



'Fraudsters give the impression that the streets are paved with free cash and they are just picking and spending. But, the reality is: You have to sweat it out to make ends meet. You have to earn every single kobo and if you engage in illegal activities or break the law, even if innocently, you will face the music'

OLUKOREDE YISHAU

COMMENT & DEBATE

ACCORDING to the wisdom of the elders, as long as there is an infestation of lice on our attire, we cannot avoid blood stain on our fingers. Lord knows that there is a colony of lice on our national attire, so we have embarrassing blood-stained fingers. There's perhaps no better evidence of our body lice infiltration than in our security architecture. It would be easy to brush this aside as one of those things which shouldn't cause a national hypertension if it doesn't involve the unpardonable loss of innocent lives.

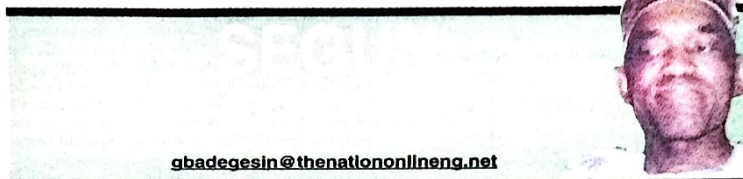
I pleaded with my editors to use the picture illustration of this piece today because I want you as readers and the leaders of this country to experience the heartache that I suffered when I saw it. I am aware that we read of kidnappings for ransom on an hourly basis. I know that our consciousness has been numbed to the reality of life in our jungle of existence that we glorify as a nation. But if there is still some modicum of human feeling in us, this is the time to summon it.

I want this picture to get fixed in the hippocampus of everyone who sees it, not as a tormentor, but as a catalyst for necessary action. I pray that no one who sees this picture will ever remain the same until they participate in the action needed to bring sanity to the security of lives and property in this nation. It is my desire that, with this picture, no leader or follower, no politician or activist, woman or man, will know or experience rest until they contribute to a lasting solution and it is found.

The young man lying in his pool of blood wasn't an armed robber meeting a deserved end. This young man was in the right place, where as a nation, we expect him to be.

Michael Adeyemi was from Ile Ogbu in Iwo. He worked at a poultry farm at the Farmers Settlement along Okaka-Iseyin Road in the Okeogun axis of Oyo state. From media reports, he was killed when kidnappers exchanged gunfire with security operatives who tried to rescue him and other kidnap victims. And as reported, subsequent to his death, the kidnappers raised their ransom fee for the surviving victims to N40m. Michael left his hometown in search of livelihood at the farm settlement. He was doing the job that he signed-up for. That was until, the wrong people, visited him and his fellow workers.

When armed Kidnappers with AK-47 showed up, what is a normal human reaction in such a situation? Instinctively, you will try and run for your life. Encouraged by the intervention of security



gbadegesin@thenationonlineeng.net

Still on insecurity



•The late Adeyemi

operatives, that was what this young man did. And he was gunned down as he fled for his life! Now, we are hearing more about the perpetrators as some of them have been apprehended and are confessing. We know their background as herdsmen turned kidnappers. They have their nests in the forests across the land, both north and south.

Primate Uche of the Methodist Church told the nation in a life press conference about his encounter with them and what they told him was their mission. Yet, as a country, we pretend that nothing is amiss as our national leaders cling to a one size fits all security mentality. They insist on doing the same thing the same way over and over again even as the result continues to be an abject failure. Yet they are not insane. But what do the wise tell us is the definition of insanity again? I wonder.

The foremost rationale for any political community's coming into being is the security of members. People can fend for themselves and eke out a living no matter how meager, if they are safe and se-

cure. But notice now how farmers are afraid of going to the farm and thus becoming more and more impoverished. A government that is keen on alleviating poverty cannot afford to pooh-pooh the importance of security. In the same manner, you cannot attract foreign direct investment in an environment of insecurity. The travel advisory by the United States, UK, and other western countries should therefore be of concern. But it is what it is!

For a long time, the nation has imposed the responsibility of governments on middle and upper class families across the nation. They procure water for their needs with boreholes since governments are incapable of providing potable water. They generate power for their use with electricity generators. We have abandoned water dam projects across the land which can produce water and power; but since at least 1999, no administration has considered it urgent to resuscitate and make them work for the good of citizens. With power and water, upper middle class folks are coping. Forget about the poor and wretched of the earth. Who cares what their lot is?

For security also, the wealthy are unperturbed. They have fortified mansions, and they can afford to hire the most reliable security personnel. They don't have to travel our highway death traps. They can fly in private jets or helicopters. And that's what they do. So, they have no idea what our people go through and this chatter about insecurity is just that: the blabber of nauseating nuisance coming from those with nothing good for the use of their time.

Otherwise why would a government that cares insist on monopolizing the security of citizens when every evidence shows its ineffectiveness? Even when Governors have security funds that they don't have to account for, and some with conscience have expressed an interest in using those funds to procure weapons for their security personnel, created by the legislative authorities of their states, the federal government blocks their ef-

forts. Why? Are federal authorities happy that innocent lives are being lost? Is their truly a hidden agenda as many have alleged?

Southwest governors initiated the Western Nigeria Security Network code-named Amotekun to complement the efforts of the federal police. Rather than commend their efforts, federal authorities rose up in arms to frustrate them. The governors asked for permits for the operatives of Amotekun to carry weapons as their counterparts up North do. They were turned down.

It makes no security sense that the police-civilian ratio is so low and our police officers often wade through security situations with their hands tied to their back while criminals operate with the most sophisticated gadgets, including advanced communication tools and high grade weapons. So, when they are overwhelmed, instead of making themselves sacrificial lambs in a country where heroes are treated as fools, they do what their survival instincts dictate; they take to their feet. But our leaders don't care. They play games with the lives of the citizens whom they took an oath to protect.

A few weeks ago, on this page, I praised the courage of Northern Governors and traditional rulers for rallying for state police. I then thought that the gesture was a breakpoint in the back and forth on the desirability, and indeed, necessity of moving policing to the local jurisdictions where it matters most. Everyone that has anything to do with this issue knows what happens in other climes where, while crime and criminality occur, they are not to the level of national paralysis that we are here in. Yet leaders play the ostrich.

Since the news conference announcing the position of Northern stakeholders on the matter of state police, however, I haven't heard of any follow-up movements. Is something going on behind the scene? Or was that announcement one of those stage-managed affairs meant to pull wool in the eyes of the public?

In the midst of the unfortunate insensitivity on the part of government, it is up to patriotic individuals, groups and associations to take upon themselves the security of lives and properties in their various communities. That's what many of our people are doing, raising funds and supporting volunteers combing the forest hideouts of criminal elements. These group efforts need the support of well-meaning individuals who still have human feeling and the benefit of a conscience that pricks.