

U-N-C-O-V-E-R-E-D! Lagos estate where cultists forcefully initiate residents

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·Youth drowns while escaping from being forcefully initiated

A 20-year-old boy identified as Sunday, has drowned in a river at Lake View Estate, Amuwo -Odogin area of Lagos, in his attempt to avoid being forcefully initiated into Iclander Confraternity, by some youths. Crime Alert reliably gathered that residents of phase 1 and 2 of the estate are presently gripped with trepidation following activities of members of the cult group as they freely brandish weapons and molest residents at will. The group was also accused of dragging youths to the riverside where they are forcefully initiated. It was learned that anyone that refuses to be initiated will be given ultimatum by the group to either leave the estate or risk losing his life.

By Evelyn Usman

THE initiation process: Such was the fate of late Sunday. The deceased, a labourer, was alleged to have been dragged to the waterside last Monday, alongside one of his friends identified as Alabi, by one Tunde, popularly known as T-money.

However, on reaching the waterside, Tunde and members of his gang allegedly began the forceful initiation process by subjecting their victims to a session of battery.

At a point, Tunde was alleged to have brought out a gun and threatened to shoot them if they insisted on not joining the cult group. It was then, according to reports, that Sunday resisted, and he was shoved by a member of Tunde's group.

In the process, he jumped into the river and drowned. While the group concentrated on Sunday, his other colleague, Alabi, managed to escape from the danger zone. He later related what transpired to concerned residents of the estate.



·Lake View Estate gate

inset: Battered Alabi

Sunday's bloated body was in the river until the arrival of policemen from Festac Division. **Crime Alert** was, however, informed that the bereaved family prevented the Police from conducting an autopsy on the corpse, as they insisted on burying it beside the river.

Cultists on the run: At the moment, members of Iclander confraternity have fled the estate. Policemen were said to have combed the estate severally for their arrest without luck. Some residents who spoke with Crime Alert lamented that they had been under siege for long owing to activities of cultists in the estate.

Some of them who spoke on condition of anonymity said that the cult group had its leadership in the Niger Delta region of the country, but their members at the estate, as learned, had been parading themselves as members of the Odua People's Congress, OPC.

Residents lament: One of the residents said: "We have been living in fear because of the activities of these boys. Some of us were forced to send our sons away from home to avoid being forcefully initiated. If you challenge them, they will come after you.

"They parade themselves as members of OPC, but one of the repentant, well known militant in Niger Delta heads the cult group. We were reliably informed that late Sunday belongs to a group of 11 friends who were all labourers. At a point, two of them bowed to pressure from these cultists and were initiated. That was the genesis of the woes of the rest.

Genesis of the woes

"Few days before Sunday's demise, they (cultists) came to where Sunday and his friends were and ordered them to stand up and follow them. They obeyed but someone intervened on their behalf and they were allowed to go. But when they came back on Monday, there was no body to intervene for them. They took Sunday and Alabi straight to the waterside where they started beating them.

"We were told that when Sunday jumped into the river, the cultists were still hauling stones at him, instead of helping him out. They watched him drown. But for Alabi's decision to escape, he would have been shot dead because he said Tunde asked them to say their last prayer since they refused to voluntarily join Iclander."

The residents, therefore, called on the police to ensure that these boys were arrested so that they can live their normal lives again.

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