

## Bloody day in Lagos community

•Hoodlums kill policeman, abduct 13 others •Missing victims feared killed as bodies were seen floating on the lagoon •16 others hospitalised in critical condition

By KUNLE AKINRINADE On Feb 26, 2022



*No fewer than 13 persons were allegedly abducted while a policeman was hacked to death by suspected land grabbers who also wounded several residents of Etegbin community in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos, reports **KUNLE AKINRINADE**.*

February 14, 2022, was a black Monday in Etegbin, a riverine community located in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State.

The day, globally acclaimed for the celebration of love otherwise called Valentine's Day, had started on a peaceful note in the community as fun seekers stormed bars and restaurants to dine and wine with their loved ones.

But while people were enjoying the bliss on the day, they were oblivious of the ominous cloud that hung over the community. A few minutes past noon, a bloody attack by some hoodlums shattered the revelry and threw the community into pandemonium as residents ran for dear lives.

The hoodlums believed to be land grabbers stormed the community armed with guns, machetes, axes and other dangerous weapons, descending on some policemen stationed in the community to maintain law and order following the taking of possession by one Adeoku family after the court declared the family as the rightful owner of the landed property.

By the time the attack was over, the hoodlums had allegedly killed a mobile police sergeant, Edison Fulman, with Force Number 500314. The policeman was gruesomely stabbed to death after he was dispossessed of his rifle while his 16 other colleagues sustained varying degrees of injuries and are still on admission in a hospital where the fate of many of them hang in the balance.

No fewer than 13 workers of a businessman and property mogul, Chief Moruf Owonla, were also said to have been abducted by the hoodlums. They are Ganiyu Ogunbakinde; Olumide Omoakin; Jamiu Osama; Azeez Oloye; Akeem; Taiwo; Dayo, Wasiu, whose surnames are not known while others who narrowly escaped death were badly wounded by the hoodlums and rescued by men of the Ajangbadi Division.

According to sources, some of those abducted might have been killed as some bodies were sighted floating on the lagoon around the coastal community.

A resident who identified himself simply as Salau said: “Few days after the attack, bodies of some men, a few of them headless, were seen floating at the various axis of the surrounding lagoon, fuelling suspicions that some of those abducted may have been killed. Some of the bodies were headless and their killers may have deliberately severed their heads from their bodies to prevent people from recognising them,” he added.

An injured victim, Mrs. Omowunmi Adewale, said she was caught unawares by the hoodlums who attempted to hack her before she escaped by a whisker.

“But for Providence, I would have been killed by the hoodlums,” she said.

“I work as a caterer at a site here. The hoodlums were armed with machetes and guns. They brutalised me and one of them was about hacking me with a cutlass but I narrowly escaped before some policemen arrived from a nearby division.”

How it all began

A protracted legal tussle had ensued between one Adeoku Family and another family over the ownership of hectares of land in the community. The matter was heard by Justice O. Oshodi of the Lagos High Court sitting in Ikeja, who recently delivered judgment in favour of the Adeoku Family in 2013.

Following the judgment, a possession order was given by the court and a certificate of warrant of possession otherwise called Form ‘O’ was issued to the victorious family to take possession of the said property.

Subsequently, a team of 17 policemen drafted from the Zone 2 Police Headquarters, Lagos and the court sheriffs executed the warrant of possession on February 11, 2022.

The repossession of the landed property by the owner family led to a misleading alarm to the state authorities that some persons suspected to be land grabbers had invaded the community and held residents hostage.

The state government had subsequently dispatched a delegation led by the Commissioner for Local Government and Community Affairs, Dr. Wale Ahmed, to Etegbin to confirm the alleged invasion by hoodlums.

State Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Cornelius Ojelabi, who was part of the delegation, explained that the visit was aimed at preventing a breakdown of law and order.

Ojelabi, during the visit, promised that both parties would be invited to a roundtable to resolve the matter amicably and urged residents to eschew violence and reprisals.

A resident, Ramoni Adio, told The Nation that some persons behind the attack had actually raised the false alarm to the state government after the possession of the landed property was taken on February 11, 2021.

“The state government consequently dispatched a delegation comprising senior government officials to the community on February 14. Unfortunately, the hoodlums seized the opportunity of the delegation’s visit to storm the community and unleash terror as soon as the government officials left,” Adio said.

He explained further that the hoodlums destroyed several properties on the land, including hotels and filling stations, and moved around the community with machetes and guns to harass residents and people perceived to be close to the owner family.

”The hoodlums came in a convoy of several vehicles and motorcycles and freely moved around with machetes and guns attacking policemen and killing a policeman while they also injured several residents and abducted some men working on a site belonging to a real estate developer,” he added.

#### Businessman cries to police over attack

In a petition to the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID), Alagbon, Lagos, Chief Owonla, whose workers were abducted and injured by the rampaging hoodlums, urged the Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) in charge of the investigative department to order a thorough investigation into the incident with a view to arresting the perpetrators and their sponsors.

In the petition dated February 15, 2022, Owonla said he got ownership of his property through the judgment given in favour of his landlords, the Adeoku Family.

The petition reads: “It was quite a pathetic situation and with a heavy heart to lay my complaint concerning what happened to my workers and manager at Etegbin and the event that led to the gruesome murder of Sergeant Edison Fulman and so many of my workers that are missing and yet to be confirmed dead.

“The fact in issue was that my landlord from whom I derived my title to Etegbin property got a judgment in their favour which was fully guaranteed and confirmed with a certificate of warrant of possession, Form ‘O’ given in favour of Adeoku Family of Etegbin in suit no ID/2370/94; CA/L/415/03 and BDM /6M/2009 dated

8th September 2013 and revalidation of possession to give credence to the judgment for the second time was carried out on Friday, February 11, 2022.

“Immediately after the possession, peace and tranquillity pervaded the village without let or hindrance and we have started enjoying peaceful possession since then.

“On Monday, February 14, 2022, my manager, who was at my gas station to oversee my real estate property, equally at Etegbin, briefed me adequately about the dastardly destruction of lives and property and arson which took place that day in a high-level conspiracy and scheming orchestrated and executed by hired armed hoodlums led by the suspects below, despite the peaceful possession given to us by a court of competent jurisdiction as the judgment creditors, to enjoy the fruit of our lawful possession.”

He added: “The moment the suspects came into the village with hired armed thugs and hoodlums (including) dreaded cultists, they started shooting sporadically in a scaring tactic to create panic and confusion in the relatively peaceful village and began to terrorise our workers and standby policemen from Zone 2 Police Command.’

“In the process, Sergeant Edison Fulman from Zone 2 Command dropped dead while many of our workers were missing but yet to be confirmed dead, and these among others include Ganiyu Ogunbakinde; Olumide Omoakin; Jamiu Osama; Azeez Oloye; Akeem; Taiwo; Dayo and Wasiu.”

Owonla claimed that one Shakiru and over 50 others were complicit in the matter, urging the police to “apprehend the culprits via conducting a wide-angle investigation into this report to know the degree of their complicity in crime and notoriety in criminality, lawlessness, extra-judicial conducts, conspiracy over time and to allow me unfettered access to my gas station and real estate property at Etegbin devoid of hired hoodlums attack, intimidation and harassment whatsoever...”

Responding via a text message to inquiries from our correspondent, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) of the Lagos State Command, Mr. Adekunle Ajisebutu, said the “Zone 2 Police Command is handling the matter.”

Contacted, the spokesperson for Zone 2 Police Command, Hauwa Idris-Adamu, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), promised to revert to an inquiry sent to her mobile phone by our correspondent.

“Will confirm and revert back pls,” she said in her reply via a WhatsApp message. She had not however replied as promised at press time.