

Pregnant housewife arraigned over step-daughter's killing

From Hope Abah, Makurdi

A 20-year-old pregnant housewife, Hadiza Mohammed, has been arraigned for allegedly killing her step-daughter.

She was said to have dumped the body at an uncompleted building near River Benue in Wadata suburb of Makurdi, Benue State.

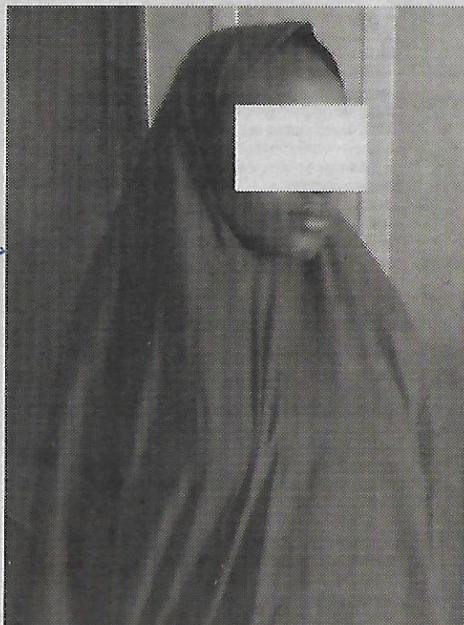
The deceased, three-year-old Khadija Abdulrahman, went missing last Tuesday evening from the custody of her paternal grandmother but her lifeless body was later found at noon the following day by a search party.

Following an investigation by the Benue State Police Command, Mrs Mohammed who was earlier arrested on suspicion was said to have confessed to killing the minor over alleged attempt being made by her husband to reconcile with the mother of the late girl whom he had divorced some time ago.

It was learnt that family members and neighbours tried to find the child immediately she went missing but to no avail even when suspicion was said to have heightened that her stepmother, who was seen with the deceased when she visited her mother-in-law where the toddler also lived, knew something about her whereabouts.

The police, however, said the jealous housewife had already confessed to the crime, adding that she might have decided to take the life of the minor after her husband told her of his intention to reconcile with the child's mother.

Family sources also said that the suspect had on the fateful day taken the child saying that she wanted to plait her hair only to return alone and pretended not to know anything about



■ The suspect Hadiza Mohammed

her whereabouts.

It was when pressure was mounted on her that she confessed to have used a block to hit the deceased, thereby killing her.

Reacting, the state Deputy Commissioner of Police, DCP Adat Ududo, said the suspect had already been taken to court and promised that the law would take its course on the matter.

But the suspect, who refused to admit to the crime while speaking with journalists at the court premises in Makurdi shortly before her arraignment, said she was not happy about the idea of bringing back the child's mother to her matrimonial home.

She explained that on the fateful day, her mother-in-law had invited her in order to mediate on a misunderstanding

she had with her husband when the child suddenly disappeared only to be found dead in an uncompleted building.

Asked if she actually committed the crime she said, "My husband say na me kill the girl, so, wetin una want me to talk again? I beg headache dey worry me."

According to the suspect, she had honoured her mother-in-law's invitation at about 5.00p.m. in company of her two brothers-in-law but met the absence of the old woman and while she waited she had cooked, prayed and stayed until 8.00p.m. as requested by her host.

She explained further: "At about 9.00p.m., I entered a house and picked a CD plate. I had earlier seen Khadijat playing around. But I entered a neighbour's house and by the time I came out, they said they were looking for the girl. We even checked my father's house, we looked for her until 2.00a.m.

"By morning, my mother-in-law came to my father's house and said they haven't still seen the girl. It was later that people started saying they found her body in an uncompleted building. They thought we were together when I went out to get a CD and that is why they are saying that I did it," Mrs Mohammed narrated.

The suspect, who said she is four months pregnant and got married to her husband in July last year, further said that she loved her late step-daughter much and only confessed to the police of committing the crime because her husband said she did it.

"My husband said my mate will come back. Now, that the baby is dead, she will still return," the suspect added.

Meanwhile, late Khadijat has been buried after Muslim clerics held a prayer session at Wadata mosque for the repose of her soul.