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## Sorrow, tears and agony left behind by men who killed Soboma George

Posted by: Our Reporter in Niger Delta 12 hours ago

In the evening of August 24, 2010, a prominent former Niger Delta warlord and factional leader of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Soboma George, was killed in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

The incident occurred on Nembe Street, Borokiri area of the Garden City. Security agencies blamed it on cult-related violence. It led to the shooting and death of unspecified number of persons.

None of the victims suffered as much as Princess John Ejims, who is battling gunshot wounds she sustained from the incident.

Miss Ejims was with her sister when gunshot rent the air. Her immediate younger sister, Joy, was also shot and died at the spot.

She still has pellets of bullets lodged in her body. Her father, she said, died from heartbreak weeks after the loss of his daughter.

Doctors believe she may become paralysed if the pellets are not removed from her body.

Miss Ejims said: "It was on August 24, 2010, at Approved Field, Nembe Street, Borokiri, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. On that day, Soboma George and some of his men were playing football at that field, and other people were also watching the game as usual.

"My late sister and I were selling boiled groundnut. The crowd at the field watching the game for us made a good site for sales.

"While I was arguing with a young man who tasted my groundnut before buying, I just saw a vehicle on speed and the next thing I heard was a war-like sound of gun. That was all I could remember; when I regained consciousness, I was in the hospital."

She was rushed to the Teme Hospital, then operated by the Doctors Without Borders. After several hours of medical battle, the doctors were able to save her life.

She said although the doctors removed several bullets and pellets from her body, there were some that could not be dislodged because they were embedded close to her spinal cord.

Two years after, she is yet to regain her full health.

She is constantly weak and cannot participate in the activities she used to do.

"Despite my condition today, I give God the glory because my spirit left my body at the hospital and I was watching the doctors battling to save my life. So, how I got back to life is something that only God knows," she said.

Doctors, she said, told her she needed a delicate surgery, which could only be done abroad to remove the remaining bullet in her waist.

She said she has been living "half life" made even more difficult by her precarious situation and inability to return to her trade.

"My father died a heartbroken man because he saw my sister's death and then couldn't bear to see me

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continue in this bad condition.”

After losing a daughter and her husband, Mrs Ejims, relocated from Port Harcourt to Elele because she could not pay rent.

Miss Ejims pleaded with the government, public-spirited individuals and organisations to assist her.

She said: “The ex-militants, who killed my sister, shot and put me and my family in this condition, are today enjoying amnesty. I want to appeal to the government and the Amnesty Office to come to my aid and help me become a human being again.

“Some of them (ex-militants) have received different trainings abroad but nobody wants to talk about those who were wounded or killed by the weapons of the militants. I want the Federal Government to assist me out of pity by offering to end this severe pain as part of the amnesty programme.”

Mr. Higher King, a human rights activist, said Miss Ejims was threatened by some persons who wanted her to give evidence in the trial of George’s suspected killers.

King said they should first think of her interest and well- being.

He said he had written to President Goodluck Jonathan, Senator Magnus Abe and the House of Assembly and the member representing her constituency but all efforts have proved abortive.

“One thing is certain; she is seriously in pain and anyone, who needs her attention, should assist to save her life. The doctors said she may be paralysed as long as she lives with the bullets. So, I am begging the governors, National Assembly and the President to come to her aid.”

He appealed to Governors Rotimi Amaechi and Rochas Okorocha (the governor of her home state, Imo) to have pity on the young lady.

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