

Akunyili's murder induces sorrow, tears, anger

He hugged his son, Obum, tight before each of them left for their respective vehicles. Obum was in a white Hilux while his father, Dr. Chike Akunyili, was in a Toyota Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV). It was an event organised by the University of Nigeria Nsukka Alumni Association (UNAA), Onitsha branch to honour his late wife, former Information and Communication Minister Dora Akunyili. Moments later, Dr. Akunyili was murdered.

He is survived by six children and several grandchildren. His children are Ijeoma, Edozie, Somto, Njideka, Chidiogo, and Obumneme.

He was shot dead alongside his driver and a police escort at Nkpor junction, Anambra State on Tuesday evening. The medical doctor and Chief Executive Officer of St Leo Hospital, Enugu was heading to Umuoji in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Apart from Akunyili, his driver and police escort, five other persons were killed in the area by gunmen. A senior police officer, who pleaded anonymity, told *The Nation* that the victims were killed at different locations. The source said one person was killed at Agulu, five at Nkpor and two at Obosi.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) denied involvement in the killing. Its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, said the killing was among the political assassinations going on in the state.

"We have no hands in the political killings going on in Biafra land. We have severely raised the alarm that some cruel politicians are hiding under the cloak of the situation in Biafra land to eliminate their political enemies and blame it on IPOB."

"This is pure political assassination going on in Anambra State now and has been perfected by Nigeria DSS security agents are doing this to paint IPOB back in the face of support and encouragement we are getting from our people."

It was learnt that his killers might have mistaken him for a politician when they ambushed his vehicle and opened fire on the trio.

The deceased had gone to Onitsha for a lecture in honour of his late wife at Sharon Hall, All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha, which was organised by the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Alumni Association (UNAA).

At the event, a source, who also attended, said Dr. Akunyili was there with his son, Obum, a state government official.

He wrote: "I was with this man some yesterday at Sharon Hall, All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha."

"It was an occasion of University of Nigeria Nsukka Alumni Association (UNAA), Onitsha branch event where they honoured the late Dora Akunyili."

"He spoke glowingly about Dora and made a donation of N500,000 to the association. He was there with his son, Obum now working with the Anambra state government."

"We saw them off to the car and it was emotional when Obum hugged him tight as both of them separated to join their respective vehicles. Obum was in a white Hilux while the man was in a Jeep (I think Prado)."

Senate mourns

The Senate yesterday observed a minute's silence in his honour.

The resolution of the Senate followed a Point of Order moved by Senator



• The late Dr. Akunyili



• The late Dr. and Prof. Akunyili

Grieving Buhari vows justice

From Bolaji Ogundele, Abuja

PRESIDENT Muhammadu Buhari has expressed sadness over the murder of Dr Chike Akunyili. In a statement by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr Femi Adesina, Buhari assured the Akunyili family, as well as families of others killed in the incident that the perpetrators would not escape from the law.

The President enjoined security operatives, as well as leaders of thought, to work harder to bring an end to the needless killings of innocent Nigerians.

"President Muhammadu Buhari is deeply saddened by the gruesome killing of Dr Chike Akunyili, the husband of the late former Director-General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Prof Dora Akunyili."

"The President shares the pain of the offspring of Prof and Dr Akunyili, their families and friends

whose lives will never remain the same after the inhuman and reprehensible act that happened in Onitsha, Anambra State.

"President Buhari has fond memories of working with the late Dora Akunyili at the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) and Nigerians will never forget the memory of the amazon, who distinguished herself as a courageous, dependable and patriotic citizen."

"Enjoining security agencies and leaders of thought to work harder to bring an end to the violence being unleashed on innocent Nigerians, the President assures the grieving families who lost their loved ones in the incident that the perpetrators of the heinous act will face both the judgment of man and that of God," the statement said.

By Precious Igbonwelundu, Sanni Onogu, Abuja, Nwanosike Onu, Awka, Emma Elekwa, Onitsha, and Ogochukwu Anioke, Abakaliki

Uche Lilian Ekwunife, informing the Senate of the dastardly act.

Ekwunife urged the Inspector General of Police to end the menace of unknown gunmen now ravaging the Southeast.

She also called on the governors of the Southeast to safeguard lives and property in the region.

Agulu in shock

The President General of Agulu Development Union, Oliver Afamefuna, told *The Nation* that the death had thrown the community into a pensive mood.

A community leader in Agulu, Sir Chris Chikwelu, said: "Chike Akunyili

is one of the respected Chiefs in Agulu, who was given the title of Agbalanze. A respected medical doctor who has lifted many persons in our community."

"We are not going to fold our hands like that after his sudden death. We're mourning and in pain in Agulu and the entire state. Our president General will summon a meeting within the week over it."

"He was involved in community service to his people. We've not finished mourning the sudden death of his wife, late Prof Dora Akunyili some years back and now this. Agulu will not keep quiet, the police and the government should hasten up."

Anambra State Commissioner of Police Tony Olofu told *The Nation* yesterday that he was already meeting with police chiefs in the state to bring the perpetrators to book.

He said the command had commenced investigations on the matter, adding that the command would not allow hoodlums to take over the state.

"We are not resting on the issue. Investigation is ongoing already and by the time we finish, it will be made available," the CP said.

The traditional ruler of Agulu, Igwe Elochukwu Obodoako, said it was too early for Dr. Akunyili's children to become orphans.

He spoke when the former governor of Anambra State, Mr Peter Obi, visited his palace yesterday to commiserate with him over the medical doctor's death.

"It is unfortunate for us to allow our people to be slain like this. What this means is that this type of death can come to any of us anytime. To say the least, this is not good."



• Chief Chikwelu Jr

To reinforce our commitment and seriousness on this issue, I, on behalf of the State Government, wish to announce a N20,000,000 reward for any useful information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators of these heinous attacks on our state.



• Igwe Obodoako

"It was not long since Prof. Dora Akunyili died and now the husband has joined her under this terrible circumstance. It is too early for their children to become orphans."

"It was in the morning that the chairman of Agulu Caretaker Committee called me and narrated what happened to Dr. Chike Akunyili. It was terrible that such a nice man should die in this manner."

"Chike was a lovely, humane person. He had no issues with anybody. I lack words to describe this kind of situation, but I blame the government for not providing security for our people any longer. He was not supposed to die in this manner," Igwe Obodoako said.

Southeast governors condemn murder

The South East Governors' Forum condemned the murder.

The Chairman of the Forum and Governor of Ebonyi State, David Umahi, in a statement by his Media Aide, Nwaze Francis, said: "We have received the shocking story of the gruesome murder of one of our brightest and the husband to our late former Director-General of NAFDAC, late Professor Dora Akunyili by unknown gunmen."

"On behalf of the Governors of the South East, we condemn the act. It is not only barbaric, but it is also unbefitting how much human lives no longer matter in our society."

"We give Security Agencies a marching order to go all out to uncover and arrest all the perpetrators of this inhuman act and make them face justice."

Southeast under siege, laments Ohanaeze

The apex Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, has lamented that the Southeast is under siege by hoodlums and gunmen.

Its President-General George Obiozor, spoke yesterday in Abakaliki, the capital of Ebonyi State.

Obiozor said the recent killings in the Southeast, especially that of Dr. Akunyili calls for introspection by the people of the region.

The Ohanaeze President spoke at the Ebonyi State Ecumenical Centre during a prayer session to mark the World Igbo Day Celebration organised by the Association in conjunction with the Christian Association of Nigeria, Southeast Zone.

Represented by the Secretary-General of Ohanaeze, Okey Emuche, the President-General described the brutal killing as a terrible development.

He said: "We need to take a pause in the Igbo nation; we need to seek the face of God. We need to think about today, the Igbo nation is under siege with killings."

"A video was sent to me, the husband of late Dr. Dora Akunyili was brutally murdered. If you see the video, if you don't hold yourself very well, you won't be able to do anything."

Anambra places bounty on killers

Anambra State Governor Willie Obiano has placed a N20 million bounty on the killers of Dr. Akunyili and others.

The governor, in a state broadcast, urged security operatives to step up their security network, adding that his administration would no longer tolerate further killings.

Obiano said: "To reinforce our commitment and seriousness on this issue, I, on behalf of the State Government, wish to announce a N20,000,000 reward for any useful information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators of these heinous attacks on our state. The people behind this must be unmasked and brought to book."

"I urge citizens to report to us anybody bearing firearm who is not a security or vigilante personnel, so we can deal with this monster, once and for all."

"I wish to most heartily condole with the families of all those who have lost their loved ones in the course of these senseless attacks."

He went on: "Between Sunday 26th and yesterday 28th September 2021 attacks on citizens at Oko, Agulu, Obosi, Nkpor, Nnobi, Nnewi and other places have left about 10 people dead including an illustrious son of this State, Dr Chike Akunyili, husband of late Prof Dora Akunyili who was reportedly gunned down yesterday around Nkpor."

"These attacks and accompanying deaths cannot be justified and must stop now."