

① Missing Osun widow found murdered by clerics, body parts removed

•Four in police net

Adeolu Adeyemo | Osogbo

FOUR suspects, two of them clerics, have been arrested in connection with the murder of a middle-aged widow, Ashiata Yekeen Salimon, in Ileogbo, Ayedire Local Government Area of Osun State.

The victim had disappeared four weeks ago before a search mounted by distraught community members resulted in the discovery of her mutilated body and the arrest of her suspected killers.

It was gathered that the victim had been invited to the house of the prime suspect, said to be an *alfa*, where she disappeared. The family thereafter declared her missing.

The concerned community members, after exhausting all available means of finding

Asiata, had reportedly decided to visit the house of the prime suspect, who reportedly fled the community.

The prime suspect was said to have been arrested in Lalupon, Lagelu Local Government Area of Oyo State, by men of the anti-kidnapping squad of the Osun State police command.

A police source said the suspect provided clues that led to the arrest of another accomplice in the crime, one *alfa*, in the early hours of Wednesday.

Sources said the prime suspect had invited that accomplice from Iwo to slaughter her and her body parts removed apparently for ritual purposes.

Another suspect arrested in connection with the crime, from Kuta, a neighbouring town, according to police source, is currently being detained at the homicide section

of the state Criminal Investigation Department in Osogbo.

The source said that thorough investigations had begun to fish out all those connected with the gruesome murder.

The prime suspect reportedly led the police to his backyard on Tuesday where what remained of the woman's corpse was buried in a shallow grave. Her vital parts were found missing.

Pathological examination and autopsy were reportedly conducted on Wednesday while the remains have been released to her family for burial.

Police are said to be on the trail of other accomplices based on the confession of the prime suspect.

National president of Ile-Ogbo Unity Forum, Mr Anthony Owolabi, condemned the act and said that security had been intensified in the community to discourage ritual killings and

other criminal acts.

Owolabi said since the murder of Ashiata came to light, a series of security meetings had been held by stakeholders to map out strategies on tackling such criminal act and other crimes in the community.

He said normalcy was gradually returning to the community and commended those who participated actively in seeing to the arrest of the suspects.

A relation of Ashiata who identified himself as Mubarak Salimon, told our correspondent that the family had handed over the matter to God.

He, however, commended the police on the job done so far in seeing that the perpetrators were brought to justice.

Salimon also thanked the traditional ruler, other leaders of the community, Ile-Ogbo Unity Forum, members of the community, operatives of

the Amoketun Corps and local hunters for ensuring order in the community and for their roles in the arrest of the suspected killers.

The coordinator of Forum for Greater Ile-Ogbo Kingdom, Mr Tayo Akanni, told *Saturday Tribune* that the arrest of some of the people linked with the heinous act had been through the support of the forum, the entire members of the community and the traditional ruler of the town, Oba Abeeb Adetoyese Agbaje.

According to Akanni, the president of the forum, all inhabitants of the community partook in the search for "the killers."

He also commended the state police command, the Amotekun Corps, local hunters and other security operatives who acted promptly on the matter.

Mr Akanni described the

widow's killing as barbaric and pledged that all necessary measures would be taken to stop ritual killings and other crimes in the community.

"We are a peaceful people in Ile-Ogbo and all efforts will be made to wage war against ritual killings, cultism and other nefarious activities in the community," he said.

Efforts to get the state Police Public Relations Officer, Mrs Yemisi Opalola, to comment on the matter were futile.

But the commander of Amotekun Corps in the state, Amitolu Shittu, speaking on the incident, warned members of the public against ritual killings and other criminal activities.

Shittu gave the assurance that his security outfit would not relent in waging war against criminal elements in the society.

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