

Trader killed over land dispute in Lagos, wife alleges



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• ***By Chinyere Okoroafor***

A trader, Charles Chimezie Nwachukwu, has been confirmed dead following an incident in the Ijegemo area of Ijegun, **Lagos State**, with his widow alleging that the killing was linked to a protracted land dispute.

The incident, which occurred about 8:30 p.m. on Friday, has sparked tension in the community, prompting intervention by security agencies and appeals for calm by community leaders.

Mrs. Blessing Nwachukwu, widow of the deceased, alleged that her husband was attacked in his shop by a group of men, including an individual she identified as a police officer popularly called "Olopa."

According to her, the assailants stormed the shop while the family was eating, assaulted her husband and vandalised property.

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“They killed my husband in his shop. All I want is justice,” she said, calling on the government and security agencies to investigate the incident and protect her family.

She further alleged that the attack may be connected to a lingering dispute over the ownership of the land on which their shop is located, claiming that her family had faced threats in the past.

The widow also made allegations against some individuals in the community, claiming they had intimidated her family. However, these claims could not be verified as of press time.

An eyewitness, Mr. Peter Agu, said the crisis began from an altercation across the road from the deceased’s shop, where a fight broke out and one person was injured.

He said while efforts were being made to manage the situation, a man alleged to be a police officer arrived and began assaulting some persons at the scene, escalating tensions.

According to him, the deceased intervened and asked those involved not to extend the altercation to his shop.

“In the process, he was pushed, fell and hit his head on the ground,” the eyewitness said.

Similarly, the Obi Ndigbo of Ijagemo, Dr. Anthony Nwaeze Onyiyechukwu-Kachukwu, said he was aware of the incident.

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He added that the deceased’s son was also reportedly attacked and is receiving treatment in hospital.

However, other accounts suggested that the attack involved a larger group of persons who allegedly threw objects and caused damage to the shop before the victim was injured.

Some sources alleged that delays in accessing medical attention may have contributed to the victim’s death.

A community member, Mr. Innocent Ogoke, said he received a distress call from the deceased's wife and later met him unresponsive at a hospital.

Another community leader, Dr. Anthony Ukachukwu, also alleged that the victim was moved between hospitals before he was confirmed dead.

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The Baale of Ijagemo Aworiland, High Chief Olateju Jimoh-Balogun, denied allegations of involvement in the incident.

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In a telephone conversation with community leaders, he stated that he was contacted during the crisis and subsequently mobilised people to the scene to restore calm.

He maintained that he did not obstruct efforts to assist the victim, contrary to claims made by the widow.

The police have commenced investigation into the incident, although a statement had not been issued as of press time.

Community leaders confirmed that some suspects had been arrested in connection with the case and are in custody at the Isheri Police Station under Area 'M' Command, Idimu.

Chairman of the Council of Ndi Eze Igbo in Lagos, Eze Dr. C.C. Nwokedi, said he had been in contact with police authorities, urging a thorough investigation.

The Area Commander, Assistant Commissioner of Police Tokunbo Abaniwonda, was also said to have visited the bereaved family on the directive of the Commissioner of Police.

The incident reportedly triggered tension in the area, with concerns over possible reprisals. However, leaders of the Igbo community intervened, urging residents to remain calm and allow the police to carry out their investigation.

Members of the Igbo Buru Otu Association and other stakeholders visited the family and appealed against any form of violence.

“We must allow the law to take its course,” a community leader said.

Some community leaders expressed concern over what they described as recurring disputes and security challenges in the area.

Dr. Onyiyechukwu-Kachukwu called on the Lagos State Government to ensure justice for the deceased and improve security for all residents.

Similarly, another resident, Emmanuel Ejiogu, described the deceased as a peaceful trader and called for a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death.

Meanwhile, sympathisers and associates of the deceased have continued to visit the family, calling on authorities to ensure those responsible are brought to justice.

The family urged the police to conduct a transparent investigation, including verifying the identity and role of the individual alleged to have presented himself as a police officer.

As of press time, authorities were yet to conclude investigations.