

The Lifeline

Sad tales from Lagos -Badagry Express

By Bianca Iboma-Emefu

COMMUTERS, residents and motorists plying the Lagos-Badagry Expressway daily face myriads of problems. For them, in this part of Lagos State, it is one day, one problem.

But the most worrisome, according to the people, is the recurrent killings in the Oluti, Alakija, Ilaje, Iyana-Iba, Mile 2 axis, all along that route.

Many residents are wondering why the security operatives and state government continue to project the state as safe haven, even with narratives of how commuters plying these routes are gunned down almost daily.

Some residents of Lagos waiting to board a vehicle in Alakija bus stop, unfortunately, meet their unexpected death while in transit.

On January 18, a man was shot dead by some men who accosted him for reasons not yet ascertained.

Also, on January 22, another young man was killed while waiting to board a bus at Alakija Bus Stop. The lifeless body of the man by the roadside by the bridge sent shivers down the spines of passersby.

That same Sunday, January 22, some dead bodies were found in the Agric area, while, the following day, six bodies were found at Ilaje Bus Stop. There were rumours that they were cult members who died in a clash with rivals. But some others stated that it was robbers who carried out the mayhem.

Again, on January 24, another tragedy occurred as two boys, between 20 and 22 years, were murdered.

There have been several tales of people who escaped death along that axis as they had to run away. Those who could not usually died before they could get help. The challenge of safety and security in this Lagos is so alarming that it needs urgent solution,



Ayinde

especially along Badagry Expressway," a resident said.

The reporter visited the scene and gathered from commuters shared stories of how people were killed by unidentified gunmen.

One of the commuters, who identified himself as Olatunji Hassan, stated that Lagos is not safe at the moment as crime has become the order of the day. According to him, security agents need to deploy new techniques to combat crime headlong.

Hassan narrated his experience in a mini bus, popularly known as korope, which he boarded at Volkswagen bus stop. He said: "Immediately the bus got close to Barracks bus stop, they began operation, as some young men brought out guns and knives, among others. They requested for our belongings and they started using the knife to pierce our bodies after they had collected our belongings.

"We all sustained injuries that fateful day. It's sad that we get maimed on our way from work or business places. Lagosians are hustling just to provide basic necessities for their families, but the activities of men of the underworld have brought fear unto us. The type of havoc meted on commuters is better not experienced. We need government to take steps that can help in tackling criminal activities in the area. The road is not safe at all. Let them work out a plan to chase them away."

He added that security operatives in the area need to collaborate, using a collective effort to tackle the menace of criminal elements in that axis.

"A joint force needs to be established in order to critically examine this trend of criminal activities. They need to see how security can be improved," he said.

Similarly, Evelyn Richard stated that

she was driving from Mile 2 and when she remembered that the place she would turn was that Oluti Bridge. According to her, she immediately came up with a plan. She told her friend that she preferred to park the car in her pastor's house somewhere in Festac rather than risk their lives because she knew that a lot of ill-fated incidents occurred at the point.

Richard said: "Once you are driving and it is dark, don't make a U-turn because that little time for you to turn in that area could make you face an unexpected danger."

Commuters plying the Lagos-Badagry Expressway axis have experienced tragic incidents, starting from heavy traffic resulting in loss of several productive hours, accidents that have left many killed or maimed to challenges of poorly maintained commercial buses that tear passengers' clothes and bad roads.

"But more worrisome is the present challenge of insecurity of public buses, which has left many with injuries and loss of valuables."

Another incident was the killing of a young lady, who was said to be a POS operator, around Volks area. She was attacked and killed as she was preparing to go home.

Several persons have been attacked and injured around Iyana-Iba Market. Once it gets dark, the area is not safe, at night or in the early hours of the morning.

Adejoke Ayinde said a woman who survived a robbery attack was returning from her business place in the evening around Odo-eran Market when she was dragged into the bush.

She said the robbers almost strangled the woman but some men rescued her. The robbers ran away when the men appeared.

"It took a while before she got back to herself. She became traumatized due to the incident," she said.

In another instance, a young man who