

Two years of tears, agony

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Family awaits justice for murdered son

From **Aniekan Aniekan**, Calabar

The saying that Nigeria has happened to someone is usually associated with a terrible misfortune in the country in recent time and no one wishes to have such experience.

One trouble can be more than enough for anyone to pass through, particularly in a very trying economic situation in the country today.

For the family of Ernest Onyeka, Nigeria happened to them in a most unfortunate way. The family is grieving as a result.



Victim

Onyeka and his siblings live in Ikom local government area of the state, a thriving area in Cross River State whose economy is built around cocoa.

Onyeka narrated: “On Saturday, the 4th of September, 2022, my elder brother, Princewill Ikenna, went to have a hair cut and that was the last time we saw him.

“On Sunday, the following day, we did not see him in church there at the Redeemed Christian Church of God and we were curious.

“After service, we went to his house and learnt he did not sleep at home and we headed to the police station to make a report.

“The following day by 11 am, my dad received a call that we should go to a field to identify a corpse and behold my brother’s corpse was lying there with three bullets on his head.”

Onyeka said the family was devastated and he went to his brother’s house to check some of his documents and saw the contact of a tracking company. This company, he said, tracked the car to Lagos State.

He subsequently headed to Lagos State and the car was found in a panel beater’s shop undergoing a process of rebranding.

Further investigations with the help of the Lagos State Police Command identified Pastor Uchenna and Pastor Kingsley of being culpable in the crime.

Onyeka said the Lagos Police command transferred the case to Cross River State and the matter was charged to Ikom Court 2 with Justice Ashu Ewah presiding.

“After the third hearing, the case suffered a series of delays until the Judge released Pastor Uchenna on health grounds and it was one story or the other,” Onyeka added.

He said what shocked him most was that the same week the pastor was released on health grounds, the sick pastor was preaching in his church.

He lamented that two years after his brother’s cold blooded murder his family is yet to get justice. The case, he added, had suffered a series of delays which prompted an outcry from family members of the deceased.

Onyeka brought to public limelight when he detailed the challenges the family was facing to get justice and made a special appeal to the Cross River State governor, Bassey Otu, and the state Chief Judge, Justice Akon Ikpeme.

Despite the challenges, the Cross River State Ministry of Justice has assured that the matter will be vigorously pursued. The Solicitor General and Permanent Secretary, Anthony Okon Effiom, has guaranteed that justice will be served.

However, in a shocking revelation, the State Solicitor-General said it was discovered that the Deputy Chief Registrar of court had failed to transmit the case file, prompting the Ministry of Justice to query the erring staff. The case is now pending before Court 2 of the Ikom Division of the Cross River State High Court.

He said the Attorney General of Cross River State has taken a keen interest in the case, directing the Director of Public Prosecution to take over the matter for effective prosecution. The Ministry of Justice has also requested assistance from the Commissioner of Police to apprehend three other suspects who are currently on the run.

As it continues to unfold, the family of the late Princewill Ikenna remains hopeful that justice will be served. The Ministry of Justice has sympathized with the family and assured them that every effort will be made to bring the perpetrators to book.

The case has as Charge Number: HM/9C/2022, with two pastors Uchenna Peter Chinweikpe and Valentine Alloysius (aka My Father My Father) as defendants.

The case has sparked widespread outrage and concern, with many calling for swift and decisive action to bring the perpetrators to justice. As the legal process continues, the family and the community remain vigilant, determined to see justice served for Princewill Ikenna.