

# Teenage trader killed as Yoruba nation agitators hold Lagos rally

A young girl lay dead yesterday not far from the scene of the Lagos rally of Yoruba nation agitators at Ojota, with some witnesses claiming she was felled by a stray bullet fired by the police.

The police denied the accusation vehemently, claiming the corpse was not fresh and appeared to have a wound sustained from a sharp object.

Yoruba youth activist and frontline agitator for Yoruba nation, Sunday Igboho was absent at the rally. He had been listed as one of the speakers at the rally.

He has not been seen in public since the early Thursday raid of his Ibadan residence by operatives of the Department of State Security (DSS) who subsequently declared him wanted.

Igboho released an audio message yesterday to deny speculation that he was arrested on Friday along with Sat Guru Maharaji in Ibadan.

True to their vow, the Yoruba nation agitators defied the police and stormed the Gani Fawehinmi Freedom Square at Ojota, demanding the creation of Oduduwa Republic.

The police had warned that no rally would be allowed as it could be hijacked by hoodlums.

The turnout of protesters was low, probably about a hundred, including some traditionalists all of whom had white dresses on.

The women tied only wrappers around their body. They were led by a man who was also in white.

Much of the space stretching from Ketu to Ojota on the Lagos/Ikorodu Road was taken over by a combined team of soldiers, policemen, Lagos State Neighbourhood Watch, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Department of State Services.

They were led by Lagos State Police Commissioner Hakeem Odumosu.

They blocked one part of the road with their operational vehicles, armoured personnel carriers and water cannons, causing a massive traffic jam around the area.

Many commuters had to resort to walking. Some vehicles were stopped and searched along with their passengers by the security personnel for offensive materials.

It first appeared the rally would not take place in view of the large presence of the security agents and with no protester in sight.

But by 10 o'clock, the story suddenly changed when the protesters emerged with placards and flags.

Coming in tow were the traditionalists.

They burst into solidarity songs and chants.

The security personnel looked on, undisturbed.

But suddenly it all turned rowdy.

The security agents activated the water cannons and some canisters of tear gas were fired to disperse the crowd who immediately scampered to safety.

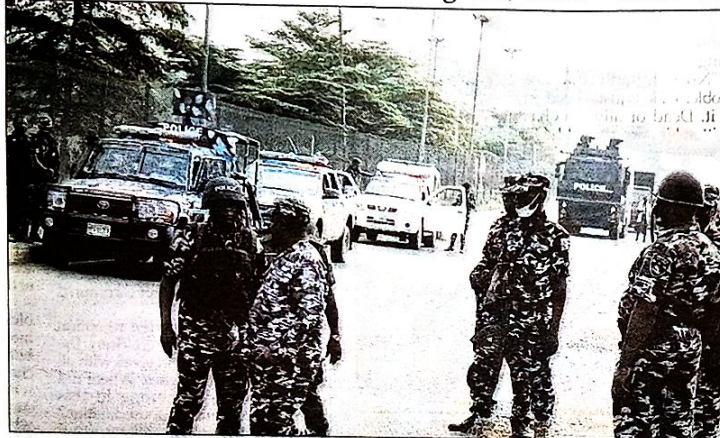
Some dashed across the expressway to the Ojodu side and behind the Total Filling Station.

About 30 of the protesters

•Police deny killing victim, arrest 30 protesters

•Our struggle will continue, say organisers

•Constitution requires Buhari crush Igboho, Kanu - NBA VP



•Heavy presence of police yesterday at Ojota, Lagos to prevent Yoruba Nation agitators from holding their rally. PHOTO: Biodun Williams

From Yusuf Alli, Abuja/  
Precious Igbon, Ibadan/  
Robert Egbe/Ala. Abiodun/  
Oanem Samuel/  
Gbenga Omokhunu, Abuja/  
Yinka Adeniran, Ibadan

were arrested by the police.

Among them was the driver who brought the traditionalists. Their vehicle, it was learnt, was also impounded.

Soon there was screaming that a female soft drinks hawker had been hit and killed by a stray bullet.

Her name was given as Jumoke, newly employed by one Tosin Oyemade.

Residents claimed that a bullet pierced her chest.

Said one resident: "As those ones were running into residential neighbourhood, the police chased them and were firing gunshots and teargas."

People including Jumoke took to their heels. It was while she was running to the back of the yard that a bullet hit her on the chest. It is painful that the police are claiming it is not a fresh corpse.

"Why didn't they say this when they came to check the body? They should have said it in the presence of the crowd if they were sure of their fact."

"Jumoke is not the owner of the shop. The owner was even in church but she had to come when they called her and told her what has happened. It is not long she started working for the woman."

None of the residents admitted seeing the bullet or shell.

Police deny killing teenager, say no live bullet fired

However, the Lagos State Police Command denied using live bullets during their encounter with the protesters.

Spokesman for the command, Olumuyiwa Adejobi, described the allegation as a calculated attempt to create confusion and fears in the minds of the people of Lagos State and the country at large.

"The command did not fire

a single live bullet at Ojota rally today," he said.

He added: "The said corpse was found wrapped and abandoned at a distance far from Ojota venue of the rally, behind MRS Filling Station, inward Maryland, on the other side of the venue, with dried blood stains suggesting that the corpse is not fresh."

"After a close look at the corpse, a wound suspected to have been sustained from a sharp object was seen on it."

"The news is false and misleading. The command therefore urges the public to disregard the news and go about their lawful normal daily activities while investigation to unravel the incident will commence immediately."

"The Commissioner of Police, Lagos State, CP Hakeem Odumosu, commiserates with the family of the found deceased and assures that thorough investigation will be carried out."

"The command equally wishes to warn against the spread or peddling of fake and unconfirmed stories as such could be dangerous and counterproductive."

Afenifere kicks, accuses FG of muzzling freedom of expression

Reacting to the police disbandment of the rally, Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, accused the Federal Government of muzzling freedom of expression in the country.

National Publicity Secretary of the group, Mr Jare Ajayi, said since Nigeria runs on democracy, "the citizens have a right to protest and express their opinion peacefully as long as it is done within the law." "For that reason, what Ilana Omo Oodua and those who organised the rally in Lagos have done is still within the legal permit of the country."

"Since the government of Lagos State has given an order that such a rally is suspended, we feel that the rally should have been suspended but not

because the government is right."

"This is just to show that we are law-abiding. This present government, particularly at the federal level is muzzling freedom of expression, freedom of association and trying to suppress any organisation, body or voice that it feels is against its policies."

"We are sure that if the Lagos rally was done in support of President Muhammadu Buhari, it is not likely to be stopped."

"In any case, the rally was not meant to be against this administration; it was planned to be an avenue to advocate or solicit for Yoruba Nation."

"Afenifere is a federalist and we maintain that, and we believe that people clamouring for secession have a right to clamour as long as it is done within the law and as long as they do not employ violence. We see no reason why government should stop them."

HURIWA condemns alleged killing of girl by stray bullet

Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA) expressed shock over the alleged killing of a young girl at the venue of the Yoruba Nation's protest in Lagos.

HURIWA condemned the incident and described the conduct of the Lagos State police command as outrageous, primitive and disgusting.

The group said the pursuit by dissatisfied citizens for self-determination is permitted under international law provided the agitations are constructive and peaceful.

HURIWA said: "We expected that the police would by now have learnt hard lessons on how to behave as law enforcement officers in a constitutional democracy, especially after the tumultuous national demonstrations against police brutality, torture and the deployment of extralegal

killings of detainees as a tool of policing by the Nigerian Police Force which took place last year."

"That epochal campaign by a mass of Nigerian citizens culminated in the reported abolition of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Nigerian Police Force known as the notorious killing squad within the policing institution in Nigeria."

"But sadly, the police doesn't seem to have changed its modus operandi and modus vivendi even after that near revolutionary movement against police brutality."

Lawyer: Killing of 14-year-old hawker unwarranted

Human rights lawyer, Adeola Oyinlade also condemned the alleged killing.

He said: "It is important to state that at this critical period in the life of our dear country, adherence to human rights and international standards is what the police need to gain the trust of the society while carrying out their duties lawfully."

"One should know that when live ammunition is used on protesters, there would be casualty. I do not see a justification or proportionality of firing live bullets in this case which has now resulted in the death of an innocent girl who did not commit any crime."

"The plethora of laws in force in Nigeria do not empower the Nigerian police to abuse firearms or kill any person at will."

"With a number of avoidable deaths recorded while quelling protests over the years in Nigeria, the police should immediately embrace human rights based approach to policing and ensure that the Nigerian Police actions are in accordance with the fundamental principles for the development of a fair and just society."

Constitution requires Buhari to crush Kanu, Igboho, says NBA Vice President

Taking a different stance on Federal Government's handling of secessionists, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) 1st Vice President, John Aikpokpo-Martins, said any President of Nigeria is constitutionally bound to crush secessionists like Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Igboho.

Mr Aikpokpo-Martins said under the Nigerian law, self-determination agitations are "simply unconstitutional".

He faulted secessionists' claim that agitation for self-determination is a fundamental right, noting that Chapter 4 (fundamental human rights guaranteed provisions) of the 1999 Constitution does not include the right to expressions seeking to divide the country.

The NBA official stated this in his personal capacity in a post on his Facebook page entitled, STIRRING THE HORNET'S NEST; THE MENS REA.

Aikpokpo-Martins said: "Let it be known that there is a major difference in the agitation of the Niger Delta

militants as led by Tompolo etc to the agitations of Boko Haram, IPOB and Sunday Igboho.

"Tompolo never agitated for a different country; this is very, very significant and must reflect on how he is treated."

"Whereas Boko Haram, IPOB and Sunday Igboho are agitating to carve different countries out of Nigeria, Tompolo never did that; he is a Nigerian and advocates for justice and equity albeit as a Nigerian and in Nigeria."

"Constitutionally, no President (whether he is a Buhari, Nnamdi, Babatunde, Ahmed, Osahon, Wike, Aker, etc) worth his job will treat those agitating for self-determination with kid's gloves; he is constitutionally and legally mandated and obliged to crush such people."

"You may mouth fundamental human rights to self-determination, etc, but the fact is the Nigerian constitution described Nigeria as one indivisible country; see section 2(1) of the 1999 constitution."

He explained that Buhari took an oath to defend the constitution, "so how can a President who swore to defend the constitution which contained a clause providing for the indivisibility of the country turn around to condone agitations for self-determination whether by peaceful and or violent agitations, when such agitations are directed at the core of the validity/legitimacy of the constitution he swore to defend?"

According to him, such agitations are "simply unconstitutional and the President is constitutionally bound to crush same."

He contended further that Chapter 4 (fundamental human rights guaranteed provisions) of the constitution that many rely on to defend protests, agitations and rallies to demand for a division of Nigeria into different countries "did not guarantee such expressions when such expressions or assemblages are directed at the validity and/or legitimacy of the constitution itself i.e. seeking a divisible Nigeria!"

"It is a legal, ideological and philosophical absurdity to rely on a constitution to which you seek to destroy to protect a right to destroy the same constitution!"

"The constitution must inherently and naturally protect and defend itself by denying any person or agitator any right that is inimical to its existence."

"So, those agitating to divide Nigeria cannot seek the protection of the constitution; it will not avail them. They can only seek to actualise their demands outside the purview and protection of the 1999 constitution by whatever means that they deem fit."

"The constitution and all organs and authorities that take legitimacy from the constitution will automatically be biased against such agitators, so they should not expect to be granted any benefits as of right."

Igboho speaks again: says he was never arrested

Embattled Sunday Igboho in a fresh statement yesterday denied speculations that he was arrested on Friday with Sat Guru Maharaji in Ibadan.

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