

●40 militants in camouflage attacked us –Residents ●'CP yet to deploy policemen' ●Kidnappers demand N5m ransom ●Security agents can't help you, gunmen taunt residents

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Tears, yesterday, flowed freely on the cheeks of sympathisers, who thronged the house of a landlord set ablaze by militants cum kidnappers at Yewa community, Isawo area of Ikorodu, Lagos State.

The victim, Mr. Moses Osaze Omorogbe, a car dealer, was buried on Sunday night.

After setting Omorogbe on fire in his car, the assailants also killed an Army Captain identified as Mohammed, four policemen and others during a gun duel.

Security agents also gunned down the militants' commander and two of his aides.

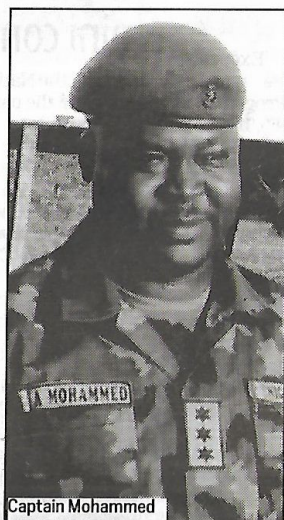
Omorogbe's burial at Olorunsogo Estate, Yewa, Ishawo, was witnessed by his widow, Omoduni, four children and relatives.

Yesterday, many residents were seen fleeing the community because of fear that the militants might return for another bout of bloodletting.

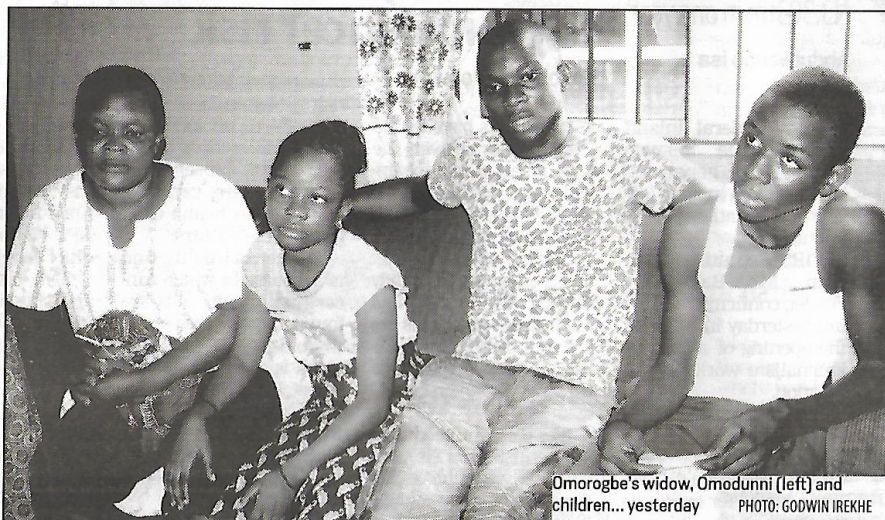
Some of the residents narrated how the militants, who were alleged to be over 40 men, dressed in camouflage, swooped on the community.

The militants yesterday demanded N5 million ransom from the family of a kidnapped landlord, identified as Chubuike Okeke.

A resident, Adetola Adeyemi, said: "I have never experienced such an attack before. The kidnappers were over 40 men and they were all dressed in military uniform. They held the community hostage for more than four



Captain Mohammed



Omorogbe's widow, Omoduni (left) and children... yesterday PHOTO: GODWIN IREKHE

hours. They started operation about midnight. Mr Ojo and his wife sustained bullet injuries, while a two-year-old girl and her mother were also injured. Houses and property were destroyed. We want government to act fast. In fact, we expected the governor to have visited today."

Another resident, Olushola, described the Sunday attack as a recurring decimal. He said the attacks were now becoming a mini-war.

He said: "The militants had a field day. They unleashed terror. Bullets were flying everywhere. They took away Chubuike Okeke. They said if we call for help, nobody would come to our rescue.

"Those of us left are not up to 30. We stayed behind because we have nowhere to go. We have to defend our homes. Our wives and children have gone else-

where to stay. We need a military base to be stationed here. We have the right to safety and protection. It's the job of government to protect us."

One of the residents, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said: "During the attack, we couldn't come out of our houses. When the commissioner of police visited the community, he promised to deploy some security operatives, to restore peace and provide security. Unfortunately, we have not seen policemen patrolling the area. That is, aside from the Armour Personnel Carrier (APC) stationed at the entrance to the community. We all ran away because no security agents were deployed as promised."

The resident added: "Before Sunday's attack, the kidnappers used to break into houses to steal toothpaste, food stuffs, cooking

utensils and clothes."

On Sunday, at least 12 persons, including Captain Mohammed and four policemen, were killed during gun battle between Joint Task Force on Anti-Militancy and militants.

On Monday, fresh information emerged that one of the hostages in the kidnappers' den, aside Okeke, is a young boy.

The residents said the kidnappers came through the waterways and kidnapped about eight people under intense sporadic shooting. The police, military and local vigilante engaged them in gun battle and tried to rescue the victims.

One of the residents, Mr. Raheem Olanrewaju, said one person was still missing. He explained that the kidnappers contacted members of the community, demanding N3,000 re-charged cards, which they said

they needed to make urgent calls.

According to Olanrewaju, the gun battle between the kidnappers and security agents lasted for more than three hours during which the DPO in charge of Owutu Police Station was shot.

He said: "The commissioner of police visited us and promised to get back; we are surprised that up till today (Monday), the police are yet to re-strategize to come to our aid. A boy was kidnapped and they are yet to get back to us to tell us how much ransom we should bring."

An elder in the community, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said: "These kidnappers have taken over the creek. Government should do everything to dislodge them. Government should ensure establishment of military base in the creek to dissuade them from further attacks on people."