



METRO AND CRIME

Man killed as caterpillar swoops o Abattoir



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One of the residents of Oko Oba Abattoir, Agege, Lagos State, identified simply as Usman, said to be a scavenger, was allegedly killed while being buried yesterday amidst tears. Usman, said to be a scavenger, was allegedly killed when State Task Force officials, with their caterpillar, went to the Abattoir community to carry out a demolition exercise on Saturday. A friend of the deceased, who gave his name as Mursale, said: “We’re not troublemakers!

We don’t have anywhere to go; that was why we couldn’t leave the railway line since we were asked us. Now, one of us has been killed. The deceased was planning to send some ba

clothes and other things he bought for his wife, when he was killed. His wife was just of a baby. Now, we don't know what to tell the wife and his parents in the North.

“We're not just at the railway line doing our business; we always settle railway police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) men and OPMESA. These policemen are the ones who have been assuring us that nothing would happen to us; that nobody would send us away.”

The exercise focused on shan-ties and structures described as illegal by the state government. Some of the structures were alleged to be along the railway line.

A witness said: “Usman was sleeping in his makeshift house, when the caterpillar, during the demolition exercise along the railway line, crushed the makeshift home, killing him in the process.” When our correspondent visited the area yesterday, some of the scavengers were salvaging some of their property.

Some of the task force officials were also stationed at different locations in the area. Among the scavengers, Mr. Basheer Hussaini, said: “We were all working, when we saw task force officials.

They appeared to have emerged from nowhere and started chasing us. We all tried to run, but we could not and run away. We stood afar and watched as they demolished the shanties.

“I'm surprised that the deceased didn't know that the demolition exercise had commenced. Immediately the caterpillar got to the deceased's makeshift home, we shouted to alert them that someone was sleeping but they didn't listen to us. Before we knew what was happening, the caterpillar had killed him, where he was sleeping. Blood was gushing out from the makeshift where the deceased was sleeping. The caterpillar and task force officials immediately left the scene.

“It was after the policemen had left the scene that was when we were able to move closer to the scene. We wanted to rush him to the hospital, but we realised that he was already deceased. A resident in the area, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the demolition exercise brought relief to the community.

He said: “The scavengers have turned the railway line to a hot bed of crime, where different kinds of crime thrive. We don't walk freely at night. They used to snatch phones and

valuables from innocent residents. I'm appealing to the Lagos State government to li the whole place to avoid crime and criminalities in the area.

This is not the first time that the scavengers had been dislodged from this area. Polic should be stationed at the railway line to prevent further regrouping. Some residents move because of the scavengers.”

The Chief Public Affairs Officer of the Lagos State Task Force, Mr. Adebayo Taofeek, surprise that anyone died during the demolition exercise. He said: “The effort of the government was to clear the whole area that had been messed up.

There is a criminal den and other vices going on in the area. The operation was a join that comprises officials of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC), OPMESA, police and other stakeholders in the market.”

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