

# Police Order Probe Of Woman's Death In A'Ibom Command

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Seven days after the alleged murder of a hypertensive widow, Mrs. Deborah Nkereuwem Nkpenie, by one Bassey Peter Ikpe, an Inspector of Police attached to the Police Command, the State Commissioner of Police, Imohimi Edgal, has ordered the immediate arrest of the said Inspector.

Before now several attempts by newsmen to extract comments from the police spokesperson on the matter which was reported to have taken place right in the premises of the state police headquarters at Ikot Akpan Abia failed since the incident occurred last Thursday as he repeatedly claimed not to have been aware of it.

A statement signed by Odiko Macdon, the State's Police Public Relations Officer, and made available to newsmen in Uyo on Wednesday, January 22, said the police decision to finally look into the alleged murder was informed by publications in some dailies and online media.

Part of the statement reads, "The attention of the Akwa Ibom State Police Command has been drawn to a publication in some dailies and online media that a Police personnel attached to the Akwa Ibom State Police Command, one Inspector Bassey Ikpe, reportedly beat one Mrs. Deborah Nkereuwem Nkpenie to death on Thursday, January 16, 2020.

"To authenticate this serious allegation, the Commissioner of Police, Akwa Ibom State Police Command (CP), Imohimi Edgal, has ordered the immediate arrest of the said Inspector.

"The commissioner has instructed the Deputy Commissioner, State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), to carry out a thor-



Nkpenie

ough investigation into the matter, while reiterating the command's commitment to policing with great respect for human rights."

A witness who spoke with our correspondent said the incident took place in the morning of Thursday, January 16, 2020, following the invitation of the deceased by the policeman who was an IPO in an ongoing case.

Such invitation, according to a Human Rights lawyer, Clifford Thomas, who had picked interest in the case and had interacted with the DPC; was against the wise counsel of the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of the State Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Department (SCIID) of the state command, considering the health of the deceased said to be hypertensive.

Recounting the deceased's last moments with the policeman at the premises of the police headquarters, a Keke rider, Ukpono Sunday Umoren, who brought the woman to the station said, "The policeman approached my Keke which was conveying the woman and shouted at her that she was lying about

her sickness. He made efforts to drag her out in anger; he knocked her head several times by the side rail of the keke. The woman was screaming that she was not well.

"She began to suffocate, and found it difficult to breathe. The policeman kept insisting that she was lying. He even told her that, if she wanted to die, she should die.

"As she was screaming while the policeman kept trying to pull her out of the Keke, her voice suddenly became inaudible. We were begging the policeman to refrain from his hostile act towards the woman.

"He even refused our taking her to hospital. It was after she breathed her last, that he eventually ordered that she should be taken to the hospital."

Further checks revealed that the Deputy Commissioner of Police in the command, Mrs. S. U. Horsefall, a lawyer, had earlier advised against unprofessional conduct by the said Inspector Bassey Peter Ikpe, including not bringing the parties before the DC for interview before arraignment in court.