

How Robbers Killed 8 Motorcycle Operators, Snatch Bikes In Mowe, Abeokuta



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Ogun State CP, Abiodun Alamutu

In recent times, okada snatching has become a new trend in Abeokuta, Sagamu, Owode Egba and Mowe areas of Ogun State. Robbery and snatching of motorcycles are also becoming very rampant in other parts of the state, such as Ibafo and Ewekoro, this may be because of the high population of motorcycle operators in the state which gives room for the robbers to easily strike.

These criminals often target individuals operating motorcycles at night in isolated places and often resorting to death or severe injuries in the process of collecting the bike from the owners who sometimes will not want to leave it. It was learnt that about seven motorcycle riders have been killed in Mowe in an attempt to steal the bikes from the owners resorting to the killing of the bike riders during struggle.

Genesis

A motorcycle rider who gave his name as Abdulahi Tairu said in the last one year, seven bike riders have been killed in Mowe and several others have been injured. Tairu said the method used by the robbers is hiring bike riders to take them on a long distance, especially Mowe Ofada road and Ogunrun part of Mowe at the wee hour and lure the bike rider with reasonable price. These methods have led to the death of many bike riders in the community.

In the process, when they get to a dark place in the community, the robber will claim he wanted to urinate and in the process bring out objects such as hammer or any sharp object to hit such rider on the head and then made a way with the bike. He added that majority of those who fell into the trap are mostly people from the northern part of the country who are new in the business.

“Mowe Police Division is now known as our Seriki, because we always go there to make report about stolen bikes, sometimes, the robbers also remove bikes from where they are parked in the owners compound. Some of the stolen bikes were bought on higher purchase, based on instalmental payment or some are given to us to use to work and pay the owners certain amount every Friday.

“Whenever we are coming from the North we don’t come with bike, some who have it over there come with it and start using it here. But for those who doesn’t have we get it on instalment or work for the owners and then get our little profit and I stop working as early as 6;30pm or latest 7pm.” A source in Owode Egba said on October 2, near Fidiwo in Owode Egba, a complainant, Daniel Michael, a motorcycle owner reported that he was dispossessed of his TVS motorcycle with registration number L 358 valued at one million naira.

He narrated that two men suddenly came out from the bush armed with a rod, and they used the rod to hit him on his chest and back, after which, he became unconscious, the duo stole his motorcycle, but he stated that he recognised them despite the injuries inflicted on him. Another victim, Majek Obasanjo, reported that he has robbed of his bike at the same bush path, but he was courageous enough to launch a counter attack and while wrestling with the perpetrators, the criminals stole his Itel phone with the sum of thirteen thousand, two hundred naira, then took to their heels.

Abeokuta

In Abeokuta, a suspect was arrested alongside a stolen Bajaj motorcycle. The suspect identified as Adejumo Michael, allegedly stole the bike from the premises of a Celestial Church of Christ, Olorunsogo, where the owner had parked it. It was gathered that policemen from Ogun State Command on Monday, October 7, seized eight motorcycles during raids on criminal hideouts in various communities within Abeokuta. The operatives, in collaboration with members of other security agencies, carried out the raids around 9pm shortly after the incident.

The operation was carried out by officers from the Lafenwa Division Crime Prevention Unit with the directives of the Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alamutu, as part of efforts to crack down on crime in the state. “During the raids, eight motorcycles were seized and brought to the police station, with four of them being unregistered. “The raids continued after an incident was reported, but upon arrival, the area was calm. The intelligence agency then searched the area before resuming the raid and search operation.”

Sagamu

Also in Sagamu, a hunter, Saheed Awolesi, who had gone to hunt in a forest had his motorcycle stolen, and he was killed in the process by his assailant. The bike was later recovered at Ibafo where the suspect Faisal Audu who was in possession of the bike and valuables belonging to the late hunter was arrested. A motorcycle rider in Mowe who spoke with our correspondent said they have been warned several times not to go to isolated areas.

The rider who gave his name as Kunle said attack on bike riders in Mowe and Ibafo has been on the increase in the last two years, but stopped for a while, recently they are back attacking and killing bike riders working late into the night, especially on the Mowe Ofada road. "The most annoying part of it is that the area where the crime usually occur police are always stationed there to collect money from commercial drivers and motorcyclists.

There are some of us who doesn't like to work during the day except at night. "Majority of those who are usually killed are those from the northern part of the country. When they are approached they can go to any extent not minding the risk involved. "It is not that other tribes have not been attacked before, crime is no respectal of anyone.

Since government didn't provide job for us, we are the ones providing for ourselves, government should protect us from the killers because of bike. "Most of the stolen bikes are being dismantle and resold to us in spare parts. There was a time when two suspects were arrested in Owode Egba and they named one Igbo man who sells spare parts as the receiver of the stolen bikes from them. If the robbers didn't have people buying from them always they wouldn't be attacking riders to steal their bikes."

Taskforce chairman

The Taskforce Chairman of Articulated Motorcycle Owners and Riders Association of Nigeria (AMORAN), Mowe branch Mr. Saheed Olalekan, said the killing and snatching of motorcycles from riders in Mowe is worrisome. He said; "Its true that killing of motorcycle riders in Mowe is something that gives us concern as stakeholders in the business.

"The reason the issue is rampant is because majority of the victims of the crime are mostly the Hausa who work late at night, in the process, the passenger the riders pick will shoot the rider or sometimes use hammer on the rider. "The armed robbers sometimes also use gun or push such a rider down from his bike on motion, we have lost counts of motorcycle riders who have fallen victims of the bike snatchers. Some of the places notorious for the snatching is Pakuro road, Ogunrun, Arigbabuwo and Abaren.

"We are doing our best to save the life of our members, we have had series of meetings with the police in Mowe, we also called the Seriki Hausa in Mowe to a meeting so as to talk to his people not to work at late hours again. After the meeting the Seriki went back to his people to inform them the outcome of our discussion and we have reduction in crime now." He added that it is now law that every motorcycle rider should work till 8pm, but we still have those who float the law.

"At Pakuro road recently, four motorcycles were snatched from the owners and the riders were injured, but thank God nobody died in the process. It's now an everyday thing to snatch motorcycles in Mowe. Places like Omu Aleku, Car park C and Ashimolowo area, in Ashimolowo those who snatch motorcycle always shoot the owners or use hammer on them. We have cordia relationships with the police. "We, the union are the representatives of the motorcycle riders in the

community, whatever happens to them is our responsibility, we always inform the police constantly on what we are doing to prevent breakdown of law and order.”

Security expert

A security expert, Mr. Femi Adeniji, said if there need to combat the rising issue of okada snatchers in Abeokuta, Sagamu and other places, there is need to implement increase in police presence in local communities. “We also need to enhance several police patrols in high risk areas to deter criminal activities related to motorcycle theft.” He said public awareness campaign is very important and urge residents to stop patronising passengers who are going to isolated area to avoid security risks.

“It would be of importance, recently the Lagos taskforce conducted operations targeting illegal okada riders, reinforcing laws against their use on highways and restricted area, the riders also need to be engaged to immediately report suspicious activities to the police for action. “All these efforts are aimed to restore safety and reduce the prevalence of motorcyclerelated crimes in Ogun State and increasing police presence in the above towns to combat this rising trend of motorcycle thefts, which has become a significant concern is urgently needed.”

Police

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The Ogun State Command Police Spokesperson, SP Omolola Odutola, said effort is being intensified by the Command and the divisions to cleanse some of the affected areas in the state of such criminals and prosecute the arrested suspects to serve as a deterrent to others. She said, “concerning the Abeokuta incident, we are also going after the robbers to deal with them accordingly.

“We want motorcycle riders in the state to know that there is a new move by armed robbery suspects involved in motorcycles snatching and robbery in some parts of the state. Some of the areas where the bike snatchers operate in the state should be careful and don’t operate at night.

“Based on this discovery, the state police command has warned residents to be aware of this and take caution, as part of security’ alerts for the ’ember months’. and also report strange person in their community to the nearest police station, we are always ready to provide security. “This is part of our end of the year security sensitisation warning to indigenes and residents of the state to be on alert, as a commercial rider so as not to fall victim of such hoodlums who pretend as if they want to board a bike and then use the opportunity to kill the owner and steal the person’s bike in the process.

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