

Terrorists killed my husband, left me with burden of raising five children – Imo widow

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Chimuanya

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Mrs Chioma Eke, wife to Chimuanya, who was shot dead by suspected terrorists in Eziobodo community, which hosts the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State, tells UCHE OKERE how the incident happened

How are you related to the deceased?

My name is Mrs Chioma Eke, and I'm from Egbu by birth but married to my husband, Chimuanya Eke, from Umueze Umuhu in Ngor Okpala Local Government Area of Imo State.

We were married for 13 years and had five children; the oldest is 12, and the youngest is a year and two months old. I'm not doing anything yet because I am still nursing our last baby.

How long have you and your family been living in Eziobodo community, which hosts the Federal University of Technology Owerri?

We moved there just three months ago, before the killing of my husband by suspected herdsmen.

What was your husband's occupation?

He was a businessman who sold clothes, and we just moved to Eziobodo for him to start his business in the area. FUTO students were expected to be among his customers.

Can you take us through what led to your husband's death?

We woke up in the morning, and he said he didn't have the strength to go out to where he was to do his business. He decided to stay indoors and then go out in the evening.

He went out to get drugs for our last baby, who had rashes at that time. So, he went out a few minutes before 6 pm. So, immediately, he went out, and some people were coming to the compound and talking about an attack by herdsmen.

I was outside with my children waiting for him to return. It wasn't long before some people passed; they said gunmen shot someone.

What was your reaction when you heard that someone was shot?

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I just prayed that nothing should happen to him because as soon as he left the house, the news about the attack came.

While people were outside talking, I was praying for his safety. Then shortly afterwards, I decided to go inside and check my phone before I discovered it was ringing.

The person on the other line told me that my husband was shot, and that was where the whole issue started. I was informed that he was at St. Augustine Hospital in Ihiagwa.

I was told to come to the hospital, but at that time, it was too late for me to go because of my little children. The time was some minutes past 7 pm. Meanwhile, his siblings were also called, and they immediately rushed to the hospital.

I learnt that some vigilante operatives in the community were sent to take care of him. I kept begging them through the phone to watch him until I got to the hospital in the morning.

His siblings rushed down and took care of him, paid the bills, and assured him that he was going to make it.

Was there any premonition of your husband's death?

Yes, my daughter woke up two days before the incident and said she saw kidnappers who tried to catch her dad in the bush, and we prayed against it.

How did your husband find himself in the midst of terrorists in the community?

He had his personal motorbike, and he was going to get drugs at a pharmacy when he unknowingly rode straight into them at Eziobodo.

How has the death of your husband affected the family?

It is now an emergency because he left five children who need to be fed and their welfare taken care of. I need urgent help to fend for them. I'm appealing for help to start a business with which to train these children.

I already learnt how to buy and sell clothes from my husband, and I can continue. I need urgent help to take care of our five children. The people of Imo should please come to my aid.