

# Murder Of Civil Defence Inspector: Police, Court in Big Cover Up

BY BERNARD TOLANI DADA, UYO

For the family of Inspector Israel Willie Umoh, whose mangled remains are still locked in the freezing morgue of the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH) after being brutally murdered by suspected cultists, only heavens will hear their cry.

This is so because the road to justice appeared to be strewn with thorns with investigations by the Police reaching a dead end. The deceased, who hails from Ikot Edet in Etim Ekpo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, last served at the Rivers State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), and according to family sources, he was gruesomely macheted on January 3, 2013.

It was learnt that he died two days later when the hospital management at UUTH had delayed his treatment, insisting authorization for handling his case must come from a known establishment.

Since then, his remains could not be retrieved by the family for proper burial because the hospital charges had risen to about N400,000.

Fighting back tears, Mrs. Edidiong Monday Lazarus, the deceased's sister recalled how her beloved brother met his untimely death.

"My late brother had suffered so much and this is the time he should be enjoying the fruits of his long years of labour. After being promoted to the rank of an Inspector, he had visited home to rejoice with his people, not knowing death was lurking around for him.

"He had promised to build a new house instead of renovating the old home for his aged father and other members of the family. He came to the village and told every one of his plans to build a house.

"It was in the process of excavating the ground for the foundation to be laid when suddenly, some people arrived on two motorbikes. They were later followed by others who stormed the place and dealt several machete cuts on my brother; everybody scampered for their lives, leaving my brother in the pool of his own blood.

"We rushed him to the UUTH but doctors could not attend to him immediately and he died two days later because those who attacked him did not want him to survive.

My brother was an easy going person, he had no quarrel with anybody and because of that, he had no premonition for the sudden attack."

Sources in the village linked the murder of the Civil Defence chief to a communal feud between Ikot Edet village and the neighboring Ibio Nnung Achat in tussle over leadership of youth groups in the communities.

To prevent the feud from degenerating to full blown crisis the Local Government, it was gathered that the Council chair, Hon. Uduot Jack, had stepped in, bringing the Police to arrest the suspects.

Investigation revealed that all the suspects linked to the murder including the ring leader, one Enobong George Udonkang, the youth leader of Ibio Nnung Achat, had since been let off the hook by the Police.

The Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Akwa Ibom State Command, Etim Dickson DSP, confirmed the release of the suspects, adding that investigation on the matter had since stopped.

He explained that the suspects, who were held up awaiting prosecution at the Homicide Department of the Command, were asked to go following a Court order, which the Police had to obey.

But the family and other agencies have expressed fears about what they described as "unholy alliance between the Police and the Judiciary in covering up murder cases in the country".

According to family sources, "a prominent politician in this Etim Ekpo Local Government is the person blocking us from getting justice", pointing out that the freed suspects always work for him during elections.

Blaming the Court for being elusive to the common people, a senior official of the State Security Service (SSS), who would not want his name in print, said they have arrested several suspected kidnappers, cultists and armed robbers, adding that all of them have always been freed by the Court.

"This attitude of the Court has made our job difficult and frustrating because you can imagine risking your life to arrest a culprit and the next day somebody that should be in jail, is seen again on the street; it baffles me", he lamented.

The Chairman of the Akwa Ibom branch of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), Mr.



Late Umoh

Clifford Thomas, queried the hasty conclusion of investigation by the Police, saying "the Police should have gone the extra mile to reach a logical conclusion on the matter. "A situation where justice is left half way done is a total ridicule of the Nigerian judicial system which our dear President Goodluck Jonathan has been striving to reposition for the common good of Nigerians, it is so sad that the poor cannot get true justice in Nigeria", he added.

Meanwhile, after a long wait for justice which may never come, kith and kin of the deceased met over the weekend with a resolution to pool their scarce resources together with a view to burying their dead. February 7, 2014, according to Pa Willie Umoh, the 120-year-old father of the deceased has been slated for the burial of his son.

Frail looking and shaking with age, Pa Willie, who can barely see, muttered: "Only God will pay back those who killed my son. It is out of order for the father to bury his son; but in my own case, I will be the one burying my son. I

was waiting for him to bury me and he was preparing a home towards that but the agents of Satan came and took him away, the God of Heaven will reward them".

The deceased left behind five children including Meekness (18) Deborah (6), God'stime (3), Abasiofon (2) and Emmanuel (1).

And worried by the enormity of the task before her, Mrs. Ekom Israel Willie, appealed to the Federal Government to impress it on the Rivers State Command of the NSCDC, where her late husband last served, to assist the family in the areas of his entitlements and other facilities.

It was learnt that the Rivers Command could not come to the aid of the family since the deceased did not die in the line of duty.

Also, the Akwa Ibom State Commander of the NSCDC, Mr. Pedro Ideba, said his Command could not do anything to help the family since the deceased was not serving in Akwa Ibom before his death. He urged the family to follow up the matter from the Port Harcourt Command.

“It was in the process of excavating the ground for the foundation to be laid when suddenly, some people arrived on two motorbikes. They were later followed by others who stormed the place and dealt several machete cuts on my brother