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## Badoo killings: Crisis looms in Lagos

— 11th June 2017

By Olakunle Olafioye

Residents of Ikorodu are seething with anger over alleged docility of leadership of the town and the seeming helplessness of security operatives in the face of unabated attacks by a suspected cult group known as Badoo.

The elusive cult group, in addition to the nefarious activities of militants in the area, has remained a major source of security concern to communities in Ikorodu and environs in the last one year, where no fewer than 20 lives have been lost in what are suspected to be ritual killings.

The cult group which has literally turned Ikorodu into a killing field in the recent months with its trademarked bloodletting struck again penultimate Tuesday, May 30 with the killing of four members of a family of five in Erunwen area of the town.

Members of the dreaded cult gang had invaded their victims' home at 1a.m. on the fateful day, killing a 46-year-old fish farmer identified as Mr. Israel Olusanya, his pregnant

wife, Rukayat and two of their children, Semilore and Wale, aged 5 and 10 respectively.

The assailants reportedly gained entry into the house through a window before smashing their victims' heads with a grinding stone, ripped the pregnant woman's womb open and removed the foetus.

The eldest child of the family, Tolu, who survived the attack was rescued the following morning by neighbours and rushed to a hospital. The Erunwen tragedy is the latest of the series of similar attacks perpetrated by the group in the last one year.

The reprehensible activities of the gang date back to July 2016 when the people suspected to be members of the gang raped a 60-year-old Ghanaian identified as Francisca and brutalised her eight-month old daughter. This incident was followed by a more horrendous attack on a family in Oluwoye community on October 21, 2016. The gang reportedly attacked a family, and killed a pregnant woman identified as Afusat Yusuf, her husband, Kazeem, while their two children were injured.

Two months after the killing of the Kazeem, the gang again reportedly struck on Saka Adegbosse Street on December 26, 2016, where they killed two siblings, Azeezat and Abeebe Oriade.

Again, three siblings were killed by people suspected to be members of the cult group on March 1, 2017, on Masafejo Street, Agbowa, Ikorodu, while similar havoc was wrecked by the gang on April 11, 2017, when a family of three was wiped out in Ibeshe Tuntun, also in Ikorodu.

A couple, Taofeek and Simiat Agbaje and two of their children also met their untimely death in the hands of people suspected to be members of the deadly group on May 4, 2017 when the gang stormed their residence at Adamo, Imota area of Ikorodu.

But while these attacks remain a major source of fear for the residents, with many fleeing their homes in the wake of fresh attacks, the inability of security operatives to arrest the perpetrators and put a stop to their nefarious activities, as well as the failure of the leadership of the town to spearhead the move to draw attention of concerned authorities to the challenge, have remained major sources of rage to the people of the community.

A resident of Ikorodu, Babajide Adeyemi, who lamented the security situation took a swipe at security operatives in the community over what he described as the passivity of the police in the face of the repeated attacks by the cult group.

"The police have clearly shown that they lack what it takes to protect the lives and property of the people of this area. For over a year now these mindless cultists have been terrorizing Ikorodu yet the police have not been able to convince us that they are up to the task of securing the lives and property of residents of this community.

"Occasionally, we get to hear that some members of the gang are arrested but the moment they are handed over to the police, the story changes. They have shamelessly compromised the security of lives and properties of our people for pecuniary gains," he alleged.

Adeyemi would not spare the leadership of the town, particularly the traditional rulers in the area whom he accused of insensitivity despite the unabated onslaughts of the cult group on Ikorodu.

"From the way the gang operates, majority of us have come to the conclusion that these people are ritualists. If this is the case what has the traditional rulers done to proffer a lasting solution to the problem especially when the police appear helpless. Does it mean they are also helpless just like our security operatives? Adeyemi queried, adding, "what I can infer from this situation is that people are being encouraged to take laws into their own hands, a situation that is likely to throw Ikorodu into a bigger security mess."

Indication that residents of Ikorodu are determined to take laws into their own hands emerged last week following the reported lynching of a man suspected to be a member of the dreaded Badoo gang at Aga area of Ikorodu on Monday.

Sunday Sun reliably gathered that the suspect who was arrested by members of vigilance group in the area in the wee hours of Monday was being held in a building on Oni Ogunsanya Street, Aga, Ikorodu pending the arrival of security operatives when he was forcefully brought out by an irate mob and lynched.

The mob was said to have defied the pleas by community leaders in the area to hand over the suspect to the police. A source who claimed to have witnessed the incident said the mob expressed their lack of confidence in the police, which they accused of compromise.

"There is a rumour that some people suspected to be members of Badoo gang handed over to the police sometimes ago were released by the police. That was the reason the people decided to lynch the suspect," the source said.

But another resident, Mr. Anthony Lewis expressed doubt over the claim that the suspect was a member of the dreaded group.

He said: "The initial report we gathered was that the guy was a member of a robbery gang that mounted a road block in an area. But some people later claimed that he rubbed himself with oil in the same manner as members of the Badoo group. Now the question is:

where and at what point did he get the oil he allegedly rubbed all over his body?

"This is a sign that the security challenge in Ikorodu is assuming a more precarious dimension. This is the fallout of the failure of our security apparatus to live up to expectation. We have now reached a stage where anybody can be given similar treatment on mere suspicion or rumour of being a member of the group," he said.

He noted that the most viable way of guarding against jungle justice was for security operatives to live up to expectation by adequately securing lives and property of the people of the area.

"More importantly, the police need to convince our people beyond any reasonable doubt that they are not accomplices and accessories to the killing spree in Ikorodu by this blood thirsty gang. I don't know how true is the claim that they released suspected members of the group handed over to them in the past. If actually they did, I am afraid, I just hope it is not true," Lewis said.

The Police Public Relations Officer for Lagos Command, Olarinde Famous Cole, in a telephone interview confirmed to Sunday Sun that a suspect was lynched. He however said that the matter was still being investigated.

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