

Blind widow seeks Edo governor's intervention over husband's killing, others

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A blind widow and mother of four, Barr. Benny Francis has appealed to Governor [Monday Okpebholo](#) of Edo State to intervene over what she described as injustice meted out on her and her children.

She lamented that after her husband, who was the breadwinner of the family, was knocked down by a bus chased by the then Kelly Okungbowa aka Ebo-Stone-led Edo State Task Force, all her efforts to meet with the governor had proved abortive.

“When the [governor](#) heard about the incident, we were told he asked, ‘Where is the family of the man?’ The governor is actually interested in the case, but we are being blocked from gaining access. I met with the Coordinator of the First Lady, who was trying to arrange our meeting with the governor. On one of my visits to the Office of the First Lady, I met Ebo-Stone in the office, so I waited at the reception. To my surprise, the Coordinator didn’t meet with me that day, even though she was the one who asked me to come. Till this moment, no attempt from that end. This is what happens to any highly placed political office holders. They may attend to me and listen to me initially, but once

I meet them with Ebo-Stone, their doors become completely shut against me. I don’t know what they are hiding,” she said.

Narrating how her tragic and pathetic story began on Wednesday, she said that until the tragic incident that led to her losing her sight, “she was a contractor with the Edo State Oil and Gas Producing Areas Development Commission (EDSOGPADEC) and was awarded a contract to construct a 10-unit staff quarters in Ughoton Community, Edo State.”

She added that “during the execution of this project, I was diabolically attacked and rendered blind,” stressing that “following this unfortunate incident, EDSOGPADEC assured me that they would compensate me for all my losses, settle my medical bills, and support my recovery. Unfortunately, these promises were never fulfilled.

“The former Secretary to the State Government (Barr. Osarodion Ogie) directed them to provide me with a Prado Jeep and a Hilux to assist with my mobility, but after the car was delivered, the former Oil and Gas Chairman ordered its retrieval within 24 hours under the pretext of repairs. To date, the vehicle has not been returned.

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“In pursuit of justice, I took the matter to court, where I initially demanded N1 billion in damages. The government pleaded for a settlement of N300 million, but after court deliberations, it was agreed that I would receive N500 million in compensation. Despite this legal resolution, only N50 million was offered, which I was advised to reject due to the lack of a conclusive agreement. Since then, the government has failed to fulfil its promises, including the offer of new contracts as earlier pledged.

“As a result of this ordeal, I lost all my properties, including my home, cars, and valuables to the bank, as I had taken loans to finance the EDSOGPADEC project. My financial situation has deteriorated drastically, leaving me struggling to survive.”

She lamented that “as if my suffering was not enough, tragedy struck again on December 11, 2024. My husband, who had been my only pillar of support, was tragically killed in an accident caused by the Edo State Task Force under the current administration.

“He was struck by a bus driver being pursued by the Task Force, led by a man known as Able Stone, and the vehicle crushed his head. He was rushed to the Edo Specialist Hospital and later referred to UBTH, where he sadly passed away by 5:00 pm that same day.

“I lost my husband when I was five months pregnant and left to care for four young children, now as a widow, with no means of support. I have made several attempts to meet with His Excellency, Sen. Monday Okpebholo, to personally narrate my plight, but all efforts have been unsuccessful.”

The widow, who debunked Ebo-Stone’s claim that he has compensated her and the children, appealed to the governor to “as a father and a man of compassion, to intervene in my case. I seek the support of the Edo State Government.”

Contacted, Ebo-Stone picked up the phone but said, “I am at a party,” and ended the call immediately upon hearing “The Guardian correspondent”. The SMS sent to his telephone as a follow-up was not responded to at the time of filing this report.