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DSS operatives murdered as US citizen petitions Buhari, Saraki

ON JANUARY 16, 2016 12:40 AM / IN [NEWS](#) / BY [TONY CHINONSO](#) / [COMMENTS](#)

- Expresses worry over DSS silence, demands public statement
- Outraged that vandals overwhelm Nigeria's military in Arepo, Ikorodu

By Evelyn Usman

The Nwofor's family compound in Ndikwuenu community in Orumba North area of Anambra state, was usually a beehive of activities during Christmastide, with relatives and friends visiting from within and outside the country to revel in a peaceful and relaxed ambience. But it changed to an atmosphere of gloom and melancholy last year. While other families were basking in the euphoria of the season, same could not be said of the Nwafor's, whose members were enveloped by grief and depression, with their countenances devoid of the usual enthusiasm and perky expressions.

The reason of the family's present state of despondency is not unconnected with the disappearance of one of its sons, Uzoh Obiora Nwafor. Obiora, as gathered, was revered in the

community , owing to his unmatched simplicity. Aside being a security agent, his intimidating height and light skinned completion which usually stood him out among his peers, made him the cynosure of attraction and a positive example to the youths.

Tragedy

Obiora was among the seven operatives of the Department of State Services ,DSS, who were ambushed and killed by vandals at Konu area of Ikorodu, Lagos, at the early hours of September 16, 2015. The team was regarded as the best

hand when it came to unearthing criminal cases such as high profile kidnap, murder and assassination attempts on imminent Nigerians .



·Mercy Obiora (American citizen)

However, on September 15, 2015, the team reportedly set out on a rescue mission at Ikorodu, where information at its finger tips indicated that some kidnappers held hostage wife of a journalist around Konu area . As the brave and enthusiastic operatives set out that scary day, little did they realise it would turn out to be an ill-fated mission, as they were reportedly welcomed with sporadic gunshots from vandals who laid ambush for them,

on approaching the kidnappers hideout. They reportedly put up a formidable defence and rare gallantry by repelling the unprecedented confrontation with their IMI Tavor assault riffles.

Unfortunately, they were outnumbered by their enemies . News of the killings filtered in at the early hours of September 16, 2015, with report having it that bodies of some of the slain operatives were later carried away by their colleagues while others were taken into the creeks.

Killings in the creeks

Attacks on security agents and subsequent killings by vandals have become a recurring decimal around Ikorodu, Konu, Ishawo and Arepo areas. Report had it that the case of the DSS operatives occurred less than six hours after seven other security operatives were killed at the Ishawo area of Ikorodu by suspected vandals. Three weeks before then, four policemen were also shot dead by vandals at Ikorodu area of Lagos, with their bodies missing till date. These vandals, discovered to be militants have virtually built enclaves for themselves at the Arepo creeks in Ogun state, making it impossible for any security operative to patrol.



Information at ***Crime Guard's*** disposal revealed that after killing security agents , they(vandals) would wear the deceased uniforms to patrol the terrain. This they use as bait to get unsuspecting security agents who would conclude they were genuine operatives.

Suspected militant owns up to killing operatives

Meanwhile, the incident of the death of the DSS operatives was greeted with mixed feelings at the Lagos Command of the DSS office and homes of families whose loved ones were sent on the suicidal mission. While the DSS assured that their men were alive and well, the affected families were filled with uncertainty, describing DSS stand as a cynical ploy to calm frail nerves.

While they questioned the DSS position and waited endlessly for the return of their loved ones, the confessional statement of a suspected leader of a dreaded robbery gang and vandal, heightened the already tensed situation. The confession of the suspect, Kelly Fotor, an Ijaw native of Arugbo, Ondo State, who was arrested by operatives of the Inspector General of Police Special Intelligence Response Team, SIRT, last November, put paid to the position of the DSS on their missing colleagues.

Fotor who confessed to being a leader of the South South group of the gang, gave a chilling revelation on how the DSS men were killed. He revealed that militants operating in Arepo creeks

, had their bases in Lagos, Ondo, Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa states, giving the name of leader of pipeline vandals in Arepo and Ikorodu axis as Ossy.

Narrating how the DSS operatives were killed, he said “ I was at Ossy’s camp in the creeks at Ikorodu when the captured DSS operatives were brought before us. Ossy and I are commanders of the South- West and South -South regions respectively. We never intended to kill the DSS men. When we interrogated them on their mission ,they said they were there to rescue a woman whom some of Ossy’s boys abducted around Amuwo Odofin. Suddenly , one of Ossy’s boys who was drunk opened fire on the operatives. It was never our intention to kill them”, he said.

Family worried by DSS silence

In spite of this revealing confession, the DSS has remained mum on the issue ,without issuing any official statement on the whereabouts of its men to the public till date. As if paying the supreme price was not enough sacrifice to pay for the rescue of an individual, the seeming silence on the part of the DSS seems to have added a forlorn approach to the thankless service of the fallen men.

Today, marks four months that the tragic incident occurred , with families of the missing operatives still left in the dark on the true position of things. Some of them who spoke to ***Crime Guard*** said they were still being assured by leadership of DSS that their loved ones were alive.

Most touching is the sight of Obiora’s wife who is being inundated with questions bordering on her husband’s whereabouts from her children, one of them is four and the other two years old. Questions like “ When is daddy coming home? “When is he bringing my chocolates and bicycle?, where is daddy? were usually posed at their mother, who would manage a smile and respond that “ daddy will be back soon”.

American relative reacts s from the Texas Obiora’s younger sister, Uchechi Mercy Obiorah, who is an American citizen, described the DSS silence as uncalled for and worrisome.

Speaking with Crime Guard, she lamented , “ My family members back home in Nigeria went to the DSS office in Lagos several times where the director told them that they (missing operatives)went to work and were kidnapped. He told my people that the DSS was negotiating for their release. At other times the director said that the Military had taken over the matter. The question is: How would the Military take over the investigation of a kidnap case of highly placed senior officers of DSS when they (the DSS) are adept at cracking high profile kidnap cases? We smell a rat somewhere”.

Petitions Buhari, Senate, IGP

Determined to get the true position of things, she has petitioned President Muhamadu Buhari , the Senate, the Inspector General of Police and the Attorney general of the Federation, requesting that thorough investigation be carried on the matter. The petition read: “ First, I want to state that my confidence lies with the president of the federal Republic of Nigeria whom I supported all the way from the United States because of my confidence that he has the capacity to restore the lost hopes of the Nigerian masses. On this note, sir, this letter becomes particularly urgent due to the inability of my family to establish any veracity on the information of Seven missing DSS operatives of which my brother is among them, since September 15, 2015.

Sir, I need not dramatize my unimaginable mental burden, nor that of my family members, that after four months, the DSS Office cannot inform us on the whereabouts of my own brother who, along with his six colleagues, were sent to work from their Lagos command on September 15, 2015. Incessant visits by my family members back in Nigeria to the office of the DSS in Lagos since September 15 have consistently left everyone with a most traumatic and painful experience as the Lagos Director, Mr Ajanaku, kept telling them that he believed that my brother and his colleagues were alive and hidden somewhere in the creeks. This information, quite unprofessional as it has been, is becoming tellingly unsavoury, objectionable and most devastating to the entire family members, especially with the passing days.

The DSS cannot permanently keep silent on a serious matter of national concern as this. In the United States, when such incidents happen, it takes the Sheriff few hours to go on air and inform the citizens. It is the right of citizens to get informed. It is already four months since they disappeared. Sir, I ask: for how long will this negotiation last? We demand an urgent official pronouncement on this matter. It is long overdue.”

Alleges attempt to bury the matter

“ It became expediently imperative to write this letter to the president, distinguished Senators and indeed, Nigerians, given our suspicion that an attempt is being made to sweep many facts under the carpet. While we strongly believe that every hidden scheming on this matter must be exposed in the end, we are particularly worried about the fate of our brother's life. From many newspaper and online reports , the area where this incident took place is shamefully and deplorably constructed on a fragile edifice of danger, sham, disorder, oppression and recklessness. These are crimes perpetrated by corrupt politicians and other criminals who collaborate with pipeline vandals to loot our great nation.

497 m confident that President Muhammadu Buhari is vehemently committed to restoring the lost
Shares pes of common men and women like us. "This case is being threatened by a conspiracy of
 silence. Why would this matter make us suffer suspected intrigues of dismissal and obvious
332 ouciance? It must be stated that the silenced even in death fights back! "DSS office in Lagos
 io claimed that 'they went to work' has not cared to ask wives of the missing officers how they
2 ve been faring.

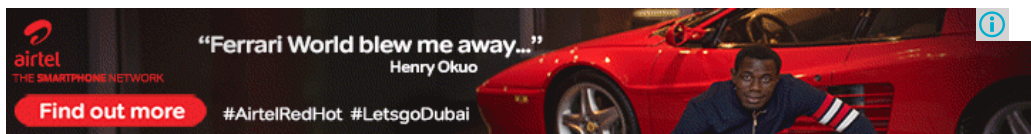
the directors of DSS all over Nigeria need to ask questions about the whereabouts of their gallant
 icers! Common sense tells us that this is a simple gesture and demonstration, of esprit-de-
 corps among the rank and file. Does it mean that the DSS *ethics* negate this salient attribute of
 camaraderie among officers? I strongly reject this aggressive and inhuman tendency from the
 S. These missing guys are human beings with wives and children yet they are being treated
 e common animals. This is a show of aggressive impunity and corrosive erosion of
 professionalism and must be rejected by well-meaning Nigerians.

tion Sought

we therefore make the following requests : That the president and members of Senate should
 compel the DSS to inform Nigerians on the present state of the seven missing DSS operators,
 whether they are still alive or not? That the president and members of Senate should institute an
 investigation into the missing DSS operatives: their mission to Arepo or Ishawo as many rumours
 are further threatening their precarious disappearance. Rumours must be debunked for the sake
 of public good. A public pronouncement by the DSS on this matter is long overdue.

2. That the president and members of Senate should compel the DSS to urgently make
 salaries and entitlements of the Seven missing DSS operatives available to their jobless
 wives and hungry children and also urgently take full financial responsibility of the
 families, as the director of their Lagos command claimed that they went on official duty
 and are not yet back. Reason and responsibility demand that the DSS should cater for the
 temporary financial needs of the families until they are back.

5. That the president and members of Senate should direct the DSS to collaborate with other
 security operatives to end the mayhem perpetrated by oil thieves, terrorists, corrupt politicians
 and locals in Arepo and Ikorodu who have killed several innocent citizens".


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