

# Vanguard



BREAKING NEWS

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## How Politicians recruit cultists to unleash terror on citizens

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By Ifeanyi Okolie

Succor may have come the way of residents of Makoko and Iwaya areas of Yaba Local Government in Lagos State, following the arrest of eight persons that took part in a prolonged bloody crisis between street urchins battling for supremacy in the area, early this year. The crisis culminated in the killing of over 10 persons while several others sustained severe injuries.

The residents who were at the receiving end of the crisis which started during the 2008 Local Government Election in the area, lost property worth millions of naira to the crisis, while shops and other business outlets operating in the area were looted.

Crime Alert gathered that operatives of the Special Anti-robbery Squad, SARS, Ikeja were drafted into the area to track down the hoodlums, when talks aimed at brokering peace between the warring factions collapsed.

Police sources disclosed that the police at Adekunle – Sabo Station, their counterpart at the State Criminal Investigations Department, SCID, Panti, and some top officials of the Yaba Local Government Area, had on several occasions attempted to broker peace between the factions, who have made life unbearable for residents of the area, without success. Unfortunately, according to the sources, all attempts at making peace failed as the hoodlums would return to the streets and unleash more terror on themselves and innocent residents of the area.



(<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/12/politicians-recruit-cultists-unleash-terror-citizens/cultists-political/>)

\*The suspected cultists

The decision to bring in SARS operatives came following the February, 2013, killing of four persons, in Iwaya and Makoko areas respectively. A resident, Tajudeen Owolabi, told Crime Alert that the first killing took place in Makoko, when Moshalangbe Boys, based in Iwaya stormed Makoko with guns and other dangerous weapons and vandalized vehicles, burnt down houses and looted shops. They also succeeded in killing a man identified simply as John, while he was playing football.

Owolabi added that, the Makoko boys who were also known as ‘Citizens Boys’ regrouped and attacked Iwaya, where they killed three persons whose identities are yet unknown.

According to Owolabi “after these killings, we made contacts with SARS operatives and they came into our area and apprehended some of the hoodlums, while the leader of Moshalangbe Boys was picked up at the Lagos Island. I also learnt that the leader of Citizens boys was also apprehended. After their arrest, peace has returned to the area and the entire place is calm,” he stated.

Meanwhile, the suspects identified as Lekan Olaiya, Edun Adeshina, Kazeem Igbalaiye, Irelola Shokeye, Kamilu Oladimeji, Darli Adewale and Bakare Azeez, told Crime Alert that they were recruited by some politicians to fight during the 2008 Local Government Election, in Yaba.

Lekan Olaiya, the leader of Citizens boys, said after the election and a winner emerged, the political crisis snowballed into a tough war of supremacy between his group and those from Moshalangbe based in Iwaya. According to him, “we are residents of Makoko, while Adeshina, Igbalaiye and Shokeye are our boys. We were all born in Makoko and we formed the Citizens group so that we, the youths, can have a voice in our community.

There are also many other groups who had different aims and objectives. In 2008 when the local government chairmanship election began, our group was loyal to a former local government Chairman in the council and the Moshalangbe boys were also loyal to one of the politicians contesting to become the chairman. In one of the political rallies in a Primary School, we clashed and there, the fight started.

The politician we fought for asked us not to kill anybody but when the election ended, they asked us to stop fighting and

go back to out businesses. But some people who got injured during the fight would not listen and they kept on coming for revenge. Oladimeji, who is the leader of Moshalangbe Boys fought with his boss after the election and he was chased out of Makoko and he relocated to Iwaya where he formed his own group.

“On daily basis, he would lead his boys into Makoko to cause trouble and when they come, they will smash windscreen of vehicles parked along the streets, they also looted shops and when they see anyone of us, they will also attack and injure the person. We, the Citizens Boys, decided to protect our area from his incessant attacks and whenever these boys enter our street, we will fight and force them out. Sometimes, the police also join us to chase them out because people who have lost their properties to the attacks usually report to the police.

“We also cannot enter Iwaya because if we do, they will attack us. In one of their numerous attacks on Makoko, they killed some innocent people who are not involved in the fight and on February 3, 2013, they also killed one of our friends, Oduayo who attended a naming ceremony in their area. After that attack, they came back to Makoko during an environmental sanitation exercise and killed one John who was playing football. These killings angered our group and we stormed Iwaya with the police and three of their boys were also killed when they shot at the police,” he narrated.

In his narration, Oladimeji, the leader of Moshalangbe Boys said he kept on fighting because the politicians he worked for betrayed and abandoned him after he helped in getting them into office. “I sacrificed and lost so much to the crisis, my father’s house in Makoko was burnt completely and my younger brother was attacked and killed at Oyingbo.

The grievance of the Citizens Boys with me was that I led my boys to support a politician they were opposed to. After their candidate lost and the politician I supported succeeded, my boss, Ogun, who brought me in stopped giving me money. He complained that I was becoming too big for his control. He conspired with Citizens Boys to fight and chase me out of Makoko. I relocated to Iwaya and the boys there welcomed me. Fortunately, the Iwaya boys had an axe to grind with the Makoko boys and because I am familiar with Makoko, I led them into fighting the Makoko boys. They killed some of our boys and we also killed some of their boys as well.”

### Hakeem Baba-Ahmad



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