

METRO AND CRIME

Man killed in mum's presence was a rival – Cultists



Published 7 hours ago on July 27, 2018

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...our son not cult member, family insists Family of 36-year-old Femi Bankole, killed by suspected cult members last week in his mother's presence, vehemently denied the victim was a cultist. This denial came barely 24 hours after some men, arrested by detectives attached to the Lagos State Police Command, said that Femi was killed because he was a member of a rival cult group. Last Friday, New Telegraph had exclusively reported how warring cult groups laid siege to Ilesamaja area of Lagos, leading to the murder of three people and maiming of many others. Among the three killed was a physically-challenged man and Femi. In fact, Femi was moments after he and his mother stepped out from their apartment.

Femi's mother had been traumatised and heartbroken after witnessing bullets being pumped into her son's body. She also witnessed, distraught, as life ebbed out of his eyes. She had called on the police to bring her

son's killers to book, stressing that Femi, a factory worker, was the breadwinner of the family. New Telegraph report had compelled the police to swiftly dash to Ilasamaja and arrested some cult leaders, including 20-year-old Maryam, who introduced herself as the executioner of one of the warring cult groups.

The lady further confessed that she used to wear 'Jalamia' and hijab while embarking on her mission to killing. According to her, she had killed four people and like an assassin, was paid N10,000 for each execution. Among the cult leaders were Ihioma Emeka (25) and Sodiq Oyewunmi (24). While Oyewunmi is the alleged leader of Aiye in Ilasamaja, Emeka is said to be in charge of Eiye in the same community. Both insisted that Femi was killed because he was a member of a rival cult group. On Tuesday, less than 24 hours after the confessions of Maryam, Emeka and Oyewunmi, Femi's elder sister has angrily snarled that the suspects were all lying against her brother.

The sister, Grace Bankole, said: "It's a lie! My younger brother was never a cultist!" According to Grace, Femi, who worked in a plastic company on Limca Road, Isolo Industrial Estate, couldn't possibly have belonged to any cult group because he was a very busy person and didn't associate much with people. She said: "My brother is the one taking care of my mother who is sick.

He took care of my younger ones too. He had many things at hand, so wouldn't have time to join cultism, which wouldn't benefit him anything. They killed my brother for nothing and they will not go unpunished." Grace noted that her brother was murdered in the presence of their sick mother. She said: "When those men came to kill my brother, everyone ran away, but

my mother stood and waited. She couldn't run anywhere because she was old. She watched as they shot her son to death. He was shot and killed by a young boy." Grace disclosed that Femi was buried last week.

Oyewunmi, on Monday, told the police that Femi was a member of Aiye and that his younger brother, Waheed Oyewunmi, was killed by Eiye members. Emeka, a graduate of biochemistry, Imo State University, who makes a living from selling Indian hemp, confessed to have killed a man, Isikpa, during the last cult war.

He said: "Our opponents killed one of our members, and then we went for a reprisal. On getting there, we didn't meet the guy that killed our member, but we saw his younger brother. "I was initiated into cultism in 2013, when I was still in school. It was peer group that influenced me into becoming a cultist. When I returned to Lagos, I joined the same group. "Yes, I know about the murder of Femi. His nickname was 'Daddies.' He was a member of the Aiye confraternity. He was among the people we attacked." Adio Ogunremi, a herbalist arrested along with Emeka and Oyewunmi, said: "The police said that I was doing juju for the cult group, but I don't know these people. I have never seen them before. Yes, I know Sodiq, who I take as a brother. I learnt that it was Emeka that told police that I was their juju man. The truth is that I have never met this Emeka until today in police custody. Emeka is now saying that I look like someone who he knows that do juju for them.

He's now saying this after implicating me in something I don't know about. The young lady that is claiming that I administered oath on her is also lying. I have never seen her before today." The state Commissioner of Police, Edgal Imohimi, said that the case had aided the police in understanding better, the way cultists think,

operate and the cycle of killings. Imohimi said that on July 13, information was received from a credible source that two rival cult groups were fighting at Alaifa area of Mushin. He said: “Detectives from Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS), Lagos Police Command, mobilised to the scene, where they arrested Oyewunmi Sodiq and Emeka Ihioma respectively. They were subsequently searched during which two live cartridges and two locally-made revolver pistols with 9mm ammunition were recovered. During investigation, Sodiq confessed to be a member of a secret cult group known as Eiye confraternity. “He further stated that during their cult activities, his brother, Waheed Oyewunmi, was shot dead by the rival cult group called Aiye confraternity led by Emeka whom he alleged pulled the trigger of the gun that killed his brother. “Upon interrogation, Emeka admitted to killing Waheed during a reprisal mission on Eiye members that allegedly killed one of the members by name Michael at Okomola area of Ilesamaja. Emeka further stated that his group decided to kill Sodiq’s brother (Waheed) when all efforts to kill Sodiq failed.” Imohimi said that on July 23, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of Ilesamaja Police Station, SP Oriyomi Oluwasanmi, arrested Maryam, 20, a member of Eiye confraternity who is the arms keeper to her group members. She confessed to have personally killed four people. She further revealed that she was under oath administered to her by a herbalist, Adio Ogunremi. They all worked for the blood thirsty cultist, Sodiq Oyewunmi, already in police net. She also revealed that the box of arms was given to one Wasiu, who is now on the run.”