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Masquerade festival: Hoodlums unleash terror in Ibadan, kill woman

From **Oluseye Ojo**, Ibadan

A 45-year-old roasted corn seller, Mrs. Sakirat Olaegbe, was on Sunday killed by hoodlums that followed a famous 'Ege' masquerade in Ibadan, Oyo State, to the Popoyemoja palace of Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Saliu Adetunji, Aje Ogungun-niso.

The Ege masquerade comes out once in three years and is known for large and uncontrollable crowds as well as violence.

The hoodlums reportedly used an axe to inflict wounds on Sakirat's body and thereafter shot her in the front of her shop, which is about three houses away from the Olubadan's palace.

The street urchins at Popoyemoja Street were said to have been angered by the purported actions of the masquerade's followers and launched reprisal, which left many people injured.

Followers of the masquerade claimed that the hoodlums unleashed terror on Popoyemoja Street after the Ege masquerade was not allowed to enter the premises of the palace.

Palace sources, however, said the hoodlums had killed the woman and destroyed many shops and property on Popoyemoja Street before getting to the frontage of the palace.

Director, Media and Public Affairs to the Olubadan, Mr. Adeola Oloko, in a statement issued yesterday, said: "We were adequately informed

that his supporters were believed to have unleashed violence even before reaching the palace at Idi Arere. So, it is not true that the violence occurred because he was not allowed entry into the palace, as being speculated in some quarters."

Meanwhile, the Oyo State Police Command has arrested some people in connection with the incident and arraigned two of them before an Oyo State Magistrate's Court at Iyaganku, Ibadan.

The prosecuting police officer, Mr. Sunday Ojeleye, who arraigned the suspects before the court presided over by Mrs. Modinat Akanni, slammed a five-count charge of conspiracy, murder, unlawful possession of criminal charms and unlawful movement with axe and charms to cause terror.

According to the prosecutor, the suspects killed Sakirat by using an axe on her body and shooting her during the Egungun festival on July 16, 2017, at about 2:45pm at SW3/336 Popoyemoja area, Idi-Arere, Ibadan.

The court ordered that the accused be remanded in Agodi Prisons and adjourned the case to August 28, 2017, for legal advice from Director of Public Prosecutions.

Meanwhile, the Police Public Relations Officer for the state command, Mr. Adekunle Ajisebutu, said the command has beefed up security in the areas where the Egungun festival was taking place.

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