

SUNDAY NEWS EXTRA

HEARTLESS!

Six-month old baby smashed on the ground ...dies the following day

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What started like a mere disagreement threat on April 11, 2015 between Wahab Idowu, a traditional healer, and some loyalists of Ajoriwin of Irawo, Oba Musiliu Ademola, soon snowballed into full blown violence that ruptured the peaceful atmosphere of Irawo, Atisbo Local Government Area of Oyo State.

By the time that the dust settled, the violence had left in its trail sorrow, anguish, tears and death. Unfortunately, it claimed the life of an innocent six month old baby, Azeem Wahab.

Though, it happened some weeks ago, both sides of the crisis are still biting their fingers in sorrow and regret.

But, Wahab Idowu is the worst-hit. Apart from losing all he has labored hard to get in life, the promising and glittering sun of baby Azeem was forced to set at dawn. It was not his death that would make the heart bleed but the cruel manner he was reportedly killed.

According to Wahab, who narrated his ordeal to Sunday Vanguard, the mother told him that it was one Ojo (surname withheld) that snatched the baby that was strapped to her back during the melee and allegedly smashed him to the ground with a raging fury.

The impact was so much for the baby that he died the following day.

According to a medical certificate of death signed April 30, 2015, by a doctor from the General Hospital, Tede, baby Azeem died as a result of the effects of trauma he suffered.

Accompanied by his counsel, Mr. Remi Alli, and the second wife, Wahab told Sunday Vanguard that the problem started on Saturday, April 11, when Wahab, his wife, Mariam, and five others went to cast their vote.

Then, one of their attackers whose first name was given as Nafiu, allegedly pointed at them saying, "let him come out, we will deal with him today as has directed" and they made good their threats as the rampaging youths swooped on him and beat him to a pulp using all sorts of weapons.

Afraid that his attackers could still be after him, Wahab said he decided to sleep in his second house with his two wives.

But, on the following day, he discovered that all the glass windows of his guest house had been broken and the sum of N1.9m kept in a bag, stolen. The extent of the destruction of the house attracted some soldiers who demanded to know what had actually happened.

"I then led the soldiers to the suspects' house and they were arrested and taken to the scene of the crime at the guest house. But, one of the suspects



•Baby Azeem, while he was still alive

ran away while the other suspect led him and the soldiers to the house. While the suspect was being interrogated, other rampaging youths stormed the scene and started hurling stones at them. The soldiers had no option than to stay aside.

"To my surprise, the Oba, Oba Musiliu Ademola, came in company of other people and the place soon became a troubled spot as I was beaten with a pestle. I became unconscious and was later told that the Oba allegedly ordered that I should be taken to his abode. But for the quick intervention of police officers who rushed me to Abiola Memorial Hospital, Tede, I would have bled to death."

His pain became aggravated by another development as he was told later by one of his wives that his six month old baby was flung away and the boy sustained

serious injuries by the same attackers, who had also destroyed all his block industry and allegedly poured some salt into the engine.

"All my blocks and my property were completely destroyed. They have ruined my life. I am empty now. While this was going on, the matter was reported at the police station. The suspects were arrested. But, the Oba was said to have gone to the state police command, Iyaganku. In the end, we were all invited by the police where one of the policemen told me that we should settle the case amicably as a family. The policeman then gave me N10,000 to make up for the blocks that were broken at my industry. What prompted the policeman's strange generosity still amazes me up till now. I collected the money. But, where would I start from? Would this money undo all the damages that I have

suffered? I have lost my baby, my block industry completely ruined. Please, Nigerians, help me to fight this glaring injustice".

Also, some of his workers at the block industry were not spared while the riotous situation lasted. "Three of them and my wife were beaten seriously. You can see the pictures of all of them with head injuries", he lamented.

Reacting to the allegation, Oba Ademola said it would be unfair if Wahab said he masterminded his attack because what I did was to prevent trouble from my town.

According to Oba Ademola, Wahab and some youths were fighting and he went and brought some illegal soldiers.

"By this time, many youths had gathered wanting to attack the

soldiers. As a king, I won't open my eyes and watch my town to be engulfed by violence. You know, if any soldier is killed, the town is in trouble. I had to rescue the soldiers.

"On March 25, 2015, Wahab who is a troublemaker did something and I had to report him at Iyaganku. People wanted to beat him because he was insulting me. But, I did not allow the youths to beat him. I invited the police from Tede. In the afternoon, he (Wahab) invited some fake soldiers. Youths went on rampage. They made a barricade to prevent the soldiers from passing. When the soldiers could not pass, they had to fire gun shots. I rescued the soldiers and told them when you arrived the town you should have contacted me. So, I brought them to my office. Wahab too was there. The youths had beaten him. I advised the policemen to take him along so that the irate youths would not kill him. The two men they arrested were just released four days ago. It was the Commissioner of Police that helped us settle the rift. He told me to call both sides together and resolve the problem", Oba Ademola said.

When contacted on the issue, the State Police Public Relations, DSP Adekunle Ajisebutu said he was in a meeting at the time of filing this report. He asked Sunday Vanguard to call him much later when he would be free.

Next Week: Read the response of the police.