

Sv News Xtra

LUCY: When home becomes a crime scene

By Esther Onyegbula

By any measure, Olumma Lucy Akataobi was a woman trying to survive and keep her young family afloat in a country where many live one market day at a time. At just 29, she was already a mother of two children, aged one and two. She was also the backbone of her household, a familiar face at a market in Owerri, Imo State, where she sold vegetables and earned a reputation for diligence, warmth and honesty. Customers liked her. Some trusted her. One of them, in fact, would, unknowingly, set off the chain of events that ended her life.

Earlier this year, Olumma's small business suffered a setback. Funds ran dry and she stayed home for a while, waiting for her sister to raise money to help her restart.

It was a difficult period, but one she met with resilience. Before her sister could gather the funds, a customer stepped in with financial support, enabling Olumma to return to the market, a small act of kindness

that reflected how much she was valued. Back on her feet, Olumma worked with renewed hope. Early this month, she supplied goods worth ₦35,000 to a customer who opted to make a bank transfer. Olumma gave the customer her husband's account details, planning to collect the money from him when she returned home.

It was a routine decision, one made in trust. That evening, she closed from the market alongside her mother. At a junction near their home, they parted ways.

Olumma continued, upbeat and optimistic. She called her suppliers, arranging for fresh items to be delivered the next day. Business, she believed, was finally stabilising again.

Alleged violence

But when she got home and asked her husband for the ₦35,000, the response shattered that hope. He told her he had spent the money. What followed was an argument that spiralled into alleged violence. Before the

night was over, Olumma was dead. According to family accounts, the altercation turned fatal when her husband, Kelechi Prince Okeke, a patent medicine seller, allegedly beat her. She reportedly died around 11 p.m. on Monday, February 2. A disturbing video showing her lifeless body



Lucy



Husband Kelechi Prince Okeke

sake of her children and the fear of societal judgment. Now, those children are motherless.

Custody

Imo State Police Command has confirmed that the husband is in custody at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Owerri, for investigation.

The family is also calling for an urgent autopsy to medically establish the cause of death, appealing to the public for financial support to ensure the process is not stalled.

Domestic violence

Beyond the immediate tragedy, Olumma's death has reopened painful conversations about domestic violence in Nigeria, how it thrives in silence, how warning signs are ignored, and how economic stress, patriarchy and social pressure combine to trap women in dangerous homes.

"How do you write 'rest in peace'," a family member said, "when two children, not yet three years old combined, will never see their mother again?" Olumma's story is not an isolated one. She is one of many women whose lives have been cut short by violence, often at the hands of those meant to protect

surfaced online, accompanied by anguished cries calling her name.

Her sister, Ezinne Onyedikachi Brenda Akataobi, has since gone public, pleading for justice. "My sister was killed because she asked for her own money," she said, alleging that Olumma had endured years of abuse, emotional neglect, financial deprivation and violence, but remained in the marriage for the

them. Each case leaves behind grieving families, traumatised children and a society that moves on too quickly. Her life mattered. Her death must matter too. As her family mourns, their message is clear: when abuse begins, silence can be fatal. There is a thin line between raised voices and raised hands, and too often, that line ends in a grave.

For Olumma, that line was crossed over ₦35,000. And the cost was everything.