

Police uncover another illegal detention camp

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THE Oyo State Police command on Friday uncovered another illegal detention camp in Ojoo area of Ibadan where at least 60 inmates were allegedly tortured to death and buried secretly in the last two years.

The victims claimed that they were turned to cannibals as they were forced to prepare and eat the remains of their dead colleagues with their captors.

The police said 92 inmates were rescued from the centre after spending between three days and seven years, while 11 suspects working with the prime suspect, Alfa Mohammed Olore, were arrested.

For eight years running, the suspect said he had managed the Olore Arabic School and Rehabilitation Centre at Ojoo, where any misdemeanour by the inmates attracts 200 lashes.

Exhibits recovered from the suspects were three cars, N32,000, three spades, concoctions, a jar of black soap and plastic container with reddish water allegedly drained from the corpses of the dead inmates.

The victims were said to have been taken to the centre, mostly by their parents for rehabilitation from mental illness, drug abuse and waywardness; while some were there allegedly for

spiritual cleansing and Quranic education.

Parading the inmates and suspects at the Special Anti-Robbery Squad on Saturday, the Assistant Inspector-General of Police in charge of the command, Mr. Udom Ekpoudom, said the latest discovery was shocking.

This is coming on the heels of the arrest, last Friday, of an Islamic teacher, AbdulGaniyu Imoniyi, who operated an illegal detention camp at Eleta, Ile-tuntun area of Sanyo where 23 victims were rescued.

Another Islamic cleric, Alfa Ali Ademola, was arrested at Orogun area of Ibadan, last week for allegedly torturing a trainee to death.

On Saturday, an Islamic leader, Alhaji Azeez Arisekola-Alao, was one of the early callers at the SARS, who the police said was on an ostensible mission to offer assistance to the rescued victims.

Looking gaunt and unkempt, the victims were pitiable sights as they begged journalists and everybody at sight for money to buy food.

Their rashes-ravaged skin, laced with scars of lashes, was an apparent indication that the victims were kept under inhuman conditions and subjected to severe torture.

One of the six females among them, 23-year-old Saminu Jafaru, told newsmen that she was subjected to sexual abuse

which once led to pregnancy.

The AIG said the lid was blown off the activities of the prime suspect when one of the inmates escaped from the centre and tipped off the police.

He said, "The experience at the scene was unbelievable and the treatment given to their captives was dehumanizing.

"Six of the hostages, who are females, complained that they were subjected to series of sexual acts against their wishes. It was also discovered that illegal abortions were carried out on the pregnant inmates.

"It was a situation where human beings were shrunk to skeletal frame with severe burns and rashes.

"Testimony reveals that the captives, whose ages range from ten to 60 years, were administered concoctions made from water with which dead inmates were washed.

"Grievous inhuman treatment and torture usually resulted in multiple deaths of inmates who were subsequently buried without any report to the police.

"The hostages in unison confessed that bodies of the deceased inmates were usually eaten by their captors.

"We understand that some big men visit some of these places to purchase human parts, but we are investigating to establish the claims."

Fielding questions from

newsmen, Ekpoudom said Arisekola-Alao had chosen to house and feed the victims, as well as pay for their rehabilitation until they reunite with their families.

Arisekola-Alao declined press interview during the brief period he stayed at the SARS, while he assured the agitated victims that "don't worry, they will give you food" before departing the venue.

The AIG admitted that pressure was mounted on him by some clerics to release Imoniyi, which he rebuffed.

He said, "We have been on this for two weeks, whereby so-called men of God have turned religion to what it should not be. What we saw last week was a child's play.

"We heard that some of the clerics are planning to demonstrate, that is unlawful. I'm warning them not to come out because we will arrest them.

In a telephone interview with our correspondent, Mrs. Ola Olusanya, the mother of one of the inmates, Gafaru Adedoyin, confirmed that she took the boy to the centre for rehabilitation from Indian hemp smoking.

Having spent about N150, 000 at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, to rehabilitate the extra-year Archeology student of the University of Ibadan to no avail, she said a friend advised the family to take him to the centre.