



The late Ishoon

Linus OOTA, Lafia

It is almost two weeks that her husband was murdered by herdsmen but tears would not stop flowing from her eyes.

Mrs Agatha Ishoon was turned into a widow with the gruesome killing of her husband, Mr Agbaka Sabastine Ishoon, by the heartless herdsmen at about 8 pm penultimate Monday.

Ishoon met his untimely death on Giza/Katalin Road in Keana Local Government Area, Nasarawa State while returning home from a cultural association meeting.

The 27-year-old widow is now saddled with the responsibility of catering for their two children all alone.

Speaking with our correspondent at the family's apartment in Azer area of Kadarko, Agatha gave an emotional account of how Ishoon left the house on his motorcycle for Kuduku, a Tiv settlement under Giza Development Area, Keana LGA of the state, to attend a cultural meeting.

Until his death, Ishoon was the secretary of the said cultural association which superintends an annual Tiv festival called *Kyegh Sha Shwa*. He had attended the meeting without any inkling that his life would cross with those of the killer herdsmen that murdered him in cold blood.

Ishoon had lived his entire life in Keana LGA, having attended primary and secondary schools there before his tertiary education at the Nasarawa State University in Keffi. At the time he was murdered, he was said to have only one semester left to graduate from the Political Science Department of the university, where his grade point was said to be clearly ahead of other students in the department.

Recalling the events of the tragic day, Agatha said: "On the evening of April 26, 2021, he left for the meeting on his motorcycle at about 4pm. He had not attended

previous meetings because of his studies in Keffi, so he decided to seize the opportunity of being on holiday to attend this one.

"He promised to come back immediately after the meeting. Being a man of his word, we became worried when he did not return up till about 10pm. I was, however, afraid to trace him to the place because the distance was a bit long and a report was circulating that herdsmen had just killed about 12 persons in Doma LG and displaced about 50,000 Tiv farmers who were taking refuge in Kadarko.

"Early the next morning, I got the sad news that he left the meeting at about 6pm but was attacked on his way home by some militia who shot at the tyres of his motorcycle, seized him and murdered him in cold blood.

"When his lifeless body was brought to us, I could not believe that it was my husband's body. There were machete and axe cuts on his neck and stomach. In fact, they butchered him like a goat and dropped his body by Giza/Kadarko Road."

Before setting out for the meeting, the late Ishoon was said to have asked Agatha to wash some of his clothes because he intended to travel to Keffi the next morning to check up something at school.

Agatha, who wept intermittently as she recalled the events that led to her husband's death, added: "I did not know that he would not be going to Keffi the next day as he planned or that I would never see

'How herdsmen slaughtered my husband, aborted his dream of becoming professor'



Agatha

history in our lives.

"He kept encouraging me not to lose hope in life; that the future looked bright. He had all the hope that the days ahead would be better. He had good plans for me and my two kids, and he never foresaw death in the near future.

"Before death came on April 26, we were inseparable. My husband gave me true love. He cared so much about me and was constantly in touch with me even when he was in school.

"He meant well for his children also. He always encouraged me to endure the hardship; that it was a matter of time. Now the time has not come and he is no more."

Agatha's trauma is compounded by the gloomy prospect of raising two kids all alone.

She said: "I am a poor village woman whose only source of livelihood is farming. How I will cater for these two kids, I don't know. Life will be very tough for me and my children.

"Who will encourage me now? My husband was my hope. Who is my hope now? I don't know what to do."

In spite of her woes, however, Agatha is determined to make the best of whatever opportunity comes her way. But she ruled out the idea of re-marrying.

"All I want is that the security agencies should help me find the killers of my husband," she said.

Born on February 20, 1992, the late Ishoon attended LGEA Primary School Azer (2000), Government Secondary School Gwandinye (2008) and Nasarawa State University, Keffi where he was a 400-level student in the Department of Political Science.

He was recently elected Secretary General of the Tiv Youth Organisation (TYO) in Nasarawa State. Before his death, he served the society in many capacities such as church leader at St William Catholic Church Azer; President, Catholic Biblical Movement of Nigeria; Secretary General, Azer Youth Development; Financial Secretary, St Augustine Catholic Tiv Community; St Michael The Archangel Catholic Chaplaincy, Nasarawa State University Keffi.

The Tiv people in Nasarawa South Senatorial District are in tears as the spilling of the blood of many Tiv farmers by marauding herdsmen has resumed in earnest with Ishoon among the latest victims.

In the meantime, many of the women, the children and the aged among them are fleeing in search of a safe haven.

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him again.

"His kids cried as they insisted on following him to the meeting but he only gave them some pets and promised to buy them biscuits on his way home. He neither returned nor bought the biscuits. Now the kids are still asking for the biscuits and the whereabouts of their father.

"Losing my husband in my prime is a lifetime scar that will never heal. It is traumatic."

The distraught widow also said her husband's death was like a bad dream she wished she could wake up from.

She said: "There is no day or time I don't feel loneliness inside me since the death of my husband. Life has not been the same without him and he has kept appearing to me in my sleep.

"My husband was coming out of the university with a Second Class Upper degree in Political Science. He was left with just one semester to complete his programme. His dream was to return to school immediately for his master's degree and become a lecturer.

"His desire was to get his PhD and become a professor despite financial challenges. I subjected myself to farm work to support him achieve his desire. My hope was that one day, things would get better and the days of suffering would become