

News

Pandemonium in Oghara as soldiers kill vigilante leader

●Army denies involvement

By Emma Amaize & Godwin Oghre
OGHARA—SOLDIERS attached to 19 Military Battalion, Koko, Delta State, yesterday, trailed and shot dead the chairman of Oghara Vigilante Group in Ethiopia-West Local Government Area, Mr. Benson Ogedegbe, in broad daylight.

There was commotion in the community soon after the killing as residents took to the streets in protest, while the Executive Director of Africa Network for Economic and Environmental Justice, ANEEJ, Mr. David Ugolor, called on the Inspector General of Police to fish out and prosecute the trigger-happy soldiers.

Vanguard learned that the deceased was having problem with the leader of a criminal gang, who contacted his military friends to eliminate him after attempts to rope him into a criminal case failed.

Army denies involvement

When contacted, Commandant of 19 Battalion of Nigeria Army, Koko, in-charge of the area, Lt. Col. Aminu Umar, denied that soldiers in the battalion were responsible, saying he was yet to receive the information.

Police Public Relations Officer, PPRO, Delta State Police Command, DSP Celestina Kalu, confirmed the death of the deceased when contacted by Vanguard.

"The DPO has sent the situation report, but we are yet to unravel the rationale behind the killing," she said.

The Divisional Police Officer, DPO, Oghara, told Vanguard that his men were attracted to the scene on seeing residents scampering for safety during a skirmish between the victim and a team of soldiers on patrol in the area.

struggling over a gun with one of the soldiers on patrol, which Mrs. Ogedegbe debunked.

A police officer, who corroborated Mrs. Ogedegbe's claim, said: "I do not think it is true that he was dragging gun with soldiers the way we saw the situation. Soldiers and not police did the killing. The police found the victim lying lifeless in the pool of his blood."

Informant's account

Our informant, who is familiar with the case insisted: "Benson Ogedegbe was killed by a group of soldiers working with the leader of a known criminal gang at Oghara."

"Benson's father was killed in the course of

fighting for justice at Oghara and he took after his father.

"He was a games master in one of the schools at Ogharafe. The gangster reported him to his military friends on the grounds that the deceased implicated him in a matter.

"The gangster cooked up a petition against his son, who was first picked up by the military, after which they invaded Benson's house, seized his vehicle and other things, and also declared him wanted.

"Following pressure mounted on the military, the case was transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department, CID, Police Headquarters, Asaba, where one of the criminals they wanted to use against Benson, confessed that he had never met him in his life."

It was learned that the police released Benson and later released his son on bail when detectives smelt a rat.

However, yesterday, Benson was going to school to pick up some documents when soldiers stalked and killed him.

Died on the way to hospital

Security agents rushed him to Delta State University Teaching Hospital, Oghara, for medical attention, but he died on the way.

A villager told Vanguard that Oghara monarch invited an army officer and the deceased sometime ago, to resolve the grievances.

"Those after the deceased do not want him to remain alive, which is why they snuffed life out of him," the villager said.



TERROR: Medical staff help a man who is treated in a hospital after he was injured in a bomb blast carried out by young female suicide bomber who detonated her explosives at a bus station in Maiduguri, yesterday. The blast happened near a fish market in the Baga Road area of the city, which has been repeatedly targeted in recent weeks by shelling,