

Man's murder sparks crisis in Ebonyi community

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By Rapheal



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From Uchenna Inya, Abakaliki

There is tension at Ihie autonomous community, Ishiagu, in Ivo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State over the killing of a member of the community, late Fabian Okonkwo.

Okonkwo was reportedly murdered on April 16, 2026, by suspected assailants in the area after alleged threats to his life.



•A victim of the attack

The deceased and some other members of the Umunkpumente Kindred in the community were allegedly holding a meeting when the assailants struck. Okonkwo died during the attack while some people sustained varying degrees of injury..

Victims of the attack alleged that Okonkwo had earlier received threats from certain members of the community before his killing.

They called on Governor Francis Nwifuru, the Commissioner of Police, CP Hope Urunwa Okafor, and the Director of the Department of State Services (DSS) to ensure the arrest and prosecution of those responsible for the incident.

The victims alleged that the crisis escalated after members of the Umunkpumente Kindred petitioned Governor Nwifuru and the Commissioner of Police, requesting a thorough investigation into the killing of Okonkwo and the arrest of those behind the murder.

One of the victims and Chairman of the Umunkpumente Kindred, Christopher Okonkwo, revealed that the late Fabian Okonkwo had sought permission in April 2026 to bury his deceased in-law on his property at Ekembe in Ihie Autonomous Community, where he resided.

He explained that the late Okonkwo approached the President-General of the town union, Chijoke Ume, to inform him of the proposed burial arrangement.

However, he stated that the President-General objected to the plan and warned him against proceeding with it.

According to Okonkwo, the deceased subsequently approached the traditional ruler of Ihie Autonomous Community, Eze Gabriel Okoro, who granted approval for the burial after confirming that the land belonged to the late Okonkwo and that his family had consented to the arrangement.

He further stated that shortly after obtaining the approval and returning home, gunmen allegedly stormed the residence of Fabian Okonkwo in the early hours of April 16 and shot him multiple times in the head, killing him before help could arrive.

In the words of Christopher Okonkwo, “he went further to threaten him that should he go contrary to his position, that he will have him to contend with. Late Fabian now went to the traditional ruler of Ihie Autonomous Community, Eze Gabriel Okoro to seek his approval and the Eze gave him permission, considering that the land in question belongs to the late Fabian and the family who had already agreed that his in-law should be buried there.

“After getting the approval from the traditional ruler, he left the palace and went back home. In the early hours of 16th April, gunmen came to his house and shot him several times in the head and before help could come, he has already died. Unfortunately nothing was taken from him which made it clear that it was a case of assassination. The hoodlums only came to kill him.

“On getting the information, the Chairman of Ivo LGA, Chief Emmanuel Aja and the Divisional Police Officer Ivo LGA came and took the body of the deceased to the mortuary without informing us who are his kinsmen that he had been murdered.

“After waiting for several weeks and the police weren’t doing anything, to unravel the mystery behind the killing, we, the kindred members, now petitioned the State Governor and the Commissioner of Police against Chijoke Ume who is the President General of Ihie community, who had earlier threatened the deceased, and he was arrested alongside his Secretary, Kenneth Kalu.

“On the 3rd of June, the Local Government Chairman called me and asked me to go and ensure that the President General and the Secretary arrested were released from the police custody. I informed him that it wasn’t a personal decision to petition the governor and the police on the murder of Fabian but rather a decision of the kindred. He insisted that I must go back to the police and ensure that I withdraw the petition and ensure they were released.

“On the 5th of June, 2026, some youths, led by one Emeka Chukwuemeka, invaded my house and when they didn’t see me, they destroyed some of my belongings. On their way out, they met my uncle’s wife, Mrs. Kate Irochi and asked her to inform me that they were giving me 24 hours to ensure that the PG and Secretary were released from the police, otherwise, that they would deal with me.

“Then in the early hours of 7th June, 2026, which was yesterday, they rang the bell that they were going to hold a meeting at one Cornelius Chukwu’s compound, We the members of the kindred had scheduled to hold a meeting in late Fabian Okonkwo’s house on how to cater for his family, especially the aged mother.

“While we were there, over 100 youths from the other three different kindred invaded the place and started attacking us. They injured about 10 persons, burnt one motorcycle, destroyed two other motorcycles and looted and destroyed a shop belonging to one Onwulandu Mbazu,” he narrated.