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BUSINESS ▾

POLITICS

SPORTS

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENTS ▾

OPINIONS ▾

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80-year-old mother runs mad as police gun down son



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By **Taiwo Jimoh** 

On May 10, policemen stormed Makoko community at Yaba, Lagos State, shot, maimed and killed residents. When the law enforcement agents were through, they left sorrow, tears and blood. Two persons lay dead while many others sustained injuries. Wailing and mourning enveloped the coastal community.

The policemen were believed to have been drawn from the Lagos State Task Force, Anti-Kidnapping and Cultism Unit and State Criminal Investigations and Intelligence Department (SCIID), Panti, Yaba.



According to residents, Kolawole was the bread winner of his aged parents.

Kolawole's pregnant wife was shot and injured while attempting to move his 94-year-father out of the way of ricocheting bullets from the policemen's smoking guns. Some policemen wore jackets that had 'Raider' written on them.

They drove into the petrified community on May 10 in eight commercial buses and a Black Maria. Witnesses claimed that to instil fear in and cowed the residents, the policemen were shooting sporadically, unmindful where their flying bullets landed.

Fearful for the lives of the elderly and children in the community, enraged youths were said to have bravely stepped out of their hiding to confront the shooters.

Kolawole was among young men that attempted to protect his family and community. Another person killed was Seyi Akintenehin. One of the residents, Mr. Peter Ipense, said, "After the policemen entered the community, they attacked 'The Acts of Apostle Church'.

They also set several buildings and about 15 makeshift shops on fire. I guessed they were trying to send a signal to us. On May 4, before the attack, elders in the church had a meeting with the officer in charge of the Anti-land Grabbing Task Force in his office. He gave them an order to vacate the community.

The elders reminded him that the matter was in court and that they couldn't speak for it. The elders told him to exercise patience for the verdict of the court. "We were in church on May 10, about 7a.m., when we saw stern looking policemen invade our community.

They came in eight commercial buses and a Black Maria. Before we knew what was happening, they had started shooting. Within a few minutes, two of our family members had been killed. The two men that were killed each had a pregnant wife.

The operation, which started about 7a.m., ended about 10p.m. They left us in anguish. According to Ipense, after the policemen gained access into the church, they set it on

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of the founder of the church to destroy it, but didn't succeed. Ipense said: "They also people's houses to make arrest, collect their phones, money and other valuables. Pre still have not been able to bury one of the victims because they took his corpse away. those who sustained injuries is the pastor of The Acts of Apostles Church, Pastor Rob Inuoshelawo.

He was shot in the leg. Some elderly men and women, who couldn't scamper into safe also alleged to have sustained injuries. Explaining why policemen stormed the community tried to kick them out, Ipense said: "We gathered that a family, the Cokers, is claiming they are the owners of this land.

But the land belongs to our forefathers who reclaimed the land from the Lagoon to A Our fathers are also paying royalties to Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety (NIMASA) till date.

My question is where was the Cokers family when our fathers were sandfilling the lagoon? Another resident, Mr. John Peter, said this was not the first time policemen would invade the community in an attempt to force them off the land.

He recalled: "On June 12, 2014, the former Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge Operations, Lagos State Police Command, Mr. Tunde Sobulo, led a team of policemen into the community to chase us away. Nobody died then, but many sustained injuries.

The task force claimed that we built our houses on a disputed parcel of land. But we refused to understand that some of our mothers, who partook in the sand-filling of the lagoon, are still alive and could testify.

All we want is peace. We don't want to take laws into our hands, which was why we presented to the governor's office the other day, to register our displeasure." Mr. Ayodele Akintola, also a resident, said: "The case of the land dispute is before the court.

[HOME ▾](#)[NEWS ▾](#)[BUSINESS ▾](#)[POLITICS](#)[SPORTS](#)[ARTS & ENTERTAINMENTS ▾](#)[OPINIONS ▾](#)[SAFETY](#)

They involved policemen and the community was invaded, leading to the murder of ten men.” Akintimeyin further said: “Many of our community members were injured and in critical conditions at the Mainland General Hospital. Some were shot in the legs. The policemen shot directly at people.

They burnt the church and 15 shops outside the church. Chairs and musical instruments were burnt. The policemen were not in uniform. Some of them wore jackets with the inscription ‘Raider.’ About 2,000 residents had been displaced now.” Giving her own account, Da Ogunbekun said that the policemen were clearly for a war. She said: “I was outside when they drove into the church premises.

The policemen started shooting and burning shops. I managed to escape through the back of the church. People were shouting and crying.

There was panic everywhere.” Mrs. Ajimuda Mosunmola recollected: “I was sleeping when a stray bullet flew into my room through the roof of my house. I would have been dead if it was not for God that saved me. I’m part of the generation who sand-filled the Makoko community to protect themselves from the police.

We are the rightful owners of this place. Immediately the bullet fell into my room, I ran outside, attempting to escape and stay alive. It was when I was going that I fell down sustaining a serious injury on my knees. Government should come to our rescue before these policemen kill all of us.”

Mrs. Titilola Olaremoje (80) said: “I’m part of those who sand-filled this community because the area was waterlogged. We were living on the lagoon before everybody moved into this place. The area was sandfilled in the 60s.

Whoever is threatening us today, will not know peace! We suffered to make the place habitable today. We have sacrificed a lot to make the place habitable. It is also a sacrilege for someone to burn down the house of God.

[HOME ▾](#)[NEWS ▾](#)[BUSINESS ▾](#)[POLITICS](#)[SPORTS](#)[ARTS & ENTERTAINMENTS ▾](#)[OPINIONS ▾](#)[S&P](#)

Imohimi, who gave the order in Lagos last Tuesday, said that an unknown land grabb attacked the policemen and the task force officials during which they were forced to c themselves.

The commissioner said that he ordered investigation into the matter based on new e that emerged from a petition written by a lawyer from the church where the fracas st

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