

# Youths desert Oyo community as 'soldier' drafted to maintain peace killed

Olufemi Olaniyi 22 March 2022

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Residents of Iluju town, a community in the Orire Local Government Area of Oyo State, have fled their homes following the killing of an officer of a joint military task force, *Operation Burst*, in the town.

Our correspondent gathered that *Operation Burst*, which comprised soldiers and members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, was called to restore order at a football field where a match was to be played on Sunday.

*PUNCH Metro* learnt that a resident parked his motorcycle on the football field where the match between Iluju United and another team was to be played and the person refused to remove the *Okada*.

This was said to have led to a fight and the situation could not be handled by the people who invited *Operation Burst* to restore peace.

A resident, who identified himself only as Joshua, told our correspondent on Monday that when the officers could not settle the matter, a soldier in the team fired a shot into the air.

He said, "One of the soldiers shot in the air and a young boy close to him heard the gunshot and fainted. But the youth, especially those who knew the boy, thought he had died.

"Some of them mobilised and attacked the soldiers. One of the soldiers was hit with an object and he died. The vehicle brought by *Operation Burst* was also vandalised.

"Immediately this happened, everybody, especially the youth and others, fled the town and ran inside the bush for fear of reprisal by the security agents."

However, another source said a soldier in the security team shot a youth during the clash, adding that angry residents attacked the security men and killed one of them.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that many people had fled to different towns and villages to escape the wrath of the soldiers.

A villager, whose community is close to Iluju, said he planned to buy foodstuffs in the community on Monday, but could not go because the town was deserted.

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He said, "Some of them said they ran into the bush on Sunday night and they had yet to come out for fear of being killed or arrested.

"Some of them said they had gone to stay with their relatives and friends in Ogbomoso and Ilorin and would not go back until they were sure they would not be attacked by the soldiers."

The Director-General of *Operation Burst*, Col. Oladipo Ajibola (retd.), confirmed the incident.

Ajibola said, "A soldier was not killed, but an officer of *Operation Burst*. It was hoodlums who came en mass to overwhelm *Operation Burst* personnel on a distress call that killed the officer and set our vehicle ablaze yesterday evening (Sunday)."

The Public Relations Officer of the NSCDC in Oyo State, Oyindamola Okuneye, said she had not been briefed about the incident.

The Chairman of Orire Local Government Area, Mr Michael Olateju, was not available to talk when our correspondent called him on the telephone.

The person who answered the call and identified himself as one of his aides, said the council boss was attending a meeting on the incident and would call back after the meeting.

He had yet to do so as of the time of filing this report.

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