

# Vanguard



BREAKING NEWS

TRANSLATE:::

## Tussle with Omo-Oniles: Man kills friend over telecom mast in Lagos

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By Bose Adelaja

BEFORE his untimely death penultimate weekend, Alhaji Taiwo Awolesi lived for two years in an uncompleted bungalow on No 25 Mohammed Ajayi close, Sabo, Ikorodu. Although he was among the first set of people to own a piece of land in the area, he was unable to erect a structure on the land until two years ago when he parked to the uncompleted building even as work was ongoing.

About a year ago after Pa Awolesi moved into the apartment, he sublet a room, while he occupied one. But the building which is the least developed in the close is now deserted, no thanks to his sudden demise.

The apartment lacks basic facilities like kitchen, toilet and bathrom as well as other structures meant to make life comfortable for the occupants who are compelled to answer the call of nature at a nearby bush.

In the neighbourhood, Pa Awolesi was known for his simplicity although he was referred to as a 'ghost' as residents were unable to trace his background. Also, some claimed he was a lone ranger as they could not ascertain whether he was married or not. Apart from his male tenant, no other person was traceable to Pa Awolesi during his life time.



([http://www.vanguardngr.com/?attachment\\_id=407715](http://www.vanguardngr.com/?attachment_id=407715))

\*Pa Awolesi's home and site of the mast under construction. Pix by Bose Adelaja

Fortune seemingly smiled on him some months ago when a telecommunications company showed interest in his remaining piece of land to erect its mast. The request was welcomed by this octogenarian who immediately entered into negotiation with the company which picked Friday July 26, 2013 to start the construction of the base where the mast will be erected.

After money running into millions of Naira reportedly changed hands, necessary building materials and construction workers were mobilised to the site. Apart from the telecommunication mast, plans were also in top gear to construct a soak-way pit for the uncompleted building.

At the commencement of the project, Pa Awolesi's joy knew no bounds; even neighbours were happy for him as they sang his praise, thanking God on his behalf.

But unknown to all tragedy was lurking around the corner. Around 12 noon of that fateful day, some miscreants popularly called 'Omo-Oniles' invaded the project site, unleashing terror on those present.

Upon arrival, they stopped the ongoing work and seized some construction tools. They also took the octogenarian hostage, demanding for a percentage of the sale of a portion of the land to the telecom company. They warned of dire consequences if their demand was not met.

At this juncture, Pa Awolesi sensed danger and made entreaties to the hoodlums but this fell on deaf ears. Not knowing the next line of action, the confused octogenarian ran to a friend, a cemetery guard, Pa Segun Salami, for succour. Pa Salami arrived the scene with a locally made gun. But tragically the bullet of the the first shot he fired went straight to Pa Awolesi's chest and he slumped and died on the spot.

Confusion immediately reigned and a crowd was attracted to the scene. Thereafter the Police at Sagamu road Division was intimated of the development and the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, Sunny Akaeze, led his men to the scene. They promptly arrested the suspect and deposited the victim's corpse at the morgue.

Meantime, investigations into the matter is still on-going, though the case has since been transferred to the Criminal Investigative Department, CID, Panty.






A Police source informed that the suspect claimed he fired the shot to scare the miscreants but ended up hitting Pa Awolesi.

When Vanguard Metro visited the scene, the deceased's home was deserted, while work on the project appeared to have been suspended.

At the community, Pa Awolesi's tragic killing has stirred outrage as residents continue to rain curses on the Omo-Oniles. Some of them also blamed the development on the failure of the Lagos State government for its failure to curb the excesses of the Omo-Oniles.

According to a trader, Madam Teniola Badmus, there is need for the State government to come to the aid of residents. "These Omo-Oniles often take the law into their hands not minding the consequence; and many have been sent to their early graves as a result of this. They usually attack people building houses with dangerous weapons, demanding huge amounts of money from their victims. So government should immediately call them to order," she submitted.

Another resident, a widow who pleaded anonymity, said the tragedy was one of several to happen in the community. "I remember when our roof was leaking and we decided to give it a facelift; the Omo-Oniles invaded our compound to stop the project. However, God gave me victory at the end. Forget about what transpired on Pa Awolesi's land, the truth is that the Lagos State government is to be blamed for Pa Awolesi's death," she said.

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