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[HOME](#) > [NEWS](#)

### **Birthday Bash, Carnival Clashes Cause Death of 3 Persons, Vulcanizer**

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with Femi Ogbonnikan

Luck has run out on three persons who are currently being quizzed by homicide detectives attached to the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Ogun State Police Command, Abeokuta, following the gruesome murder of three persons on October 5, 2014 in Okesopen Area of Ijebu-Igbo, in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State during violent clashes between two rival cult groups-Eiye Confraternity and Black Axe (Aye) at two separate locations.

At the first location, SATURDAY THIS DAY gathered that trouble began at about 2:30a.m at a birthday party held at Alake Area, Okesopen, Ijebu-Igbo when two young men were quarrelling over a secondary school girl. Guns, bottles, cutlasses, charms and other dangerous weapons were freely used to settle scores.

“Members of the two warring rival cult groups resorted to shooting sporadically and if not for the timely intervention of our officers and men, who raced to the scene, the situation would have gone out of control”, hinted a police sergeant.

Ahmed Akinshindemi, 23 years, who is being questioned over the gory incident, lent credence to the police claims that the clash was over a secondary school girl.

According to the vulcanizer who is a member, but refused to disclose his cult group, the birthday bash actually took place at Orita Idogi where he and his friend, one Tope (now at large) had attended.

He said, it was his friend, Tope and another young man (name unknown), who began fighting over a girl, identified as Biola, a student of Beje

High School, Okesopen, Ijebu-Igbo.

"I didn't engage in the fight, but I was making peace. In the process of trying to make peace, I was given a mark in my right palm and arrested when policemen were called in. The physical fight was between my friend, Tope, an attendant at Mosafuneto hotel, Okesopen, Ijebu-Igbo and his rival. The genesis of the clash was as a result of the rivalry between the two young men over who is the real boyfriend of Biola, culminating in the sporadic shootings", said the 23-year-old suspect.

On his part, Sodiq Abolaji, claimed he was arrested over a violent clash during "Aleke Carnival" in front of Oba Palace, Okeagbo, Ijebu-Igbo.

Sodiq, a bricklayer, said he and his friend, Lekan Ajayi, had gone to watch the annual Aleke Carnival in his motorcycle on Saturday night, before violence broke out about 4:30a.m on Sunday morning.

"There were serious exchange of gun fires, I rode the motorcycle and I had to call my friend, Lekan Ajayi to let us scamper to safety. We had almost escaped, before we ran into a detachment of armed soldiers stationed at every strategic location and members of Ogun State Vigilante Service who commandeered us to a halt for checks with their torch-lights.

It was when they searched us that they stumbled on a short cutlass I hid inside the engine of the motorcycle. It was from there we were arrested and subsequently, handed over to the officers and men at Topon Police Station, Ijebu-Igbo", said the 21-year-old suspect.

When prodded to find out why he had the short cutlass on him, he retorted, "It was for self defence. I felt unsafe within the town, because of imminent attacks going on here and there. In the past, we had been attacked. It was when the heat of the attack at Aleke Carnival was too much that we took to our heels. Three persons had already given up the ghost. Before we sensed further danger ahead and we took off", said the 21-year-old suspect.

Also, Lekan Ajayi corroborated the confessions of his friend, Sodiq Abolaji.

According to him, it was the members of the other group that started the altercation when they were attacking our own people at the carnival. The carnival started off on a sound note, before members of the other group felt they could enthrone their supremacy over what was expected to be a peaceful carnival. It was in the process of resisting their domineering tendency that the fracas ensued, during which guns, cutlasses, bottles and other dangerous weapons were freely used to settle the score. We only missed death by a whisker, before we succeeded in escaping from the scene of the incident", said Sodiq, a bricklayer.

An informed police source hinted that the duo, Ahmed Akindehinsimi and Lekan Ajayi were notorious members of one of the rival cult groups, which have been giving sleepless nights to residents of Ijebu-Igbo town in the last few months.

According to the source, "they know themselves, as they are trying to hide the identity of the cult group they belong. Investigations have just begun and they will soon tell us which of the group, whether Eiye Confraternity or Black Axe (Aye) they belong. In the last three months, we have been battling with the menace and unwholesome activities of these cult groups which have held both Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu-Igbo to ransom. They know themselves and we have been going after them for their arrest".

In response to the arrests, Mr. Olumuyiwa Adejobi, Ogun State Police Command Public Relations Officer, in a press release signed and issued on Monday, October 6, 2014, noted that the Ogun State Police Command had reiterated its commitment and determination to continue to tackle cult activities in all nooks and crannies in the state through robust intelligence gatherings.

According to Adejobi, a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Mr. Ikemefuna Okoye, Ogun State Commissioner of Police (CP), while addressing senior officers of the command at his Eleweran, Abeokuta office, made reference to general security in the state, with specific focus on Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu-Igbo axis where the command had recorded some killings among cult group members.

"While addressing the officers, the Commissioner of Police (CP), confirmed the arrest of some cult members, belonging to Eiye Confraternity and Black Axe (Aye), who have been attacking each other in Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu-Igbo in the last few days where two members of the cult groups have been confirmed dead.

"Dangerous weapons recovered from the groups include cutlasses, pairs of scissors, two guns, some expended and live cartridges, assorted charms and groups; paraphernalia.

The corpses of the two deceased members, Abiodun Adeniyi, 28 year old male and Taiwo Yusuf, male also, 24 years old, who were shot dead during the Ijebu-Igbo fracas and their corpses have been deposited at a public mortuary in Ijebu-Igbo for post-mortem examination.

"The Commissioner of Police (CP), Mr. Ikemefuna Okoye, has, however, directed all relevant anti-crime outfits in the command to relocate temporarily to Ijebu axis for adequate protection of lives and property, in a bid to curtailing cult clashes and other violent crimes.

"The CP has also appealed to the residents of Ijebu land and Ogun state in general, to collaborate with the police and other security agencies in their bid to win the war against cultism and other violent crimes in the state", Adejobi said.

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