

Family demands justice after man dies from alleged jungle justice in Imo

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Armed herders shoot Catholic priest, abduct two in Benue

The family of Chibugo Amadi of Umuora village, Umuohiri community in Isiala Mbano Local Council of Imo State has demanded justice over his death, alleging he was subjected to jungle justice by his kinsmen.

The Guardian learnt that the deceased reportedly attacked his brother with a machete two weeks ago over a minor altercation, leaving him critically injured. The brother was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he was resuscitated through the intervention of community members.

Angered by Amadi's actions, his kinsmen reportedly described his behaviour as inhumane and unacceptable. They allegedly apprehended him, stripped him naked, beat him with sticks and wood, and paraded him around the village. Amadi later collapsed and was taken to a hospital in Okwelle, Onuimo Local Council, where he was pronounced dead by the doctor on duty.

During a press briefing in Owerri, activist Chidiebube Okeoma, founder of the Stand for Humanity Foundation, disclosed that the perpetrators dumped Amadi's body in a morgue and fled after the doctor confirmed him dead. Okeoma added that videos of the mob action were recorded and shared on social media platforms.

Okeoma, along with the foundation's legal adviser, Chijioke Onwubuariri, is advocating for justice for Amadi's family. They revealed that the suspects involved in the killing are identifiable from the video evidence.

According to the foundation, when Amadi's 18-year-old son met the suspects at the hospital, they allegedly lied that his father fell from a tree. Okeoma confirmed that a petition has been submitted to the Commissioner of Police in Imo State, Aboki Danjuma, who has directed the State Criminal Investigation

Department (SCID) to investigate the matter.

The deceased's wife, Mrs Chinonye Amadi, along with three of her eight children, sought help from the foundation. Okeoma stated: "This is an intentional murder. We have video clips showing how they deliberately murdered him. They conspired to sell his four plots of land at an undervalued price and still killed him in the presence of his wife and children."

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He added, "We have taken over the matter and written a petition to the CP. Now, the suspects are on the run, but they must be caught. I commend our legal adviser, Chijioke Onwubuariri, for offering pro bono services and urge well-meaning individuals to support this quest for justice."

Meanwhile, suspected armed herders shot Rev Fr Solomon Atongu, the Priest in charge of St Theresa's Catholic Parish, Jimba, Gwer West Local Council, Benue State, over the weekend.

A parishioner, Thaddeus, told The Guardian that two individuals who were with the priest were abducted during the attack. Although it was unclear if the assailants presumed the priest dead, Atongu was rushed to the hospital, where he is reportedly responding to treatment.

Suspected herders also attacked several communities in Benue over the weekend, killing many residents. In Orkpen-Tsor, Mbakyulan, along the Naka-Adoka road, six individuals were reportedly shot by armed bandits.

In Tse Orbiam, another settlement in Gwer West Local Council housing a military base, herders reportedly invaded and displaced residents. The area, located five kilometres from Naka, the local council headquarters, has been under siege.

Notably, the Divisional Police Officer of Naka Police Division, Superintendent of Police Mamud Abubakar, was killed in the same community on February 1, 2023, by armed bandits.