

# MURDER AT DAWN: Tragic details of how husband of 3 wives and father of 13 children was killed in cold blood

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Some children and relatives of the deceased; Nwanga

From **Uchenna Inya**, Abakaliki

**Okechukwu Nwanga, popularly known as Ezza Npwurunwa, his three wives and 13 children, survived the Effium/Ezza-Effium war in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, which claimed many lives with property worth billions of naira destroyed. They had relocated to Abakaliki, the state capital, at the peak of the crisis.**

After the relocation, he started life from scratch, having lost his means of livelihood. He was almost recovering when the unexpected happened.

Nwanga was murdered by assailants in what could be described as jungle justice. His body is now in the morgue awaiting burial.

The deceased left his house around 5am on October 2 and told his six months pregnant wife, Chiamaka, that he was pressed and needed to answer the call of nature. Shortly after leaving the house, his wife started hearing his screams and she started crying at the top of her voice to attract help, and help eventually came.

But before it came, the man was already at the point of death. However, four of the suspects who attacked him were arrested by a team of policemen on patrol in that axis.

Nwanga was taken to the police clinic on the Abakaliki/Enugu highway after his rescue by the police but he passed away immediately he was taken to the facility. His death has devastated his family, friends, associates, relatives, well-wishers and his Anioma community, which was created by Governor Francis Nwifuru from Effium community as part of the solution to the crisis in the area.



Chiamaka and co-wife

Nwanga's grieving wife, Chiamaka, narrated the incident to Daily Sun thus: "My husband was with me all through the night. When it was 5am, he told me he was pressed and needed to ease himself and he went out.

"After sometime, I started hearing his voice. He was shouting, 'What did I do? What did I do? What did I do?' The shouting was very intense and I was uncomfortable. So, I started crying, calling for help.

"Before policemen that were on patrol around our area who heard my voice could come to our place, he was very weak with machete cuts all over his body. They macheted him to death. He had machete cuts all over his body, that's how I saw him and he had no issues with anyone. My

husband was a very peaceful man; he never had issues with anyone. They should find those that killed him.”

Ikechukwu Orogwu, who lives around Umuoghara in the capital city, where the incident occurred, alleged that the incident was not the first time someone was killed in the area and called for an end to it. He described the deceased as a hardworking and successful businessman and wondered why he was killed.

His words: “This is not the first time they killed our brothers; they have been killing us. Recently, they killed one of our brothers and they said he stole a phone, an ordinary phone. Now, this man has been killed too. He is our brother. This morning, we got this shocking news that he was killed.

“The allegation against him is that he stole a phone. What is a phone to warrant taking one’s life? What is happening here is very bad. The authorities should wake up and tell us what is happening here because I can’t see the deceased stealing ordinary phones.

“He is a businessman. He is a transporter and he is also a trader. He trades in alcohol. He is also a land agent. I knew him as a land agent because I am also a land agent. He is a very friendly person and never had any issue with anyone. He is hardworking and he doesn’t have any criminal record. He was my business partner. I wonder why he was killed like this.”

Another resident of the area, Nwanga’s friend, Sunday Nworie, expressed sadness over his gruesome murder. He also called for justice on his killing.

He said: “I was in my house this morning around 5:30am when my brother called me and said that there was an incident in my brother’s compound. I asked what happened? He said a group of people came with machetes and rifles and attacked our brother and that he may not survive the incident.

“I shouted and I immediately rushed there. On getting there, I was told he had been taken to Police Clinic, along Abakaliki/Enugu expressway, by a team of policemen who were on patrol and heard of the incident. When I got to the clinic, he was already dead. He couldn’t even talk to me as usual, he was lying lifeless.

“So, I am not happy that this type of incident happened to my brother. We have carried his body from the Police Clinic to the mortuary. My brother was not a criminal, he had no criminal record whatsoever.

“We went to the police station and discovered that some persons that killed that my brother, including two women, have been arrested and they called my brother a criminal. The DPO called him a criminal because that is what the suspects arrested for killing him called him.

“I immediately challenged the DPO. I told him that my brother was not a criminal. I told him to check his record before calling him a criminal because, since he was born, nobody has ever mentioned he stole anything.”

Obasi Joseph, another friend of the deceased, said he grew up with him and that Nwanga was a nice person.

“The deceased was one of our brothers; we grew up in the same Effium community. He happened to be one of the victims of the war that ravaged the community for many years. Because of the war, he relocated to Abakaliki and he has been known as a hardworking man and has no criminal record. He is very hardworking and he relied solely on himself for survival.

“We know him to be into some businesses and he is also a motorist and, as many can attest, he is even one of the officials in their company. This morning, sadly, we got the news of his gruesome murder by some assailants. We have just gathered like brothers and neighbours to sympathize with his family.

“It is unfortunate that he left his young wives and children and we are so saddened by his tragic death. All we are pleading is that he should be given justice. We are pleading with the government to help us so that normalcy will be restored. You can see the number of youths here but we have warned that they should not act in a way that violates the law and destroy the peace and tranquility radiating in the state.

“It is not as if it is not paining us. We are just trying to be law-abiding. The government and security agencies should help us to fish out whoever was involved in this heinous crime because we can’t take the law into our hands; and everything should be done as soon as practicable so that his family will at least be relieved of their pains,” he said .

Meanwhile, Nwanga’s community, Anioma, has also condemned his murder and called for Nwifuru’s intervention and dispassionate police investigation to bring the culprits under the weight of the law.

In a statement signed by Monday Eze, president-general, and Chukwudi Egbara, secretary, the community said it received the death of Nwanga with shock.

“The Anioma Community Development Union leadership strongly condemns the gruesome murder of the young man in cold blood.

“Given the growing tension over the unwarranted killing, the Anioma Community Development Union leadership hereby calls for restraint from aggrieved persons and all of us affected by the tragic incident to enable the police conduct a full-scale investigation into the murder.

“We, therefore, call on the peace-loving governor of Ebonyi State to use his good offices to ensure that the police conducts a dispassionate and comprehensive investigation into the unwarranted killing of Mr. Okechukwu Nwanga and bring the culprits under the full weight of the law.

“Our condolences and prayers are with the wives and children of the deceased, even as we implore Governor Nwifuru and good-spirited individuals to support the dependents of the deceased, especially his young children.

“As a town union, we promise to monitor investigations and proceedings as regards the killing of our fellow compatriot, until justice is done,” the statement stated.

The police public relations officer in the state, Joshua Ukandu, a superintendent of police, who confirmed the incident, said some persons have been arrested in connection with the killing. He said the suspects were apprehended by a team of policemen from the state police command who were on patrol and saw the suspects cutting the deceased with machetes.

“The matter is still under investigation but the story is that the man allegedly maybe went to steal something from a compound. When the person that the man was trying to steal something from raised the alarm, the people came out and descended on the man.

“This is currently under investigation, we have made arrests. We have four persons in our custody in connection to the incident. The people that we arrested were the people we saw beating up the man, using machetes on him,” he said.

Ukandu condemned jungle justice and urged people to refrain from it.

“Jungle justice is not the right approach, we are not in a banana republic and that is why we have laws that guide our actions. Jungle justice is what we are completely against, nobody should take laws into his or her hands in the cause of trying to get justice because that is not the right way to get justice,” he said.