

# Fulani herdsmen kill woman, 3-month old daughter in Ibadan

• Save us from the onslaught of herdsmen who rob, kill at will, villagers cry out

CRIME EDITOR, OLUWATOYIN MALIK was at a village in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State where a 30-year-old mother of three and her three-month-old baby were shot at and killed by suspected Fulani herdsmen who ambushed her and others, and robbed them of their valuables.

**T**HURSDAY, February 1, 2018 Opabunmi village an Ibadan settlement off the Moniya-Ijaiye Road in Akinyele Local Government Area of Oyo State was sore. The hitherto serene atmosphere pierced with wailings from the family of a certain Mr Badmos and the other village residents.

One of them, 30-year-old Mrs Mariam Badmos, was to be buried with her three-month-old baby at the backyard of her husband's house in the village.

About 18 hours before then, Mrs Badmos, popularly called Iya Fathia was vibrant, full of life and happy to have witnessed the end of January. But at about 8:00p.m on the last day of the month just ended, her life and that of her baby were brutally cut short allegedly by Fulani herdsmen on her way home with her husband and others after closing from their different shops at Akinyele community. She was interred at about 1:30p.m, with the small grave of her daughter beside hers.

Speaking with Saturday Tribune after the burial, the Baale of Opabunmi Village, Alhaji Rafiu Akinpelu expressed anger on the way the Fulani herdsmen had constituted a menace to the residents of the village and other surrounding ones.

Alhaji Akinpelu also expressed disappointment on the governments attitude in not protecting its people from the onslaught of their attackers.

According to the community head, "I was not around when the incident occurred and I didn't hear anything. But this morning, as I set to check my nearby farm, I heard people wailing. I enquired from them what happened and the people told me that it was one of our villagers, popularly called Iya Fathia.

They said she and others were robbed by Fulanis on their way home the previous night, after which the robbers still shot at them. It was the pellets from the cartridge that hit the baby and penetrated her mother's body. So the mother and daughter died.

I learnt the incident occurred at Agbirigidi, a nearby community which is about eight minutes ride on motorcycle from Opabunmi village, on the way to Akinyele community.

"From time immemorial, herdsmen had created a grazing route around Agbirigidi village. There is also NNPC pipeline there.

"As I was told, the deceased was in a Liteace bus with seven others - five adults and three children. Her husband owned the bus and was the one driving. The couple had their shops at Akinyele community and were heading home at about 8:00p.m., when the herdsmen jumped out of the bush and dispossessed the occupants of the bus.

"After robbing them, they still shot the deceased and her child."

**Saturday Tribune** learnt that though the building at which backyard the late woman and her child were buried belonged to her husband, they were living in the next village to Opabunmi, called Adetola village, about two minutes ride from Opabunmi village.

The Baale said that the criminal activities of the Fulanis were not new, but had been incessant. He said that when the police from Moniya Division came to the area, after the case was reported on Wednesday, they recovered a motorcycle hidden in the bush while combing it to see if the armed herdsmen would still be there.

The community head appealed to the federal and state governments to act quickly to stop the activities of the herdsmen who use cattle herding as a cover to perpetrate crime.

"The government should come to our help so that the Fulanis will not wipe us out totally. It is not as if we cannot fight for ourselves and avenge the killings, but we know what the law says about killing, and we don't want to violate the law.

"The Yoruba people are not lazy people; they also have their sources of strength. But if we start, we know what the consequences will be. That is why we are incapacitated.

"Unfortunately, all those we elected into positions are not doing anything because they know that the Fulanis cannot get to where they are because of the security built around them."

## How it happened

One of the passengers, Amodu Oladapo, who was in the bus when the herdsmen ambushed them, told **Saturday Tribune** that the vehicle's clutch was bad. Narrating the how the incident happened, Oladapo said: "As the driver made to change gear, the Fulani robbers came out of the bush from the left and right, swooping on the vehicle.



The body of the late woman being conveyed to burial site. Inset: The baby's head with visible signs of pellets' penetration.

"They were many; they would be more than 10. They gripped the driver who was the deceased's husband but he appealed to them not to hurt him, saying that he knew they needed money. My wife was sitting by the right door, in front with the driver and his wife.

Some of the Fulani robbers held on to my wife too. They brought my wife out of the bus and took her a little bit into the bush. Because it was dark, they didn't know that some of us were at the back of the bus.

"One of them later sighted and raised a big stick to hit us. I started begging him, saying 'du Allah, du Allah' repeatedly. Then I heard my wife telling them: 'Akoi kudi, akoi kudi', as she made to open the money pouch she tied round her waist.

"When the one who stood watch over us heard 'akoi kudi', he left us for where his gang members were with my wife. I and one Rasheed Adebayo seized the opportunity to escape.

"We saw the vehicle of a company in the community approaching and we stopped the driver, telling him of our experiences. At that time, the Fulanis released the women after they had collected their money and phones. The women started running towards us.

"They had yet to release the driver who they took inside the

bush to collect all the valuables they could find on him. We were waiting for him when, suddenly, we heard a loud bang, as the Fulani robbers shot at us. They didn't leave the spot they were as they shot. We didn't even know that the pellets hit anybody. Even the deceased did not know that she and her child were hit. The only thing she said was that her hand was feeling heavy and she could not lift it.

"She found it hard to stand on her feet, so I raised her hand and noticed blood oozing out. I asked one of us to remove the baby she was backing and immediately that one did, he noticed that the baby was dead. The hijab that was used to cover the baby's head was soaked with blood.

"As the woman was about to collapse, I held her by the waist to support her. We saw her husband running towards us, asking what happened. I took the young children with us home while she was rushed to a nearby hospital.

"The pellets entered the baby head and body and also penetrated the mother's body and sides.

"When I returned to the spot, I met some vigilance group members and they started calling others. The police were also alerted and they came.

"Before the victim died in the hospital, she was begging that she should be taken care of because she was in pain. **Saturday Tribune** learnt that the deceased gave birth to five children but lost two before the last child was killed along with her on Wednesday. She left two children behind."

The narration was corroborated by another occupant of the bus, Rasheed Adebayo, who said she was afraid to pull the baby from her mother's back, and when he did, he discovered that she was already dead.

The deceased's older brother, Muideen Akitunde, who was visibly angry, expressed disappointment at the way the deceased was treated at the hospital she was taken, saying that the case that should be seen as needing emergency treatment, was trivialized with the issue of registration before she could be attended to.

He said he came from Lagos State where he was, immediately he got a call, intimating him of the fate that had befallen his immediate younger sister.

Akitunde said: "We don't have a good government. Please record me on tape and video. I repeat: we don't have a government. We have no money like they do to take ill people abroad for treatment. But it is so bad that when my sister was taken to the hospital where she died, they were asking for her hospital card."

"Should that be the next thing? Someone they saw in excruciating pain; with pellets buried in her body. Is the card most important at that time? Or try and save her even if she eventually dies?"

Akitunde said his sister was in her 30th year when she was killed.

"She had complained that she was tired of staying in a rural area, but I encouraged her to stay on. If I had known, I would have supported her in moving out of the place," he said regretfully.

Oyo State police spokesman, Adekunle Ajisebutu when contacted told **Saturday Tribune** that he was aware of the case and that investigations were ongoing. He added that the Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Odude has ordered a manhunt for the culprits.

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