

MONDAY 21 MAY



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I will die! Oyo woman tears her dress in public after herdsman destroys cassava farm she took loan to cultivate

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- One dead, farm laced with anti-cattle poison by native destroyed
- Fulani leader: Bororo girl raped, tied to tree, dead; nobody talking about that

By Ola Ajayi, Ibadan

It has been tale of woes for farmers in Oke Ogun area of Oyo State as suspected Fulani/ Bororo herdsman attacks and destruction of lives and hectares of farmlands continue unabated.

The cries of residents of the agrarian community have reached high heavens but the incessant attacks have remained a permanent pain. To many farmers in the

area who are still lucky to be alive after suffering unprovoked attacks, they have concluded that the attacks have become what an anonymous poet called “a chameleon excreta onto which they have stepped, and, when they clean, does not go”.

While some farmers came out of the attacks alive, some were not so lucky. They paid the supreme price for accommodating their fellow countrymen who have become terror and unbearable nagging pain to them. Alani Olalere(30) of Eleeti Compound, Isale Oja, Igangan in Ibarapa North area of Oyo, is one such unlucky people who did not live to tell the story. On April 28, he woke up early and went to his farm with the hope of coming back to reunite with his family. But like a green leaf that is yanked off the tree, he was mowed down in his prime by men suspected to be herdsmen.



Herdsmen with their cattle

Unusual of him, he did not return home on time. This prompted his people and fellow farmers to organize a search team. By the time they saw him, he was nearly dead with life threatening machete wounds in his neck. He was hurriedly taken home. He tried to say something but, having lost much blood, he breathed his last after a while.

In the case of Adekunle Oluwole, who lives at Alubata Compound, Isale Oja, Igangan, and who is lucky to be alive, he oscillates between life and death after those he called “Bororo herders” attacked him on his father’s cashew farm.

Narrating his ordeal with blood shot eyes and marks on his body, Oluwole said the heavy rain that fell on May 7 forced him and his uncle to take refuge in the house of some Bororo men. As friendly as his hosts looked, he said they were discussing with the help of an interpreter. As courtesy demands, he said their hosts even offered them a cup of tea which his uncle took with appreciation.

But, before this time, there had been complaints by the family of Oluwole that the herdsmen had been encroaching on their cashew farm which their father left as inheritance for them. So, he and Alhaji Ismaila Olosunde, his uncle, used the opportunity to tell the Bororo men to stay off the farm. Pointing to Oluwole, the son of the owner of the farm, he told the herders that, from now, “the son of the deceased would take over the farm”. Though this infuriated the herders, they did not show it until moments later.

Oluwole further narrated that after the rain had stopped, he went back to his cashew farm to work. “But after few minutes I got to the farm, suddenly, I saw seven Bororo men, led by the interpreter, who surrounded me and threatening to kill me. They said this farm has been sold to them by my dead father, noting that if they did not kill me, I will still be troubling them on the ownership of this farm. ‘So, we are here to kill you’, they said emphatically. Before I could say ‘please’, they had descended on me with sticks. They beat me until I was nearly dead. In my badly beaten state, I saw one of them pick up my cutlass and, as he was about striking me, one of them stopped him. Some breeze blew and I regained strength. I started running.

“I was given a hot chase. As I kept running, I was shouting at the top of my voice, ‘please, rescue me, they want to kill me’. It was my distress call that attracted my uncle who was in another farm. He stopped them and carried me to hospital”.

Mr Adeagbo Taiwo, Secretary of farmers in the area, said the matter was reported to the police after which one of the alleged attackers, Idris Nura, was arrested. “Idris’ dad promised the police to bring the remaining six suspects to the police station. But, up till now (last Wednesday), he has not shown up as promised”.

Mr Daniel Sunday Orisabukola, in his own account, narrated how his eight acres of cassava farm at Arigba Village, in Ibarapa East area of the state, was destroyed not by the cattle but allegedly by a Bororo man, he identified as Imuoru. According to him, “When the herder discovered I had laced my cassava farm with poison, he was annoyed and asked me why. He just came to the farm cutting down and uprooting all cassava stems and tubers that were eight months old.”

Also, in a video of one of the attacks, an unidentified woman, whose farm has allegedly been completely destroyed by herdsmen and their cattle, is seen tearing her dress when she discovered the farm she took a loan of N500, 000 to cultivate is gone.

She is heard saying, “My God, what am I seeing? Is this my farm or not. People around, please, help me. I want someone to tell me that this is not the farm I took N500, 000 loan to cultivate. Where are my cassava and maize farms? Eight-acre farm? Imouru has killed me. He first destroyed my maize farm and I accepted my fate with the hope of cushioning the effects of the loss by the profit I get from cassava. Now, see what he has done. I will die.”

The farmers accused the traditional ruler of Igangan, the Asigangan of Igangan, Oba Lasisi Olawuyi Adeoye, JP, of harbouring Bororo men. The two phone numbers of the monarch did not connect after several efforts to reach him.

But while reacting to the allegations, the Seriki Fulani in the area, Alhaji Salihu Kabiru, said, “I cannot confirm that their (natives) farms were destroyed by

Fulani/Bororo. They invited a policeman who came to arrest a Fulani man and the Fulani man said he did not destroy the farms.

“From the information I got, I learnt that a crisis broke out between two factions of Yoruba people and, in the process, the man called Olalere was killed.

“Only two weeks ago, they caught a 12-year-old Fulani/Bororo girl and tied her to a tree where she eventually died. I suspect they even raped her. Nobody is talking about that. As I speak, the two men arrested in connection with the killing of the girl are with the police at Iyaganku, Ibadan. If you are in doubt, the police will tell you. In the case of Olalere, the police are already aware”.

The Public Relations Officer of Oyo State Police Command, SP Adekunle Ajisebutu, said he would get back to Sunday Vanguard as soon as he got information on the incident

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