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Lagos blood thirsty cultists defy police

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Bitter that a rival cult decided to kill a member over what he described as an ordinary gunshot, Ihioma decided to lead his cult on a revenge mission.

Chioma Igbokwe; Gilbert Ekezie

Barely a week after the police in Lagos paraded suspected cultists arrested in parts of the state, the battle for the control of territories by the bloodthirsty young men and women appears unabated as four persons were again killed on Tuesday and another four fatally wounded in a fresh gang war in Ajeromi Ifelodun area of the state.

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Fresh attack

The entire Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government Area and Ifelodun Local Council Development Area were thrown into chaos by members of Eiye confraternity on Tuesday when the cultists numbering 50 invaded communities in the area at 3 am with arms, cutlasses and other dangerous weapons, killing four and injuring five others.

The bandits who unleashed mayhem on Okoya, Ogungbe, Moshalashi, Aroworade Streets, as well as Baale Adeyemo Street and environs also destroyed properties worth millions along Okoya and Cemetery Streets, as they broke into shops, residential apartments and vandalized them.



ONE OF THE DAMAGED SHOPS AT OKOYA STREET, AJEGUNLE

At 34 Okoya Street, the cultists broke into the house and ransacked every apartment. They also broke into Lefty Bar on the same Street and carted away drinks, plasma television, generating set and other items. Also, window glasses of about fifteen vehicles parked along the streets were smashed by the hoodlums.

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ONE OF THE VANDALISED VEHICLES ALONG OKOYA STREET, AJEGUNLE

Investigations revealed the cultists were on a revenge mission against their rival cult, Aye who they claimed attacked their area at Cemetery Street last Saturday.

It was alleged that many of those who perpetrated the act under the Eiye fraternity were members of OPC operating around Cemetery market and its environs. They removed the two eyes of one of their victims, popularly called Jesse, a security guard in the area, tore his stomach and removed his intestines, before setting his body ablaze near Aroworade Junction along Okoya Street.

Chairman of Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government Area, Fatai Ayoola and his Ifelodun counterpart, Fatai Ajidagba who visited the scenes of the incident and victims with the Divisional Police Officers of Ajegunle and Layeni, CSP Sunday Digha and CSP Barnabas Okolodo respectively condemned the act, describing it as wicked and unfortunate.

They hinted that one Ibrahim Stubborn, a suspected member of the Eiye living at No. 34 Okay Street with his grandmother was reason for the attack on the house and the entire area. As a result, the Chairmen mandated the DPO of Layeni to lock his grandmother's room if she could not produce him. "If that could not be done, the entire house should be put under lock and key until Ibrahim is found. He and others should be charged for murder."

According to the council chairmen, those behind the mayhem include, Kaka, Segun, Jedi and others. "This mess must stop. We cannot fold our arms and watch hoodlums turn our localities into Boko Haram enclave. We, therefore, charge leaders in the localities to fish out those involved in the dastard act, so that they could be punished according to the law. Moreover, we will do our best to ensure that criminal activities are not witnessed in our communities."

The Police have removed remains of the victims, while those who sustained bullet injuries were taken to the hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, the two Divisional Police Officers have assured of safety of lives and properties of the residents and passersby. "We will continue to keep our eyes open to ensure that residents do not live in fear as a result of the activities of hoodlums." They also called on residents to report any criminal activity to the police.

Confession

Some of the suspected cult members recently arrested have, however, opened up on what always makes them thirst for blood: the unbridled desire for territorial control. Not deterred by the consequences of committing murder, Sodiq Oyewumi, Ihioma Emeka, and Maryam Abiola told Saturday Sun, they only kill rival cult members. They are amongst suspects accused of killing several persons in Ilasa and Mushin areas of the state.

Their arrest

On their arrest, the state Commissioner of Police, Imohimi Edgal who paraded the suspects before journalists said that on July 13, 2018, the Command got information from a credible source that two rival cult groups were fighting in Alafia area of Mushin. As a result, the officer in charge of FSARS, Peter Gana mobilized detectives to the scene where they arrested Sodiq and Ihioma. They were both searched during which two live cartridges and two locally made revolver pistols with 9mm ammunition were recovered from them.

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During investigation, the suspects confessed to be members of the secret cult known as Eiye Confraternity. Sodiq further stated that during their cult activities, his brother named Waheed was shot dead by a rival cult group, Aiye led by Ihioma whom he alleged pulled the trigger of the gun that killed his brother.

Upon interrogation, Ihioma admitted to killing Waheed during a revenge mission on Eiye members that allegedly killed one of their members, Michael at Okomola area of Ilasa. Ihioma further stated that his group decided to kill Waheed when all efforts to kill Sodiq failed.

Battle for control

At the police station, Sodiq claimed that he was initiated into Eiye Confraternity while in senior secondary school at the age of 15. "My father was never at home so it was my mother who struggled to feed her children. I was initiated by our seniors to help us move freely in Mushin without any molestation and also to be able to make small money from politicians. My mother discovered and with the help of my uncle, they forced me to secure admission to study English in the university.

"Unfortunately when I got there I was expelled over cult activities. Back in the street, I discovered that Aiye boys were more in Ilasa and controlling things. They are the ones that politicians contact. I knew that if I did not do anything about it, we will be broke during the election. Politicians only contact those who are more in number. I was still considering the way forward with some friends when an opportunity came.

"One Aiye boy, Ihioma decided to dare us by shooting into the air while we were in a meeting. I saw it as an opportunity because if police get involved they will say that it is cult activities. We decided to fight and in the process, we picked the weakest amongst them, one Michael and killed him. This was the only way to let the rival cult to fear us. Unfortunately, Ihioma who used to be my childhood friend came on a revenge mission. Luckily for me, my spirit told me not to sleep in the house that day. They came and since they did not see me, decided to kill my only brother Waheed.

"I was bitter and picked the two bullets left with me. My plan was to empty it on Ihioma's head. Unfortunately policemen who were on stop-and-search because of the crisis spotted me and discovered the two bullets."

On the source of the weapons, Sodiq said that it was the cult's Number Two that controls their armoury. "My target was to become the Number One in Ilasa area because I was respected while in school. During our initiation, we were told to be ready to die for the cause of our cult group and the more you kill the faster you grow in rank. Most importantly, anyone that we kill must be a cultist except it was by mistake. Although Ihioma is my childhood friend, he needed to die because he killed my brother. If he had any single respect for me, he will not touch my family. Michael, whom I killed, is not related to him."

Insisting that he does not know Maryam, the self-confessed assassin, Sodiq begged police to take her to a psychiatrist for treatment. "We do not initiate women because they can cause problem amongst us. I cannot contract her to do any job for me when there are able-bodied men."

Rival's account

The man behind the recent crisis, Ihioma Emeka, aged 25, told the police that he shot into the air to remind rival cult that Aiye was still in control of the streets in Ilasa and Mushin. According to the Mbaise boy, Waheed whom he killed was also a cult member.



IHIOMA EMEKA AND SODIQ OYEWUMI

"I graduated from Imo State University in 2014 where I studied Biochemistry. I knew about the activities of cult boys on the street but my mother did everything in her power to prevent me from joining them. Unfortunately, when I got to school, I found myself associating with them. It was easy to convince me to join the Aiye Confraternity. Since I did not want my mother to know, I became a non-active member of the cult. We only pay N2000 every month and your interest will be protected. Lecturers fear and respect us and no matter the amount you offer them they will allow you to pass all your courses. This is why most of us rarely attend classes.

"After my NYSC, I couldn't get a job, so I started hanging around cult boys in the street. Aiye boys were more in number in Mushin and because of that we normally get jobs. Politicians normally contact us when they have events. I always carry a locally-made pistol with me because the streets are not safe. Weeks ago, while I was heading to Temitope Street, I saw Eiye boys with some politicians. As soon as they noticed me, they started insulting me, saying that they were gradually taking over the streets. I decided to teach them how to respect people by shooting into the air. The politician that they were protecting ran away and the event was cancelled. I did not know that they will take it personal till I learnt that they killed Michael."

Bitter that the rival cult decided to kill their member over what he described as an ordinary gunshot, Ihioma decided to lead his cult members on a revenge mission. "It was a mere gunshot. I did not kill anybody that day, so why should they touch Michael? When we had emergency meeting after the death of Michael, I volunteered to kill Sodiq since I was the one who started the crisis. That night when we got to his house in Ilasa, he was not there. We met his mother, sisters and Waheed his only brother. Since they do not know where he is, I shot Waheed and left. Waheed needed to die in order to restore peace on the streets. I killed only Waheed because he is also a member of Eiye. We were called for a peace meeting before the police arrested me and several others."

Why I joined

Not left out in the tales of killings is Maryam Abiola, the self-confessed assassin who appears not to know the implication of her actions. Smiling and laughing as she answered questions at the police station, Maryam claimed that she ran away from home because of poverty. "After my secondary school in Abeokuta, I started hawking satchet water and other things with my mother. She told me to quickly get married and the man who wanted to marry me is an old man. My girlfriend who is based in Lagos came back to Abeokuta to see her parents. She told me to follow her to Lagos and without telling my mother, I came to Lagos.



MARYAM

"On getting to Mushin, I discovered that I still have to hawk to survive. The other option is to be sleeping with men for money.

I have a small body and men do not like me so much. They will sleep with me and tell me stories. Unfortunately, I met Sodiq when I visited Ilasa with my girlfriends. He convinced me to join them, that I will make good money. They took us to their herbalist and we took an oath. He then taught us how to use the gun. He told me that all the people that we will kill are bad people. I have never seen N10, 000 in my life, so I was willingly to do anything to make that money."

When Sodiq confronted her insisting that they have never met, she laughed and said. "Brother Sodiq, you cannot deny me. Your mother sells Agbo (herbal medicine) on your street. It was inside your house that you taught three of us how to shoot. You were even the one who said that since I wear hijab that no one will suspect that I am a killer even if I was found at the scene. You also said I have a small stature that people will believe I am 20 years old. It has happened, denying me will not solve your problem, Brother Sodiq."

According to Maryam, her first victim was a woman. "The first person I killed was a woman who lived at Hassan area, close to Ilasa. Sodiq said that the woman was evil and needed to die. I entered her house in the night and killed her while she was sleeping with her children. By the time people who heard the gunshot gathered, I had left the place and returned the gun to Sodiq. I even went back to the house to make sure that she did not survive. That night Sodiq gave me N10, 000.

When asked if she knows that it's a crime to kill, Maryam said yes. "Sodiq explained to me that killing a cult member is not a crime. He assured me that all the persons that I killed were cult members who deserved to die."

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