

NEWS

How girl, 10, was raped to death in Benin-City

MEMBERS of a Benin City, Edo State family are cursing the day they accepted the request of a 45-year old man to be their tenant. The family of Pa Andrew Igharo, the *Odionwere* of Benin Technical College Road, in the Edo State capital are accusing Mr. Joseph Omoruyi their tenant for the past six years, of seducing the grandchildren of Pa Igharo with N10,000.

Joseph, a commercial motorcyclist, had three wives and six children.

The Igharo family alleged that he had a propensity seduced minors in their family.

One of the girls is in class four in a primary school. She always got invited allegedly by Joseph to meet him at the back of their house located at No.1 Benin Technical College Road, which she said she always turned down but Joseph allegedly took a bold step to satisfy his sexual urge. Hewas to have sneaked into his landlord's sitting-room where the 12-year old lay to have her.

The girl, in tears, said: "One day, he came inside our room. I thought it was another person. He locked the door and used his hand to cover my mouth and raped me."

She, however, did not inform anybody.

Said the girl: "He raped me on top of this bench in the parlour. It was in the afternoon when nobody was at home except my late sister. He would call me to come and take money at the backyard. He would give me N20 or N10."

Joseph also allegedly seduced and slept with her cousin who with the former because her parents are separated.

Obviously not satisfied, Joseph went on to sleep with Faith, cousin to Igodaro. Her father is outside the country and mother, a trader, is at Use while she lives with grandpa.

The *Nation* was told that one day the first victim took ill and was hospitalised and treated for malaria. When she was not getting better and could not sit properly, the doctor observed her and discovered that her hymen was broken and her private part had injuries.

He discovered that she was raped.

Said Mrs. Rachael Ogbemudia, elder sister of the victim's father: "We went to see the doctor at the

From John Mayaki, Benin

private hospital and he called me aside to say she had vaginal problem; that as she was brought to the hospital for malaria symptom, she was treated but, she couldn't sit down properly.

"He now observed that her private part was wide open and that she had been messed up. We then asked her but, she didn't speak up. She kept quiet for some days. When this other girl now came, I told her 'look at what happened to your sister, hope the same thing will not happen to you?' She now opened up to say it was 'the man, my father's tenant' that is trying to talk to her.

"The doctor said we should ask her very well and after this, she now said it was the man that was talking to her sometime ago that she should meet him at the backyard. The doctor treated her and said we should go for pregnancy test which we found negative."

The man was accused to have also raped her inside his car, which is presently parked at the Ugbowo Police Station. Joseph denied all the accusations.

Mrs Ogbemudia said: "From the doctor's observation, it seems it was an everyday affair, such that her private part became so open and wider than that of a woman giving birth.

"We observed that when we took her to the hospital, her mouth was black, her teeth black, and we didn't know it was the infection that blackened her mouth and her teeth. Meanwhile, we have reported to the police and arrangements were on to arrest him.

"By this time, he no longer slept at home. Twice, the policemen came in the night, twice they failed to arrest him. He had gone to summon us to 'Aiyelala' at Oluku (a terrible diabolical consultant). We were now waiting knowing that since he was the one that summoned us, he would be present too.

"We reported at the police at Ugbowo and a policeman went with us to Oluku on that day. We met this man there, but the Oluku high priest said that it was not the government's duty to arrest in his shrine.

"The police said that they sent them from the police station to arrest him and that it has been long they have been looking for



•Mrs Ogbemudia, auntie to the victim and Pa Igharo Andrew, the victim's grandfather

'At night, she couldn't sleep; she was restless. The next day, we rushed her to University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). We explained to the doctor what had happened and they fixed oxygen on her but she died the next day and her remains lie at the UBTH mortuary.'

him. They arrested him and took him to the police station.

"Even the pant she wore the first day he made love to her was thrown over the fence by Joseph. It was all stained with blood. Not long, she had headache again. We decided to take her to the private hospital we took her before. After a night at the hospital, she collapsed. The doctor asked us to go and scan her, head maybe she had problem with her brain; that was done.

"At night, she couldn't sleep; she was restless. The next day, we rushed her to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH).

We explained to the doctor what had happened and they fixed oxygen on her but she died the next day and her remains lie at the UBTH mortuary."

Information obtained from the Consultant Pathologist, Dr. Okonkwo's in/out patient note dated July 4, stated that "the above named (names withheld) 10-year old girl, was brought to the casualty (obstetrics and gynaecology) 13 days ago with three weeks history of sexual assault, purulent bloody vagina discharge of two weeks and a week's history of high grade fever and vomiting. On examina-

tion, she was found to be drowsy but, easily arousable; BP blood pressure was 180/120 mm. Her vaginal examination showed absence of the hymen.

"The family of the patient are requesting for a post mortem. Thank you for the anticipated prompt response". The note was signed by Dr. Awolola O.O, for the consultant, with Dr. Osakue Eric's signature as witness to the medical case.

In a police case request for medical treatment and report, which *The Nation* obtained, the patient suffered fever, PV discharge and severe lower abdominal pains for one week.

The report added that "she was very weak, feeble to touch. Abdominal examination revealed lower abdominal tenderness, V/E shows broken hyper vaginal orifice 2cm wide with offensive vaginal discharge. And a diagram of P.D. 2 degree to rape was made."

This was signed by Dr. Eric for the medical director.

At the Ugbowo Police Station, *The Nation* confirmed the arrest of Joseph Omoruyi in connection with case of rape. His car was also seized.

The Divisional Police Officer (DPO), Mr. Pius Kagi Ezo, said the case had been transferred to the State Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The Command's Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Mr. Peter Ogboi, confirmed the arrest.

Odionwere, who is 65 years old and a peasant farmer, has been thrown out of his house by his children. He told *The Nation* that after the death of the girl, "my children started fighting me that I connived with the tenant to rape the two girls".

Odionwere said: "Six years ago, Joseph rented the room from me and since then, I took him as my own son. When I want to eat, I called him and we eat together. If I am going to the farm, I will tell him to take care of my children.

"Of recent, I discovered that the girl was sick. One day, she fainted and she behaved at times as if she was mad. I cried out and they assisted me to a hospital where she was admitted.

"I wonder how an advanced person will want to rape a little girl. My son, the father of the deceased, is overseas and the father of the other victim who is my in-law, is in the village. Both of them (girls) stay with my wife and me.

A Central Hospital psychiatrist, Mrs. Helen Eborieme described the "weakness for minors" as paedophilia, which she described as abnormal.

Mrs. Eborieme who described this group of people as paedophiles, noted that it could be caused by a psychological disorder. She pointed out that while some preferred to sleep with male people others prefer corpses.