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Deaths, uncertainty as security forces, oil vandals battle for Ogun community

BY BOSE ADELAJA

Oke-Okoko, located in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State, is metres away from Agric bus-stop, Ikorodu.

Easily noticed from the junction is a plank market, buildings and shanties. The community has people from different parts of Nigeria with a police check point about 30 metres away from the entrance of the community.

From the first junction of the road is usually a police van with officers carrying arms and checking vehicles going in and exiting the community.

Also, within the radius of about 100 metres is the community centre which has stigmatised Oke-Okoko. This is where illicit petroleum business takes place. A peep into your right hand side exposes a heap of kegs, some of which may have been filled with products as their owners scout for buyers.

Around the area are trays of Indian hemp on display while some smoke freely on the road. At Oke-Okoko, life takes a different turn and a 'mind your business life style' as some of the youths there are mostly armed and hang around the



• Oil pipeline vandals at work

berth. This area is usually raided by uniformed men from the army, the police, the airforce, the navy, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps, NSCDC, the Customs and Immigration for illicit petroleum traders aka vandals.

On December 12, 2013, one Lamidi Adamo, a vulganiser, was allegedly shot dead by men of the NSCDC in the presence of his three year-old baby Zainab, who held the clothes of his father's killer weeping.

“At the end of confrontation, two policemen were said to have been felled by bullets. Although normalcy has returned to the town, residents are apprehensive of what will happen next and some have temporarily moved out of the community

And about a month ago, there was a shoot out between the vandals and law enforcement agents which put the community in turmoil as many could not gain access into their homes when bullets flew freely in the air.

Monday, January 26, 2015 was another tragic day in Oke-Okoko as some NSCDC men were declared missing and their van reportedly set ablaze after they were attacked by vandals. The NSCDC called

for reinforcement and some vandals were arrested.

It did not end there as the vandals went back and mobilised for a reprisal attack. They were said to have rode down on motorcycles to Isawo Police Division with dangerous weapons suspecting that their men may have been detained there.

That was around 10pm. At the end of confrontation, two policemen were said to have been felled by bullets. Although normalcy has returned to the town, residents are apprehensive of what will happen next and some have temporarily moved out of the community.

When Sunday Vanguard visited the community on Thursday, there was a heavy presence of soldiers while residents were scared of venturing out of their houses.

A community leader, Ismaila Agbedo, said his life was in the hand of God. "If I see somebody ready to buy my property; I am willing to sell because shooting here is becoming rampant", he stated. Also, Madam Maria said, "It is not good to raise children under this kind of environment,"

Efforts to reach the officials of NSCDC proved abortive as none of them responded to calls by Sunday Vanguard.

Delta community, Shell resolve differences over oil spill