

INSIDE THE STATES

How royal family lost three members in battle for vacant stool in Ogun community

The mayhem between two factions in Agosasa community, Ipokia Local Government Area, Ogun State over the selection and installation of a new monarch resulted in loss of lives and property. Kunle Akinrinade reports that a royal family whose young members were killed during the crisis is crying for justice.

MEMBERS of Amosun royal compound in Agosasa community, Ipokia Local Government Area, Ogun State are yet to come to terms with the pall of grief that fell on them after a mayhem that broke out in the battle for a royal stool.

The family lost no fewer than three of its members to the crisis that engulfed the entire town during which buildings and vehicles were torched by irate youths from the warring factions.

There had been tension in the community over who would become the next monarch following the death of the Oja of Agosasa, Oba James Elegbede, in February 2022.

The prevailing tension peaked on Sunday, September 11 when a mob comprising youths of the town trooped out to the streets to protest what they termed an attempt by another faction to install another candidate as the monarch of the town while another candidate was already undergoing traditional seclusion and rites for ascension to the throne.

The irate youths claimed that a socialite, Otunba Akeem Adigun, was the brains behind the attempt to install an unpopular candidate as the monarch.

The protest turned bloody when both factions attacked each other during which no fewer than five persons, including three members of the Amosun royal family, namely Nofiu, Wasiu and Fatai, were gruesomely killed.

It took the intervention of soldiers and policemen to bring the situation under minimal control after lives and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed.

At the family house of the Amosuns on Thursday, a crowd of sympathisers and family members gathered for the eight-day fidaus prayers for the repose of the souls of the slain youths.

The crowd was overwhelmed with grief and emotion as siblings, children and wives of some of the deceased youths lamented the dastardly killing of their breadwinners, calling for justice.

The Head of the Amosun family, Oseni Amosun, declined comments, saying that he was too downcast to speak on the cruel fate that befell the slain family members.

However, one of the chieftains of the family, Emmanuel Oluwaseun Amosun, recalled how the three young members of the family were killed in cold blood.

He said: "Nafiu is my older brother. A day before the incident, precisely on Sunday, September 11, he asked me in the morning where I was and I told him I was at home. He asked me to see him when I returned from work on Monday, September 12.

"Around 1 pm on Monday, I started receiving phone calls from some of my friends and associates that Nafiu a.k.a. Marine had been shot dead by some members of a faction rooting for the installation of a parallel monarch in the community. I was told that his killers who rode on a Hilux van pushed him into the gutter while he was on a motorbike around the Odo Afa area of the community.

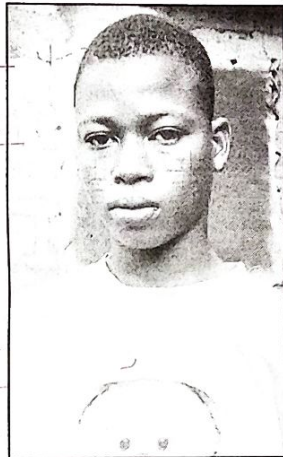
"I was told that my brother was lying in a pool of blood after he was shot, stabbed and soaked with a chemical substance by his assailants. I was told the hoodlums told him repeatedly 'You will die today' before they eventually killed him.



• The late Amosun



• Amosun's widow, Tope



• Amosun's eldest son, Afeez



• Amosun's twins, Taiwo and Kehinde.

"A sympathiser rushed him to a hospital but doctors at the hospital rejected him because his situation was pathetic. He was subsequently taken by family members and friends to the alternative medical centre for extraction of the bullets that lodged in his body but he died while efforts were being made to save his life."

Emmanuel said further that two other members of the family were gruesomely killed a few hours after Nafiu was shot dead.

He said: "While family members and friends were returning from where Nafiu died, they were also ambushed by the same gang and two other members of the family, Fatai Fadeyi and Wasiu were killed while Fadeyi's body was taken away by the hoodlums."

"Two other members of our family, who were seated in front of our family house, were attacked by some military personnel working for the other faction, and they have since been taken away and we don't know their whereabouts."

"We reported the matter to the police at the Ipokia Division and it took some days to obtain a police

report, hence, we could not even bury two of the deceased persons on time."

Mrs. Aberi Fadeyi, a sister to deceased Nafiu, recalled how her brother was killed in the crossfire on Monday September 12.

She said: "Nafiu was with us at the family house, because he lives with our Kabiyesi (the Oba-elect) and we were playing together when he told me that he wanted to get an item at the nearby Ibatase axis of the community."

"Suddenly, one of our aunts rushed in, lamenting that our younger brother had been shot and was found in a pool of blood."

"We were told that some loyalists of the opponent were responsible for the shooting. As if that was not enough, I started receiving calls from various friends and associates when those who took my brother to a native doctor for the purpose of saving his life by extracting bullets from his body were again attacked by the same persons that shot Nafiu (43).

"Another brother of mine, Fatai, was tied and beaten to death while he was trying to rescue Wasiu Ibikunle (48) who was hacked to death."

"They have killed all male

members of our family, leaving only we women. We want a thorough investigation of the cruel killing and justice for our brothers killed in cold blood."

"They are still going from house to house killing people, and the men have fled the town for fear of being killed, leaving behind only we women."

Attempt to speak with the widow of the late Nofiu Amosun, Mrs. Tope Amosun was futile as the woman, overcome with emotion, declined comments. The three children of the deceased, Afeez, Fatai, Taiwo, and Kehinde Amosun were equally downcast, hence, they could not speak with our correspondent.

One of the sympathisers told our correspondent that the killing of the three youths was orchestrated to silence the family whose leading member is the new monarch of the community.

"The killing of youthful members of the family was a well-orchestrated callous act to silence the family after the attempt to install an unpopular candidate as monarch was resisted by indigenes of this community."

"The three members (of the family) were simply marked for extermination and it is quite sad that the killers are almost getting away with their fiendish act."

"The police authorities and state government must ensure the masterminds are promptly fished out and prosecuted no matter how highly placed they are in the society, in the interest of justice and equity."

In the wake of the violence that swept through Agosasa, vehicles and buildings belonging to Adigun and a former Chairman of Ipokia Local Government and current appointee of Governor Dapo Abiodun, Isiaka Aderounmu, among others, were razed by a mob as residents fled the community for fear of being killed by the warring factions.

An apprentice painter was said to have also been attacked with machetes by the hoodlums and he is currently battling for life in an undisclosed hospital at a location he was moved to.

A source said: "Innocent persons who don't have anything to do with the face-off over the ascension to the stool in the community were also victims of the crisis."

"A boy, Kabir Mustafa, who is a painter, was also among the residents attacked by the hoodlums suspected to be loyal to a faction in the crisis. The boy was attacked with machetes and his arms and hands were mercilessly cut by the hoodlums."

"He has since been moved out of the community and he is currently in a pathetic situation at an undisclosed location where he is being treated."

The Nation had reported penultimate Sunday that there was a political undertone to the crisis, with the face-off between the camps of Chief Akeem Adigun a.k.a. Socopao and a former House of Representatives member and governorship candidate.

Adigun, whose buildings and vehicles were destroyed during the mayhem, claimed the crisis was fuelled and heightened by contest for elective positions in the forthcoming 2023 general elections. He fingered an unnamed chieftain of the Allied People's Movement (APM) of masterminding the crisis in Agosasa.

Adigun said: "Politics of 2023 is the real political undertone of the crisis. If it was an ordinary kingship tussle, how would it get to the extent of burning the APC Secretariat? How would it get to the extent of burning the property of the Agosasa APC ward chairman? How would it go to affecting the political appointees of APC with the official vehicles of the state government Basic Education Board (SUBEB) being burnt down?"

"The mastermind of the dastardly act is an APM chieftain. The wife is an APM member currently holding office at one of the arms of Ogun State Government with the backing of a failed governorship candidate in the last election."

"They have already installed somebody without informing the government and without following any due process. The person is Sunday Abogunrin and he has run away from the town," Adigun said.

Governor Dapo Abiodun, has however promised to go after the sponsors and perpetrators of mayhem in Agosasa town of Ipokia Local Government Area of the state over the obaship tussle.

Abiodun expressed shock that despite his incessant calls that violence must not be seen as a viable option to settle grievances, some persons under the guise of vying for a vacant stool of Oja of Agosasa, resorted to stoking the embers of intra-communal clash.

He said that his administration would not allow the breakdown of law and order, vowing that perpetrators of the Agosasa mayhem would not go unpunished.

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