

Suspected ritualists murder 20-yr-old man on Valentine's Day

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The murder of a 20-year-old Igede man from Benue State on Valentine's Day in Odogbolu, Ogun State, has thrown the community into mourning with indigenes of the Benue tribe appealing to the police to ensure that his killers are fished out and brought to book.

The late lad, Sunday Abari, until his gruesome murder last Wednesday was said to be a worker and motorcyclist in the Ijebu town.

An uncle of the late boy, Sunday Ogar, who claimed to have brought him from Benue State to eke out a living in Ogun State few years back, said he could not comprehend why Abari, who he described as gentle and peace loving was so gruesomely murdered.

His words: "Sunday returned from a private palm plantation on Tuesday and decided to use his motorcycle as usual for commercial activities. When he did not return at his usual time, we became worried and organised a search party for him around the community. We also reported him as missing to police stations at Odogbolu, Ikenne, Sagamu, Iperu, Idowa Obalende and Ijebu Ode."

According to him, efforts were being made on Valentine's Day to continue the search for him, when someone notified them that some fresh bloodstains were noticed along a bush path in the outskirt of Odogbolu.

"We mobilized ourselves, about 15 men, to the scene, which is about 150 metres inside the bush, only for us to discover the naked and dismembered body of our dear one, with his head and organs removed. His remains were covered with bush leaves and sticks," Ogar said.

Ogar said there were pointers to the fact that Sunday, who received serious machete cuts by his assailants, was dragged along the path before they over powered him.

"Aside from that, we also noticed that Sunday was also cut open and his heart and kidney and some internal organs removed," he said.

Pastor Gabriel Owuna, a member of Igede Community in Odogbolu, who led journalists to the scene, described the murder as callous and a demonstration of high level of wickedness by anyone or group.

"It is disheartening and sorrowful for the life of a young man to have been terminated for ritual purposes," Owuna said.

Also Chief Peter Onah, leader of Igede community in the state urged government and security agencies to find the perpetrators and bring them to book.

"Mysterious disappearance of youths is becoming rampant in the community, whereby their lifeless and mutilated bodies would be later discovered. We appeal to the government as well as security agencies to come to our aid."

As a result of the ugly development, *Sunday Sun* gathered that the traditional ruler of Odogbolu, Oba Adedeji Onagoruwa had summoned a highlevel meeting with security agencies and other stakeholders with a view to fishing out the perpetrators.

Although Ogun State Police Public Relations Officer, ASP. Abimbola Oyeyemi could not be reached for comments, but sources close to the Homicide Section of the command at Eleweran, Abeokuta, confirmed the incident.

"A case of ritual killing was reported and the police has already launched a manhunt to arrest the perpetrators of the dastardly act," the reliable source said.