

Inside NIGER DELTA

With Emma Amaize (emmanuelamaize@gmail.com) 08032933618

EVWRENI HORRORS:

How 50 were killed in revenge attack for the murder of monarch

—Adjogbe, ex-NDDC Director

- 'Tale of killings and failed attempt on my life'
- Faults incumbent royal father, CP Inuwa's claims

By Chris Onuoha

Dr. Samuel Adjogbe, an engineer and a former Executive Director of Projects of the Niger Delta Development Commission, (NDDC), is a native of Ewreni Kingdom in Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State which has been rocked by crisis for years on the account of the tussle over the headship of a group in the kingdom and the existence of a vigilante group.

In this piece, Adjogbe responds to some claims made against him in the crisis and said an attempt was made on his life.

The beginning

The claims attributed to HRH Oghenekevwe Owin Kumane and CP Hafiz Inuwa, Delta State Commissioner of Police, in a report published on Saturday, November 28, 2020, are a figment of their own imagination as they do not reflect the facts with respect to the killings, terrorism, vandalism, arson and the wanton destruction of lives and property in Ewreni Kingdom.

Ordinarily I wouldn't have responded, but in order to put records straight, I have decided to make these clarifications. Meanwhile the matter is still under investigation.

The true position of things is that I and members of the entire Adjogbe family as well as persons perceived to be loyal, close, linked or associated to us have become targets marked by a disbanded vigilante group to be killed, terrorized, our properties vandalized and/or wantonly destroyed with the aid, cover and protection of the police in Ughelli A- Division and the Delta State Police Command because I supported my cousin, Mr. Bright Adjogbe, who contested and won an election into the office of the President General of Ewreni Clan Improvement Union (ECIU) as against Chief Collins Udi, the preferred candidate of HRH Oghenekevwe Owin Kumane in October 2019.

The monarch and his group (formed into a Peace Committee) delayed the swearing-in of the elected President General of ECIU, Bright Adjogbe, from 26th of October to 1st of December, 2019 during which time it was alleged that they tried to upturn a victory that was freely and democratically given by the entire indigenes of the kingdom as represented by the delegates from 15 branches and other standing committees, as required by the ECIU constitution.

Whereas in 2016 when I supported the monarch's candidate, Hon. Ohare Victor, over Chief Eric Osharode and Ohare won, there was no crisis, but in October 2019, when I supported another candidate (my cousin) contrary to the monarch's preferred candidate, the monarch said I wanted to take over the kingdom.

In the ensuing crisis, one Omoghene Akakor and Sylvester Adjogbe (my youngest brother) were killed on the 22nd of March 2020 and 1st of July 2020 respectively for no just cause.

Those allegedly funding the killers to terrorize perceived enemies are well known and currently being investigated by the relevant authorities.

Despite reporting the two killings to the Ughelli A- Division and Delta Police Commissioner, they failed to make any arrest or commence any form of investigations into the two killings. Even the attempt to assassinate was swept under the carpet and was tagged herdsmen's attack.

This caused me to petition the Inspector General of Police (IGP) requesting him to transfer the case to Abuja for unbiased and thorough investigation.

This I believe is the reason for the public outburst of CP Inuwa as you could see from his purported comments in the report in the national daily aforementioned.

Internal crisis

It is pertinent to mention that after the elections and the inauguration of the National Executive Council of the Ewreni Clan Improvement Union (ECIU), on the 21st of March, 2020, a National Executive Council meeting of the union was held in the Eni Hall in the heart of the kingdom.

At the said meeting, decisions to move the kingdom forward were taken. One of such decisions was the immediate inauguration and swearing-in of the various Chairmen of Committees and their respective members. They include the Town Planning/ Building, Health, Education, Works, Agriculture, Civil Defense/Security (Vigilante), Social and Marriage committees.

While the other committees are functioning, the newly inaugurated Civil Defense/Security (Vigilante) committee was not allowed to function, instead the disbanded group continues to hold sway. This is the genesis of the internal crisis rocking the kingdom that has led to loss of lives, missing persons and wanton destruction of properties (houses and cars).

In trying to resolve this impasse, the leadership of ECIU and the monarch, accompanied by some of his chiefs, were invited to a meeting twice by the Area Commander, Ughelli Area Command, ACP Lawan Shikafi.

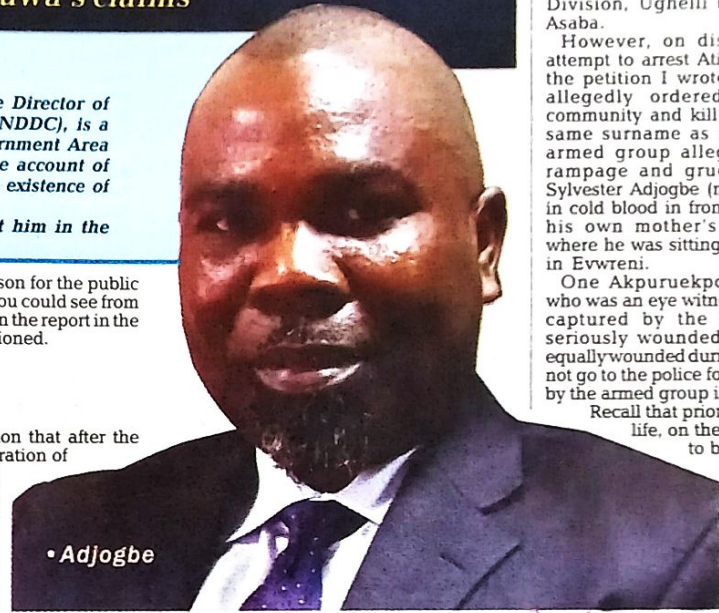
The current Chairman of Ughelli North Local Government Area and the DPO of A- Division Ughelli, CSP Kelvin Zuokomor also attended those meetings.

Although, I attended one of such meetings at the instance of Kaide Kumane, who is an uncle to the monarch I told everyone in the meeting that could not sit on an alleged murderous case.

This was when Omoghene Akakor was alleged to have been killed and his body hidden.

When the issue could not be resolved amicably between both parties, it was referred to CP Inuwa in Asaba for resolution.

At the said meeting, the CP actually



• Adjogbe

directed that the President General of ECIU and the monarch should work together and call for an enlarged stakeholders meeting on the need to reconstitute the new vigilante group after ease of movement and gathering restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

He also directed that the old vigilante be disarmed.

Surprisingly, however, this directive by the CP to the DPO, A- Division, Ughelli was ignored.

In all the meetings, I was not invited (except the only I attended after Kaide Kumane pleaded with me to intervene), perhaps, because I am not one of the ECIU exco members or a chief of the kingdom.

It was my cousin, Bright Adjogbe, who is the President General of the ECIU, that CP Inuwa is mistaking for me.

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Assassination attempt

As of today, the old (disbanded) vigilante members are still operating in the kingdom, even as it is alleged that they are terrorizing people and causing unnecessary tensions. These alleged acts are said to be causing natives to flee.

While waiting for government to ease COVID-19 lockdown so that an enlarged stakeholders meeting could hold to thrash out the issue of the vigilante, an attempt was made to assassinate me on the 20th of June 2020, when my Lexus 570 SUV was riddled with bullets along the East-West Road within the Ewreni segment and one of my drivers was not so lucky as he was shot in the head.

Consequently I wrote a petition through my lawyer to DPO Zuokomor of A- Division, Ughelli but nothing was done. A second petition was addressed to Area Commander Shinkafi of Ughelli Area Command which

led to the arrest of one Mr. Hero Ifaka but the second suspect, Mr. Stephen Atiri, escaped arrest.

The matter was later transferred to Asaba. Acting on the strength of the second petition, two police officers were detailed from Asaba with a letter to arrest Atiri.

On the 1st of July 2020, the two police officers from Asaba, led by ASP John Aqbajie, first reported at A- Division, Ughelli to inform the DPO of their mission wherein more policemen were deployed for their mission to Ewreni Kingdom.

On getting to the kingdom to arrest Atiri, the vigilante group that ought to have ceased to function based on the CP's earlier directive allegedly resisted the arrest. The police team retreated to A- Division, Ughelli before returning to Asaba.

However, on discovering that the attempt to arrest Atiri was as a result of the petition I wrote, armed men were allegedly ordered to go into the community and kill anyone bearing the same surname as me, 'Adjogbe'. The armed group allegedly went on the rampage and gruesomely murdered Sylvester Adjogbe (my youngest brother) in cold blood in front of a shop, opposite his own mother's family compound where he was sitting along Uwoite Street in Ewreni.

One Akpuruekpo Omamurhovwun, who was an eye witness of the killing, was captured by the armed group and seriously wounded. Others that were equally wounded during the rampage could not go to the police for fear of victimization by the armed group in the kingdom.

Recall that prior to the attempt on my life, on the 22nd of March 2020

to be precise, a day after the NEC meeting of ECIU was held at Ewreni, the kingdom recorded the first attack from the armed men during which several natives were shot and

wounded and one Akakor Omoghene killed by the assailants and his corpse taken away.

His corpse is still missing from that attack. Though the killing of Omoghene was reported to the Ughelli A- Division Police Station and the Delta State Police Command, Asaba, the Ughelli A- Division Police Station and Delta State Police Command failed to investigate the case.

Attacks

Daily attack on natives of Ewreni Kingdom in recent time is worrisome while the police have failed to carry out any form of investigation.

On the 10th of October 2020 after the demise of Mr. Tuesday Okwah, some people allegedly linked to the disbanded vigilante allegedly went on the rampage, terrorizing the kingdom (especially the entire Okpawha community), chasing away natives and burning down their properties, including houses and vehicles.

This attack was reported to the Ughelli A- Division Police Station and CP Inuwa, but till date, they have failed to investigate the issue.

If Inuwa was serious about investigating and bringing perpetrators of violence in Ewreni to book, when the case of the murder of Sylvester Adjogbe was not transferred back to Delta Command, he would have at least thoroughly investigated and prosecuted those who carried out the crime of terrorizing Ewreni natives and burning down houses and properties on the 10th of October 2020.

CP Inuwa was alleged to have stated the following in the newspaper report, "Engr. Samuel Adjogbe's sudden accumulation of wealth makes him feel he can buy over/ control any officer of the law to commit/ perpetrate mayhem in Ewreni community with reckless abandon".

He also stated that he has not met me and so does not even know me, so, at what point did I approach him directly, indirectly or through anyone, with the intention of buying him over to have him help me perpetrate mayhem or any form of criminality in Ewreni Kingdom? Don't forget, I was a successful engineer before my appointment as Executive

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