

Crime

Taiwo Jimoh

Cult clash

The recent violent clash that led to the death of a man identified simply as Oluaye, a member of Aiye cult group, allegedly killed by rival Eiye cult group at Oko-Afo area of Badagry, Lagos State, has led to the killing of 15 members of the Eiye cult group in retaliation.

Oluaye was said to be the hit man of Aiye cult group in the Badagry zone, but his death has led to serious tension following retaliation from his members by killing Eiye group members randomly in Badagry, Ojo and across the state.

It was learnt that after the death of Oluaye, his members promised to retaliate and in keeping with that, no fewer than 15 members of Eiye and Aiye cult groups have been killed.

Genesis

On August 18, it was learnt that Oluaye and his friend, one Erukpe, had just returned from a party and was sitting with some of his friends in the neighborhood at about 8pm, at Moshalashi bus stop when members of Eiye all dressed in black and rode on bikes, suddenly opened fire on him and shot him in the head and pushed him into the gutter.

After Oluaye was pushed into the gutter, he was later shot multiple times in the head and every part of his body and his friend, Erukpe, was also shot several times before they left.

The source told our correspondent that during the assault, Erukpe, who was not a cult member was also shot in the stomach, while another Aiye member who was sitting close to Oluaye called Canty was also shot in the head, the three of them died on the spot at Oko-Afo area of the state.

The source added that the death of Oluaye, Erukpe and Canty reportedly escalated to other parts of the state, leading to the death of an Eiye member called Toheed, he was allegedly killed by Eiye members in retaliation to the death of their leader.

The source further said the clash also escalated to Ojo area where one Aiye member was killed by the Eiye on August 23, the deceased was identified as Opeyemi, he was said to be shot at close range on Dada Street, Ojo.

The deceased Opeyemi, was said to be the only son of his parents and married with two children, but work at Oriade-Local Council Development Area of the state, he was also a Disc Jockey. The deceased had left the community, unfortunately he only came to visit a friend when he was killed.

Ojo killings

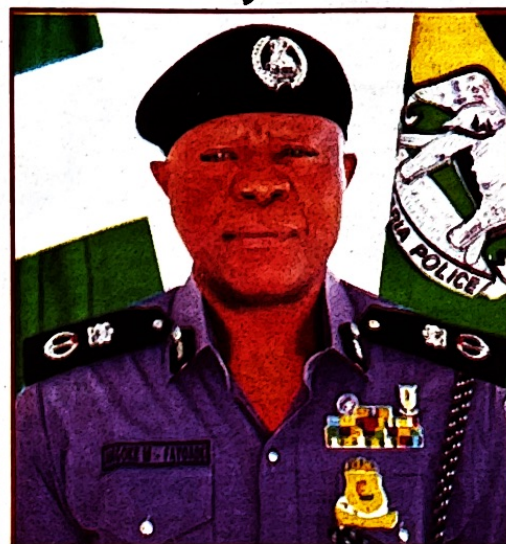
However, on August 20, on Ecowas Road, in the Ojo area of the state, a member of Eiye, named Sodiq, was also killed by suspected Aiye members.

According to the source, there is an ongoing rival clash between Aiye and

How 15 rival cult members were killed in retaliation over death of Aiye hit man



One of the cultist killed in Ojo



Lagos CP, Adegoke Fayoado

Eiye members across Lagos, while the retaliatory attacks is now a non stop one in the state.

He said: "I got another information that someone was killed in Alaba area of the state. I also received other reports of heavy gunfire near Imude Roundabout, Shibir and in Ojo Local Government Area of the state, but nobody was killed."

"Retaliatory attack is ongoing randomly in every part of the Lagos State, due to the death of Oluaye who is said to be a hit man of Aiye in Badagry and in the state in general."

"This cycle of violence has escalated over the past one month, with both groups engaging in deadly confrontations that have also resulted in the death of several young promising boys in the state."

"In retaliation, Aiye members targeted Eiye members, leading to significant casualties on both sides. Residents have expressed fear as these cult members operate openly, often attacking indiscriminately, which has created panic and fear in the community. Majority of parents in Badagry area have relocated their male children out of the zone to avoid being lured into cultism."

"It is becoming embarrassing seeing parents with the police evacuating the remains of their children killed during cult clash in Badagry. The local government chairmen in the area are doing their best to tame the boys, instead they are coming out more daring on daily basis. I want to appeal to the Commissioner of Police to deploy anti-cultism unit to Badagry area and every part of the state to curtail their activities."

"When it's 7pm now in parts of Badagry, you will not see people moving around for fear of be-

ing attacked by the cultists in the course of attacking each other. The boys are daring, they attack each other during the day, especially in Badagry. We want peace, in 2018, majority of the cultists renounced their membership in Badagry, but now it is something else. The Lagos State government should help us to flush the bad boys out."

Residents

The residents of Badagry have expressed significant fear and concern following a series of violent clashes between rival cult groups, particularly the Aiye and Eiye confraternities.

A residents who gave his name simply as Mauho, who spoke with our correspondent on phone noted that the issue of cultism in Badagry is getting out of hands and need to be properly checked.

Mauho said the murder of Oluaye who is the hit man of Aiye members in Badagry and Ojo has heightened tension in the community and its environs in the last one month.

The senseless killing has led to widespread anxiety among residents of Badagry and its environs. The violence has escalated to the extent of parents relocating their sons out of town, to avoid being lured into the group.

"The clashes between the rival groups have created a pervasive atmosphere of dread and panic in the town. We want peace in our town, we don't want death of young boys who are supposed to be the leader of the town tomorrow, but unfortunately they are being killed like chickens."

Another resident who spoke with our correspondent on condition of anonymity said that the cult members often attack anyone they perceive as associated with their rivals, regardless of their actual affiliations.

"This indiscriminate violence has left many feeling unsafe in the town, prompting calls for increased police intervention. Residents have urged the authorities to deploy external police forces to effectively address the situation, as they believe local law enforcement are often compromised or ineffective in curbing the violence"

Security expert

A security expert, Mr. Femi Adeniji, said, to effectively address and tame cult violence, government should take a decisive action against the various confraternities in the state.

Adeniji said implementing a multifaceted approach that includes education, law enforcement and community support will help a lot in taming cult related issues in the state.

He said: "Governments should prioritise educational programs that inform citizens about the nature of cultism, their recruitment tactics, and the psychological manipulation involved. Also, strengthening law enforcement capabilities to investigate and prosecute cult-related crimes is essential."

"This includes not only addressing violent acts, but also dismantling illegal activities associated with cults in every aspect of the law."

"Establishing support systems for individuals who have left cult groups is crucial. This can include psychological counseling, medical assistance, and social services to help reintegrate former members into society and discourage others from joining cults in their communities."

When contact for response, the state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Benjamin Hundeyin, did not respond to his telephone calls or reply to messages sent to his phone.

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