

Ogun elections: Woman killed in crossfire as hoodlums, security agents clash

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Oluwakemi; Ogere Town Hall

Deji Lambo, Abeokuta

There was pandemonium in the Ogere-Remo area of the Ikene Local Government Area of Ogun State during the governorship and state House of Assembly elections on Saturday as a stray bullet hit and killed a mother of six, Oluwakemi Adeoye, during an exchange of gunfire between suspected political thugs and security agents.

PUNCH Metro gathered that the hoodlums created a tensed atmosphere along the Oja-Ale Road as they attempted to snatch the Independent National Electoral Commission's ballot boxes from the Town Hall Collation Centre/Polling Unit in Ward 6, Ogere-Remo.

Police operatives and soldiers stationed in the area were said to have exchanged gunfire with the hoodlums in a bid to prevent them from snatching ballot boxes.

In the ensuing confusion, Oluwakemi, who was being conveyed by a motorcyclist from where she went to buy foodstuffs, was allegedly hit by a stray bullet.

An eyewitness, who did not want his name mentioned, said a clash between the Lemo group and the Luku group led to the crisis, adding that one of the mobile police officers stationed in the area allegedly fired the shot that killed Oluwakemi.

The 31-year-old said, “There had been issues between the Lemo group and the Luku group; so, on the election day, both groups accused each other of misconduct and attacked each other.

“The woman was on a motorcycle and immediately she and the motorcyclist passed the Methodist Church, the mobile police officers stationed in the area ordered the motorcyclist to stop and out of fear, he quickly turned. All of a sudden, a bullet hit the woman and she died on the spot.”

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A neighbour of the deceased, who identified himself simply as Akande, said the 45-year-old trader could not be rushed to the hospital because passersby and the motorcyclist ran away due to the ensuing tension.

The deceased’s husband, Matti, said he was at home when he got a call that his wife had been shot dead, adding that he took her corpse to the Ogere Police Station, where the case was reported.

He said, “I was at home when I got a call that I should quickly come down to Oja-Ale because something had happened to my wife. When I got there, I saw my wife’s dead body. She had left home to buy what the family wanted to eat for the night, but had not even got to her destination when the stray bullet hit her.

“I was told that when the motorcyclist saw the policemen fighting the hoodlums, he turned back and it was at that point that the bullet hit her. I carried her corpse to the Ogere Police Station and wrote a statement.

“My wife’s family members have come around and we have buried her according to Islamic rites. She was the one taking care of the family because I am old; I am really worried as to how to take care of our six children.”

Oluwakemi’s elder sister, Morayo, while demanding justice, urged the Ogun State Police Command to investigate the incident that led to the victim’s death and to arrest the culprits.

“I want the police to help me get justice by investigating the matter and arrest those responsible for my sister’s death. I cannot tell my mother about the incident because I am scared that the news will kill her. I want the government to assist the family in raising the children she left behind,” Morayo said.

The deceased’s eldest child, Wasiu, 24, said he was still in shock over the development, adding that he and his siblings needed help to survive in the absence of their mother, who had been taking care of them.

When contacted, the state’s Police Public Relations Officer, Abimbola Oyeyemi, confirmed the incident and said the security agents were not involved in the killing of the woman, adding that eight suspects had been arrested in connection with the crime.

Oyeyemi said, “The death of that woman had nothing to do with the security agents. What happened was that, in Ogere, there are two rival cult groups; one is headed by a man simply known as Luku Number One, while the other group is led by a guy known simply as Lemo.

“So, after the elections were concluded and the electoral materials were moved to the collation centre, the two groups clashed in the town and started firing at each other. It was in the process that the woman was killed by a stray bullet.

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“It was even the husband who came to the police station to report the incident and immediately, the police and the soldiers moved in and were able to arrest eight suspects. The soldiers also arrested Luku, who happens to be the leader of one of the groups, and they took him away.

“The vehicle that he (Luku) was using that day was impounded. The police and soldiers were not at the scene as of the time the stray bullet killed the woman. The police asked the husband to bring the corpse so that a post-mortem examination could be performed on her remains, but he refused and went ahead to bury her.”