youths engaged in shootouts in broad daylight. A number of others have equally been maimed or mugged at parties and market places, resulting in palpable fear among residents.

On Tuesday January 13, 2016, five persons were killed and five others injured in a cult clash in Ikorodu. The fight between the Aye and Eiye confraternities was said to have started around 1am during Itunmeko street carnival. The fight broke out after the Eiye cult group killed two Aye (Black Axe) members who were invited to the carnival; they were said to have been killed on their way home. Those injured were transferred to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) and Ikorodu General Hospital.

Rampaging armed men also hacked a man to death on March 7, 2016 on Jaladugbo Street in Ikorodu. The deceased reportedly known as Sunshine was hacked to death by some cultists who shot sporadically before escaping on a motorcycle. Again, a 32-year-old surveyor, identified simply as Adekunle, and five others were shot dead in a hotel in Ikorodu on July 6, 2015, when suspected Eiye and Aiye confraternity members engaged in a shootout in a hotel in the Itumojia and Allison area of the community.

The violent clashes between the vicious gangs mostly occur in notable areas of Ikorodu, including Igbogbo, Odogunyan, Agbede, Odo Nla, Ita Oluwo, First and Second Gates, Odo Kekere, Ladega, Transformer and parts of Ogijo. The location of the Lagos State Polytechnic (LASPOTEC) to the residential area has also contributed to the escalation of clashes between contending cult gangs as members of Eiye Confraternity and others battle for supremacy endlessly. Findings revealed that the deadly clashes started in late 2014, after a member of Aiye gang accused a member of Eiye Confraternity of snatching his girlfriend. A few days later, the Eiye member was gruesomely murdered leading to series of reprisal attacks between the two rival gangs that has refused to abate to date.

Land grabbers

Dare-devil land grabbers have also spread fear among residents of Igbokuta, Ishawo, Imowo Nla, Imowo kekere, Isiu and Igbogbo areas of Ikorodu. On April 1, 2016, suspected land grabbers opened fire on aggrieved residents of Isiu community in an attempt to forcibly takeover their farmlands, leading to the death of an unidentified man.

Two weeks later, a father of three, Saheed Agbede, was also killed in the Ire-Agunfoye area of Igbogbo, Ikorodu, during an ambush by suspected land grabbers. A youth, Yinka Olatunji, was said to have been severely injured after some people described as land grabbers stormed Imowonla and attacked residents with machetes and guns.

An Imowonla indigene, Mr Olusegun Ajayi, who blamed the police for being 'ineffective', reportedly said: "I woke up around 6am and heard strange noise and gun shots. I wanted to use the toilet but I had to run back immediately for my life. They spoil our things, fired shots to scare women, came into our houses and flung away our things. We can't even stay in the house because of fear of being killed. We want the government to come to our rescue. We wonder how police officers will connive with land grabbers when Governor Akinwunmi Ambode has given an order that there should not be anything of such." Although a few arrests were made by the police shortly after the incidents but, according to residents, they are yet to be prosecuted.

The Nation learnt that some suspected cultists have also been engaging in land grabbing activities lately. Some of them, our correspondent gathered, are hired by rival property agents and family members to secure vast landed property as well as intimidate contending parties in a bid to forcibly take over ownership of controversial property.

The dislodging of pipeline vandals by military personnel from the creeks of Ikorodu is responsible for the relocation of vandals to some parts of the town where they have continued with their deadly operation and reign of terror on residents.

The proximity of the town to neighbouring communities in Ogun State has also made it easy for kidnappers to ferry their victims out of the community to evade arrest by security operatives. The waterways and coastal areas of Ikorodu and other areas of the state have also served as highway for robbery gangs and kidnappers to carry out deadly operations with little or no resistance from security forces.

For example, in June last year, a group of armed robbers successfully raided two commercial banks in Ipakodo Ebute near Ogo-Olonto in Ikorodu carting away unspecified amount of money. It was learnt that the robbers used speed boats in accessing and escaping from the community after the operation that lasted several hours.

