

that people from most states, the South West and other regions patronized the forest.

But, the NDLEA Chief Executive who expressed displeasure with the illegal activities at the forest, disclosed that the NDLEA successfully destroyed seven cannabis plantations measured about 50 hectares, adding that the agency would deal decisively with any government official that sabotage the efforts of the NDLEA to discourage the cultivation of the product.

"The NDLEA will not hesitate to prosecute any forest guard who aid and abet

He added that: "Cannabis use can induce rape, unprotected sex, political violence, murder, militancy and many more. This is the second cannabis farm destruction within the past one month and this shall be a continuous exercise until cannabis cultivation is completely eradicated... The first one was 184 hectares while this one is 50 hectares plantation of cannabis. We are looking forward with optimism to a time when farmers will abandon cannabis for only food and cash crops".

The destruction of the plantation was carried out by 70 NDLEA officers drawn

NDLEA Director of Operations and Investigation, Mr. Olugbenga Mabo, said that cannabis farm destruction was a proactive strategy to cut off cannabis supply which affects the image of the country, saying "we achieve more when we destroy cannabis farms than waiting to intercept the drug after it had been harvested by the cultivators."

He stated that "when citizens get caught for trafficking in cannabis outside the country, the image of Nigeria is affected. Let me commend the officers that participated in this assignment because, they

job done. Drug control is a hazardous job but we are working very hard to overcome our logistic challenges such as inadequate vehicles and funds," he added.

One of the suspects whose farm was among those destroyed, Charles Osanebi, told NDLEA investigators that he would have harvested a minimum of 40 bags of cannabis from his farm but for the destruction.

He said "this is my first time of cultivating cannabis in this forest.

I was introduced into cannabis cultivation because I needed money".

FROM WOLE BALOGUN, ADO EKITI

The aphorism- the hunter becomes the hunted, often used to describe an unpleasant situation where a man, presumed to be a winner, loses, is apt in describing the twisted fate of 48-year-old Ogundiran Ogunloye Matthew, a prominent hunter and indigene of Emure-Ekiti town in Ekiti State. Ogunloye had gone to hunt in his community's bush, when he met his death in a mysterious way.

Popular in the community as 'Oguns' (his alias), hunter Ogunloye was a clerical staff of the Emure Local Government Area (LGA) in Emure-Ekiti. He had gone for both hunting and farming exercise on Sunday afternoon, August 31 and his whereabouts had been unknown until his corpse was found near a bushy path in the community on Wednesday, September 3.

His ailing wife, 42-year-old Janet Titilope Ogundiran, an indigene of Omu-Ekiti, had declared him missing when he didn't return home as usual by late Sunday night. The bed-ridden woman, who had been sick for over six months, sent words to the deceased's family in Ogunloye compound in the community and a search party, comprising mainly the other hunters of the community swung into action, looking for Ogunloye.

They searched his farm, and the thick bush of the town, first and second day, but didn't find him until the third day when they found his body near a bush path close to his farm.

According to one of the hunters, Mr. Jejelowo Omolayo, Ogunloye was found facing down at the spot. His hunting armoury and

clothing were on him, but there was a bullet hole in his forehead which had swollen up so gruesomely, with some parts of his body already decomposing.

"He was in a complete dressing for hunting. He was met facing down, his gun was with him and when our people checked it, it was discovered that a number of bullets had been shot from it. Flies were on the body, as it was already decomposing and his hunting lamp, hung on his head, was broken. Ogunloye's death is very painful to all the hunters in this town. He was a good person, never did anything against the land. He was like a brother to me", said Jejelowo, wearing a sad face.

Recalling Ogunloye's good deeds when alive, a farmer and settler in Emure, Mr. Oguntuwase Adebayo, said the deceased was well known to him for years: "He gave me and two others some piece of land on which we are farming now. The land belongs to his elder brother, Femi. We have been together for years and I know he was a kind, generous and good man. He didn't fight anybody over any issue as far as I know, "the man said mournfully.

Ogunloye is survived by three, very young girls, Olasunkani, 15, Kemi, 11 and Esther, 6. They were brought to pay last respects to their father during his burial in an humble way at the family's compound in Emure on Thursday, September 5.

When approached to share the last moment with her father, Olasunkanmi, the deceased's first born, wept like a baby and simply asked

the question: "Who would now pay our school fees and feed us now that daddy has been killed?"

She then said: "My dad was a very nice and caring father. I don't think my life is complete without him. I am in junior class 3 now in the secondary school and my siblings are both in primary schools. For almost a year now, my dad has been the only one sustaining the family because our mummy took ill and has not been able to make anything out of her petty trading. She is still very ill now. It has been only our father, he would go for both farming and hunting every evening to make sure we all have something to eat the next day. He doubles this with working as a clerk with the local government. He was such a very hard working, responsible and caring father, but now he is gone! They have killed him".

Describing his elder brother's death as very unfortunate, Mr. Ogundiran, younger brother to Ogunloye, said the deceased was a very straight-forward person who could lay down his life, fighting for the rights of others. "My elder brother could not bear to see others suffering, being mal-treated or cheated. He could lay down his life fighting for them. That is why almost everyone in this town loves him.

"That is also why his death is both strange and suspicious. We rest the case on investigating his death because we don't have the wherewithal to pursue it. But we know that this is not an accidental death. Somebody could have killed him. I'm saying this because the way his body was found shows that there is a possibility

his killer(s) did it deliberately. On the bush path, which is a few feet from the spot his body was found, there were traditional items that signaled to the search team that what they were looking for was at that spot. We call the items 'ala' in Yoruba. And what this all means is that my elder brother's killer (s) did that to help the search team locate his body," Ogundiran said.

The bereaved young man said his deceased brother has put in 11 years of service with the Emure LGA and appealed to the local and state government to kindly assist Ogunloye's children on their education, saying that now that their father has been cruelly murdered and their mother is critically sick, they need all the help anyone could render.



• Ogunloye