

# Family laments death of 41-year-old mother of six in Enugu crossfire

From Lawrence Njoku, Enugu

**I**n their one-room apartment at No.105 Kaduna Street, Obiagu Road, Enugu, Obinna Chukwuka sat sorrowfully yesterday, surrounded by his six children.

He had become a psychological wreck; unable to come to terms with the sudden demise of his wife, Ukamaka.

The 41-year-old woman was a victim of last Friday's shootout involving the police and unknown gunmen at Nkponkiti Junction, along Presidential Road.

On the fateful day, Ukamaka, a cook in one of the eateries at Enugu Press Centre, had bubbled with life, having no premoni-

tion whatsoever that she would never return to her husband's house alive. In her usual manner, she had gone to work. She closed at about 9:00 p.m., and decided to walk home. It was her last as she stumbled into the shootout at a police checkpoint.

*The Guardian* learnt that two police officers also died during the exchange of gunfire.

After she was hit, Ukamaka reportedly fell into a gutter, dying instantly. Her distraught husband, who fought back tears, told *The Guardian* that his life had been torn into shreds.

He said: "That night, I waited for her to return until 9:00 p.m. Then I de-



The late Ukamaka

cided to go to Obiagu Road and wait. I stayed there till 10:00 p.m. But

there was no sign of her. I called her phone several times. It continued to

ring out. So, I decided to go and look for her. "On getting to Nkponkiti Junction, I saw several police officers. One of them stopped me and demanded where I was going. I told him I was looking for my wife and he ordered me back home. I returned to the house by midnight.

"I did not sleep that night. By 6:00 a.m., the following morning, I was already on my way to search for her. At Nkponkiti Junction, I saw some people gathered, discussing. I asked whether anything happened there. One of them informed me that a woman was killed last night and her body had been removed from the

gutter and taken away.

"I walked toward the gutter and saw her items and immediately raised an alarm. It was from there that I was directed to Ogui police station, where they took me to the Eastern Nigeria Medical Centre morgue where her remains were deposited."

Obinna, a carpenter, who hails from Achi in Oji River, Enugu State, said he is now left with the huge burden of how to raise the six children.

"I need help. My wife was the breadwinner of the family. I need help as much as possible to bury my wife and take care of the children. Two are still in nursery, three are in primary school, and one in secondary," he sobbed.