

"You see that man?" he lowered his voice. "He is a member of Toba's gang. He is one of those who killed that young man weeks ago."

Why was he not arrested? How come they were all allowed to walk about the neighbourhood, freely, as if nothing happened?

"Well, everybody's hands are tied. You don't know who they work for. You know, they have no real jobs. That's why they are here fomenting trouble. If a vehicle should break down right now along this road, you would see them all. They would gather around the vehicle and begin to extort money from the driver. It is worse if it is a truck or other large vehicles. These LASTMA officials you see standing under the bridge... they would join them. They all work together. Some of them are the ones at bus stops extorting money from "danfo" drivers and conductors. My house is very close to this place, and I have my own business here, so I know these people. Everybody in Fadeyi knows them."

Cover up

Like many residents, this source believes that the gangs are shielded by people in authority.

"You cannot say the government is not aware," he said. "They know these people. Toba used to terrorise the people of Mushin before he was expelled from the area, and then he moved to Fadeyi and became even more powerful. He has been arrested before, but the politicians released him months before the election because they needed him and his gang members in order to win the election. We know who these politicians are. Anytime Toba and his men commit a crime, they all cross the road and hide at the other side of Fadeyi. After a few days, they return. It's been on like this for many years. The police and other law enforcement agents are involved in this thing."

Mushin

If Fadeyi has been chaotic, Mushin is even more so. Indeed, many say it all began at Mushin. Even more troubling is the many instances of killings that have been witnessed within the area.

Kazeem Kuye, one of the youth leaders at Mushin, related an incident he witnessed at Mushin some months ago.

"It happened at Ogunmokun Street. It is a street that connects Mushin to Fadeyi. We just heard gunshots. It was in the evening. After the whole commotion, we saw that two people had been killed at the same time. One of them was a pregnant woman."

Indeed, according to Kuye, the incidents at both Fadeyi and Mushin are "very connected", and are a part of what he called "cult rivalry."

"Yes, yes, they are very connected," he said. "They are connected because the ring leader Toba migrated from Mushin to Fadeyi. It is cult rivalry and it has been going on for a long time. I think it is the politicians who hire these thugs during campaign. They always arm them. It's these weapons they use thereafter to terrorise people."

"We are willing to expose them"

Law enforcement agents have always maintained that they have inadequate information to make any arrests. Indeed, DSP Kenneth Nwosu was recently quoted in a national daily as saying that the case against the gangs would be stronger if residents could volunteer information about the leaders:

"...we need information that would enable us to arrest the kingpins of these gangs from the general public. Once we achieve this, the foot soldiers won't be able to operate like they are doing now."

However, according to another resident of Mushin who did not wish to be named, many honest people live in Mushin and Fadeyi, and are ready to provide information that will lead to the arrest of the gang members.

"The police are not being truthful if they say they don't know those people," the middle-aged man told **Saturday Tribune** on Tuesday. "But if really they don't, what have they done in order to find out? Who did they ask? So, please, tell them to come, we will show them who these people are. We are willing to do anything in order to ensure that our neighbourhood is safe."